



HERDER - FARMERS CONFLICT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF AKWAIBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the causes of farmer-pastoralist conflicts and their impact on food security in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study employed the Taro Yamane techniques for a robust analysis. Through surveys and data analysis, multifaceted factors contributing to these conflicts were identified, including land disputes, climate change, resource scarcity, livelihood insecurity, and weak governance. The study found significant agreement among respondents regarding these issues, highlighting the complex interplay of socio-economic and environmental factors exacerbating conflicts. Additionally, the level of acceptability of nomadic pastoralists by host communities was explored, revealing historical, cultural, and economic challenges hindering full integration. Based on these findings, strategic recommendations were proposed to mitigate conflicts, including robust conflict resolution mechanisms, sustainable resource management practices, livelihood diversification strategies, and governance reforms. These strategies aim to foster social cohesion, inclusive development, and peaceful coexistence in Akwa Ibom State and contribute to broader national development efforts.

Keywords: Climate change, Resource Scarcity and Insecurity

1.0 Introduction

The conflicts between farmers and nomadic cattle herders have long been a part of the economic landscape in West Africa, dating back to before the 20th century when such clashes were primarily confined to the savanna belts. In these regions, cattle rearing predominated, while crop production occurred only during the short rainy season on a limited scale, allowing herders access to vast grasslands. However, as time progressed and irrigated farming was introduced in Nigeria's savanna belt, coupled with the depletion of pasture during the dry season, pastoralists faced dwindling grazing lands Abbass, (2012).. This scarcity forced them to migrate southward to the coastal zone, where the rainy season is longer and soil moisture is retained for an extended period, a phenomenon known as transhumance.

Historically, fears of losing animals to diseases like trypanosomiasis and the abundance of wild animals deterred herders from settling permanently in humid zones. While there's debate about the timeline of farmer-herder conflicts, it's generally agreed that such clashes became widespread in coastal West African countries during the 20th century. Factors contributing to this escalation include the southward movement of pastoral herds into humid and sub-humid zones, facilitated by disease control measures and the expansion of farming activities into former pasturelands. Additionally, population growth, both human and livestock, since the 1950s has intensified pressure on natural resources, leading to increased competition between farmers and herders. (Machi , 2014)

The devastating Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s further exacerbated conflicts as a significant number of pastoralists migrated into the fringes of the humid forest zone in West Africa. Nigeria has witnessed a surge in farmer-herder conflicts, resulting in loss of lives, displacement of communities, and decreased productivity in both agriculture and livestock sectors.

In the context of addressing food security, Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria holds significant potential due to its agricultural productivity. With a diverse range of crops including yam, rice, beans, cassava, and soybean, the state contributes significantly to Nigeria's food production, particularly in soybean production where it accounts for over 70%. Additionally, the state's extensive river network offers opportunities for fishing, irrigation, and inland water transportation. Livestock farming, though secondary to crop farming, also plays a vital role in the state's economy, with poultry, sheep, pigs, and cattle being traditionally reared. The strategic location of Akwa Ibom State and its abundant arable land further enhance its agricultural potential Okuneye, (2020)

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

The agricultural sector in Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom State and neighboring areas, is facing significant challenges due to terrorist activities and conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. Farmers are reluctant to return to their fields due to the fear of violence, leading to a reduction in agricultural outputs and threatening food security. Recent clashes between herdsmen and farmers across various regions of Nigeria have further exacerbated these concerns, causing loss of lives, destruction of farmlands, and displacement of communities. Okuneye, (2020)

The Grand Strategy for National Security in Nigeria emphasizes the need for a holistic security approach to promote stability, control crime, and improve the welfare of citizens. However, rising food prices and unstable supplies have heightened insecurity concerns, with essential commodities such as rice reaching historic price highs. Persistent increases in prices of staple products have worsened the plight of the common man and hindered poverty alleviation efforts.

Given these challenges, it's essential to understand the root causes of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Akwa Ibom State and their implications for food security in Nigeria. Research into these issues is crucial for identifying solutions and ensuring food security in the region and the nation as a whole.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the causes of farmer's pastoralist conflicts and food security in Nigeria, the socio-economic effect of the conflict on the farmers in Nigeria, know the level of acceptability of nomads by host communities in Akwa Ibom state, identify the intervention and strategies in the resolution of such conflict in Nigeria

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Farmers-Herders Conflict

The issue of farmers-herders conflicts has been approached from diverse angles by various authors and scholars. Machi (2014) views these conflicts as stemming from the incompatibility of individuals with different backgrounds vying for survival. However, this perspective overlooks the crucial aspect of competition for resources as a primary driver of farmers and herdsmen's clashes. Consequently, Machi's definition lacks the depth required for comprehensive analysis and understanding.

In contrast, Yinka (2012) conceptualizes farmers-herders conflicts as a struggle over resources between two distinct agricultural land users: farmers and herders. This definition acknowledges the contestation over limited land and water resources, which are essential for agricultural activities. However, Yinka's perspective falls short in addressing broader implications such as threats to national security and the socio-cultural factors like religion and ethnicity that significantly influence these conflicts.

Simire (2018) offers a more nuanced definition by characterizing farmers-herders conflicts as disputes arising between farmers and herders primarily due to issues of land access. Simire emphasizes the impact of environmental degradation, particularly the expansion of agriculturist populations and cultivated land at the expense of pasturelands in regions like the Middle Belt. This dynamic has disrupted traditional herding practices, leading to conflicts over access to pastureland and watering points. Simire's definition aptly captures the evolving nature of these conflicts and the complex interplay of environmental and socio-economic factors involved.

While each author provides a distinct perspective on farmers-herders conflicts, Simire's definition stands out for its holistic approach, considering not only resource competition but also the broader socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of these conflicts. Understanding farmers-herders conflicts requires recognizing the intricate interactions between different stakeholders and contextual factors, which Simire's definition effectively encapsulates.

2.2 Concept of National Development

National development is a multifaceted concept that has been scrutinized and redefined by scholars across various disciplines. Drawing from recent scholarly perspectives, it's evident that the discourse on national development has evolved significantly, encompassing economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions.

Amartya (2017), emphasized the importance of broadening the understanding of development beyond mere economic growth. He argued that true development should be measured by the enhancement of people's capabilities, freedoms, and opportunities. This perspective underscores the significance of addressing inequalities, promoting education, healthcare, and ensuring political participation as integral components of national development.

Similarly, Ha-Joon (2019), an economist known for his work on developmental economics, highlighted the role of state intervention in driving development. Contrary to the neoliberal paradigm, Chang advocated for strategic government policies aimed at fostering industrialization, infrastructure development, and the protection of domestic industries. His stance underscores the need for a proactive state role in steering the development process.

Dambisa (2018), emphasized the importance of sustainable development. Moyo stressed the necessity of balancing economic growth with environmental preservation and social equity. She argued that unchecked economic development can exacerbate environmental degradation and social disparities, ultimately undermining the prospects of long-term national development.

Furthermore, Joseph (2021) reiterated the significance of inclusive growth in achieving sustainable development. Stiglitz emphasized the detrimental effects of income inequality on economic stability and social cohesion. He advocated for policies aimed at redistributing

wealth, ensuring equitable access to resources, and fostering social mobility as essential for fostering sustainable national development.

Contemporary scholars offer diverse insights into the concept of national development, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that goes beyond economic metrics. Their perspectives underscore the importance of addressing social, political, and environmental dimensions while advocating for inclusive policies and state intervention to foster sustainable and equitable development. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, integrating these insights into policy frameworks becomes imperative for realizing the aspirations of nations towards genuine progress and well-being.

2.3 Empirical Literature

The notion of security has been meticulously examined by Oppenheim (1975), who outlined five criteria to encapsulate its essence. Firstly, security concepts should be operational, breaking down into measurable elements without the necessity of quantification. Secondly, they should establish definitional connections with synonymous terms. Thirdly, they should draw attention to theoretically significant aspects of the subject matter. Fourthly, they should not preclude empirical investigation solely through definition. Finally, concepts should align closely with customary usage or ordinary language.

Mesjasz (2020) delves into the etymology of the English word "security," tracing it back to the Latin "securus," meaning without uneasiness. Initially, security connoted liberation from discomfort or a peaceful state devoid of risks or threats. The term has evolved to encompass feelings of safety and protection, describing situations devoid of worries or dangers.

Jatan (2020) expands on the multiplicity of meanings attached to security, identifying four distinct interpretations. Firstly, security is traditionally associated with the absence of military conflicts or military security. Secondly, it encompasses phenomena directly or indirectly influenced by international relations. Thirdly, security is viewed as a public good, while fourthly, it includes human security.

Asobie (2019) refers to Chambers 21st Century dictionary, defining security as protection from physical harm, including assassination, protection against attacks or robbery, protection from future financial difficulties, and freedom from vulnerability to political or military takeover.

Baldwin (2019) grapples with the definition of security, initially defining it as the absence of threats to acquired values. However, operationalizing "absence" proved problematic, leading to a revised definition: security as the low probability of damage to acquired values.

Krause and Nye (2020) offer insights into the relational aspect of security, suggesting that it is not an independent concept but one intertwined with individual or societal value systems. Realism posits security as the exclusive domain of states, often achieved through force, whereas constructivism views it as subjective, shaped by social values and identities.

Boemcken and Schetter (2017) define security as the absence of severe threats to fundamental values deemed vital for survival, while Allenby (2011) highlights the inherent ambiguity in environmental security, given its varied interpretations.

Otto and Ukpere (2012) perceive security as protection from disruptions in daily life patterns, encompassing physical safety and protection against future dangers. They contend that security must be linked to peace, safety, and the absence of crises or threats.

Buzan (2017) acknowledges security as a contested concept, reflecting diverse perspectives and conceptual vagueness, complicating consensus-building. Williams (2008) views security in terms of threats to cherished values, while Bello (2017) extends it beyond physical protection to encompass quality of life and sustainable development.

Rothschild (2017) advocates for a shift from state-centric security to a broader focus on human security and global well-being. The United Nations Development Programme emphasizes human security, defined as safety from hunger, disease, and repression.

2.3.1 Gap In Literature

In conclusion, the concept of security encompasses a wide array of interpretations, ranging from traditional military connotations to broader notions of human well-being and cooperative international relations. It is a multifaceted concept, deeply intertwined with societal values, perceptions, and the prevailing global order. Thus this study tends to focus more on Akwa-Ibom state being that the current dispensation is fully geared into the issue of security of farmers within the Agricultural space.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Many theories abound that could be used to situate this study". Among these are Structural Change Theory, The Political Ecology Theory and Democratic Peace Theory. "However, in the context of farmers-herders conflict and its relationship with national development in Akwa-Ibom State, the Democratic Peace Theory is the most suitable.

2.4.1 Democratic Peace Theory

This study utilizes the Democratic Peace Theory to elucidate the security challenges in Nigeria. According to this theory, security is primarily contingent on fostering liberal institutions to effectively fulfill their duties, with the long-term goal of promoting liberalism (Doyle, 1998). Hence, the pathway to peace entails promoting democratic systems, universal respect for human rights, and the development of civil society. However, such a conclusion hinges on the assumption of a stable and robust correlation between the democratic nature of a state and its propensity for peace. The Democratic Peace Theory posits that liberal states refrain from engaging in warfare with other liberal states. This theory was initially articulated by Michael Doyle in a seminal article published in the *Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs* (Doyle, 1998). Doyle argued that there exists a distinction in liberal behavior towards fellow liberal societies as opposed to non-liberal ones.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The design of a research topic explains the type of research (experimental, survey, correlational, semi-experimental, review) and also its sub-type (experimental design, research problem, descriptive case-study). It is the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the problem research (Creswell, 2014). The research employed field survey design to obtain data for adequate analysis. This was because data were generated through structured and unstructured interviews and questionnaire.

3.1.1 Population of the Study

The entire population of Akwa Ibom state is over 4,253,641 people. The population is drawn from the selected area. The population comprises of adult men, women and youths (Nigeria population Census of 2016).

3.1.2 Method of Data Analysis

Given the population of the study, Taro Yamane (1967) technique was applied in determining the sample size. The sample size used for the study is 399.96 which is approximately 319 respondents.

A sample size was calculated using Yamane (1967) formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{1 + 4,253,641(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{1 + 10634.1025}$$

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{10635.1025}$$

$$n = 399.96$$

3.1.3 Source of Data Collection

The data for the research work was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. These are further highlighted.

Primary Sources of Data

Primary data were obtained using structured and unstructured interviews. Questionnaires were used to obtain views of respondents on various issues relating to farmers-herdsmen conflict in the Akwa Ibom State.

Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data were sourced from relevant publications, books, journals, monographs, magazines, newspapers, seminar papers and dissertations. Others were published and unpublished materials as well as from the Internet.

4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation of Result

This section included presentation and analysis of collected data on farmers-herders conflicts and national development in Akwa-Ibom State. It examined issues and effects of farmers- herders conflicts and national development in Akwa-Ibom State. It also presents interpretation of data analysis before highlighting the challenges of farmers- herders conflicts and national development in Akwa-Ibom State and proffer strategy to address the challenges.

Information and Analysis of Sample

The distribution of questionnaire by state of the respondents is presented in the Table 1 below. The distribution further shows that the locations sampled in Akwa-Ibom States Out of 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, 385 valid copies were returned and 15 were not returned.

Demography Analysis of Respondents

The demography of the respondents for this study covered their characteristics such as gender, marital status, age range, educational qualification and occupation. The analysis and breakdown of the demographic characteristics of respondents is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Gender of Respondent (Demographics)

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	278	72.20
2.	Female	107	27.80
3.	Total	385	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 above shows the distribution of gender of the respondents. It is revealed from the distribution that 72.20 per cent of the respondents are males while 27.80 per cent of the respondents are females.

Causes Of Farmer's Pastoralist Conflicts And Food Security In Akwa-Ibom

The causes of farmer-pastoralist conflicts and their impact on food security in Akwa-Ibom which is representing Nigeria in this study are multifaceted and interconnected.

Table 2: List of Causes of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflicts in Akwa-Ibom

S/N	Causes	Respondent's View	
		Agree	Disagree
1.	Land dispute	233	151
2.	Climate Change	227	141
3.	Resource Scarcity	242	124
4.	Livelihood Insecurity	332	46
5.	Weak Governance and Institutional Failure	286	75

Source: Field Survey, 2024

4.1 Analysis of Results

Land Dispute

Based on the opinion of the 223 respondents representing 57.92 per cent agreed that Land dispute is a cause of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Akwa-Ibom State 151

respondents representing 39.22 per cent disagreed while 11 respondents representing 2.86 per cent were undecided. Hence, land dispute is a cause of farmer-pastoralist conflict in Akwa-Ibom States for enhanced national development.

Climate Change

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondent's views on the climate change as a cause of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Akwa-Ibom state. The 227 respondents representing 58.96 per cent, affirmed that, climate change is a cause of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Akwa-Ibom state, 141 respondents representing 36.62 per cent disagreed, while 17 respondents representing 4.41 per cent of the respondents remained indifferent.

Resource Scarcity

The table above also revealed that 242 of the respondent representing 62.86 "per cent agreed that limited access to water and pasture due to environmental degradation and population growth intensifies competition between farmers and pastoralists, 124 of the respondent representing 32.21 per cent strongly disagreed, about 12 respondent representing 3.12 per cent declined the response to the question and 7 respondents representing 1.82 per cent were neutral in response. Hence, resource scarcity is an important issue to be considered in combating farmers-herders conflicts in Akwa-Ibom State for enhanced national development.

Livelihood Insecurity

The research survey shows that 332 respondents representing 86.23 per cent agreed that Poverty and economic marginalization contribute to conflicts as both farmers and pastoralists struggle to secure their livelihoods, while 46 of the respondents representing 11.95 per cent disagree and 3 respondents representing 0.78 per cent were indifferent and lastly 4 of the respondent representing 1.04 per cent did not respond to the question. Hence lack of alternative income opportunities pushes these groups to fiercely protect their access to land and resources, sometimes resorting to violence as a means of survival.

Weak Governance and Institutional Failures

In the survey conducted, 286 of the respondents representing 74.29 per cent agreed that inadequate enforcement of land-use regulations, ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms, and corruption within institutions exacerbate farmer-pastoralist conflicts. About 75 respondents representing 19.48 disagreed, 15 respondents representing 3.90 per cent indicating they had no idea while 9 of the respondents representing 2.34 per cent have no response to the question.

The impacts of these conflicts on food security in Nigeria are significant. Displacement of communities, destruction of farmlands and livestock, disruption of agricultural activities, and loss of lives and livelihoods all contribute to food insecurity, affecting farmers and pastoralists as well as wider communities dependent on agriculture for food and income.

4.1.1 Level of Acceptability of Nomads by Host Communities in Akwa-Ibom State

The level of acceptability of nomads by host communities in Akwa-Ibom State varies depending on several factors, including historical, cultural, economic, and environmental considerations. Generally, nomadic pastoralists, predominantly Fulani herders in Southern Nigeria, face challenges in gaining full acceptance in host communities in the Akwa-Ibom.

Historical and Cultural Factors

There is a long history of tension between settled farming communities and nomadic pastoralists in Nigeria. Historical grievances, ethnic rivalries, and cultural differences contribute to mistrust and conflicts between these groups. Pastoralists' migratory lifestyle and different cultural practices often clash with those of settled agricultural communities.

Land Use and Competition

Land scarcity and competition for resources, particularly grazing lands and water sources, intensify conflicts between nomadic herders and settled farmers. As urbanization expands and agricultural activities encroach on traditional grazing areas, conflicts over land ownership and usage rights escalate.

Environmental Degradation

Environmental factors such as deforestation, desertification, and depletion of natural resources contribute to conflicts between nomadic herders and host communities. Climate change exacerbates these challenges, leading to disputes over dwindling pasture and water resources.

Livelihood Security

Both nomadic herders and settled farmers rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. In some cases, competition for resources leads to economic insecurity and exacerbates tensions between these groups. Conflicts over access to grazing lands and water sources can disrupt livelihoods and lead to resentment among host communities.

Ethnic and Religious Dynamics

Ethnic and religious differences often intersect with conflicts between nomadic herders and host communities. Perceived ethnic or religious affiliations may influence the level of acceptance or hostility towards nomads, exacerbating tensions and complicating efforts to resolve conflicts.

Governance and Policy Issues

Weak governance, ineffective land-use policies, and inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms contribute to the marginalization of nomadic pastoralists in southern Nigeria. Lack of recognition of traditional grazing rights and inadequate representation of pastoralist interests in decision-making processes hinder efforts to address their grievances.

Social Integration Efforts

Despite challenges, there are initiatives aimed at promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between nomadic herders and host communities in southern Nigeria. These efforts involve community dialogues, conflict mediation, and initiatives to improve access to education, healthcare, and other social services for nomadic populations.

Proffer Strategies to Mitigate the Conflicts in Akwa-Ibom

Certainly! Based on the issues highlighted in the study, here are strategies to mitigate the challenges associated with farmers-herders conflicts and their impact on national development in Akwa Ibom State:

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Implement robust conflict resolution mechanisms at local, state, and national levels. This includes establishing mediation committees comprised of representatives from both farming and herding communities, as well as government officials and civil society organizations. These committees can facilitate dialogue, negotiate peaceful resolutions, and address grievances in a fair and transparent manner.

Land Use Planning and Management

Develop and enforce land use policies that address the competing needs of farmers and herders. This includes delineating grazing reserves and agricultural lands, clarifying land tenure rights, and establishing mechanisms for resolving land disputes. Encourage participatory land use planning processes that involve all stakeholders to ensure equitable access to resources.

Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Resource Management

Promote environmental conservation practices and sustainable resource management to mitigate the impact of climate change and environmental degradation. This includes reforestation efforts, soil conservation measures, and water management initiatives to safeguard natural resources and reduce conflicts over land and water.

Livelihood Diversification and Economic Empowerment

Support livelihood diversification and economic empowerment programs for both farmers and herders. Provide training and technical assistance in alternative income-generating activities, such as agroforestry, small-scale irrigation, livestock fattening, and non-farm enterprises. Foster partnerships with private sector actors to create job opportunities and enhance economic resilience in rural communities.

Capacity Building and Conflict Sensitivity Training

Conduct capacity-building workshops and conflict sensitivity training for government officials, community leaders, and law enforcement agencies. Equip them with the skills and knowledge to identify early warning signs of conflict, de-escalate tensions, and promote dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties. Emphasize the importance of respecting human rights, cultural diversity, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Good Governance and Institutional Strengthening:

Strengthen governance institutions and enhance accountability and transparency in land administration and conflict management. Improve the capacity of local government authorities, judiciary, and law enforcement agencies to enforce land-use regulations, resolve disputes, and uphold the rule of law. Promote inclusive governance processes that involve all stakeholders in decision-making and resource allocation.

Community Engagement and Social Cohesion

Foster community engagement and social cohesion through dialogue, reconciliation, and confidence-building measures. Facilitate joint initiatives and collaborative projects that bring together farmers and herders to address common challenges, promote mutual understanding, and build trust and solidarity. Encourage the formation of multi-stakeholder platforms and community-based organizations to facilitate ongoing dialogue and cooperation.

Investment in Infrastructure and Service Delivery:

Invest in critical infrastructure and service delivery in rural areas, including roads, water supply systems, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions. Improve access to basic services and amenities to enhance the well-being and livelihoods of rural communities. Prioritize investments that benefit both farmers and herders and promote inclusive development.

By implementing these strategies in a coordinated and collaborative manner, stakeholders can work towards mitigating the challenges associated with farmers-herders conflicts and fostering sustainable peace, development, and prosperity in Akwa Ibom State and beyond.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The presented section delves into the analysis of collected data on farmers-herders conflicts and their implications for national development in Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. It begins by outlining the distribution of questionnaires and demographics of the respondents. Subsequently, it explores the causes of farmer-pastoralist conflicts and their impact on food security, followed by an examination of the level of acceptability of nomadic herders by host communities in Akwa-Ibom State.

The demographic analysis reveals that out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 385 valid responses were received, with a majority of male respondents (72.20%) compared to female respondents (27.80%). This distribution provides a basis for understanding the perspectives presented in the subsequent analysis.

The causes of farmer-pastoralist conflicts are analyzed through respondents' views on various factors, including land disputes, climate change, resource scarcity, livelihood insecurity, and weak governance. The majority of respondents agree that these factors contribute significantly to conflicts between farmers and herders in Akwa-Ibom State. Land disputes, climate change, and resource scarcity are identified as primary drivers of conflicts, exacerbating tensions and affecting food security in the region.

Further analysis delves into the level of acceptability of nomadic herders by host communities in Akwa-Ibom State. Historical, cultural, economic, and environmental factors play significant roles in shaping the dynamics of acceptance or rejection of nomads. Historical grievances, ethnic rivalries, and cultural differences contribute to mistrust and conflicts between settled farming communities and nomadic herders. Land scarcity, competition for resources, environmental degradation, and livelihood security also influence the level of acceptability. Additionally, governance and policy issues, such as weak enforcement of land-use regulations and inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms, exacerbate tensions and marginalize nomadic pastoralists.

Despite these challenges, efforts are underway to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between nomadic herders and host communities in southern Nigeria. Community dialogues, conflict mediation, and initiatives to improve access to education and healthcare for nomadic populations are among the strategies aimed at fostering integration and reducing conflicts. This work is in line with Krause and Nye (2020)

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings presented underscore the multifaceted nature of farmers-herders conflicts and their far-reaching implications for national development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed that issues such as land disputes, climate change, resource scarcity, livelihood insecurity, and weak governance contribute significantly to the escalation of conflicts between farmers and herders. These conflicts not only disrupt agricultural activities but also lead to displacement of communities, destruction of farmlands and livestock, and loss of lives and livelihoods, exacerbating food insecurity and economic instability in the region. To address these challenges, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach that integrates conflict resolution mechanisms, sustainable resource management practices, livelihood diversification strategies, and good governance principles. Additionally, promoting social cohesion, community engagement, and inclusive development initiatives are crucial for fostering peaceful coexistence and enhancing resilience in rural communities. By prioritizing these efforts and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, policymakers can work towards building a more peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future for Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria as a whole.

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