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Exploring the effectiveness of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in managing farmers-herders' conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The persistent farmers-herders' conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria presents a complex challenge to manage. The conflict primarily arises from competition over scarce resources, which is further intensified by ethnic, religious, and political factors. The conflict has caused widespread devastation, claiming lives, destroying property, and displacing thousands from their homes and livelihoods, thereby exacerbating poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. Military interventions, predominantly kinetic in nature, have largely focused on the use of force resulting in short-term solutions and often worsening tensions. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive framework that integrates both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to address the multifaceted nature of farmers-herders conflict. The methodology draws on relevant literature, government websites, newspapers, published as well as conflict theory to examine impact of the conflict and the use of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in managing the conflict. This article argues for the integration of non-kinetic methods with kinetic approaches to effectively manage the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State. Non-kinetic approaches such as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, community engagement and cooperative initiatives are viable in addressing the underlying grievances and promoting sustainable peace. The article concludes that non-kinetic approaches are more effective in managing the conflict than kinetic approaches. Consequently, it is recommended that government should prioritise dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation in order to address the root causes of the farmers-herders conflict and ensure sustainable peace.

Keywords: Community engagement, conflict, dialogue, force, scarce resources.

Introduction

The conflict between farmers and herders has become a major threat to national security, causing widespread loss of life, destruction of property, and displacing thousands from their homes and livelihoods. This situation has worsened poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity in the affected communities. Mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disillusionment, apathy and frustration marked by anxiety and severe hardship are pervasive (Onuh, 2023). Obikaeze, Oduntan, Fajobi, Kayode, and Eteng (2023) also note that the conflict has brought about economic difficulties, with the destruction of farmland and livestock severely impacting the livelihoods of both farmers and herdsmen. Education has been disrupted as schools in conflict areas are often forced to close, health sector has also suffered, with healthcare facilities destroyed, limited access to clean water has led to widespread diseases in overcrowded camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). As a result, social tensions have escalated, with ethnic and religious divisions deepening, leading to distrust and hostility between the two communities.

According to Ette and Ihehiulo (2022), this conflict is primarily driven by environmental degradation, including shrinking water resources and the spread of desert-like conditions, which have reduced both farmland and grazing areas due to climate change. Similarly, Ogunbode, Ayodele, Oyebamiji, & Faboro (2023) argue that the causes of the conflict are complex, involving rapid population growth, both of people and livestock, as well as factors like the Boko Haram insurgency and criminal activities such as cattle rustling, which further escalate tensions.

The conflict between farmers and herders in Adamawa State has significantly affected almost the 21 local government areas, resulting in violent clashes and widespread devastation. According to Salihu (2019), the conflict has claimed 6,00 lives, caused forced displacement, and destroyed both agricultural land and livestock. Onuh (2023) adds that an estimated 5,000 cattle have been killed, and 20,000 rustled in various local government areas, further fuelling the violence. In a similar vein, Amnesty International reported that on 14 July 2018, Bidda village in Mayo-Belwa Local Government Area was attacked, resulting in the deaths of 27 people. Ette & Ihehiulo (2022) also documented the deaths of 30 individuals during an overnight conflict between farmers and herders in Safere and Kodomti villages in Numan Local Government Area. Furthermore, The Nation newspaper reported that on 18 February 2018, an attack in Song LGA claimed 10 lives, with entire villages burnt down. As a consequence of these ongoing conflicts, Joseph (2022) found that between 2016 and 2021, at least 305 people were killed across the 21 local government areas of Adamawa State.

Obikaeze, Oduntan, Fajobi, Kayode, & Eteng (2023) note that the rising death toll has contributed to an increase in out of school children, as those responsible for paying school fees are being killed as well as displaced people from their means of livelihood, leaving many unable to carry on with their usual activities due to the constant fear of being attacked has led to a growing number of destitute individuals and a higher unemployment rate. As a result, this situation has caused widespread hardship, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress, with serious health implications. Idris and Najmudeen (2020) highlight that the conflict has not only caused severe damage to the state but has also led to the rise of ethnically and religiously based militia groups, further intensifying inter-ethnic tensions and break social trust whereby many farming communities and herdsmen view the conflict through a religious and ethnic lens, resulting in the destruction of places of worship. Consequently, northern Christian minorities

and some politicians have characterised the conflict as a deliberate effort by Northern Muslim leaders to impose Islamic Sharia or as part of a jihad movement targeting predominantly Christian communities (Idris & Najmudeen, 2020). As a result of the impact of the herders-farmers conflict, see the table below showing some villages attacked and people killed in some Local Government Areas of Adamawa State.

Table 1: Some villages attacked and People killed in LGAs of Adamawa State

SN	LGAs	Villages Attacked	Frequency	Percentage
1	Demsa	Bille	22	3.5
		Umbula	43	6.9
		Bolon	80	12.8
		Gada	91	14.6
		Dong	63	10.1
2	Mayo-Blewa	Bidda	27	4.3
		Ganle	42	6.7
		Ndinkong	32	5.3
3	Numan	Kadomti	30	4.8
		Lawaro	60	9.3
		Safere	89	14.2
4	Song	-	10	1.6
5	Girei	Labondo	34	5.4
6	**Total**			**100**

Source: *Compiled from various Newspaper by Author and Amnesty International (2018), harvest of death, three years of bloody clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria.*

Despite the devastating effects of the conflict, as shown in the table above, Nwakanma, & Boroh (2019) revealed that it has had a profound impact on the economic, social, and psychological wellbeing of the people, as explained below:

Economic Impact

The destructive activities of herdsmen in Nigeria's forests and farmlands include killing or injuring innocent farmers, raping farmers' wives and daughters, and kidnapping for ransom. As these attacks continue unchecked, farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands out of fear of becoming victims. The destruction of crops by cattle has also led to significant losses. In the northeast region, particularly in Adamawa State, over forty million Naira worth of crops is lost annually due to cattle invasions, leaving many farmers worse off.

Social Impact

The conflict has displaced thousands from their homes, creating a humanitarian crisis and tearing apart the social fabric that once connected communities. This erosion of relationships has worsened poverty and food insecurity, while women and children have become increasingly vulnerable to sexual violence.

Psychological Impact

The violence, displacement, and loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihoods have resulted in widespread mental health challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression.

As a result of this conflict, Yasemi and Jolicoeur (2021) explain that while conflict may be inevitable, it should be managed by reducing its negative impacts and fostering positive outcomes that can be achieved through cooperation between all parties, either the use of force when necessary, and compromises from everyone involved to achieve peace. Given this assertion Vahyala (2021), state that kinetic approach is are used to manage conflict and this approach refers to the proactive and aggressive use of force, targeting not only the conflict parties but sometimes innocent community members. To him, kinetic approach often involves neutralising, capturing, or eliminating individuals, which can result in significant collateral damage. In contrast, Kofman, Fink, & Edmonds (2020) argue that non-kinetic approach is also use to manage conflict and it offers a less aggressive way of managing conflicts which involves a more measured and patient application of power, aiming to weaken the positions of conflict parties through cooperation and collaboration

with partners, rather than through force action but strategy that focuses more on diplomatic and economic tools to achieve a lasting resolution. Thompson & Adams (2021), Added that Kinetic methods involve the use of force, while non-kinetic approaches focus on peaceful resolutions through dialogue, mediation, and interaction. Joseph (2023) supports this, explaining that kinetic strategies involve the direct use of physical force and systems that support it, while non-kinetic strategies are more relevant to irregular warfare and conflict resolution through non-violent means. However, the use of force, particularly when security personnel are involved, has often aggravated conflicts, leading to further collateral loss of lives that of innocent civilians, property worth millions of naira may be destroyed, and public confidence in security forces eroded trust making citizens become less willing to share crucial information that could help manage the conflict more effectively (Bello, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to foster dialogue and strengthen community participation through roundtable discussions, peace talks, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as community and religious leaders, are key to identifying the root causes of the conflict in other to find lasting solutions. Is on this basis the article draws on a range of relevant literature, including journals, articles, newspapers, government reports, as well as a conflict theory to investigate the impact of the farmers-herders conflict and analyse the various approaches, both kinetic and non-kinetic, that have been employed to manage the conflict, and to ascertain which approaches can help to prevent the recurrence and escalation of violence conflict, which is the main thrust of this article, with the following objectives serving as a guide.

- Explore the various kinetic and non-kinetic strategies used in managing the farmer – herder conflict in Adamawa State.

- Assess the successes and failures of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in managing the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State, by reviewing relevant literature.

Theoretical framework

Conflict theory, rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, (1864-1920) focuses on the inherent inequalities and power struggles between different groups within a society. Nzeda & Mohammed (2024) explain that the theory suggests that conflict arises when there are competing interests, often tied to unequal access to resources, power, and opportunities. In the context of farmers-herders conflicts in Adamawa State, Nigeria, the theory provides a lens through which to understand the tensions between these two groups at the heart of the conflict lies competition for natural resources, particularly land and water, which are critical for both farming and grazing activities. From a conflict theory perspective, farmers and herders represent two distinct groups with divergent needs and interests where the farmers rely on land for crop cultivation, while herders depend on open spaces for grazing their livestock. As a result to the increasing scarcity of arable land, exacerbated by population growth, climate change, and environmental degradation, intensifies the competition between these groups. As each group strives to secure its livelihood, conflicts naturally arise, especially in areas like Adamawa State, where both groups have historically coexisted. However, conflict theory also highlights the role of power dynamics in fuelling tensions in Adamawa state such as ethnic and religious differences often intersect with natural resources, grievances, with political actors at times manipulating these divisions for their own benefit. This manipulation can deepen mistrust and contribute to violent confrontations, as marginalised groups perceive themselves as being systematically disadvantaged. To address this, both kinetic (military) and non-kinetic (peaceful) approaches have been employed. When examining the effectiveness of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in managing this

conflict, it is crucial to consider how each method aligns with managing farmer- herders conflict . Kinetic approaches, which involve the use of force or military interventions, might temporarily quell violence but do not address the root causes of the conflict such as the unequal access to resources or the resources marginalisation of certain groups. In fact, such approaches can sometimes exacerbate tensions, as they reinforce the perception that one group is being unfairly treated or oppressed. On the other hand, non-kinetic approaches, which focus on dialogue, mediation, and sustainable development, are more likely to align with the principles of conflict theory. These strategies seek to address the underlying inequalities and grievances driving the conflict, promoting a more equitable distribution of resources and fostering mutual understanding between conflicting parties. In the case of Adamawa State, non-kinetic approaches that involve community engagement, improved land use policies, and conflict resolution mechanisms may offer more sustainable solutions to the farmers-herders conflict. In conclusion, conflict theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State. It highlights the need for addressing the structural inequalities and power imbalances that drive the conflict. While kinetic approaches may offer short-term relief, non-kinetic methods, which aim to tackle the root causes of the conflict, hold greater potential for achieving lasting peace in Adamawa State.

Methodology

This paper employs content analysis to examine the effectiveness of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in managing the farmers-herders conflict. By making inferences from existing literature, it explores the documented semantic relationships between these approaches in addressing the conflict.

Conceptual Clarification

Kinetic approaches methods and specific instances of the use of kinetic approaches-successes and failures

Kinetic Approach

Yahaya (2021), posit that kinetic generally refers to military presence associated with surveillance with armament that utilize force to stop conflict which may led to collateral damage if proper survey is taken in conflict prone community. Furthermore Idris & Najmudeen (2020) explain that kinetic approach manage security involves proactive measures and strategies that focus on physical actions and movements to prevent, detect, and respond to security threats thus include:

- Physical Barriers motion detectors and cameras to keep an eye on and document activity.
- Patrols: Hiring security guards to patrol and check locations on a regular basis.
- Access Control: Limiting who is allowed entry to specific locations through the use of curfew, keycards, and biometric devices.

Based on the above definition of kinetic approaches, Popoola, Brimah, and Olawale (2020) identified the following kinetic approaches adopted for managing the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State in their research;

Operation Farauta

Operation Farauta is an hausa word which means Hunting was established in 2019 comprised of personnel of the armed forces, police, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) to mitigate conflict between farmers and herders, armed robbery, kidnaping, and other violent crimes.

Operation Lafiya Dole

Operation lafiya dole is an hausa word which means you most accept peace compulsory is an Multi-National Joint Task Force which comprises Chadian, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria military establish 2018 in the past administration of Mahamudu Buhari to

consolidate on regional intelligence to manage conflict between farmers and herders, Boko Haram insurgency and other crime and criminality that is effecting Adamawa state and other states in north east.

Bombardment
Bombardment, refers to the military forces launched a continuous attack on the fortress, bombarding it with missiles, shells, and bombs for several hours before finally retreating.

Yanbanga
Yanbanga, a Hausa term meaning vigilante, refers to a group of brave young individuals who believe that official law enforcement is insufficient, they volunteer to help manage the farmers-herders conflict, operating outside formal law enforcement structures.

Cattle Rangers
Farm Rangers, a specialized unit within the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, are trained and equipped by the government to manage and oversee farming activities with primary responsibility to protect both crops and farmers from herdsmen, ensuring the crops remain safe until harvest.

Successes of Kinetic Approach
According to Joseph (2023), Kinetic approaches, primarily involving the use of military or security forces, have been employed to manage the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria, with varying degrees of success. In the context of Adamawa State, such approaches have delivered notable successes, particularly in curbing the violence conflict and deterring further escalation of conflicts as listed below;

- These methods focus on the immediate suppression of violence and the restoration of order, often through force or the deployment of law enforcement agencies.

- Has been the swift containment of conflict between farmers and herders in situations where conflict escalate rapidly, the prompt intervention of security forces has been crucial in preventing further loss of lives and property.

- Enforce existing laws and maintain a impression of order in the affected areas through patrols, arrests, and sanctions, have been able to curb criminal activities that often arise as offshoots of the conflict, such as cattle rustling, rape, kidnaping for ransom, banditry, and land invasions.

- Played a role in safeguarding humanitarian efforts and ensuring the delivery of aid to communities affected by the conflict by securing roads and ensuring the safety of aid workers, security forces have facilitated the provision of essential services, such as food, water, and medical assistance, to displaced persons and those caught in the crossfire.

- Forces provide a deterrent effect, discouraging both parties from engaging in open conflict.

Failure of Kinetic Approach
This approach, involving the use of force, has faced significant criticism. Law enforcement agencies such as the military, police, NCDC, and DSS have repeatedly been accused of extrajudicial actions and profiling innocent citizens, which has only escalated the conflict (Popoola, Brimah & Olawale, 2020). Supporting this claim, the Punch newspaper, on 16 December 2021, reported that the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) deployed two fighter aircraft, an Alpha Jet and an EC 135, to bomb suspected hideouts in the villages of Dong, Pusaro, Kedemti, and Lawuro in Demsa Local Government Area of Adamawa State, during the farmers-herders conflict. Given this below is the listed failure;

- Inability to offer a lasting solution because military and security interventions may temporarily quell outbreaks of violence, they do not address the root cause of conflict, such as competition over land and resources, ethnic tensions, and historical animosities.

- The use of force can be perceived as favouring one group over another, especially when it is not carefully applied with impartiality. In many cases, farmers and herders feel that their grievances are either ignored or treated unfairly, leading to mistrust, hostility and victimisation.

- Lead to unintended consequences, such as civilian casualties, displacement, and the destruction of property.

- Neglection of the importance of community involvement and local ownership of peace processes through focusing on short-term military solutions, these approaches often bypass the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and local leaders who could play a critical role in fostering dialogue and reconciliation.

Methods of non-kinetic approaches and specific instances of the use of non-kinetic approaches-successes and failures

Non-Kinetic Approach

Non kinetic is an approach are been use in managing conflict through functional activities that are relevant to intelligence operations, influence information operations, mediation, negation, dialogue as well as efforts to reconcile conflict parties (Largo, Rabillas, Kilag, Angtud, Book, & Sasan, 2024). Thus, non-kinetic approach encompasses guiding groups safely and productively through facilitating a fair, equitable space for exploration of discussion that will be able to identify sources of conflict, enabling others to participate, and build skills to help prevent and manage conflict as well as limiting the potential for unproductive discussion, and resolution (Joseph, 2023). Given this definition of non-kinetic approach Ahmed (2023), added that non kinetic approach rehabilitative measures, community engagement and programs aim to foster trust and cooperation between conflict parties thereby enhancing intelligence gathering and preempting farmers- herders conflict prompt the establishment of the following non kinetic approach;

Pilot Ranch Project

Pilot Ranch Project, is a trial program held at Gongoshi G in Mayo Belwa Local Government Area to process, planned and organised initiative focused on creating or developing a large piece of land where livestock, such as cattle, sheep, or goats, are raised as well as building facilities like barns, grazing areas, water systems, fencing, and other necessary infrastructure to manage and care for animals to address farmer-herder conflict among other challenges.

Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Humanitarian Services.

Ministry of reconstruction, rehabilitation, reintegration and humanitarian services, is established to facilitate community dialogues, reconciliation, confidence building, and promoting cultural, and socioeconomic integrations through organizing capacity building and training opportunities for farmers, herdsmen public sector officials and local leaders to enhance integration and equal participation of farmers, herdsmen and IDPs in schools, health facilities, agricultural input, food security, including access to nutrition and markets through direct support or Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance.

State Livestock Transformation Office (SLTO)

State livestock transformation office is a plan established support activities of National Livestock transformation plan (NLTP) to create platform for collaboration with various United Nations (UN) entities and International NGOs to play crucial roles in support and provide durable solutions that demonstrate global expertise in managing farmers herders conflict through dialogues, mediation, mobilization of resources towards the realization and coordination structures as well

as active participation in the process of the plan.

Signing of peace accord

The signing of a peace accord is an agreement reached between representatives of farmers and herders, which took place on 4th June 2020. Its aim was to end the conflict over access to land for farming and grazing, encouraging both sides to cease hostilities and work towards peaceful resolutions with a formal document outlines the terms for ending the conflict, promoting reconciliation, cooperation, capacity building and provisions for financial support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme to help implement these efforts.

Successes of Non kinetic Approach

Non-kinetic approaches, which focus on peaceful conflict resolution, dialogue, and sustainable development, have achieved significant successes in managing the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria with the following success listed below;

✎ Establishment of dialogue and mediation platforms, which bring together farmers, herders, community leaders, and government representatives as well as provide space for both parties to voice their concerns, share grievances, and negotiate peaceful solutions by facilitating open communication.

✎ Promoted improved land-use policies and resource management systems through collaborative efforts between local communities and government agencies, initiatives aimed at clarifying land ownership, regulating grazing routes, and designating farmland have been introduced to reduced the incidents of encroachment and resource based conflict, as both farmers and herders are now more aware of their boundaries and rights.

✎ Involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups in promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion through organising and implementing projects focused on educating local communities about the benefits of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and dialogue.

✎ Empowered local communities through economic development initiatives by providing alternative livelihoods and economic opportunities, especially for youths, to reduced the likelihood of individuals turning to violence or criminal activities out of frustration or desperation.

Failure of Non-Kinetic Approach

✎ Sustained political will and commitment from both local and national authorities because many non-kinetic initiatives rely heavily on government support for implementation and enforcement. However, inconsistent backing, poor coordination, and occasional political interference have hampered the effectiveness of these strategies.

✎Poor Funding; in many cases, peacebuilding initiatives are not followed through, with some programmes suffering from poor funding, leading to a lack of continuity. As a result, these initiatives often fail to build the momentum needed to resolve long standing conflict between farmers and herders.

✎ Struggle to achieve meaningful engagement from all parties involved in the conflict because of deep-seated mistrust between farmers and herders, driven by years of unresolved grievances, makes it difficult to bring both groups to the negotiating table in a spirit of cooperation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the conflict between farmers and herders in Adamawa State has had a severe impact, affecting almost all 21 local government areas. It has claimed many lives, caused forced displacement, and led to the destruction of agricultural land, livelihood and livestock. Additionally, cattle have been killed or rustled in various areas, further escalating

the violence. As a result, several villages have been attacked, leading to the destruction of property, which in turn has disrupted socio-economic activities and worsened poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. This devastating impact has prompted the development of strategies to manage the conflict by using both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches. The kinetic approach, which involves military force, has led to the establishment of security operations such as Operation Faruta, Lafiya Dole, Bombardment, Yanbanga, and Cattle Rangers, among others. However, these operations have often resulted in collateral damage and increased mistrust between community members and security personnel. On the other hand, the non-kinetic approach is vital for achieving long-term strategic goals, as it addresses the root causes of the farmers-herders conflict. This approach not only helps to reduce the cycle of violence but also prevents collateral damage and strengthens resilience within affected communities. Ultimately, it contributes to a more sustainable and peaceful coexistence. Studies have shown that non-kinetic methods, such as dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, and community participation, are more effective than kinetic approaches in resolving conflicts between farmers and herders.

Recommendation

The findings have shown that the non-kinetic approach, which involves non-violent methods such as dialogue, mediation, and community-based participation, is effective in managing the farmers-herders conflict. However, due to the mistrust, collateral damage, and human rights violations that have occurred during the use of kinetic approaches, the article recommends the following:

- Ministry of reconstruction, rehabilitation, reintegration and humanitarian services to sustain and prioritize non-kinetic approaches, such as dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation, can help address the root causes of the farmers-herders conflict as well as establishing more community led platforms for open communication between farmers and herders will foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

- Ministry of information should raise awareness about the benefits of peaceful conflict resolution and cooperation among farmers and herders should be emphasized educational programmes that will focus on the importance of resource sharing, environmental sustainability, and conflict prevention, thus encouraging long-term harmony between both groups.

- Ministry of reconstruction, rehabilitation, reintegration and humanitarian services should mitigate the negative effects of kinetic operations, there is a need to rebuild trust between communities and security personnel. This can be achieved by involving local leaders in security operations and ensuring transparency in the actions of security forces to prevent further mistrust and collateral damage.

- Even when dialogue platforms are established, entrenched positions and historical tensions often prevent productive discussions from taking place. In some instances, key stakeholders, especially those directly involved in the violence, have refused to participate in peace talks, seeing little benefit in negotiations that do not immediately address their security concerns.

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