

Security, Vulnerability and Agricultural Resilience: Experience from Herdsmen and Rural Farmers' Conflict in Nigeria

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Abstract— *The problems of herdsmen and rural farmers' conflict took critical dimensions in recent times suggestive of the vulnerability of the farmers as the conflicts persisted and decanted into palpable security threats in some parts of Nigeria. This paper explores the linkages between herdsmen and rural farmers' conflict and in particular, provides some useful insights on the vulnerability of the farmers and need for policy response on agricultural resilience. The study builds on the human security framework and relevant secondary data to review two case scenarios in the Middle Belt and Eastern Nigeria. The case analyses which are most recent and incendiary reveal that these conflicts have divergent implications that may contribute to fatal outcomes including decline in rural agricultural practices, food shortage and loss of human lives. The paper suggests that agricultural resilience strategies are critical to mitigate the conflicts. It made some policy recommendations.*

Keywords— *Security, Vulnerability, Agricultural Resilience, Conflict, Herdsmen.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have witnessed devastating resurgence of nomadic herders and rural farmers violence in some parts of Nigeria. This stimulates a number of debates on strategies to mitigate rural vulnerability. Three out of four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas (UNDP, 2007). Thus, rural poverty and vulnerability are linked. Dominant debates and literature on vulnerability centers largely on climate change vulnerability (Davies, 1996; de Waal, 1997; del Ninno and Roy; 2001; Gray, 2002; Amadi; 2013). For instance, Amadi (2013) examined climate change and peasant food production decline at the post 2012 flood disaster in the Niger Delta pointing out the vulnerability of peasant farmers to environmental security threats. A similar investigation linked the problem of vulnerability to risk factor in household wellbeing (Chaudhuri, 2002).

Useful as these studies are in understanding vulnerability, they have not expanded the understanding of non-climate induced vulnerability and strategies of mitigating same such as the ongoing rural farmers and herders conflict in parts of Nigeria. Beyond this, the most incendiary challenge in recent times in Nigeria is the threats posed by herders who graze the food crops of rural farmers and repeatedly unleash terror and onslaught on the farmers. This suggests critical investigation of both vulnerability and security linkages and patterns of government's policy response with regards to agricultural resilience.

A temporal analysis of herders and farmers conflict provides novel insights on studies seeking for broader elucidation of rural vulnerability and resilience dynamics, in particular, security challenges. Nigeria's rural population is predominantly farmers, only a very few engage in non-farm livelihoods. This accounts for about a quarter of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), (World Bank, 2015). Increasing violence in recent years has affected farming and food production. The fragile nature of the rural areas in parts of Nigeria especially the volatile Niger Delta region since the late-1990s with the resurgence of ethnic minority agitation on resource marginalization and environmental degradation by ethnic minority movements notably the pan Ogoni organization; the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), which took intense dimensions at the aftermath of the execution of their leader Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 by the Federal military government, militancy in the region and hostage taking of expatriate oil workers, in South West Nigeria the Odua People's Congress (OPC) and their agitations at the aftermath of the annulment of the June 12th Presidential elections, the clamor for self-determination by the Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and later the fierce Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East, the persistent terrorism of the faceless Boko Haram terrorist groups in the North East, the perverse sectarian crisis of the Shiite ethnic sect in

the North West and the herdsmen and their attacks on the rural farmers, fuel security threats and vulnerability of the rural areas in Nigeria.

This has been part of the colonial legacy as the colonial land and natural resource acts were repressive (Coleman, 1958). However since political independence, herders conflicts had taken novel turn and increasingly disastrous, leading to killings of rural farmers which calls for urgent security response at the local levels. Security underpins a situation of threat to freedom (Buzan, *et al*; 2007). This implies that the freedom of the rural farmers who ordinarily go about their means of livelihood is threatened.

Studies on security and rural agricultural development typically depend on a seemingly blur perspective that are often problematic and fails to substantially identify distinct dynamics of rural vulnerability. This superficiality divides rural agriculture and resilience into discrete, and contradictory domains without exploring robust indicators that suggest the intensity of such conflicts. This dichotomy points out much of the theoretical and empirical impasse that creates various analytical difficulties in grappling with the problems of rural farmers and their vulnerability particularly in development contexts. This scant study has made the human security framework inevitable in exploring the rural farmers and insecurity nexus.

Deploying the human security framework, the paper attempts to provide broader elucidation of the intensity of the insecurity of the ordinary people who predominantly live in the rural areas. The human security debate underscores the threats of these ordinary people in their everyday lives including their subsistence (UNDP, 1994). The treatment of insecurity as the causal effect of the vulnerability of rural farmers and the need for strategic balance with agricultural resilience forms part of the linkages this research agenda seeks to create. This suggests the urgency of agricultural resilience strategies.

The term agricultural resilience had emerged as a novel term in recent scholarship to understand salient strategies for crisis and disaster reduction. Agricultural resilience is both confronted and challenged by a number of threats such as climate change, food crop disease infestation, high cost of agricultural materials, food security, farming security, vulnerability, limited availability of land, poor energy supply and similar issues associated with farm imputes.

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2004), underscores the linkages between environment and disasters as both are mutually reinforcing particularly among rural areas whose livelihoods derive

from the natural environment. This has pointed to the need for farmers resilience dynamics.

In recent decades, agricultural resilience has emerged to offer a direct and serious challenge to rural farmers vulnerability and wider security threats (World Bank, 2012). The core issues in agricultural resilience is to maintain system functionality and effective food system outcomes.

A resilient agriculture as Bennett, *et al*; (2014) put it; is one that meets both food and development needs over both the short- and very long-terms, from local to global scales, without destabilizing the Earth system. The World Bank (2012), defines resilience as the ability to withstand, recover from, and reorganize in response to crises so that all members of society may develop or maintain the ability to thrive.

This study makes such remarkable contribution as it examines the on-going herdsmen and rural farmers conflict in Agatu in Ado Local Government Area of Benue State in the Middle Belt Nigeria and Ndiagu, Attakwu and Akegbe-Ugwu communities in Nkanu-West Local Government Area of Enugu State in Eastern Nigeria. It also explores the linkages between these conflicts and the internal decay associated with ethno-religious undertone of these conflicts as the herdsmen are predominantly Muslims while the farmers are Christians and in a more distinct manner, the relevance of agricultural resilience, as a force to confront the resurgent conflict which has negatively impacted agricultural food production, security of lives and properties and rural livelihoods.

Although agricultural resilience focuses almost entirely on alternative strategies against threats to agriculture, it has not been given sufficient policy attention in most poor societies in the global South. This does not only make this paper a critical re-engagement on novel theorizing of agricultural resilience, rather it suggests that many practices designed as resilience strategies have not been effective particularly in most rural areas leading to debates that argue for participatory resilience involving the local people directly through a bottom top approach.

The paper argues for urgent policy framings to mitigate insecurity and vulnerability challenges of the rural farmers in Nigeria. It presents two case scenarios, and sets out in substantial details the ways in which the vulnerability of rural farmers has resulted in perennial attacks, destruction of crops and killing of the rural farmers, which, draws on most recent experiences and offers some insights in understanding and conceptualizing the causal connections between security, vulnerability and agricultural resilience.

Paying critical attention to the imperatives of rural farmers security transformation as central to sustainable agricultural

development of Nigeria, it subsequently provides some strategic edges that could facilitate the development basis of agricultural resilience, and calls for effective and clearer policy agenda to construct alternative conceptual model for rural farmer's protection. The rest of the paper is organized as follows; materials and methods, the nexus between security vulnerability and rural agricultural resilience; conclusion and policy direction.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The nomadic herders and rural farmers' conflicts have been noted to have persisted since at least three decades of post-colonial Nigeria. Although it might date longer than this, the most striking issue is that its persistence and perverse inroads has been less explored as there are scant policy instruments to mitigate the conflicts since the 1990s.

The marginalization of this research agenda derives from both negligence and asymmetrical power structure among the rural and urban areas in Nigeria and a number of related factors: poor governance policy to meet the development needs and demands of the rural areas in Nigeria; persistent rural-urban dichotomy and undervaluing of the development potentials of the agricultural sector particularly since oil became the major foreign exchange earner for Nigeria in the 1970s.

The prospect of rehabilitating the rural farmers and providing adequate security is a central concern of this study as many farmers, their farm lands and lives are repeatedly threatened. The violence has caused the death of more than 100,000 farmers in Benue and Enugu states, and many are internally displaced (UNHCR, 2016).

The paper builds on human security theoretical framework. According to UNDP (1994), human security involves the legitimate security concern of ordinary people whose daily subsistence are threatened. In the particular context of our analysis, two most recent and incendiary case analysis would be examined to identify the incidence, patterns and structures of rural vulnerability and insecurity arising from conflicts between rural farmers and cattle herders. This is a longitudinal study set between the period 1990 to 2015, to illustrate the causal linkages of rural farmers vulnerability. This period is particularly important because during the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, there were series of similar intractable rural conflicts, some directly involving farmers and herders others stretching from one rural community or the other such as the Ife-Modakeke conflict in Western Nigeria, the persistent and systematic Osu caste conflict in parts of Eastern Nigeria, the Aguleri and Umuleri boundary dispute in Eastern Nigeria (Amadi and Akena, 2015).

The oil resource induced conflicts in parts of rural Niger Delta Nigeria such as the 1992 Umuechem crisis in Etche Rivers State, the 1999 Odi massacre in Bayelsa State, the 2005 Gbaramatu killings in Delta State by the military Joint Task force (JTF) etc.

In less than two decades of Nigeria's democracy, rural farmers and herders conflicts decanted into uncontrollable proportions. Thus, the challenges of insecurity, rural violence and agricultural resilience became persistent and perennial.

There have been minimal efforts at effective strategies at redressing the problems and return to security of the rural farmers which was the predominant form of pristine agricultural farm practice in pre-colonial rural Nigeria.

The two case examples for the study are; the Agatu case scenario in Benue State Middle Belt Nigeria and Enugu in Eastern Nigeria. Our case analysis would examine chain of causes, resultant effects and implications for urgent policy intervention.

Beyond that, it would be linked to the broader illumination of rural vulnerability debate as the paper demonstrates that herders / rural farmers conflict which represents one of the core human security threats have not been given adequate attention. The paper particularly provides a deepened study which shows a decade span scenario suggestive of the persistent nature of the conflict. This is fused into novel paradigm on alleviating rural farmers conflicts through agricultural resilience. What follows are the case analysis.

Case Analysis

There have been at least 370 clashes involving herders and farmers in Nigeria in the last five years, compared to just 20 in the 15 years before that (UNHCR, 2016). Thus, the vulnerability of the rural farmers remains perverse and affects sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods. Worldwide, 75 percent of poor and food insecure people rely on agriculture and natural resources for their living (World Bank, 2015). They are usually vulnerable to disasters and challenges of mitigation and particularly how to cope with such disasters that impact agriculture and food production.

Recent trends create novel niche for rural agriculture following the deepening economic crisis of Nigeria as over dependence on crude oil as the mainstay of the economy has resulted in economic recession. Thus, there is both conceptual, theoretical and policy significance of re-evaluating the foundational basis of rural agricultural transformation. When it is considered that the rural farmers produce the bulk of food that feeds the nation, it becomes expedient to seek for a critical investigation of

agricultural resilience as the rural farmers are largely vulnerable and prone to security threats .

The case analysis for this study seeks for broader elucidation of the problem of the research. The basis is that such methodological tool typically provides evidence based vision of social space as it aims to fully resolve the difficulties associated with the underlying assumptions of insecurity and vulnerability of rural farmers. In this paper, a case analysis which, draws from on- the ground experience and field work offers a means of conceptualizing the causal connections between security, vulnerability and agricultural resilience. This approach reaffirms the importance of participatory evidence based analysis to the new paradigm of social interaction. The two analyses derive from the North central and South Eastern Nigeria respectively.

CASE ONE : THE AGATU CRISIS IN BENUE NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA OF 2016

At the return to democracy in 1999 the transformation of rural farmers became an issue of increasing concern as the security threats posed by herdsmen re-emerged in the form of crucial

and seemingly persistent attacks in part of northern Nigeria ,the Middle Belt and Eastern Nigeria respectively.

In March 2016, the Agatu region of Benue State had one of the most recent and incendiary attacks as Fulani herdsmen armed with AK-47 rifles invaded several villages and farm settlements in broad daylight, gunning down children, women, men and the elderly alike(Mayah,2016). About 300 villagers were reportedly massacred in communities like Agila, Okokolo, Akwu, Adagbo, Odugbehon and Odejo Extending from Aila to Obagaji, Akwu to Odejo, houses, churches and police posts were burned down. Human corpses were littered everywhere (Mayah ,2016).This included men and women while several others were displaced.

Such perennial rural violence was also experienced in the neighbouring Nasarawa-Benue borderline linking to Agatu. There are other communities in Benue other than Agatu that have been previously attacked. Mayah (2016)reports that between 2011 and 2014, suspected herdsmen attacked dozens of communities in the four local government areas of Guma, Gwer-East, Buruku and Gwer-West, some more than once.The hometown of the late Tor Tiv IV, Alfred Akawe Torkula, in Guma was razed. Similarly, houses, food barns and farmlands were burnt and scores killed in communities like Tse-Aderogo, Tse-Akenyi, Umenger, Angyom, Aondona, Anyiase, Adaka,

Gbajimba, Tyoughtee, Gbaange, Chembe, Abeda, Mbachoon, Tongov and Mbaapu.

In May 2015, over 100 farmers and family members were massacred in villages and refugees camps located at Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa in Logo Local Government Area of the state (Mayah,2016).

In July 2015, Adeke a community on the outskirts of Makurdi was attacked (Mayah,2016). December,2015 six persons were killed at Idele village in Oju Local Government Area. A reprisal attack by youths in the community saw three Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded. The Oju killings were followed by an attack at Ucha Nyiev village, near the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (Mayah,2016).These re-occurring conflicts suggest the perverse vulnerability and insecurity of the rural areas.

CASE TWO: THE ENUGU ATTACKS IN EASTERN NIGERIA

To take another case example, there have been incidence of rural farmers and herdsmen clash in parts of rural communities in Eastern Nigeria notably Enugu, Umuahia and Aba .At issue has been desertification as the over grazing of the farmlands and the food crops have been a persistent problem.

In Enugu,several rural communities have experienced desertification and overgrazing as little incidence of rainfall attracts the herdsmen to the area. The herders created routes from Benue to Kogi State down to Enugu through -Uzo Uwani Local government area of Enugu State. Several adjoining rural communities have been vulnerable such as Nimbo which had been attacked in the past through the Kogi route.

There are also other routes that extend from Benue to Obollor-afora a community within the Nsukka axis, there is another route from Orakamu through Benue to Enugu, and Aghamelumu-Nsukka routes. Through these routes the herdsmen extend to parts of Ninth Mile and adjoining communities in Nsude down to Emene in Enugu and to other parts of the South East and South South Nigeria. A number of the herdsmen settle in some of the rural communities in Enugu as migrant nomads while on transit to other parts of the country.

The August 2016 attack took a perversedimension in Ndiagu, Attakwu and Akegbe-Ugwu communities in Nkanu-West Local Government Area of Enugu State as the rural farmers of the adjoining communities were plagued with unprecedented attacks by suspected herdsmen.

The attack started early in the morning as Fulani herdsmen numbering over fifty were armed with guns,machetes and bow invaded the communities.As they advanced to the

targeted communities series of violent clashes and uproar ensued.

Prior to the attack, there have been several complaints by some of the youths of the danger prone communities following the surge of Fulani herdsmen particularly in Atakwu where the Spiritan Institute of Theology -a Catholic Institute is situated. A seminarian who was a student of the institute Lazarus Nwafor and a lady Ifeoma Agbo were victims of the attack as they were slaughtered in cold blood by the herdsmen.

As the herdsmen attacked members of the community, several women were raped and others fled their homes including children, while a good number sustained physical injuries from machet cuts and similar attacks.

The crisis generated uncontrollable disorder and attracted several futile attempts for peace before the Nigeria police and the military intervened. Beyond this, there has been a challenge of non-response by the government to the clamor of the rural farmers whose means of livelihood is daily ruined by the herdsmen.

The clamor of the youths about the security threats arising from the influx of herdsmen was not taken seriously. The attack of August, 2016 was not the first, there have been several others including Emene and Ninth Mile areas of Enugu in early 2016. A report shows that at least 340 people have been killed in 2016 alone from the herdsmen attack (UNHCR, 2016). Although in most instances they kill several people as in the Agautu incident in Benue and similar previous attacks in Enugu state which forced tens of thousands to flee while others were internally displaced (UNHCR, 2016).

Towards Alternative Strategies for Rural Farmers' Vulnerability Mitigation in Nigeria

The development of resilient agricultural strategies is important to protect the farmers, preserve Nigerian agricultural system and the rural farmers who largely rely on tilling the land for their livelihoods (Altieri, 1999). The basis for agricultural resilience sets for the general notion that the poor are often marginalized and vulnerable as they have little voice in taking decisions on issues affecting them.

Our two case examples have provided some useful insights in understanding the dynamics of vulnerability of rural farmers and the security threat herdsmen pose to both the farmers and agricultural development of Nigeria. To return to the original claims of security transformation through agricultural resilience, the paper demonstrates here that alternative mode of agricultural resilience is needed to

bolster rural security and farmers' livelihood sustainability. This includes recent suggestions on resilience strategies.

The four pillars of FAO's resilience strategy include; Enable the environment; Watch to safeguard; Apply risk and vulnerability reduction measures; Prepare and respond. These pillars have been a useful springboard for resilience dynamics. Agricultural resilience is equally about equipping farmers to absorb and recover from shocks and stresses to their agricultural production and livelihoods. Some shocks are short-term, others long-term. Some come suddenly while others are predictable. And some are more severe while others slowly erode farmers' ability to farm (Farming First, 2016; FAO, 2016).

In September 2013, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development inaugurated Advisory Committee on Agricultural Resilience in Nigeria (ACARN) amidst upheavals in much of rural agriculture in Nigeria. Thus, a new paradigm of rural agricultural resilience is sought as this remains largely eluded resulting in persistent insecurity and vulnerability of the farmers who are increasingly exposed to security threats such as anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic threats including natural hazards notably droughts, floods, earthquakes and disease epidemics to non-anthropogenic security threats such as violent attacks and conflicts. The paper is interested in the latter.

FAO (2016) points out that agricultural resilience is essential for improved food production. Although there is tendency for security threats, the ability to contain such threats justifies the basis of resilience. Critical of transformation of both rural farmers and the environment, Fraser, *et al*; (2003) contend that resilience attempts to capture relations between agricultural practices such as farming and the farmer, and by extension the protection of the natural environment.

This provides recent insights on environmental security (Dalby; 2002). Thus, resilience and environmental security nexus provide some plausible re-evaluation of rural security and in particular the mitigation of rural farmers' vulnerability through environmental consciousness and awareness.

Thus, security and vulnerability cannot be treated as separate realms of rural farmers' protection. This points to a rethinking on rural farmers' vulnerability, although such contention in the particular case of our analysis is made evident with persistent attacks on the rural farmers by herdsmen, in fact, the intensity of the attacks by herdsmen rest with the claim that the farmers are not only vulnerable rather helpless as there are poor counter strategies to protect them against present and future attacks.

In this regard, resilience-vulnerability mitigation will only prove effective to the extent that resilient strategies are able to not only contain but counter threats to the rural farmers. This, of course, has not been institutionalized as recent insecurity trends suggest.

However, in these accounts, the insistence upon effective resilience strategies leads ultimately to novel thinking of rural farmers' security transformation. It is much harder to see how resilience is, in any perceptible sense institutionalized in recent times in Nigeria or would be institutionalized for the sake of transforming rural farmers often marginalized.

Two key discernible drives must be put into consideration in the particular context of our analysis namely; the ethnic and religious differences in Nigeria. While the farmers are predominantly Christians, the herders are Muslims; ethno-religious intolerance often makes the conflict sectarian. This does not make the conflict ineluctable.

Although the importance of cattle is well documented, the farmers and their protection should be at the center of agricultural policy in Nigeria. This is primarily because agriculture provides a variety of foods and raw materials central to economic survival of Nigeria.

Similarly, it is the farmers' welfare that could drive agricultural development of Nigeria. Even where rural farmers engage in farming, it becomes limited to subsistence to avert herders' grazing (UNHCR 2016).

Since the distinction between human subsistence arising from agricultural food and economic development is thin, it is only expedient to mitigate rural farmers' vulnerability. Thus, novel policies against rural farmers' attacks and unlawful grazing on their land and destruction of food crops by the herders is sought.

This argument that agricultural food production has economic undertone has a multivariate development implication. It, is a version of a more general set of development claim which upholds agricultural resilience as both expedient and compulsive for a primary economy like Nigeria. This is connected to the broader elucidation of "economic diversification" in development studies.

Beyond resilience, this orientation is propagated among debates which argue for ecological justice (Amadi, et al; 2015) as they emphasize the need to ameliorate deleterious natural resource extraction, in this particular case the unguarded grazing of farm lands by the herders.

It is clear that the incidence of cattle herders and rural farmers' conflict have increased in recent times, rather than vice versa. This has a serious consequence for the future of agricultural development of Nigeria with distortions in agricultural growth and long term multiplier effect on

agriculture and agro allied materials, the challenges of systemic disempowerment and livelihoods vulnerability.

Indeed, persistent attacks and the complex problems are partly the evidence of the failure of the post-colonial state to institutionalize effective rural security network and in particular, agricultural resilience.

The tendency for re-occurring conflict is discernible in several rural communities as the herdsmen graze unguardedly. The evidence of social decay and ineptitude of the state apparatus to douse the problem, makes agricultural resilience strategies inevitable.

Though in some developing countries such as India, there have been remarkable success in deploying the agricultural resilient strategies through the introduction of some institutional apparatuses and dissemination of information to the rural farmers.

Equally in South Africa, there have been some insightful agricultural resilience programs. Some crucial trends perhaps inform the persistent attacks and government policy inertia. This include the alleged control of political power of the venerated northern oligarchy involved in cattle ownership in northern Nigeria.

However, the general call to remedy the herdsmen and their attacks is rather institutional. It remains almost impossible to track the challenges of herdsmen attacks with its linkages to the northern oligarchy. I believe, this will remain problematic within the Nigerian rural farmers' agricultural resilience debate. Except something drastic is done it may not be very easy to check herders attack. The key argument here is that rural farmers insecurity—consistently, "dislodge"—both agricultural food production and the overall volume of food produced in Nigeria. Thus, from this conceptual prognosis—and based on the persistent resurgence of herders attacks, recreating agricultural resilience strategies is both urgent and critical.

To capture the crux of this matter is the seemingly policy inertia by the government in this direction. The paper advances some resilience strategies, as follows;

Participatory Resilience Strategy; Many practices designed as resilience strategies have not been effective particularly in most rural areas leading to debates that argue for participatory resilience involving the local people directly through a bottom top approach. The aim is to resist ecological and non-ecological threats. Theories suggestive of resisting ecological threats include the panarchy theory (Holling 2002). Robert Chambers (2010) has argued that participatory methodologies is a people centered bottom top and inclusive approach directly involving the people themselves. Since it is people centered it centers on the needs of the people

Multi-stakeholder strategy is suggested as several stakeholders should be involved in strengthening agricultural resilience this include synergy of institutions and governments including Ministries Departments and Agencies(MDAs),Community Based Organization(CBOs)and civil society groups to build and sustain resilience.

Herders and Farmers Dialogue: Dialogue has been an effective strategy deployed in conflict resolution. In the particular case of our study the heads of both parties should be engaged in a dialogue for consensus building to bring lasting end to the conflict.

*Rural farmers Armed VigilanteNetwork:*Our case analysis suggest that the herders are armed. It does not make sense to combat an armed gang with bare hands. There is urgency of herders to be made to drop their arms through dialogue or encourage rural farmersto constitute armed vigilante groups to act as guardiansof the farms and resist armed attacks. And to effectively confront and combat the herders who themselves are armed. For instance, our case one reveals that the herdsmen were in possession of Ak47 rifle.

*New Legislation is Critical:*There is need for a novel legislation restricting illegal grazing or redefine areas and terms of grazing in particular *Anti -grazing legislation* is necessary as in most developed societies illegal grazing is a punishable offence. There is need for the Nigerian legislature to adopt effective legislation and implement same on a result oriented basis .

Policy makers should also look at ways in which herdsmen infiltrate the rural areas and farmlands in the cause of grazing . Environmentalists should examine the environmental impacts of illegal grazing on food crops . Government intervention is both urgent and valuable —to check persistent killing of farmers by alleged herders .What the paper has been aiming at is to remedy some of the perceived deficiencies of herdsmen attacks.

III. CONCLUSION

In 2016, at two ends of Nigeria notably Benue in the MiddleBelt and Enugu in Eastern Nigeria , rural farmers and herders conflict have been persistent. The fate of the Agatu and Enugu farmers opened to view an entirely novel and unanticipated outcome namely; rural violence and carnage . This was perhaps the most incendiary and represents rural vulnerability and insecurity.

What this paper has attempted to do is to inject novel plasticity in the ongoing debate on security and vulnerability of rural farmers in relation to agricultural resilience. The contention is; what would be the implication of institutionalizing effective vulnerability

mitigation strategy for the rural farmers ? . This paper has demonstrated that rural farmers should be effectively protected to provide basis on which a boost in agricultural food production could be actualized .

Thus, security and resilience studies could be enlarged and further redefined to provide wider reach with the construction and institutionalization of rural resilience in which the security needs of the common people such as rural farmers could be guaranteed .

Furthermore, rural security transformation provides a rationale for upholding human security debate and further extends its theoretical reach to the poor societies of the South rather than focusing on security threats that centers predominantly on the North. This paper suggests that the persistent problems of herdsmen and killing of rural farmers constitute both security threats and economic decimation of food production and resources to advance agricultural development.

This rural farmers were casted into uncontrollable disorder. The torments of both the Agatu and Nkanu rural farmers have been intense and calls for urgent and radical measures. These incidents might be graver than represented in this study. What the paper has achieved primarily is to draw local and international attention to the problem of herders and farmers conflict. And essentially seek novel theorizing of agricultural resilience especially within non ecological perspectives as much of the problems associated with rural vulnerability are grave.

These developments paradoxically created feelings of disregard of the rural farmers by the federal government. Thus, the large scale killing which was a near genocide opens the understanding of insecurity and vulnerability.

The urgency to re-examine this problem is critical as Nigeria is currently confronted with economic recession which provides a compelling need for a boost in agriculture as a viable alternative. It is possible—indeed, desirable—to re —examine the dichotomy between security and the rural farmers.

The field of development studies and particularly sustainable development aims at meeting development needs of present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation from meeting their own needs (WSSD;1987).In the present circumstance, sustainable agriculture is circumvented and threatened by Fulani herdsmen and their attacks.

What this paper has argued is that the attacks have multi-dimensional effects. Beyond attacks and killing the rural farmers ,the economy is affected. The position this paper has argued here, could be strengthened by both security experts, development studies, environmentalists and rural

agricultural development experts on the grounds of what should be considered expedient on sustainable agricultural practices .

The paper has raised stimulating questions suggestive of the enormous effects and wider implications of the herder's attacks on rural farmers . The paper has equally demonstrated policy inertia to tackle this resurgent problem—in particular, it has attempted to demonstrate how agricultural resilience strategies could prove useful in addressing the question of insecurity and rural farmers vulnerability .

The paper reveals that most of the problems arising from herdsmen and rural farmers are not ineluctable like any other conflict . Although this requires further work—the paper has shown that agricultural resilience could be one of the most effective tools of restoring and transforming rural farmers. The paper has further rearticulated the relevance of mitigating rural farmers' vulnerability as options for inclusive and sustainable agricultural development . Thus, the development conception of agricultural resilience is advanced here, in line with the notion of logic of rural farmers' security transformation, which allows broader elucidation of sustainable rural agriculture dynamics.

The paper also provides some important insights suggestive of the need to take rural insecurity and vulnerability seriously beyond rhetoric. By providing a rural agricultural transformation construct this paper is not only one of rural insecurity mitigation debate but a concern on rural-urban dichotomy from a security-sustainable development perspective which maintains socio-economic inclusiveness. The strategies I have attempted to suggest are not just of value to security studies and rural agricultural transformation alone but also to the seemingly protracted levity on tackling the persistent problem of herdsmen and rural farmers' conflict.

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