

**HERDERS AND FARMERS CONFLICTS: GOVERNMENT AND NON –
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS INTERVENTIONS IN PEACE BUILDING IN
PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract: *The aim of this study was to assess the impact of government and Non-governmental interventions in peace building among farmers and herders in Plateau State. The study used cross sectional descriptive survey design as a guide. The study was guided by two specific objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses. A sample of 800 respondents was issued with the structured instrument tagged ‘Government and Non-Governmental Interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts (GANIHFC) questionnaire’ developed by the researcher. Out of these sampled respondents, 790 questionnaires were filled and returned. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the sampled areas respondents and communities respectively. A pilot study was conducted using 100 herders and 100 farmers in Barkin Ladi Local government Area. The face and construct validity of the questionnaire was validated by experts, while its reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha technique and result revealed a reliability coefficient of 0.834. Data collected were analyzed using frequency tables, mean and standard deviation with 3.0 as the criterion mean. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Spearman Rank correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that government interventions have not impacted significantly on peace building between farmers and herders in Plateau State and hence $p > 0.05$, thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The findings further revealed that Non-governmental interventions have impacted significantly on peace building between farmers and herders in Plateau State, that is $p < 0.05$ which means the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on these findings, the study concluded that both government and Non-governmental organizations have intervened in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State, but that the interventions by government have not yielded significant impact. The study recommends among others that government should intensify its efforts in building peace between herders and farmers in the State through collaborative programmes with community leaders and NGOs operating in such areas, government should ensure that the security operative deploys to maintain peace in herders and farmers rated communities adhere strictly to rules of engagement and that government should establish a department for ethnic and religious affairs in all local government areas in the State.*

Keywords: *Government Interventions, Non-governmental Organizations Interventions, Herders and farmers conflicts*

Introduction

In Nigeria, the relationship between herders and sedentary farmers has been very cordial and symbiotic for decades. In those old good days, there were disputes and disagreement on certain issues, such misunderstandings were resolved amicably using tradition peace building mechanism within communities. Of recent however, conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria has assumed a dangerous dimension and has therefore remained one of the nation's greatest challenges in its journey toward achieving sustainable development. Adisa (2012) rightly observed that the farmers-herdsmen conflict has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria. Though these herder-farmers conflicts have been attributed to economic, social and political factors among others, factors such as increases in the herd sizes, due to improved conditions of the cattle, compelled the cattle herders to seek for more pastures beyond their limited range. Population increase that has made arable land a scarce commodity and climate change among others have also constituted great threats by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between herders and farmers. Blench (2004) posited that the most frequently mentioned causes of conflicts between the cattle herders and farmers are illegal invasion of farms and destruction of crops by cattle, particularly during the planting season and immediately after the harvesting period. While, Abbas (2009) the major sources of conflicts between the Fulani herders or herdsmen and farmers, the study showed that land related issues, especially on grazing fields, account for the highest percentage of the conflicts.

In Plateau State, herders and farmers conflicts have remained a re-occurring phenomenon to the extent the state at a point lost its peaceful feature. Evidences from reviewed literature revealed that they causes of the conflicts include competition over access to land, destruction of farmlands, cattle rustling, politics and religious extremism among others in the State. What this means is that the struggle over the control of economically viable lands cause more tensions and violent conflicts between herders who use the land for grazing and farmers who see land as their inheritance and a source of their livelihood, and are ready to protect same by all means. Abubakar (2012) said the genesis of conflicts over access, use and management of land resources between nomadic cattle herders and sedentary farmers is as diverse as the nature of the conflicts themselves. According to De Haan (2002) destruction of crops by cattle and other properties by the cattle herders themselves are the main and direct causes for conflicts cited by the farmers, whereas burning of rangelands and blockage of stock routes and water points by crop encroachment and the increasing rate of cattle rustling propel more violence between farmers and herders. Regrettably, in most of these conflicts, innocent citizens are killed and the destruction or loss of property leaves an already endangered populace even poorer. In some cases, herders have blamed the government for not been sensitive to their plights.

The incessant violent conflicts between herders and farmers in Plateau State have made peace a scarce commodity in almost all the senatorial zones. The narrative has change from peaceful communities to communities where people live in fear as cases of attacks have become the order of the day. While it is undoubtedly clear from literature that government and Non-governmental organizations have played significant role in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State. Peace building is a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. According to Schirch (2000) peace building prevents, reduces, transforms, and helps people to recover from violence in all forms. Peace building strategies by government and NGOs must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the parties concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized sequence, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. It is against

this background therefore, this study seeks to assess the impact of government and Non-governmental organizations interventions in peace building among farmers and herders in Plateau State.

Statement of the Problem

Herders and farmers conflict in Nigeria and in Plateau State in particular is not a new phenomenon partly because conflicts itself is part of human life and a component of every society, but violent conflicts are what societies try to avoid. One cannot deny the fact that herders and farmers conflicts have not existed. What is new however is that while in the past, conflicts between herders and farmers were less in terms of frequency and intensity and in most cases were settled amicably in communities by using traditional peace building mechanism (traditional rulers), the situation has assumed a more dangerous dimension of recent. Buttressing this view, Adetula (2016) asserted that previously the herdsman were known to wreak havoc in certain communities in Nigeria, but now the rate at which they are committing these crimes has increased exponentially.

In fact, the used of sophisticated weapons such as AK 47 guns during these conflicts further attested to the fact that herders and famers' conflicts have assumed a new and a more dangerous dimension that calls for greater intervention by government and NGOs organizations so as to build sustainable peace among the worrying parties.

In plateau State herders and farmers conflicts have impacted negatively on the socio-economic of the areas affected and the state at large. Integrated Regional Information Network (2009) reported that the two days of fighting between farmers and nomads in June 2009 left 3 dead and a number of pastoralists' settlements burned in Plateau State. Kwaja and Bukola (2018) also reported that in Nigeria, the consequences have been severe as more than 6,000 people have been killed and over 62,000 people have been displaced in the Middle Belt states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau alone. In recognition of the devastating effects of conflicts on the economy, government, both local, state and federal have made frantic efforts in building peace among farmers and herders in the affected communities at different times. Government interventions have largely been in form of deployment of security personnel to flash points in addition to organizing peace building dialogue session for stakeholders. Similarly, Non-Governmental organizations like, religions bodies, traditional leaders and civil society Organizations, both local and International also have organized advocacy and dialogue sessions on peace among herders and farmers in the State. Despite these interventions, these conflicts still persist as there are alleged pockets of attacks and killings going on in some local government areas. National Orientation Agency (2017) reported that about 27 natives of irigwe of Nkie-Dahoro Village of Maingo District of Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State were brutally killed by suspected herders in a primary school under the watchful eyes of security personnel who incidentally instructed them to go there and seek refuge. Based on these revelations from literature, it appears as if not much has been achieved with regard to identifying the drivers of herders and farmers conflicts, and the extent of the impact of such interventions in resolving the conflicts between the worrying parties in the State. The problem that prompted this study therefore is: what has been the impact of government and Non-governmental organizations interventions in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the role of government and non-governmental organization in curbing herders and farmers conflicts in Plateau State. The specific objectives of the study however included the following:

- i. To assess the extent of Government interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in Plateau State
- ii. To examine the impact of Non-governmental organizations interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in plateau State

Research Questions

The study was guide by the following questions:

- i. What is the extent of the impact of Government interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in Plateau State?
- ii. What is the impact of Non-governmental organizations interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in plateau State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- i. Government interventions has no significant impact on Peace Building among herders and farmers in Plateau State
- ii. Non-governmental organizations interventions has no significant impact on Peace Building in plateau State

Conceptual Review

Herders and farmers in Nigeria and in Plateau State in particular have co-existed for a long period but such co-existence has never been without tension because it demands a conciliation of rival interests. In such cases, the herdsmen speak the local language very fluently, thereby enhancing social integration and neighbourhood. Ayeni and Efosa (2010) opined that the major pre-occupation of the herders is to take very good care of their herds. This largely involves the search for good grazing grounds in respect of pastures and water for the cattle. They also resist any area that could be hazardous to the health of their herds, such as tsetse fly infested environments. The farmers also have land as the major source of their livelihood and will not for any reason allow the cattle owned by the herders to destroy them. There are other instances where pastoralist –crop farmers interpersonal relationship is not very cordial, conflict that arise in such situation are not usually resolved by personal intervention. Conflict can erupt when livestock is poorly controlled and when herds wander on to cultivated fields. Conflicts have most times occur at critical periods in the annual cycle, particularly during planting period when herds are late in leaving agricultural lands and during harvests, if they return too early. Clashes occur when agricultural activities hinder the movement of herds and cut off their access to water or pastures (Shetima & Usman, 2008). Abbass (2012) opined that in northern Nigeria, rainfall occurs seasonally with a pronounced dry season. The seasonal rainfall and prolonged dry season bring about dynamics in the ecosystem and sour relationships resulting in a sharp division between the sedentary farmers and the nomadic pastoralists. This division between the groups brings tension and conflict. While, Adogi (2013) noted that politicization of the already conflictive farmer/herder relations in that context has contributed in complicating the situation.

Studies have established that the impacts of herders and farmers conflicts are multi-dimensional in nature, but apart from loss of lives and food insecurity, social and economic activities also have been hampered. In

communities like Barkin Ladi and Riyom apart from so many lives loss, commercial activities are at their lowest ebb as movements are restricted due to the emergence of the so-called “no go areas” in some communities. According to Tenuche and Ifetimehi (2009) land as a main factor of production is rapidly declining in fertility while population is increasing at annual rate of 2.5% in the face of declining agricultural production.

Peace building mechanism used in resolving conflict depends on the nature and the magnitude of the conflict. According to Maiese (2003) peace building is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. In the context of this work therefore peace building among herders and farmers encompasses all policies and programmes to design by government and civil society organizations to restore stability and effective social, political, and economic institutions among herders and farmers after or serious upheaval for the benefits of parties involved and the Nigeria state as a whole. Imobighe (2003) opined that conflict management and peace building should first seek to eliminate the conditions that create an environment of conflict and rise to situations that are likely to undermine good relationship. This means at first level of conflict prevention and peace building, conflict managers should concentrate at putting in place the building blocks for societal peace and harmony through system re-examination and system correction.

In Plateau State, Government and Non-governmental organizations have made frantic efforts aiming at curbing the incessant conflicts between herders and farmers in the area. The government through security agencies, particularly the special Task Force (STF) a conglomeration of different security agencies have been very active involved in managing these conflicts. To effectively build peace among herders and farmers, Momale (2003) suggested that government should provide policy guidelines and ensure their effective implementation to guarantee the rights of access to resources for marginalized group. However, the Centre for Peace, Diplomatic and Development Studies (CPDDS) (2012) argued that the problem with the police is that the force lacks the capacity to guarantee security due to inadequate logistics, particularly mobility, which would enhance their ability to respond to crises effectively and efficiently. The narratives implies that parties in conflicts have lost faith in the security forces, the police and the judiciary, due to corruption and material greed tendencies that have distanced these institutions from the general populace. This agreed with Gyong (1998) who stated that the traditional method of conflict management before the advent of colonialism in Africa was better than the present strategies. According to the author, the desire was to remove the cause of the dispute and reconcile the two parties in such a way as to restore the social structure of society to its state of equilibrium with elders of the community playing the role of impartial judges.

Similarly, community-based organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as traditional and religious institutions, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and other informal means have all played significant role in mitigating and curbing herders and farmers in Northern Senatorial district of Plateau State. According to Kwaja (2011) the search for Common Ground, Centre for Peace Initiative and Development (CEIPD), Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the League for human Rights and Youth Adolescence, Reflection and Action Centre (YARAC) among have played important roles in resolving herders and farmers conflicts in Northern senatorial districts of Plateau State. This agreed with Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008) who opined that informal traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution are still functional in the study area; both crop farmers and herders have preference for the issue of conflict arbitration. While, Best (2009) asserted that grassroots community-based

activities, good governance, collaborations, negotiation, reconciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication and crisis management are all elements of western alternative dispute resolution.

Herders and farmers conflicts in have also attracted the attention of researchers going by the quantum of literature available. For instance, Dabit and Gwom (2017) carried out a study on the nature and activities of farmers and herders in Ropp District of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State between 2007 and 2017. The study used a sample of 19 key informant interviewee (KII) and 4 focus groups. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample while data were collected using face-to-face Interviews, focus group discussion (FGDs) key informant interview and participatory learning techniques. Pictures and simple percentages were used in analyzing the data collected. It was found out that over 1700 people have been killed with over 3500 cattle rustled. This study is relevant to the present study, but while it was delimited to Barkin Ladi LGA, the present study covered the whole Plateau State.

Similarly, Ajibefun (2018) conducted a study on the social and economic effects of the menace of Fulani herdsmen crises in Nigeria from affected Local Government areas in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted of 250 farmers and 150 respondents from Fulani tribe selected via purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of t-test were used to analyze the data generated from respondents. The findings revealed that the major cause of the conflict was destruction of crops. The study recommended among others that representative of the host communities and Fulani herdsmen should be permitted to take part actively in the planning procedure of restoring peace to most of the affected communities. The study by Ajibefun (2018) is relevant to the present study since it focused on herders and farmers conflicts which are also captured in this work. However, social and economic effects of the conflicts were the main variable, this study focused on the interventions of government and Non-Governmental Organizations in curbing herders and farmers conflicts in Plateau State in particular.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of the Tragedy of the Commons. This theory was postulated by Hardin in 1968. The tragedy of the common states that when a resource is collectively owned by a group of people, each will exploit the resource, overusing it, ignoring the group's collective interest, and thus ultimately destroy the resource. Hardin explained the 'tragedy' by using the example of a pasture which is open to all to use. This open pasture is used by herdsmen to allow their cattle to graze and each herdsman will continue to add cattle to the pasture so as to expand the amount of proceeds coming from their herd. Based on this theory also, land and its resources is the common and the tragedy is the damage done to the land resources leading to competition and conflict over this scarce resource by herders and farmers. The common dilemma stands as a model for a great variety of present resource problems in most societies.

This theory is relevant to this study considering the fact that land is a resources that is collectively use by farmers and herders. Farmers use land resources to grow their crops, while herders also use the resources to graze their animals. This creates pressure on the land, thereby reducing its quantity and fertility and with population increase and climate change, the quantity needed by both farmers and herders decreases continually, which according to this theory is the tragedy associated with the use of this common resources. Thus, conflicts arises between farmers and herders if one group feels deprived of these resources by the other, thereby leading to loss of lives and properties as experienced in Plateau State.

Research Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research design as its guide. The study population consisted of farmers and herders in the three (3) senatorial zones of Plateau state, namely Northern, Central and Southern zone respectively. A sample size of 800 respondents, comprising of 400 herders and 400 farmers was drawn using two sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling and stratified sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire titled ‘‘Government and Non-Governmental Interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts (GANIHFC) questionnaire’’ developed based on the 5-point Likert scale by the researcher was used. The questionnaire consisted of section A and B. Section ‘A’ comprised of the socio-demographic data of the respondents, while Section ‘B’ consisted of the research items to be answered by respondents. Face and construct validity of the questionnaire were ascertained by experts in test and measurement at the Jos. A pilot study involving 100 herders and 100 farmers was also carried out in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of the State and after which the reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach Alpha technique. This method was considered appropriate due to the non-dichotomously nature of items in the questionnaire. Thus, a reliability coefficient of .834 was obtained which indicated that the questionnaire was reliable since it was statistically greater than 0.70 used as the benchmark.

The direct administration or face-to-face method was used in the administration of the questionnaire to the selected sample. Three (3) trained research assistants assisted the researcher in the administration of the questionnaire. Frequency tables, mean rating and standard deviation were used as descriptive tools for analyzing the research questions. A decisions rule of 3.0 was used as basis for statistical decisions on the research questions. While, the hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 or 5% level of significance using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (r). The probability value (p-value) and the level of significance (0.05) were used for statistical decisions. The computations were done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version twenty one (23.0) software for accuracy.

Results:

Research Question One: What is the extent of the impact of Government interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in Plateau State?

Table 1: Mean Rating of impact of government interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts

Statement of Items	N	X	St. Dev.	Decision
Federal and State government organized dialogue meetings between worrying parties in the state.	790	3.327	1.399	Agree
Some perpetrators of the conflicts have been arrested and prosecuted by government	790	3.289	1.483	Agree
Most victims of the conflicts have returned to their communities’ courtesy government peace efforts.	790	2.718	1.264	Disagree
Deployment of security personal by government enhances peace in affected communities	790	2.825	1.352	Disagree
Airing of peace jingles and other peace programmes help in building peace	790	2.471	1.193	Disagree
Deployment of security agencies led to local resentment and increases divides and conflicts	790	3.503	1.350	Agree
Government has provided adequate relief materials to the victims herders and farmers conflicts	790	2.567	1.292	Disagree

Grand Mean	2.957	1.333	Disagree
Decision Mean	3.000		

The findings from the results of analysis in Table 1 on the impact of government interventions on peace building among herders and farmers in Table revealed that a grand mean of 2.957 and a decision mean of 3.000. This means that the cumulative or the grand mean of the items used to measure the extent of the impact of the interventions by the government is less than the benchmark or decision mean. The decision rule therefore is that the respondents disagreed with the items and the implication is that governments' intervention has not significantly impacted on peace building between herders and farmers in Plateau State. The respondents argued that government intervention has not significantly made most of the victims to returned to their communities, the deployment of security personnel has not enhanced peace and this may be attested to by the pockets of killings in some communities in the area, airing of peace jingles and public media stations in the State also has not helped in building peace and that relief materials provided by the government to victims have not been adequate. The respondents however stated that government has organized dialogue between warring parties in conflicts ($X=3.327$) and that some perpetrators were arrested and prosecuted ($X=3.289$).

Research Question Two: What is the impact of Non-governmental organizations interventions in Peace Building among herders and farmers in plateau State?

Table 2: Mean Rating of impact of Non-governmental interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts

Statement of Items	N	X	St. Dev.	Decision
Traditional and religious leaders play effective roles in preventing herders and farmers conflicts.	790	3.357	1.365	Agree
Peace meetings and dialogue organized by civil societies help in reducing herders-farmers conflicts	790	3.486	1.294	Agree
NGOs peace building strategies are more effective because of their participatory nature	790	3.796	1.349	Agree
Working with local actors like herders and farmers by NGOs limit herders-farmers conflicts.	790	3.825	1.397	Agree
Sponsorship of social events like sports in conflict prone areas by NGOs has helped in building peace	790	2.720	1.135	Disagree
Private media stations jingles on peaceful co-existence among herders	790	2.871	1.131	Disagree
Involvement of NGOs in peace building enable herders and farmers to accept decisions taken	790	3.722	1.354	Agree
Grand Mean		3.397	1.289	Agree
Decision Mean		3.000		

Table 2 indicated that the grand or cumulative mean for the impact of NGOs intervention in peace building among herders and farmers in the study was 3.397 as against the decision or criterion mean of 3.000. Since the grand mean is greater than the decision mean, it implies that NGOs interventions have had significant impacts on building peace between herders and farmers in Plateau State. In other words, the peace enjoy between herders and farmers in the State is attributed largely to the peace building programmes and activities embarked upon by both local and international NGOs in the State. However, the sponsoring of social events ($X= 2.720$) and the airing of peace jingles by NGOs ($X=2.871$) has not impacted significantly to peace building in the State.

Results of Hypotheses Testing:

Hypothesis One: Government interventions have no significant impact on Peace Building among herders and farmers in Plateau State

Table 3: Results of Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of impact of Government Interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts

Variable	X	SD	N	r-cal.	p	Decision
Gov't Interventions	2.827	1.399	790	.550	.202	H0 Accepted
Herders/Farmers Conflicts	3.503	1.468				

$p > .05$

Table 3 indicated that $r(790) = .550, p = .202$, which means that the probability value (p-value) of the test statistic is greater than 0.05 used as the level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted or the study failed to reject the H0 and the conclusion drawn is that there is a no significant impact of government interventions in curbing herders and farmers conflicts in Plateau State. The study revealed that $r = .550$, which also means that government interventions in curbing the conflicts in the area have been positive, but not significant.

Hypothesis Two: Non-governmental organizations interventions have no significant impact on Peace Building in plateau State

Table 4: Results of Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of impact of Non-government Interventions in Herders and Farmers Conflicts

Variable	X	SD	n	r-cal.	p	Decision
NGOs Interventions	3.796	1.349	790	.348	.000	H0 Rejected
Herders/Farmers Conflicts	3.914	1.289				

$p < .05$

The findings from the results of analysis in Table 4 found that $r(790) = .348, p = .000$ which implies that $p < 0.05$ and hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The study therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between the impact of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in curbing herders and farmers conflicts in Plateau State. The coefficient of $r = .348$ means that the impact of NGOs intervention towards addressing the conflicts has been positive.

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to empirically assess the impact of government and Non-governmental Organizations interventions in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State. The findings from the analysis of research question one established that government intervention has not significantly made most of the victims to returned to their communities, the deployment of security personnel has not enhanced peace and this may be attested to by the pockets of killings in some communities in the area, airing of peace jingles and public

media stations in the State also has not helped in building peace and that relief materials provided by the government to victims have not been adequate. But, the study also found that government has organized dialogue between warring parties in conflicts and that some perpetrators were arrested and prosecuted and the deployment of security has led to local resentment and divides among communities. The hypothesis tested revealed that government intervention has no significant impact on peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State. The failure of government has been reported also in literature. Duru (2016) reported that a gruesome attack on Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State in February 2016 in which about 7000 people were driven from six villages by the Fulani herdsmen. The author further stated that despite heavy gunshots by the herdsmen, no military or security presence was felt. Over 200 persons were killed and houses were razed. This may not be in any way different in Plateau State since both States are the Middle belt region that has remained vulnerable to herders and farmers conflicts in recent times.

Furthermore, the results of analysis of research questions two indicated that NGOs interventions have contributed significantly in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State. The study revealed that traditional and religious leaders play effective role in building peace between herders and farmers, civil societies dialogue and meetings also has contributed to peace among the parties in conflicts and that the participatory nature of NGOs peace building strategies has helped in building peace between herder and farmers in the State. The results from the hypothesis revealed that a significant impact of NGOs intervention on peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State. Buttressing this, Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008) asserted that the village head and the head of herdsmen called *ArDOS* should be involved in settling the dispute and in building peace.

Conclusion

The incessant conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria and in Plateau State have been widely reported in conceptual and empirical literature as evidence from the findings of this study. The findings revealed that the provision of relief materials and deployment of security personnel by government have not impacted significantly to peace building in the State. It was found that NGOs interventions in form organizing dialogue and meetings for parties in conflicts and their participatory peace building strategies have impacted positively on peace building in the area. The study therefore concluded that though government has intervened in many ways, such interventions have not impacted significantly on peace between herders and farmers, but that NGOs interventions have had significant positive impact on peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations have been made among others:

- i. Government should intensify its efforts in building peace between herders and farmers in the State through collaborative programmes with their community leaders and NGOs operating in such areas.
- ii. Government should ensure that the security operative deploys to maintain peace in communities affected by herders and farmers conflicts adhere strictly to rules of engagement.
- iii. Government ensure that victims of herders and farmers conflicts are assisted with financial resources and houses and properties destroyed should be renovated or reconstructed to enable those affected return back to their original communities.

- iv. Government should establish a department for ethnic and religious affairs in all local government areas. This department should be saddle with the task of co-ordinating peace building programmes of both government agencies and NGOs in the State.

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