ADDRESSING DESERTIFICATION TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PEACE BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDSMEN IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Desertification is the reflection of the environmental problem facing Nigeria today, it is estimated that the country is losing about 350,000 hectares to desertification annually, affecting almost the northern part of the country.Series of government efforts were made to address the issue but due to the gap between policy and implementation, the situation keep advancing to southwards at the rate of 1.5 km per year.Thus, desertification is a growing ecological problem, causing economic losses, threatening national unity, as well undermining the country's national security. The purpose of this research are to: (1) examine the role of climatic variability and human factors to desertification and its (desertification) impact to national security; (2) suggest appropriate measures to address desertification for sustainable peace between farmers and herdsmen. The research is situated within the theoretical framework of Political Economy Approach, to explain economic issues as the primary cause of tension and conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen in their struggle for economic survival. The method in obtaining data for this research was mainly through secondary.Two major findings emerged from the research; (1) Desertification a source of conflict and threat to national security and (2) Strategic intervention to curb desertification for sustainable peace. The research recommends the adoption all the strategic intervention measures to counter climate change and excessive human activities toward the successful recovery of the land productivityfor sustainable peace.

***Keywords*:**Climate Change, Conflict, Desertification, Peace and Security

Introduction

United Nations identify desertification as a global threat to environmental sustainability. It is also the reflection of the environmental problems facing Nigeria today, obstructing the socio-economic development, threatening national unity, increasing organized crime, paralysing the socio-economic activities, posing a great threat to the security of human persons, and resulting to conflict that harm both state and its citizens. Thus, it undermine the country's national security. It is estimated that the Nigeria is losing about 351,000 hectares of

its landmass to desert annually and such situation are estimated to be progressing to southwards at the rate 1.5 km per year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Moreover, NBS (2010) reportsrevealed that Northern Nigeria is the most affected, with 15 states as desertificationfrontline states (See Table 1). This means that the food security is under threat, because the agriculture and meat area supply of the country(North) is under desertification attack.

Table 1 Desertification Frontline States in Nigeria

States	Geographical Region	Land Area		Population 2006		Rate of Desertification
		KM2	% of Nigeria	Number	Density (/Km2)	
Sokoto	North West	27.825	3.06	3,702,676	133	Severe
Zamfara	North West	37.931	4.17	3,278,873	86	Severe
Katsina	North West	23.561	2.59	5,801.584	246	Severe
Jigawa	North West	23.287	2.56	4.361.002	187	Severe
Kano	North West	20.280	2.23	9,401,286	464	Moderate
Kebbi	North West	36.985	4.06	3,256,541	88	Severe
Kaduna	North West	42.481	4.67	6,113,503	144	Moderate
Borno	North East	72.609	7.98	4,171,104	57	Severe
Yobe	North East	46.609	5.12	2,321,339	50	Severe
Bauchi	North East	41.119	4.52	4,653,066	113	Moderate
Gombe	North East	17.100	1.88	2,365,040	138	Moderate
Adamawa	North East	38.700	4.25	3,178,950	82	Moderate
Taraba	North East	56.282	6.19	2,294,800	41	Moderate
Niger	North Central	68.925	7.58	3,954,772	57	Moderate
Plateau	North Central	27.147	2.98	3,206,531	118	Moderate
Total		**580.841**	**63.83**	**62,061,067**	**107**	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2010; National Population Commission, 2006.* Moderate: 26 to 50% of plant community consists of climax species, or 25 to 75% of original topsoil lost, or soil salinity has reduced crop yields 10 to 50%.* Severe: 10 to 25% of plan community consists of climax species, or erosion has removed all or practically all of the topsoil, or salinity controllable by drainage and leaching has reduced crop yield by more than 50%.

In its efforts to protect the environment from further degradation Nigeria formulated and adopted series of policies and programs such as National Policy on Environment, National Agricultural Policy, National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), National Tropical Forest Action Plan, Arid Zone Afforestation Project (AZAP), River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Federal/States Environmenal Protection Agencies, Global Tree Planting Project, Tree Planing Forest Campaign Project among others and Department of Drought and Desertifcation Amelioration was created in the Federal Ministry of Environment. Even at the International level the country is a signatory to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). However, years after the adoption of National Policies Nigeria was ranked the world's highest deforested country (FOA, 2010; Olagunju, 2015) This is an indication that Nigeria's efforts in anti-desertification are inadequate and the country is losing about 351,000 hectares every year (NBS, 2010).

Today, interest in the study of desertification is witnessing tremendous increase. For instance, previous studies tend to focused on the causes, effects of drought and desert encroachment and policy responses(Olagunju, 2015; Muhammad et al, 2013; Nneji 2013; Onyeansi and Olegbeye, 2012). However, in spite of the proliferation of scholarship in the area of desertification In Nigeria, scholars are apathetic about Desertification and conflict between farmers and herdsmen. It is on this bases that this research attempt to examine the causes of desertification and the challenges it poses to national security. The research is also design to suggest appropriate measures to curb desertification with the view to bringing about peace, safety of lives and property of farmers and herdsmen.

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspective

The previous studies reviewed related to desertification were categorized into four themes: Studies related to the desertification issues around the world, but most of these studies concentrate in Europe and Asia. These studies tend to focus on nature, characteristic, and the sustainable factors responsible for drought and desertification and its impact on the global economy(Henry, 1996). Studies dealing with international desertification and drought policies that focus on anti-desertification conventions, treaties and protocols such as United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, roles of International stakeholders in anti-desertification project such as United Nations, World Bank, European Union and African Union among others (NCCD, 2011; Ogallo, 2009). And studies concerning Nigeria's policy responses and implementation issues, National Policy on Environment, National Agricultural Policy, National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), National Tropical Forest Action Plan, Arid Zone Afforestation Project (AZAP) with the view of identifying the success or otherwise (Medugu& Majid, 2007a; Medugu& Majid, 2007b). The conflict between the farmers and herdsmen is on struggle for economic survival. Therefore, this research is based situated within the Political Economy Approach, propounded by Karl Marx. The approach assumed that Economic issues are the major source of tensionand conflict in any given societies. In this context, the political economy approach is apt in this study to analyze and justify the root cause of tension and conflict between the farmers and herdsmen. The relations between the farmers and herdsmen in the production processes are linked to their struggle for economic survival, to capture and control the scarce fertile land for crop production and livestock grazing

respectively. Thus, the Political Economy Approach to land in Nigeria sparks-off the root of all conflict between farmers and herdsmen that led to the loss of lives and property, which undermine the country's national security.

Methodology

The assembly of the data for this research was mainly based on secondary source. The merit of this method according Creswell (2003) are: (1) It is a non-reactive method where information get from the document is not subject to possible distortion and interpolation, as the result of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees (2) Document is cost effective because it has already been produced. And (3) it helps the researcher to study the past. In this regard, the assembling of data was through government documents, journals, published books, seminar presentations, unpublished materials, and others were retrieved from the website. However, the method suffers the problems of being incomplete, inaccurate and non-accessibility but such problems were solved by adopting Creswell (2003) guidelines for obtaining documents in the study. These involved identifying the relevant materials, seek permission to use the identified documents and examined its merits in terms of accuracy and completeness. The research adopts contextual or document data analysis as proposed by Creswell (2003) who stated that document analysis was chiefly beneficial in such studies where history of events or experience and implementation has importance, and where relevant documents and written communication are essential to the investigation. Therefore, constant comparison in segregating and identifying the key issues in addressing the research objectives was employed on the documents obtained. Evidences from the documents were presented to support the findings and conclusion of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented to achieve the research objectives, where two major themes and sub-themes emerged from the analysis. (1) Desertification a source of conflict and threat to National Security and (2) Strategic Intervention to Curb Desertification for Sustainable Peace with 3Ps as sub-themes. (See figure 1).

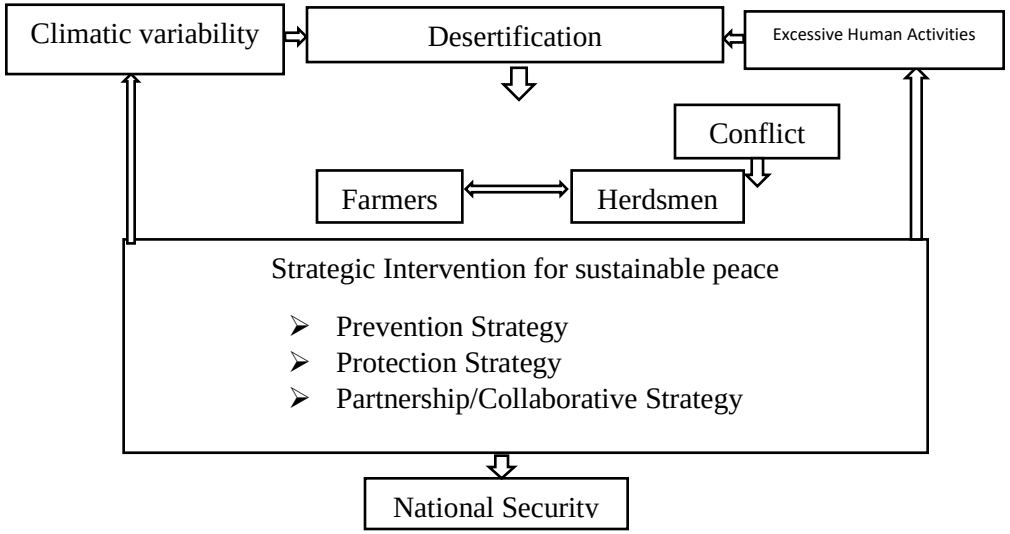


Figure 1. Diagram of the findings

The diagram shows climate variability and human activities as the factors for desertification, which in turn lead conflict between farmers and herdsmen, and the strategic intervention to address the phenomena with view to promoting sustainable peace for national security.

Desertification a source of conflict and threat to National Security

The findings revealed that climatic variability and excessive human activities are responsible for desertification (UNCCD, 2011; FOA, 2010; Lester, 2006).Climate influence is a major source of environmental degradation. The alteration of climatic condition reduce the amount of rainfall, high temperature, poor growth of natural vegetation and increase the level of greenhouse that leads to global warming which in turn increases the variability of the climate condition. Thus, the impact of wind, temperature anomalies and rainfall fluctuation are pertinent to the phenomenon of desert encroachment in Nigeria. Similarly, excessive human activities such as deforestation, over cultivation, over grazing, over cutting, bush burning and urbanization are pertinent to the situation of desertification. In the area of deforestation Nigeria is consider as the world highest and lost about 55.7 per cent of its forest, with yearly deforestation rate of 3.67 percent (FOA, 2010; Onyeansi and Olegbeye, 2012). This phenomenon is disturbing according FOA (2010) that the forest in the country will vanish if the current rate of deforestation continue. Similarly, the increase in population and to meet up with food need resulted to expansion of agricultural land, over cultivation and over grazing has led the degradation of the land particularly in the Northern Nigeria. The increase in both human and livestock population overstep the natural carrying capacity of the land, for instance the livestock population increases from 6 to 66 million and additional pressure to the grazing lands is the

influx of foreign herdsmen notably from Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic (Shiekh and Soomro, 2013; UNCCD; 2011). Moreover, the socio-economic status of Nigerians, cannot be ignore in the land degradation because over 70 per cent of the country population relied on fuel wood. Thus, the need for fuel wood accelerate desertification. For instance "75,000 tonnes of fuel wood were brought into Kano within the radius of 20 km and in Katsina over 90 per cent of its energy from fuel wood" (Muhammad et al.., 2013) The significant attached to the security was even capture in section 14 (2b) of the constitution that states "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" (Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The law has placed the responsibilities of safeguarding Nigerians' lives, property and welfare against internal and external threat and other forms of danger on government. Looking at security from the economic well-being of a country and her citizens, Robert MCNamara said "Security is development and development is security" (Cited in Dasuki, 2015). This means desertification is a security threat to Nigerian economy and her citizens, because the impact of desertification to Nigerians are so intense that it causes socio-economic hardship, food insecurity, reduce the economy growth, increases poverty, water scarcity and raise the level of unemployment. These are the components that ignite conflict and threatening the National Security. The country has witnessed series of occurrence and reoccurrences of conflict resulting from the consequences of desertification between farmers and herdsmen in Kaduna, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, among others where lives and property were destroyed. The influx and activities of some foreign herdsmen added to the intensity of the security challenges in Nigeria.

Strategic Intervention to Curb Desertification for Sustainable Peace

Based on the findings, desertification is majorly cause by climate change and human factors, it is the source of the persistent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. To combat such phenomenon, the need for strategic intervention measures are significant for sustainable peace between the conflicting parties. Such measures involved Prevention, Protection and Partnership(3Ps) and the measures must targeted 3Rs (Redress, Recovery and Reintegration). (a) Redress all issues that promote desertification and cause conflict (b) Recover land fertility and productivity and (c) Reintegrate the conflicting parties to appreciate the role of each

in the production process and work in partnership for sustainable peace.

Prevention Strategic Intervention involved all activities geared toward ensuring that all excessive human activities resulting to desertification are discouraged in the country (over cultivation, over grazing, fuel wood, and bush burning among others). This preventive measures involve extensive and sufficient enlightenment and sensitization of all stakeholders, to create awareness on the effects of desertification to the livelihood of human persons. The implementation framework for effective prevention are through mass media, town hall meetings, airing of jungles and placing bill boards in strategic places, grass-root awareness campaign and national sensitization walk to mark anti-desertification day. The participants in such national walk should involve Farmers associations, Miyetti Allah, Law enforcement agencies, students' union, development partners, civil societies and general public. Protection Strategic Intervention involved all critical activities to counter climate change and excessive human activities toward the successful recovery of the land productivity, through shifting from fossil fuel to less carbon intensive fuel, political will to increase the use of renewable energy (Solar, Biomass and Wind) extensive tree planting, soil conservation, afforestation and reforestation, control the influx of neighbouring herdsmen, poverty reduction and provision of alternative means of livelihood in the prone area, designing comprehensive and effective anti-desertification programs and promoting stakeholders participation in the implementation process. Partnership/Collaborative Strategic Intervention involved all activities geared toward cooperation and adoption of collaborative strategy among all relevant stakeholders, (countries, industries, development partners, civil societies, agencies, farmers and herdsmen) because fight against desertification required such. Adequate funds and technical supports need to be committed to achieve anti-desertification goals, therefore, Partnership is also central in the task of resource mobilisation. In promoting collaboration a National, States and Local Government Consultative Forum should be established and the forum should include all relevant stakeholders, farmers and herdsmen inclusive. The forum should meet annually or quarterly to share experience, initiate a plan of actions, articulate and design strategies to prevent the further desertification.

Conclusion

Climate change and excessive human activities are the driving factors for desertification The findings of this research has significant implication to the government and policymakers and other stakeholders because the research brought to their notice the direct relations between climate influence and human activities to desertification and the persistent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. The research has contributed in advancing the discussion of Political Economy Approach. Thus, the findings supported the theoretical expectations of the approach, that economic issues are the root of tension and conflict in any social formation. Likewise the findings revealed that scarce of productive land for cultivation and grazing as economic issue is the source of conflict between farmers and herdsmen respectively. The research recommends the adoption of all the strategic intervention measures to curb desertification for sustainable peace. It also recommends that when reviewing the policy to involve all stakeholders, governments, industries, farmers and herdsmen associations in the policy process, so that they would support the policy they helped in formulating.

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