ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES CLIMATE CHANGE: AN EXPOSITION OF HERDSMEN TERRORISM IN TIVLAND OF BENUE STATE

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to examine the scramble for environmental resources as a precipitating factor in the rise in herdsmen activities in Nigeria. The paper is informed by the fact that since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been an astronomic increase in the number of herdsmenactivitiesthat have resultantly led to the destruction of lives and properties. Scholars have identified a lot of factors that must inform the wanton destruction of villages and communities by maundering herdsmen in Nigeria. Although, environment factors are interrogated as exacerbating agents, literature on the nexus between the scramble for environmental resources, climate change and the seasonal changes that have characterized the activities of herdsmen have remained feeble. Thus, the work is aimed at contributing to the existing literature on the impact of environmental factors on conflicts in Tivland of central Nigeria. Using both qualitative and quantitative sources of historical data, the paper establishes that the struggle for environment resources coupled with climate change have informed the unwarranted killing, maiming and ransacking of Tiv communities by herdsmen. This, the paper argues, is eminent in the changes in the occurrence of these conflicts. Before now, clashes between herders and farmers was witnessed between the periods of December to March, owing largely to changes in environments in the Sahel region. However, with the continuous environmental changes that are evident with desert encroachment and silting of the lake chad basin, the demography of the conflicts has changed to an all year around conflict. To mitigate these conflicts, the paper advocates for environmental campaigns on the impact of environmental factors on Herders-Farmers conflicts and calls on religious leaders to dissuade the minds of their adherents about the religious motives of the conflicts. This will ultimately erase the fear of cultural imperialism that have constituted as a knock in the wheel of efforts in addressing the herdsmen malady.

Introduction

Extant literature is replete of how the scramble and control of environmental resources can fuel crisis amongst groups.[23] Similarly, literature has shown the role these resources have played in the socio-economic developments of states. They determine the economic lifestyle of people, groups and communities. In Nigeria, environment resources are abounded—they range from Rivers, mineral deposits, uranium, coal, tin, gold, limestones and iron. Mineral deposit like crude oil, for instance, have remained Nigeria's major source of income. Because of the centrality of these resources to the socio-economic and political development of states, the struggle for their control among groups and sometimes the state has largely remained a perennial problem. Besides, they are now threatened by changes in the atmospheric condition like climate change. Climate change, for example, have affected environmental resources as evidenced with the shrinking of the lake chad basin from 45,000km^2 to 3000km^2 within the last three decades.[24]Again, changes in the atmospheric condition has informed the south ward migration of groups like herdsmen from the Sahel region to the transitional region or Middle belt region of Nigeria. With the apparentimpact of climate change on environmental resources, the aftermath has resulted to conflicts—struggle over the control of these resources.

As climate change have had implications on environmental resources in Nigeria, scholars like Ovuyovwiroye[25],Faniran[26]have reconstructed the impact of climate change on Nigeria's socio-economic and political trajectory. In fact, scholars likeItuma&Chilaka[27]demonstrates how the scramble for natural resourcesas a result of climate change can incubate and harsh conflicts among groups. In North central Nigeria and especially in Tivland, the close of the 20th century witnessed conflicts between herdsmen and farmers. Scholars like Azaigba[28] have examined the nature and character of these conflicts and advance a plethora of reasons that must have occasion these conflicts. While the paper acknowledges earlier works on the how the control of the abundant environmental resources fuel conflicts in Nigeria, the paper equally contributed towards this regard. But specifically, the paper argues and established that seasonal changes in the occurrence of Herders-farmers conflicts in Tivland of Nigeria is because of environmental factors. This factors have informed the all year migration of herdsmen to areas in Tivland that will support their pastoral occupation.

Tivland in Geographical Perspective

Tivland is located in Benue state of Nigeria. Tivland covers fourteen local governments in the state viz: Makurdi, Guma, Buruku, Gboko, Gwer, Gwer-East, Tarka, Logo, Kastina-ala, Ukum, Kwande, Ushongo, Konshisha and Vandeikya. The population of the Tiv is pegged at over two million and they are the most populous ethnic group in Benue state.[29] Geographically, Tivland lies on both sides of the River Benue and occupies an area of

[23] S. Tonah, "Managing Farmer-Herder Conflict in Ghana's Volta Basin" *Ibadan Journal of Social Science*. Vol. 4, No. 34, 2006, 33-34. Also, B. Roger, "The Expansion and Adaption of Fulbe Pastoralism to Sub Humid and Humid Conditions in Nigeria" *Cashiers D'etudes Africaines*. Vol. 34, No. 135, 1994, 197-205.

[24] C. Udeh, "How Climate Change is Provoking Clashes Between Herdsmen and Farmers in Nigeria" *Ecologist: The Journal for the Post-Industrial Age*.www.theecologist.org/2018/feb/22/how-climate-change/provoking-clashes-between-herdsmen-farmers-in-nigeria//. Accessed 08/09/2021.

[25]O. A. Ovuyovwiroye, "Overview of Climate Change Impacts in Nigeria"www.tandfonline.com>abs. Accessed 08/09/2020.

[26]A. Faniran, "Land, Land Degradation an Global Environmental Change: What Every Citizen Must Know" in A. Osuntokun, (ed), *Dimensions of Environmental Problems in Nigeria*. (Ibadan: Davidson Press, 1997), 50.

[27]S. O. Ituma and F. Chilaka, "Climate Change and Conflicts in Nigeria: A Theoretical Examination of the Worsening Incidences of Conflict Between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers in Nigeria" in *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*. Vol. 2, No. 1, 2012, 110-124.

[28]K. T. Azaigba, "Herders and Farmers Conflict in Central Nigeria: A Review of Contending Antidotes," in *Kaduna Journal of Humanities*. No. 3, 2017, 191.

[29]"Nigeria Census-Nigeria Data Portal," accessed 17 July 2017, https://www.nigerias.opendataforafrica.org>statepopulation.

above 30,000 square kilometres and stretches from about 6^0 30' to $8^0$10'north latitudeand 8^0 to 10^0east longitude. Most ofTivland is 2440 meters above sea level. Tivland is a transitional zone and share common borderswith Jukun and Chamba of Taraba state in the East. To the west are the Idoma and Igala of Benue and Kogi states respectively. To the north, the Tiv share borders with the Alago and Koro of Nasarawa state. To the south the Tivshares borders with the Bekkawra, Abi ethnic groups categorized by Wegh as Udam in Cross River State.[30]The land lies within the Guinea Savannah Region and it is characterized with alluvial plains, fresh water and vegetation the supports crop and animal farming.[31]The abundance of agricultural resources in Tivland has earned Benue State the appellation of "The Food Basket of the Nation". Linguistically, Tiv belongs to the Niger-Benue Congo family. Several traditions of origins suffice Tiv migration and existence. However, their Bantu origins is not disputed by scholars.

Theoretical Underpinning

Several theoretical postulations such as the frustration-Aggression,[32] and plural,[33] theories have been used to explain the lethality that has characterized herdsmen/farmers relations in Tivland and Nigeria.However, this chapter shall examine and adopt the social conflict theory and the eco violence theory. The anchorage of these two theories in informed by their analytical similarities in explaining the herdsmen/farmers conflicts. The social conflict theorysees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources and power which are not evenly endowed by nature[34] (environment). Proponents of the theory view society as a gathering of people of diverse needs and interests with limited resources to meet their needs. This creates inequality that generates social conflict and social change.[35] Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory.[36] Social conflict theory basically looks at struggles for power and control in the society as a major causal factor of conflict. Conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. The basic tenet of the theory is that two opposing groups in the society always struggle for limited or scare resources that nature (environment) has bestowed on mankind.

Extrapolating from the above, struggle over environmental resources which are scare and are now threatened by changes in the atmospheric condition have often resulted to conflicts among groups. This glaring reality have informed Thomas Homer-Dixon argument about the relationship between environmentalresources, migration and conflicts as evidenced in his Eco Violence theory. Thus, according to him:

> *Decreases in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth, and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce*

[30] S. F. Wegh, Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity. (Enugu: SAAP Press Limited, 2003), 32.

[31]Benue in Historical Perspective. (Makurdi: A Publication of the Ministry of Information and Culture, 2003), 2.

[32]P. N. Oli, C. Ibekwe, and N. I. Uche, "Prevalence of Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria" in International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities. No. 1, 2018, 33-34.

[33] M. B. Ajibefun, "Social and Economic Effects of the Menace of Fulani Herdsmen Crisis in Nigeria," in Journal of Educational and Social Research.Issue 8, No. 2, 2018, 133-134.

[34]U.Egbuta, "Understanding the Herder-Farmer Conflict in Nigeria," accessed 28 December 2018, https://www.accord.org.za.

[35]U. Egbuta, "Herder-Farmer Conflict."

[36]U. Egbuta, "Herder-Farmer Conflict."

> *economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts.*[37]

Arising from the above, theherder/farmer conflictscan be explained within the context of changes in atmospheric condition in the world and Nigeria has since necessitated the mass migration of nomads into the Benue valley and Tivland in search for greener pasture that will support their occupation.

The migration of the nomads into Benue Valley and Tivlandis informedby the fact that for the cattle occupation to be practiced and sustained amidst environmental challenges like drought in the Sahel region is by securing fertile regions within the Benue Valley, Tivland and other places in Southern Nigeria. Therefore, in the light of the Social Conflict theory and Eco-Violence theory, the on-going conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria and Tivlandcan be understood within the context of struggle for the control of scare resources that are now threatened by environmental challenges like climate change.In such scenarios, as argue by Ekah and Okpalaeke, each group struggles to attain or acquire more resources and because they are scare, struggle ensues between them.[38] In Tivland which is the study area, the close of the 20th century and the 21stcentury opened with struggles between herdsmen and farmers over the rich and alluvial plains of Tivland of Benue State.Ochefu rightly observes that, the alluvial plains of the Benue valley and the riverhave subjected the area and her inhabitants to numerous attacks from herdsmen.[39]Again, in areas such as Guma, Gwer-west, Kwande, Buruku, Logo, Makurdi (Adaka) that have suffered from incessant attacks from herdsmen, there is the prevalence of fresh water and green pasture.[40] It is in this connection that the paperadopted the Social conflict and Eco violence theoretical assumptions in explaining the cruelty that exist in herdsmen/farmers relations in Tivland of Benue State.

Historicity of Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts in Tivland

The history of herdsmen/farmers conflicts is as old as man. In fact, Kertyo argues that the history of the conflict can be traced to the Bible.[41]The

[37] T. F. Homer-Dixon and J. Blitt (eds),Eco violence: Link Among Environment, Population and Security. (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 55.

[38] J. A. Ekah and P. C. Okpalaeke, "Identifying Conflict Early Warning Signs (CEWS) in Farmer-Herders Conflicts in Nigeria: Bekwarra Local Government Area in Perspectives, 2000-2015" *Kaduna Journal of Humanities.*www.researchgate.com. Accessed 10/11/2019.

[39]Y. A. Ochefu, "Farmers and Herders: Political Economic Implications of the Fulani Herdsmen/Farmer Conflicts in the Benue Valley," (Paper Presented at a two-day Symposium Organized by the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Collaboration with YavniellaKonzult Titled "Displaced, Traumatized and Neglected: A Serious Humanitarian Crisis in Benue State at J. S. Tarka Foundation, Makurdi From Monday 14th to Tuesday 15th January 2019, 11.

[40] I.Ayu and M. Dura, "Grazing Reserves or Ranches: Where Lies the Panacea to Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts?" A Memo Submitted to the Benue State Committee on Agriculture, Security, Human Rights and Legal Reforms. 2014, 4.

[41] P. M. Kertyo, "From Mutuality to Hostility: A Historical Analysis of the Changing Patterns of Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria" A Paper Presented at the 2019 Humboldt Kolleg Conference with the theme: Nigeria's Resource Wars from 6th to 10th May 2019. 1.

Bible recorded in clear terms the differences in Cain (farmer) and Abel (herder) relations that ultimately resulted to the killing of Abel by Cain.[42] Again, the Bible have recorded the acrimonious relations that characterized Abraham's and Lot's herders over access to land resources (environment) and grazing reverses.[43] Apart from the Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot episodes, there exist some skirmishes in herders and farmers relations during the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Greek Civilizations.[44] In Sub-Saharan Africa, conflicts between herders and farmers was and have become a common feature of economic activities[45] as evidenced in countries like Mali, Senegal, Ghana etc. In Nigeria, conflicts between the two groups also existed before Nigeria's autonomous existence in 1960[46] Interestingly, these conflicts were feeblish, seasonal and to a larger extend, never threatened the harmonious existence of these groups as A. Utsaha argues for the case of Northern Nigeria:

> *In the early 1950s, conflicts between herders and farmers existed in areas like Doma, Awe, Guma, Keana, Lafia, Wukari. These conflicts were not frequent. Whenever conflicts occurred, they were settled amicably without the use of guns. Herders lived and interacted freely with the local communities (farmers) that accommodated them.*[47]

Arising from the above quotation, its crystal clear that before the 21st century, Herdsmen-Farmers were feeble. The 1950s witnessed signs of early conflicts between herdsmen and Tiv farmers as evidenced in Guma. The conflicts never experienced the gruesome murder of people. In fact, they usually occur during dry seasons.

The metamorphization of these clashes to armed conflicts is a development that can be traced to the 1980s. A focus group discussion with elders of Torkula village reveals that:

> *During the late 1980s, conflicts between the Nzorov people and the (TseDamkor), a name use to describe the people of the area that are believed to be the direct descendants of Usman Dan Fodio began to manifest. At the earliest stage, the conflicts were addressed as preparators of the conflicts on both sides were punished using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms….later, specifically towards the close of 1990, the conflicts assumed catastrophic dimension that resulted to the death of (Tyoor) kindred head of*

[42] In the Biblical Book of Genesis, Cain and Abel are the first two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain, the first born, was a farmer, and his brother Abel was a Shepherd. The brothers made sacrifices to God, each of his own produce, but God favoured Abel's sacrifice instead of Cain. (Genesis 4). Though, many will interpret the account to mean spiritual relationship with God, but the account thus explained the animosity that exist between a farmer and a herder. For details, Consult the *Holy Bible King James Version*. (India: Franchrix Publishers, 2010), 3-4.

[43] The Biblical Book of Genesis: 13 have reported the quarrels between Abraham's and Lot's herders. For details, consult the *Holy Bible King James Version.* 10-11.

[44] B. Chatwin, "Nomad Invasion" in B. Chatwin, (ed), *What Am I Doing.*(London: Picador, 1989), 216.

[45] A. Ofuoku and B. I. Isife, "Causes, Effects and Resolutions of Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herder Conflict in Delta State, Nigeria" in *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*.No. 2, 2018, 47-54.

[46] "Fulani Grazing and Settlement," 20 March 1958, No. VN.72/3/239.

[47] Interview with AwambeUtsaha, born 1938, Ex-Service Man, Daudu, Guma, 11 September 2018.

NzorovZakiIordyeAkaahena, his son and 14 others by armed Fulani herdsmen.[48]

The 1980s actually saw the intensification of these conflicts. They began in Tivland in 1986 as Tiv versus Alago crisis in Awe, when Doma local government and Nasarawa state were not created. It resurfaced in 1989 and 1990 spreading towards 1991 as Doma/Awe and Tiv crisis.[49]

From the above accounts, armed conflicts between the two groups stated in the 1980s. This is particularly true of developments like the "*IjovIpupuu*" episode in which out of anger, arising from destruction of farms by Fulani cattle, the Iharav people of Sengev district went for a reprisal attack that resulted to the killing of 80 cows.[50] From the late 1980s, the conflicts were fierce, they were relaxed during the 1990s only to resurface at the beginning of the 21st century. In fact, as argue by Agba and Mgbanyi,[51] beginning from the second decade of the 21st century, central Nigeria and Tivland was characterized by attacks from herdsmen who ransacked Tiv and other indigenous farming population in the area. The periods between 2012 to 2013 witnessed armed attacks by herdsmen on farming communities like, Anguhar, Abaim, Gjir, Tse-Ugbulugh, Tseikeah, Adeke, Adaka, TseBume in Tivland. Similarly, the same periods evidenced herdsmen terrorism in villages like Ukpaim, Umenger, Agasha, Udei, Kaseyo, Yogbo, Turan in Tivland. The attacks continued at reached its peak in January 2018.

Scramble for Environmental Resources and the Seasonality of Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts

The herdsmen/farmers conflict is as old as man. P. Oli,[52] K. Azaigba,[53] R. Blech,[54] Y. Ochefu,[55] F. Asogwa[56] H. Degri[57] have interrogated herdsmen terrorism and identified a number of factors which are geopolitical, economic and

[48]Focus Group Discussion with Elders of Torkula Village, Daudu, Guma, 11 September 2018.

[49] Interview with Chief Daniel AyuaAbomtse, born 1962, Traditional Ruler, Naka, Gwer-West, 16 September 2018

[50] Interview with KwaghgbaIorhom, born 1979, Farmer, Naka, Gwer-West, 16 September 2018.

[51] T. P. Agba and D. Mgbanyi, "Perspectives on Terrorism in the North Central Nigeria Area Since 2001" A Paper Presented at the National Conference on Terrorism, Insurgency and Economic Development in Nigeria, organized by Centre for Peace and Development Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi from 29th to 30th November 2016. 7-8.

[52] Perpetua Nneka Oli, Christopher Ibekwe, and Nwankwo I. Uche, "Prevalence of Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria" *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2018): 33-34.

[53] Azaigba, "Herders and Farmers Conflict in Central Nigeria," 191-199.

[54] Roger Blench, "The Expansion and Adaption of Fulbe Pastoralism to Sub humid and Humid Conditions in Nigeria," *Cahiers D'etudes Africaines* 34, no. 135 (1994): 197.

[55] Yakubu A. Ochefu, "Farmers and Herders: Political Economic Implications of the Fulani Herdsmen/Farmer Conflicts in the Benue Valley" (paper presented at a two-day symposium on "Displaced, Traumatized and Neglected: A Serious Humanitarian Crisis in Benue State" organized by the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in collaboration with Yavniella Konzult at J. S. Tarka Foundation, Makurdi, 14-15 January 2019), 3.

[56] Felix C. Asogwa and Nneka Ifeoma Okafor, "Herders-Farmers Conflict and National Security in Nigeria," *South East Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 2 (2016): 30-32.

[57] Ibrahim Hamman Degri, "Managing Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria," in *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*, ed. Shuaibu Ibrahim et al. (London: Bahiti & Dalila Publishers, 2017), 540-557.

climatic as precipitating factors for herdsmen terrorism in Nigeria and Tivland. Blech, for instance, argues and demonstrated how the search for natural resources occasioned herdsmen-farmers conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. Relatedly, Oli also argues how the conflicts between Herders and farmers are heightened as result of environmental factors such as desert encroachment.

In fact, struggle for environmental or natural resources or changes in the atmospheric condition have always informed these conflicts. For instance, as argue by Gordon Childe in Michael Smith, cultural change can be driven by environmental change.[58] It therefore means, environment changes can inform the migration of people to other places that will support their occupation. Again, the biblical account of the discrepanciesthat existed between Abraham'sand Lot's herders were as result of the scramble for natural resources—they all desired to have access to fertile lands. In North central Nigeria and Tivland, the struggle for access to land have always precipitate conflicts. Although, the fatality was minimal but began to increase at the beginning of the 21st century as K. Azaigba observes:

> *Before the year 2000, conflicts between herders and farmers over land witnessed few fatalities in terms of human lives due to the use of low-profile weapons. Conflicts were also settled using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Reasonable number of Fulani herdsmen were permitted to settle in host communities across the central region.*[59]

The fact that herdsmen were allowed to settle in host communities cannot be disputed. However, the narrative significantly changed as herdsmen did not only want to settle but have control over land in the study area. Thus, the attempts by herdsmen to have control of the Benue Valley and Tivland has exacerbated the conflicts as N. Gbashinbo illuminates:

> *The geographical location of the Benue State has long attracted herders to the region. The region is characterized with fertile land, alluvial plains, swamps, streams, River Benue with her tributaries of Kastina-ala and Buruku…it is the geographical features of the area in terms of natural resources that have subjected it to incessant attacks by herders who want to conquer and subdue it.*[60]

The struggle for the control of geographical features of the state is induced by environmental exigencies like climate change and the desertification of the Sahel region. Stressing the overwhelming importance of this factor, especially the desertification of the Sahel region. Desertification of northern Nigeria has affected the raring of animals like cows. The shrinking of the Lake Chad has informed the south wards migration of herders to other parts of Nigeria as L. Mohammad points:

> *Lake Chad that used to provide water and other resources to more than 30 million people in four countries, including Nigeria, in the early 1960s has shrunk by about 90 percent, from twenty-five thousand square kilometers to two thousand five hundred square kilometers, thus forcing those affected to move south in search of resources. These and other reasons, like*

[58] M. E. Smith, "V. Gordon Childe and the Urban Revolution: A Historical Perspective on a Revolution in Urban Studies" in The Town Planning Review. Vol. 80, No. 1, 2009, 3-29.

[59] K. T. Azaigba, "Herders and Farmers Conflict in Central Nigeria: A Review of Contending Antidotes"191.

[60] Interview with Nensha Gbashinbo, born 1978, Civil Servant, Agasha, Guma, 28 September 2018.

> *desertification, have altered the resource landscape, heightened competition for dwindling resources and raised the possibility of clashes between farmers and herders.*[61]

An instructive development that have characterized the south wards' migratory movement of herders from the Lake Chad region to other parts of the country especially in Tivland is the battle for control of farmlands and other natural resources that are inherent in the area. Tivland has enormous natural resources that are now scrambled by herders.

The changing climatic condition, is no doubt taking a toll on the survival of herdsmen and farmers business. The desert encroachment from the Sahara towards the Sahel region and other associated climatic conditions have continued to affect the livelihood of herdsmen as they push further south in search of available space, pitching them against farmers communities in Tivland. As earlier noted, Tivland is characterised by good vegetation, stable water and flood plains. The availability of greener pasture and water in communities in Makurdi, Guma, Gwer and Gwer-West, Logo, Kwande, Buruku Local Government Areas have long attracted herdsmen.[62] For instance, the greener pasture and water plains in Villages like Uvir, Shaghav, Nyiev, Turan, Ayilamo, Mbatie and Mbalagh have attracted Fulani herdsmen who have overtime ransacked and occupied such villages for purposes of cattle grazing.[63] It was the presence of greener grass around the River Buruku areathat occasioned herdsmen attacks in Mbaapen council ward of Buruku local government in 2015.[64]Again, the presence of the River Benue—which is the state's major geographical featurewith its tributaries of Buruku and Kastina-ala and several major streams such as Angbo, Usase, Aneli and Guma have informed some attacks by herdsmen especially in communities that are have these streams domiciled. The attack in Mbanyagbev council ward of Tarka local government was occasioned because of the grazing of farm crops around the Angbo stream by cattle.[65]

Arising from the above, the struggle for these areas have impacted on the seasonality of the conflicts. Before, now, herdsmen annually move from north to south with their cattle in search of grazing field. The movement was seasonal—from October to February. The seasonality of the movement was anchored on a combination of factors that were anchored on drought and the early cessation of rainfall in the Sahel region. Commenting on their movement to Tivland Amin Musa argues:

> *As a growing up child, my father together with two of us and our cows move to Tivland during the months of October and November. Each time we arrive Tivland, we were received and land was allotted to us. The reason for the movement was because of the unavailability of greener grass for our cow to graze because of loko chi senyi (Harmattan period). Clashes between us and Tiv farmers were only noticed*

[61]"Farmers/Herders Clashes Triggered by Environment, Not Ethnic/Religious Issues—Lai Mohammed," *Vanguard*, 10 March 2018, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/953761/

[62] "Report submitted by Chief Daniel AyuaAbomtse, Ter Tyoshin II to the Presidential Committee on Herdsmen/Farmers Crisis in Nigeria on a Visit to Benue State" February 2018, 6-13.

[63] Interview with Chief Daniel AyuaAbomtse, born 1962, Traditional Ruler, Naka, Gwer-West, 16 September 2018.

[64]Interview with Buter Igbatov, born 1967, Farmer, Mbajor, Buruku, 15 March 2019.

[65]Interview with Dominic AduguDamkor, born 1968, Farmer, Wannune, Tarka, 17 February 2019

during this period but they were settled peacefully.[66]

From the above, herders were seen in Tivland in villages in Guma, Gwer-west, Makurdi during these periods. The month of October-December mark Southwards movement of herds down to Tivland as a result of scarcity of water and greener pastures in Northern States. This southwards movement by Fulani herdsmen was intensified from January to February with longer grazing hours and frequent visits to water resources.[67] While the month of March to April marks the peak of southwards movement into villages in Tivland.These months were characterised by influx of herdsmen in Tiv farming communities. May to June which is characterized by rainfall witnessed the mass exodus of Fulani herds from Tiv. However, with climate change and its resultant effect on the environment, the movement pattern has been markedly altered—their migration is not seasonal as it was before and are now domiciled in Tivland. The alteration in the migratory pattern of herdsmen and the desire to have direct control over environmental resources in Tivland have informed the "all-round" nature of conflicts among these two groups. This has led to the wanton destruction of goods and properties worth billions of naira. Similarly, the change in the seasonality of the conflict has impacted negatively on inter-group relations between the Tiv and Fulani. The presence of Fulani in Tivland is greeted with suspicion and fear.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, the struggle for the control of environmental resources have occasion conflicts among groups and states. For instance, the biblical accounts of the discrepancies that existed between Abraham's and Lot's herders suffice the importance of fertile lands in cattle occupation and how the desire to have direct control to such land among people, groups or communities can exacerbate conflicts. In Tivland, these conflicts existed. Although, during the 1950s and even up to the early 1980s, they were seasonal, feeble and never witnessed the wanton destruction of life and property. In most cases, they were settled amicably. Reasons for the seasonal and feeble nature ofconflicts between herders and farmers in Tivlandare anchored on the mass exodus of herders in Tivland following the returns of rains in the Sahel region. However, with changes in the atmospheric conditions and its resultant effect on the environment, conflicts over the control of environmental resources between herdsmen and farmers have led to conflicts in Tivland. Although, the conflicts were seasonal—between the months of October to February, the changes have even altered seasonality of the conflicts and the migratory patterns of herdsmen into Tivland. To mitigate these conflicts, the paper advocates the ranching system of animal husbandry and calls on religious leaders to dissuade the minds of their adherents about the religious motives of the conflicts. This will ultimately erase the fear of cultural imperialism that have constituted as a knock in the wheel of efforts in addressing the herdsmen malady.

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[66]Interview with Amin Musa, born 1978, Herder, Ugba, Logo, 15 June 2019.

[67] Chief Anshongu Mathias, Interview cited.

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