



Assessing the Capacity of Local Government in Managing Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria: Empirical from Ibarapa North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria

Wasiu Abiodun Makinde¹, Michael Tanpinnu Idowu²

¹⁻²Department of Public Administration, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State.

Corresponding email: michael.idowu@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction: Herdsmen-Farmers conflict has become a recurring issue in Nigeria, leading to loss of property, lives and means of livelihoods. This has become a cause for concern for all levels of government, especially local governments, as the third tier and closest level of government to the grassroots and local areas, and a critical stakeholder where such incidents are taken place. However, their capacity to manage such conflict is often questioned, leading to this study assessing the capacity of Ibarapa Local Government in managing Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts in Oyo State. The study will specifically examine the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanism as well as challenges being faced by Ibarapa Local Government in managing Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts. The choice of this local government resulted from the record of these type of conflicts in the recent past.

Methodology: The study employed both qualitative and quantitative (mixed) methods of data collection and analysis. Cochran's sampling technique was adopted due to the inability to ascertain the actual population, to distribute 240 copies of questionnaire to farmers, herdsmen and local government officials to deduce information on the research objectives. An in-depth interview was conducted with the selected local government officials, traditional rulers, community leaders and security personnel. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as thematic analysis for interview responses.

Findings/Discussions: The study discovered that some policies and frameworks have been put in place by Ibarapa North Local Government for managing Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts, but their implementation is often ineffective. The local government lacks adequate funding, personnel and infrastructure to effectively manage the conflicts. The study further revealed that there is a lack of understanding and awareness of Herdsmen-Farmers conflict among stakeholders. The conflict resolution strategies employed by the local government are usually ad-hoc in nature and not effective for sustainable peace.

Conclusion/Policy Implications: The study concludes that the local government lacks the required capacity to effectively manage conflicts between Herdsmen and Farmers. To ameliorate these challenges, the study recommends that Ibarapa North Local Government should develop and implement policies and frameworks that will be effective in managing conflicts between Herdsmen and Farmers in their local domain. There should be capacity-building and training programmes for all stakeholders including their staff, on conflict management and resolution. It also suggests support from state and federal government in providing necessary funding, facilities and logistics for effective management of Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts. Finally, the study opined that multi-stakeholder approach involving traditional rulers, local government officials, farmers, herders and community leaders is key to effective Herdsmen-Farmers conflict resolution management.

Keywords: Herdsmen, Farmers, Conflict Management, Local Government, Conflict Resolution