



# Impact of Farmers/Herders Crisis on Farm Crop Destruction in Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State, Northeast Nigeria

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## Abstract

The ongoing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria has severely impacted agricultural productivity, particularly through the destruction of crops, leading to food insecurity and economic instability. This study focuses on the effects of the crisis on crop destruction in the Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria. The conflict, which has persisted for decades, has reduced farmers' income and purchasing power, worsened food inflation, and contributed to rising hunger and malnutrition across the country. Additionally, the destruction of farmland and livestock has escalated tensions between communities, further complicating efforts to achieve food security. Using the Frustration-Aggression Theory as a framework, the paper explores how frustration from both farmers and herders due to disrupted livelihoods has fuelled aggression, contributing to the prolonged crisis. The findings underscore the urgent need for conflict resolution to mitigate the adverse effects on agricultural productivity, food supply, and national stability. Adopting a descriptive survey design and using a structured questionnaire, the study surveys 500 respondents from five randomly selected communities in the study area. Descriptive statistics involving frequency and simple percentages were used to analyse the data collected. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Data analysis revealed that the destruction of farm produce as a result of the herders-farmers conflict leads to a persistent increase in food prices in the markets and reduces the purchasing power of both farmers and herders. The study recommends the swift deployment of security agencies in violence-prone communities to deter and prevent the crisis.

**Keywords:** *Farmers, Herders, Crisis, Farm Crop, Destruction*

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## Introduction

The farmers-herders crisis in Nigeria and other parts of the world has significantly impacted agricultural productivity and food security, primarily through the destruction of crops. This is a recurrent issue globally, and Africa, particularly Nigeria, is not exempt from this widespread problem. Historically, numerous conflicts across various communities, including religious, ethnic, and political tensions, have plagued Nigeria since its return to civilian rule in 1999. However, the oldest and most common of these conflicts is the herders-farmers conflict, which affects various regions and states in the country and has devastating effects on food production, among other issues (Adisa, 2012).

These conflicts have led to the destruction of farm produce worth millions, if not billions, of naira, causing severe hunger, starvation, and national food insecurity in Nigeria today. The consequences of crop destruction on the people of Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria, cannot be overstated. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the impact of the herders-farmers crisis on crop destruction in Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria.



## **Literature Review**

### **The Impact of Farmers/Herders Conflict on Destruction of Farm Crops**

The devastating consequences of the farmers/herders crisis on the destruction of farm produce are enormous for common Nigerians and in the study areas. It includes, among others, inflation, reduction of farmers's purchasing power, general decline in agricultural produce, and severe hunger. Hence, a detailed review of related literature on the effects of the farmers/herders crisis on the destruction of food was projected comprehensively here. One significant effect of the destruction of farm produce as a result of the herdsmen and farmers conflict is the reduction in both farmers' income and purchasing power. Agrarian farmers solely rely on their crops, while herdsmen depend on their cattle for survival. Therefore, the destruction of these assets reduces their purchasing power and income.

Akinbile, Aminu, and Adeyemi (2021) argued that the unresolved conflict between these groups of farmers has significantly reduced the income of affected farmers and herdsmen. Previous studies have revealed that farmers and herdsmen involved in these conflicts experience a marked decrease in their annual income compared to those who are not affected. Thus, the impact of the crisis on income reduction for both farmers and herdsmen cannot be overemphasised. Similarly, Bappah and Manuwa (2021) posited that the long-standing conflict between herdsmen and farmers has had a significant negative impact on food security, agricultural productivity, and the income of both groups. Likewise, Obi-Egbedi et al. (2012) reported a significant reduction in the income of farmers affected by the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Oyo State, Nigeria. It could be argued that the effects of this conflict on the income and purchasing power of farmers and herdsmen across various parts of the country are both worrisome and tragic, leading to widespread poverty.

Eme, Ugwu, and Onuigbo (2017) were of the view that the economic cost of herdsmen-farmers

clashes in various parts of the country on the populace and the nation's economy cannot be overlooked. Bloody clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers have led to the destruction of houses, food storage facilities, and farmlands, resulting in food insecurity, hunger, and persistent price hikes in food items, starvation, and malnutrition. The conflict in Nigeria over the years has contributed to hikes in the prices of food in the country, as opined by Ake, Owioye, Ajakaiye, and Ayantunji (2013). The conflicts lead to the destruction of farm inputs and outputs to the detriment of market supply, scaling up the prices of food and further exacerbating rural poverty (Ahmed, 2013). As crop yields decrease, the supply of food diminishes, leading to rising food prices. This inflation disproportionately affects low-income households, making it difficult for them to afford the basic necessities (Ahmed, 2013). According to the ACAPS (2017) report, the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Benue and Plateau States face severe food shortages. Furthermore, the conflict has caused food prices in the market to skyrocket, with prices expected to continue rising if nothing is done to resolve the conflict between these groups of farmers in the region and Nigeria at large. Food inflation in Nigeria has reached alarming levels, with rates reported at 40.87% in June 2014, a significant increase from previous years (Punch Newspaper, 2014; The Economist, 2014).

Destruction of farm crops as a result of the farmers-herders crisis has led to widespread hunger and starvation among Nigerians. Canice and Yunana (2022) maintained that the conflict between farmers and herdsmen is a serious threat to food security in Benue State, with serious implications of food insufficiency leading to abject hunger and starvation in the state. Olaniyan et al. (2018) describe how the conflict disrupts planting and harvesting cycles, leaving affected areas with limited food supplies and exacerbating hunger and starvation in conflict-prone regions. One could maintain that the severe hunger and starvation faced by the people of Shongom local government as a result of the destruction of farm



produce in the event of a herdsmen-farmers crisis calls for urgent attention and proactive measures to tackle destruction of crops as a result of farmers-herders crisis in Shongom LGA.

### **Theoretical framework**

The study reviewed frustration-aggression theory in explaining the cause and crop destruction as a result of the herdsmen-farmers conflict in Shongom Local Government area of Gombe State, Nigeria.

#### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

The Frustration-Aggression theory, originally developed by Dollard (1939) and later expanded by Miller (1941) and Berkowitz (1969), explains that frustration occurs when a person's efforts to achieve a goal are blocked, leading to feelings of tension, anger, and potentially aggressive behaviour. The theory holds that aggression arises when individuals are prevented from attaining their goals. The theory suggests that frustration, defined as any event or circumstance that impedes progress toward a goal, inevitably leads to aggression. This framework has been employed to explain various societal conflicts and violent behaviours.

In the context of Shongom Local Government Area in Gombe State, the frustration-aggression theory can be applied to understand the conflicts between herders and farmers. The herders, perceiving they are being obstructed in their pursuit of grazing land for their cattle, may experience frustration, which can escalate into aggressive actions. Omoroghomwan (2021), asserts that this sense of deprivation fuels their aggressive response as they feel denied the economic benefits necessary for their survival. Similarly, farmers in Shongom, who also experience frustration due to the strained relationships with the herders, may respond with aggression, which more often than not leads to the destruction of properties such as crops and cattle.

### **Materials and methods**

This study adopted a descriptive research design that relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The researchers seek to understand the impact of the farmers-herders crisis on the destruction of farm crops in the study area. The population of this study comprises all adults between the ages of 18–70 years from the five selected communities (Yarwana, Dwaja, Pamadu, Lapaidimtai, and Lasanjag) from the corresponding political wards (Filiya, Gundale, Gwandum, Kushi, and Lapan) respectively. The population of the study was estimated at 5,110 based on the 2006 National Population Census. The sample size for the study was 508, using Taro Yamane's and Williams G. Cochran's formula. Data for the study were collected from the primary source, using the questionnaire method. Data collected via questionnaires were analysed, and descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables and simple percentages (%) were used in the interpretation of data. The hypothesis formulated for this study was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical technique under the 95% confidence level. This whole statistical process was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.

### **Result and Discussion**

A total of 508 questionnaires were administered to respondents in the selected communities for the study. However, while eight of these figures were recovered but wrongly filled, only 500 copies of the distributed questionnaires were viable for the scientific analysis. Therefore, the compilation of data and discussion of findings were done based on the available questionnaires.



**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Shongom LGA**

Variables	Group	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	401	80.2
	Female	99	19.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age range	20-29	83	16.6
	29-30	134	26.8
	39-40	147	29.4
	49-50	69	13.8
	60	67	13.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
occupation	Farmer	227	45.4
	Herder	112	22.4
	Civil servant	95	19.0
	Farming and cattle rearing	32	6.4
	Business	34	6.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Tribe	Pero	220	44.0
	Fulani	60	12.0
	Tangale	163	32.6
	Total	500	100.00
	Wurkum	57	11.0
Religion	Christianity	384	76.0
	Islam	116	23.0
	Traditional		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Marital status	Married	299	59.8
	Single	147	29.4
	Divorced	20	4.0
	widow / widower	30	6.0
	Separated	4	0.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Level of Education	No formal education	151	30.2
	Primary	176	35.2
	Secondary	151	30.2
	Tertiary	22	4.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Farming system	Subsistence	377	75.4
	Commercial	123	24.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Shongom Local Government Area, Gombe State, as presented in Table 1, highlight several key aspects. The table shows a significantly higher proportion of males 80.2% participated in the survey compared to females. The age of respondents ranged from 14 to 60 years, with the highest participation seen in those aged between 29 and 30 years. Farming emerged as the dominant occupation, accounting for 45.4% of the workforce in the study area. In terms of ethnicity, the two most prominent groups were the Pero 44.0% and Tangale 32.6%.

Data on religious affiliation of the respondent show that Christianity was the most widely practised, with 76.8% of the respondents practicing Christianity, followed by Islam and a very small number of respondents adhered to traditional religious beliefs. In terms of marital status, 59.8% of the respondents are married followed by 29.4% of the respondents who are single. Regarding the educational qualifications of respondents, 35.2% of the respondents had only attained a primary school certificate. The data also revealed that the predominant farming system practised in the area was subsistence farming 75.4%. This high prevalence of subsistence farming means that farmers in Shongom depend heavily on their crops for daily survival. As a result, the destruction of farm crops by herders causes frustration and is a source of conflict in the area.

**Table 2: impacts of Farmers/Herders Conflicts on the Destruction of Farm Crops in Shongom LGA, Gombe State**

Items	RESPONSES				
	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Destruction of farm crops leads to conflict between farmers and herders in Shongom LGA.	299 (59.8)	147 (29.4)	4 (0.8)	20 (4.0)	30 (6.0)
Destruction of farm crops leads to the displacement of people and communities in Shongom LGA.	151 (30.2)	176 (35.2)	0 (0.0)	151 (30.2)	22 (4.4)
Destruction of farm crops leads to a reduction in farm output in Shongom LGA.	371 (74.2)	121 (24.2)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.4)	1 (0.2)
Destruction of farm crops reduces farmer's purchasing power in Shongom LGA	369 (73.8)	67 (13.4)	19 (3.8)	25 (5.0)	20 (4.0)

#### N = 500

The table presents respondents' views on the impact of farm crop destruction due to the farmers-herders crisis in Shongom LGA, Gombe State, Nigeria. A majority of respondents 59.8% strongly agree, and 29.4% agree that crop





destruction leads to conflict between farmers and herders. Meanwhile, 4.0% disagreed, 6.0% strongly disagreed, and 0.8% were neutral. Overall, the responses indicate that crop destruction by herders is a significant factor contributing to conflict between the two groups in the area.

The analysis of the respondents' viewpoints regarding the displacement of people due to the farmer-herder crisis in Shongom Local Government Area. The data from Table 1 shows that 30.8% and 35.2% of respondents agreed that the destruction of farm crops leads to the displacement of people and communities in Shongom LGA. None of the respondents 0.0% were neutral on this issue, while 30.2% disagreed and 4.4% strongly disagreed that the crisis causes displacement. This suggests that a majority of respondents believe that the conflict between farmers and herders results in the displacement of communities in the area.

Further, respondents' views on the impact of the destruction of farm crops and its relation to a reduction in farm output. A substantial proportion 74.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 24.2% agreed that during the conflict, crops are either abandoned due to fear of attack or destroyed by herdsmen. None of the respondents 0.0% remained neutral, while 1.4% disagreed and 0.2% strongly disagreed with the notion that crop destruction leads to reduced farm output. This indicates a near consensus that conflict-related destruction or abandonment of crops results in decreased agricultural productivity in Shongom LGA.

The table reveals that the majority of respondents 73.8% strongly agreed and 13.4% agreed that the destruction of farm crops negatively impacts farmers' purchasing power. A minority of respondents, 3.8%, were neutral, while 5.0% disagreed and 4.0% strongly disagreed that crop destruction reduces purchasing power. Thus, the analysis confirms that the destruction of farm

crops as a result of the farmer-herder crisis in the study areas reduces farmer's purchasing powers in all ramifications.

### Correlation

**Table 3: Test of Relationship between Destruction of Farm Crops and Inflation in Shongom LGA, Gombe State**

		Inflation	Destruction of farm crops
Inflation	Pearson Correlation	1	.872
	Sig. (2-tailed)		-.007
	N	500	500
Destruction of farm crops	Pearson Correlation	.872	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.007	
	N	500	500

**\* N=500; R-value= .872; P-value = -.007**

The study revealed a strong and significant relationship between the destruction of farm crops and the rise in food prices in Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State. The correlation coefficient (R-value) of 0.872 indicates a high positive correlation, meaning as farm crops are increasingly destroyed, food prices in the market also rise. Additionally, with a p-value of -0.007 (which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05), the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that crop destruction plays a major role in exacerbating the ongoing rising cost of food items in Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, farmers/herders crisis has had far-reaching effects on Nigeria's agricultural sector, leading to income reduction, economic downturns, increased food prices, and decreased productivity. Addressing this conflict is crucial for the stability and prosperity of the nation's agricultural productivity. Therefore, the study recommends that security personnel should be placed in violate-prone communities to prevent further crises and destruction of crops and cattle in the study area and Nigeria at large.

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