

THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSHUMANCE AND INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE

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Introduction

Transhumance has induced a varying degree of internal conflict and insecurity in the Northern part of Nigeria and has consequently moved to the Southern part through the North-Central region. Across the country today, newspapers and media houses are awash with diverse stories of arson, kidnapping, indiscriminate shooting at unarmed farmers, and killings of different magnitudes. These dastardly acts are perpetrated primarily by unscrupulous herdsman or herdsman militias who go about with guns and other sophisticated weapons (Aigbe and Akenzua 2020). Although cattle rustling and theft have not accentuated the process of reaching a truce between the clashing parties, the herdsman, who are major aggressors in the conflict, have resorted to using gruesome means to unleash terror on civilian farmers. The implication of this is that scores of casualties in terms of deaths are being recorded.

In 2018 alone, the death toll resulting from the clash between herdsman and farmers was six times greater than the number of deaths caused by

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the Boko Haram terrorist group within the same period. Between January and September 2018, the death toll was set at 1,750. This figure surpassed the 1,229 deaths in 2014, when the crisis was at its peak (Global Terrorism Index 2015). Also, more than 62,000 people, including children, were internally displaced within the same period in Kaduna, Benue, and Plateau (Kwaghga 2018). According to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO 2021, 46), the menace has killed over 10,000 people in the last decade. Within this period, 4,000 individuals were killed between 2016 and the whole of 2017 and 2018. Also, 616 fatalities were documented in 2020 and 549 in the previous year, 2019. Beyond clashes with farmers, the transhumant elements also perpetrate acts of brigandage and gruesome violence on civilians. According to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED 2020), criminal militias perpetrated 602 incidents of violent attacks on civilians: 307 in 2018, 102 in 2019, and 193 in 2020. These attacks constitute other forms of organised crime in the form of robbery attacks on communities, intimidation and causing fear, rape, kidnapping, and so on.

These violent and gruesome attacks by criminal herders on farming communities have prevented crop farmers from accessing their farm lands for cultivation, thereby increasing poverty and hunger, which results in food insecurity. In an age where agriculture is seen as a veritable alternative to economic diversification, issues like this can only serve as a clog in the wheel of progress, despite numerous agricultural policies being formulated. According to Nwozor, Olanrewaju, and Ake (2019, 10) “the key thrust of Nigeria’s agricultural renaissance is to diversify its economy by making agriculture the hub of economic growth while also achieving a hunger-free country (a hunger-free country is one that is food secure)”. Food security has been prioritized as an imminent national policy framework in the country, considering the fact that a huge part of its 200 million population is food insecure (FMARD 2021). Despite its favorable agro-ecological endowments, food insecurity is still of great concern to the government due to its prevalence in the country.

As Fadare *et al.* (2019, 29) observed, “Nigeria has a total landmass of 92.4 million hectares, out of which only about 32 million hectares, or 34.63 percent, are being cultivated”. With this observation alone, it can be deduced that the country already lacks the wherewithal to meet the nutritional needs of its people, thereby making food unavailability the order of the day. According to Food and Agricultural Organization (2017), “between 2004 and 2006, the total number of undernourished Nigerians due to their inability to access food was 9.1 million”. Between 2016 and 2018, the figure had risen to 25.6 million (Nwozor, Olanrewaju, and Ake 2019). This obviously is a downward

trend in terms of development, and the implication is that there is a huge gap between the demands for food and the supply of it.

Until 2018, the conflict between farmers and pastoralists was primarily confined to the North-Western, North-Eastern, and Middle Belt zones of the country. However, from late 2017 to early 2018, the conflict had expanded to the South-West, South-East, and South-South of Nigeria (EASO 2021). To date, it keeps spreading like wildfire and has therefore become a national menace. Farmers are scared of going to their farmlands due to the high level of insecurity being perpetrated by transhumant elements. Numerous scholarly attempts to provide insight into this menace have revolved around land tenure, ethnicity, resource scarcity, climate change, and other causes. Those who have made attempts to relate the issue to food security were particularly interested in the North-East and North-Central sub-regions of Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the level of humanitarian damage caused by farmers-herders crisis and its impacts on farming activities in South-South Nigeria. Also, it examined the nature of stakeholders' response to quelling the feuds between farmers and herders towards ensuring food availability in Nigeria. In light of the above objectives, the research interrogated questions such as, to what extent has the humanitarian damage caused by farmers-herders conflict impacted farming activities in the South-South? Secondly, how have the stakeholders responded to quelling the feud between farmers and herders so as to ensure food availability with references to the South-South geopolitical zone? Furthermore, the research hypothesized on the one hand that there is no relationship between transhumance and food insecurity in the South-South zone of Nigeria. On the other hand, it hypothesized that there is no relationship between insecurity and farming activities in the South-South, Nigeria. The reverse of these hypotheses is also tested in the study.

Transhumance and internal security: a conceptual and theoretical underpinning

Transhumance and internal security are omnibus concepts that are not amenable to a singular definition. This is due to the fact that the concepts independently possess wider coverage while providing linkages in various aspects. For instance, Akpen (2019, 53) argued that "there are varied conceptual issues (mobility, modernization and stimulus paradigm) that catch our intellectual curiosity which can be used to describe transhumance". To this

extent, transhumance is defined as the practice or action of moving livestock from one grazing location to another in a seasonal cycle typically to low lands in the winter and high lands in the summer (FAO 2017). According to Ayantunde *et al.* (2011), transhumance can be seen as a livestock production system characterized by seasonal and cyclical movement of varying degrees between complementary ecological areas. This movement is majorly inspired by unfavorable climate change that exposes nature's parsimony in terms of rainfall distribution. That is why Akpen (2019, 45) argued that "transhumance is a response to ecological, agricultural, health and socio-cultural challenges".

Internal security on the other hand constitutes another intellectual voyage that has attracted numerous attempts at a definition. This is so because the term 'security' is a broad concept that is not amenable to a singular definition. That is why Degaut (2015, 9) argued that "defining security is not an easy matter, since the term has had many different meanings to different people in different places and different times over the course of human history". Traditionally, the term security was conceived as comprising military, economic and political capacity of a state to defend itself against external insurrections. However, with the emergence of new world order and liberalism, security tends to transcend the conventional state-centric approach to a more humanistic approach. To this extent, the term security is subdivided into two distinct forms, which are: national security and human security. The former constitutes the whole gamut of military power and capacity while the latter constitutes parameters that measure human capital development and societal growth in terms of economic, health, environmental, food security, etc.

Thus, concerns for the common man now drive the concept of security. By implication, Adams (2019, 221) contends that "internal security must be related to the ability of the state to perform the function of protecting the well-being of its people". To Prakash (2016), internal security can be defined as the act of keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state or other self-governing territories generally by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats. Nwoli (2008) corroborated this view when he asserted that internal security entails the security agencies of a nation being able to combat armed robbery, religious and ethnic riots, communal and community clashes, armed insurrection, rebellion, insurgency, terrorism, natural disaster, etc.

The relationship between transhumance and internal security challenges cannot be over emphasized. Besides the hordes of vicious, violent and virulent group formations within the Sahel, some people have attributed

the prevalence of violence in farmers/community and herders conflicts to gruesome transhumant migrants who continually arrive in greater numbers in central and southern Nigeria majorly through the northeast. According to Ikelegbe (2019), “these transhumant migrants are perceived to be more aggressive, impatient and brutal while crimes perpetrated by them tend to be more indiscriminate, atrocious, horrendous and destructive”. Other scholars (Agbu, Musa and Zhema 2020) believe that transhumant migrants are majorly the remnants of war-ravaged Libya and other Sahelian countries of which Nigeria is a victim. Their migration to the country and the consequent spread to Southern Nigeria is aided by porous borders, thereby leading to the formation of armed groups and loosely available illicit arms for the perpetration of violence and criminality. This situation does not allow for an easy understanding of the nature of transhumance that is well known to communities and other farming areas. The notion now is that the current crop of herders does not in any way represent traditional nomads that are well known for moving about with sticks and cattle.

Rather, the new ones constitute strange elements with despicable characters such as: wielding AK47 ammunition, lawlessness (Ikelegbe 2019), leading herds into major streets and public places like schools and markets and using herds to block highways for brigandage (Eke 2018; Aghedo 2017). The horrendous grazing activities of transhumant elements that result in wanton destruction of crops and farmlands have led to violent confrontation between the warring parties. Also, the herders are hardened by the harsh conditions of their occupations and lifestyles and the relative deprivation, isolation and the lack of basic amenities that they endure. Furthermore, there is a wide contention that the perceived oppression and marginalization by the herders is further accentuated by the continuous depletions of their cattle stock through cattle rustling, insecurity and declining grazing routes. The resultant effect of this accusation and counter accusation is the ravaging farmers-herders conflict that has resulted in the loss of lives and properties.

Theoretically, several conceptual strands have been used to explain the conflict of transhumance. A lot of them have focused on and revolved around the intellectual tradition of neo-Malthusianism which places emphasis on resource use, environmental scarcity and population growth factors (Homer-Dixon 1994; Moritz 2010). This reductionist tradition has posed a critical theoretical and methodological issue in a situation where the phenomenon is contagious regionally (Nwangwu, Mbah and Ezugworie 2020). Against this backdrop, this research adopted the theory of Structural-Functionalism.

Structural-functionalism is a theory that tends to explain the society based on the existence of structures and the roles they perform. Historically, it can be traced to the work of Talcott Parson, in the 18th century, and was later developed by other scholars including Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown. It was Parson who argued that society consists of four structures, with each of them performing a specific role. The structures according to Parson include: economy; polity; law and social control; lastly, cultural and motivational commitment. Each of these structures is destined to perform specific functions viz: adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Varma 1975, 200).

Since Parson's analysis of structures and the roles they perform in the sustenance of the system, other scholars have provided their own perspectives about the functionality of the social system. Beyond Gabriel Almond and David Easton who introduced the functional analysis into the domain of political science through the systems theory, Radcliffe-Brown also gave insight into the explanation of structural-functionalism.

According to Turner (2012), in Radcliffe-Brown's explanation of function, the idea of structure is included. This structure comprises numerous entities which maintain the continuous existence of social order. To this extent, he made three basic summaries of his own approach to the functional theory. The assumptions are:

1. Minimal integration and coordination of a society's parts represent the only criteria for its existence.
2. The term function encompasses those interactions that facilitate the maintenance of this required integration.
3. In each society, structural features can be said to contribute immensely to the maintenance of necessary integration.

Radcliffe-Brown perspective of the theory beams its searchlight on the prerequisites under which social structures are maintained. To this extent, he suggested that certain laws regulate the functioning of societies. He then provided little modification to the idea of need and replaced it with 'necessary conditions' for the existence of human societies. As such, these conditions can be discovered by proper scientific means of knowledge acquisition or science. He argued that the organic analogy should be used in a careful manner among scholars. Basically, the tenet of structural-functionalism is that society is made up of interconnected parts in terms of structures. The interdependence and interaction of the structures, in terms of the functions they perform, helps to ensure the smooth running of the society and to ensure its unity.

When this is brought to the domain of transhumance, it creates a web of three units of analysis, which in this context are the structure. They are: the herders' institutions, the farmers' institutions and the government. These various structures exist to perform varied roles and functions. While the herders are known for harnessing livestock and animal husbandry for the provision of skin and herds, the farmers function to provide cash and food crop for commercial or subsistence purposes of the good of the society. Also, the government as a structure exists to provide social amenities to ensure the smooth running and performance of the other two structures. It also functions to minimize frictions between other structures by ensuring security of lives and properties and ensuring the ease of doing business among these other structures. In the event of distortion, the structure is able to absorb stress and return to equilibrium when each part performs its functions effectively. However, the crisis of transhumance in Nigeria has lingered due to the inability of the units to perform their role. There is a continuous trespassing of the functions of each structure that tend to heat up the nadir part of the social structure. This explains the incessant clashes between farmers and herders.

Methodology

This study utilized the cross-sectional/survey research design with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. The population of the study was 1,780,579 while the sample size was about 1200 using the multistage sampling technique. This sample, derived from Taro Yamane formula, was spread across nine local government areas (three each) in three South-South states of Edo, Delta and Rivers states. While the questionnaire constituted the major instrument for data collection, the in-depth interview (IDI) was also used to elicit information from farmers, security officials (police and vigilantes), herders and others who are privy to the menace of transhumance. The information gathered from both the questionnaires and the in-depth interview were complemented with data from secondary sources which include: journal articles, online sources, books, monographs, annual reports, etc. Furthermore, the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's correlation coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The research is focused on the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The region is given attention because it is closest to the North-Central and thus constitutes a pathway through which transhumant elements

migrate southward. Also, the South-South zone possesses favorable weather conditions, with the highest annual rainfall. According to Adewole & Serifat (2015, 100), the region boasts an average annual rainfall of 737.84 millimetres, compared to the second-placed South-East at 442.36 millimeters. These statistics render the South-South a fertile ground for herdsmen to graze their cattle due to its abundant rainfall for grass production. Within the South-South Geopolitical zone, Edo, Delta, and Rivers states represent the domain of case study analysis and springboard. This is because, according to The Guardian (2020), Edo and Delta states are the worst hit by the onslaught of herdsmen activities and brigandage, while Rivers State was selected based on its arable and fertile agricultural land. This could be partly due to the fact that Edo State is the first point of call from North Central and therefore serves as a migratory route.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1

H₀₁ - There is no significant relationship between transhumance activities and food insecurity in the South-South.

H₁₁ - There is a significant relationship between transhumance activities and food insecurity in the South-South.

Table 4.53		Correlations	
		Transhumance Activities	Food insecurity
Transhumance Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1039	1039
Food insecurity	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1039	1039
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between transhumance activities and food

insecurity, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. Thus, the positive increase in transhumance activities leads to a corresponding increase in food insecurity in the South-South. Hence, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between transhumance activities and food insecurity in the South-South region.

Hypotheses 2

Ho2 - There is no significant relationship between insecurity and less farming activities in the South-South.

Hr2- There is a significant relationship between insecurity and less farming activities in the South-South.

Table 4.54		Correlations	
		Insecurity	Less farming activities
Insecurity	Pearson Correlation	1	.723**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1039	1039
Farming activities	Pearson Correlation	.723**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1039	1039
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between insecurity and farming activities, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. It therefore means that an increase in insecurity leads to a corresponding increase in less farming activities. Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between insecurity and less farming activities in the South-South.

Discussion of findings

On the nature of transhumance induced conflict between farmers and herders and its impacts on food security in the South-South region of Nigeria, the study revealed that farming activities have reduced in the South-South zone of Nigeria due to the crisis of transhumance which has metamorphosed into food insecurity in the region. Thus, the study established that there is a strong positive relationship between transhumance activities and food insecurity in the South-South region with 0.712 (71% correlation) @ ($p > 0.001$) significance level. To affirm the position of this study, Erunke and Aku (2022, 23) observed “that the low level of agricultural production, due to attacks from herdsmen, for example, coupled with a rising population growth rate in Nigeria, is likely to lead to a food crisis and a higher unemployment level”. Their study examined the implications of Farmers-Herders Conflict on Food Security in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. Aso, Udosen (2021, 17), asserted “that the Nigerian herder-farmer crisis can be interpreted as an issue of obtaining land for economic survival”. The implication of this is that there is endemic political, economic, and environmental tensions in the nation and severe food insecurity, particularly in the Middle Belt and Southern parts of Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999. Also, Gordon (2000) claims that the conflicts are brought on by the herdsmen’s cattle destructively destroying farmlands. Herdsmen, of course, are nomads who travel from their customary homes in quest of more fertile pasture for their herds of cattle.

This view was corroborated by an interviewee who lamented:

[...] those people are wicked. They just enter our farm in this community and use their cow to destroy our crops. If you talk, they will say they are the ones that own Nigeria and they cannot do them anything. There was a day they killed one man here and cut another person’s hand with machet on another occasion because the person argued and fought with them. We don’t even know what to do now. Me for example, I am scared to go to the farm because of fear. My children are not here, nobody will fight for me (IDI 2 2023)³.

Interrogating further on the nature of the conflict between farmers and herders that has contributed to food insecurity in the region, a 58 years old man supported the earlier view when he stated that:

³ In-Depth Interview. Are responses that were generated from interviewees in the course of interviewing them during the research.

My son, my production has really gone down. In fact, we are suffering in this village. All these Fulani people are very harmful to us. Last year, I planted vegetables, corn and melon. As they were growing, they brought their cow and destroyed everything. That period, I didn't get one harvest. We used to take some to the market to sell but that year, not even one was harvested (IDI 2 2023).

To investigate on how the conflict has affected their crop production whether for sale or personal consumption, the first interviewee posited that:

Before, I used to harvest cassava and yam for sale because that's what I farm. But now, to even get the yam to eat is hard. My income has reduced because of it and things are now very expensive (IDI 1 2023).

Exploring the level of humanitarian damage caused by farmers-Herders crisis and its impacts on farming activities in South-South Nigeria, the study established that the internal security challenge posed by farmers-herders conflict discourages people from embarking on agriculture which has led to constant hike in the prices of crop and livestock production in the South-South. With the correlation co-efficient of 0.723 @ ($p < .001$), the study revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between insecurity and less farming activities in the South-South region.

This result was further buttressed by a 36 years old man who posited that:

In our village, we cannot go to the farm. We cannot go at all. We always get attacked and sometimes, our women get raped too. One day, my mum was raped in the farm by them because she was the only one. We have even taken a protest march to the government so as to complain but no answer. Since then, our food production has reduced (IDI 3 2023).

In the same vein, another interviewee asserted that:

[...] there was a day I was going to the farm and I saw some people running back that those people were robbing people that were in the farm. Sometimes, in this community, traders do go to the farm to buy produce and get vehicle to pack them. That day, Fulani cow people were in the bush robbing them so we were told to go back home from farm (IDI 5 2023).

Ezemenaka e Ekumaoko (2018) observed that over the last decade, there has been incessant reportage of the high level of humanitarian damage of farmers-herders conflict across the states in Nigeria. The surge in farmer-s-herders witnessed a different dimension from 2013 when the herdsmen began to unleash terror through guns and machetes on armless farmers, which have led to scores of people fleeing their homes and farmlands. From this period, Nigeria became used to newspaper headlines such as scores killed as herdsmen attack some communities in Nigeria. According to the statistics provided by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2014), 63 people were killed from clashes between farmers and herders in 2013. By 2014, this figure tremendously increased to 1229 casualties (GTI 2015). The spate of insecurity occasioned by herdsmen is alarming in Nigeria to the extent that a day hardly passes by without news of attacks. In June 2018, the country woke up to the news that rampaging Criminal Herdsmen had attacked eleven (11) communities in Barkin Ladi local government area of Benue state. This particular attack left Eighty-six (86) toll with Fifty (50) houses burnt in the process (Ezemenaka and Ekumaoko 2018).

Due to this unprecedented level of security challenge, food prices have risen beyond measure as a result of the country's obvious insecurity challenges and the significant decline in food output. Many individuals are at risk of famine as a result of the 253% and 123% price increases in key staples food like beans and tomatoes since July 2020. In addition, Nigeria's food import cost has increased by 140% since the country's rising food demand cannot be met by current production levels (Fadare *et al.* 2019). This is why Udosen (2021) argued that given the numerous constraints on food production, investors and entrepreneurs are advised against entering the agricultural sector, particularly in regions plagued by insecurity problems. This resulted in property destruction, crop damage, attacks on cattle, livestock rustling, and live cattle killings in Benue State. According to reports, some of the main causes of conflict and violence between farmers and herders are population expansion, climatic change, environmental degradation, government policies, and insurgency activities (Dimelu *et al.* 2017).

Conclusion

The study concluded that transhumance and farmers' violent conflicts have created food insecurity and humanitarian crisis across many communities in Nigeria. Many have died, many have been displaced, and a large number of properties in the form of crops, animals, vehicles, etc. have

been destroyed. Farmers, though, have occasionally been involved in carrying out attacks or reprisal attacks against the Fulani herdsmen, have been seen to be mostly at the receiving end of the conflicts. They count more losses than the herdsmen. Thus, the research established that there is a significant relationship between transhumance and food insecurity in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The herder-farmer conflict has become more significant in the last two decades in Nigeria. Although the government had in the past taken some measures to address this phenomenon, the increasing desertification and the effects of climate change have further increased the drive for the herdsmen to move further south in search of grazing land and pasture for their livestock. These southward movements always pitch them against farmers and the host community, whose crops are regularly invaded and destroyed by the cattle during this seasonal movement. The result of this is increased conflict, death, displacement and the total destruction of properties. However, because the phenomenon is a human security issue, there is a need for a concerted effort at state, national, regional and international levels to address the challenges, especially since there is no specific legislation that is dedicated to addressing the peculiar needs of herders and farmers in the country. Thus, the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between ethnic identity and the crisis between farmers and herders in the South-South region.

Undoubtedly, the internal security challenges caused by the threat of transhumance have significantly affected the production and accessibility of food in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The consequences of this disaster are a significant food security crisis coupled with an increasing cost of living. This research has helped to inundate the relationship between transhumance, internal security, and food security in Nigeria, with an emphasis on the South-South Geopolitical zone. It established that people (particularly those farmers in rural areas) are discouraged from embarking on the planting of crops. Those who summon the courage to do so often resort to violence in order to defend their crops from being eaten up by herds. The research also pointed out that successive governments over the years have done their parts to weather the storm. However, there has not been political will to implement the policies that have been formulated. To this extent, the actors in the crisis have not felt the impacts of the government's attempts to remedy the situation.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has not also aided in the process of reaching a truce among the critical actors in the menace. As one of the interviewees pointed out during the course of the research, a

lot of the herds are owned and controlled by prominent members in some of the communities, and they most often pay deaf ears when cases of violent clashes are reported. This, by implication, suggests that there are internal sponsors who would want to leave no stone unturned so as to shield their herds from destruction.

Based on the findings and conclusion above, it is mandatory and quite expedient that the government should put in place an effective mechanism through mapping of a holistic security architecture to curtail the negative operations of the transhumance and the influx of herder into communities in Nigeria. As the study revealed, enough measures have not been put in place to checkmate the activities of transhumant elements. In most cases, as some of the interviewees revealed, farmers resort to self-help in order to protect their crops and their farmlands from being destroyed. Also, the herders asserted that their herds are either poisoned or taken away through the activities of cattle rustlers. Therefore, leaders of the South-South zone should formulate and adhere strictly to a joint security effort so as to protect farming communities and the farm lands from being invaded. This can be achieved by establishing regional security networks that will collaborate with the federal forces and local security framework with express permission to carry sophisticated ammunition coupled with high grade intelligence gathering to deal with criminal elements. When the people begin to get the confidence that their lives are safe, the discouragement to work in the farm will be eliminated, which will witness a geometric rise in the production of crops. The resultant effect will be an increase in and access to aliments, which will consequently lead to food security in the South-South geopolitical zone.

The government should adopt alternative dispute resolution through dialoguing with the herders and the farmers in the communities. As the study revealed and echoed by one of the IDIs, not all transhumant are criminally minded and as such, a lot of criminally bent herders have infiltrated the good ones. Also, as noted by a particular herder, activities of cattle rustlers have not facilitated the process of reaching a truce between the conflicting parties. Therefore, there is a need for the South-South zonal leaders and with the help of local government and other community leaders to seek political settlement measures in which all the various stakeholders (including the representatives of both farmers and herders will converge. The purpose of the convergence will be to reach an agreement for everyone to stop harboring criminal elements. While the farmers can do their part by revealing any known cattle rustlers, the herders, in turn, will reciprocate by reporting criminal elements among them instead of harboring them due to primordial affiliation. When this is sincerely done, the tendency for insecurity to reduce is high while the

impediments to farming are removed. This will in turn lead to a huge supply of farm produce that will consequently bring down prices.

As the study revealed, numerous attempts have been made by the various governments of the South-South zone with not much from the central government. However, there has been no strict cooperation from the leaders of the region to collaborate in the implementation. For instance, as revealed in the work, the leaders of the South-South zone came together to agree on a policy framework which was named “Asaba Declaration”. As part of its resolution, it was agreed that all the states in the region should ban open grazing of herds. Till date, not all the states have implemented the agreement. Those that have commenced implementation do not have the will to enforce it. As some of the farmers who participated in the in-depth interview asserted, herds move about their farm lands both day and night without recourse to extant laws. When they are reported, the issues are trivialized. Therefore, for there to be food security in the South-South zone, there must be strict adherence to policy implementation that will nip the security challenges in the zone in the bud.

Furthermore, the government should intelligently investigate the sponsors of the criminal herders in the country and bring them to justice. According to the popular parlance which says “there is no smoke without fire”, the study has revealed that a lot of the criminal elements among the herders are being sponsored by some influential individuals within and outside the communities. This view was corroborated by an IDI participant that stated that when the issue of destruction of herds is reported, it is most times swept under the carpet while the security forces instantly release arrested culprits after claiming to have received instructions from above. The leaders of the geopolitical zone should, as a matter of urgency, do everything within their power and under the confine of the law, fish out those unscrupulous elements that are responsible for fanning the embers of discord among farmers and herders. It is not just enough to fish out, such people must be prosecuted and appropriate punishment given as established by the law. When that is done, it will ring a bell of determination on the part of the leaders while other potential perpetrators back off.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons should be nipped in the bud for peace and tranquility in the communities. As the study unveiled, the increase of both have only helped to exacerbate the tension between farmers and herders. These weapons are made readily available to those criminal elements among the herders, who begin to use them to commit all sorts of atrocities. The South-South leaders should as a matter of urgency

collaborate with the federal government on the issue of arms control. By this, anyone who is caught with the possession of illegal firearms should be extremely punished without recourse to legal processes.

Another major issue that this study addressed is the fact that there is an existing negative perception of herders by the indigenous communities. There is therefore the need for mindsets restructuring so as to eradicate this ill perception. The research found that there has been a persisting mindset by those in the South-South, which created a perception of the criminality of the herders. A positive change of mindset will help to move the strained relationship from hostility to rapprochement. This will also help to ameliorate the debacle of intolerance and ethnic bickering.

The study also revealed that the crisis of transhumance is further accelerated by the fact that there are no pathways for herds and a definite place to be stationed. As such, the study recommends that states within the South-South zone should create grazing routes for herds and establish cattle ranches. This will facilitate the process of effective implementation of the Asaba declaration, which necessitated the ban on open grazing. The implication is that there will be no room for the invasion of farmlands and crops belonging to farmers. When the ranches are created, it will generate an avenue whereby the owners of herds have to register their businesses with corporate social responsibilities. This will further create a revenue base for governments within the zone while making more funds available for good and quality implementation of agricultural policies for more food security.

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the nature of transhumance and the level of humanitarian damage coupled with their impact on food security in the South-South geopolitical zone. Relying on the Structural-Functionalism theory, the study utilized the survey research design as well as the qualitative and quantitative research strategies as the methodological tool. To this end, the multistage/stratified sampling technique was used to derive the population of the study which constitutes some states in the South-South zone, while the Taro Yamane formula was used to scientifically derive the sample size from the population. The study revealed that farming activities have reduced in the South-South region of Nigeria due to the crisis of transhumance which has metamorphosed into food insecurity in the region with 0.712 (71% correlation) @ ($p > 0.001$) significance level. Also, the study found that the internal security challenge posed by farmers-herders conflict discourages people from embarking on agriculture, which has led to constant hike in the prices of crop and livestock production in the South-South with 72% relationship @ $p < .001$. It concluded that transhumance has created food insecurity and humanitarian crisis in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The study thus recommended that: an effective mechanism through mapping of a holistic security architecture should be put in place, the government should adopt alternative dispute resolutions through dialoguing with the herders and the farmers in the communities, there should be a strict adherence to policy implementation.

KEYWORDS

Transhumance. Internal Security. Food Security. Challenges. South-South.

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