

# Tiv Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict, and Socioeconomic Development of Guma Local Government Area of Benue State

<sup>1</sup>ISHOR, David G., PhD., <sup>1</sup>IORKOSU, Samuel T. and <sup>1</sup>APAVIGBA, Liambee  
<sup>1,2,3</sup> Department of Sociology, Federal University Lafia

## Abstract

*This study focused on the effects of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict on socioeconomic development of Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. Objectives of the research were to assess the relationship between Tiv and Fulani ethnic groups prior to the conflict, identify causes of the conflict, find out effects of the conflict on social and economic activities in the local government and identify lasting solution to the conflict. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 421 respondents, farmers, community leaders and divisional police officers in study area. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for the study. Data were generated through questionnaire administered on the 421 respondents and interview sessions with farmers, community leaders and divisional police officers. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed through ethnographic summaries. The study found that the conflict involving Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen has seriously and negatively affect socioeconomic development in Guma Local Government Area. It was thus recommended among other things that people rearing cattle should establish ranches in order to avoid destruction of farm crops by grazing cows, a development that often lead to conflict.*

**Keywords:** Tiv, Fulani, conflict, socioeconomic, cattle

## Introduction

Challenges facing humanity are myriad but have to be understood within the context of environmental degradation and insecurity. Conflict is an inescapable reality of social existence (Gambo, 2008). It is a universal phenomenon to which even developed countries of the world are no exception (Ademola, 2005). There is hardly any society that has not experienced one form of conflict or the other. Since individuals and groups of varying nationalities with differing interests interact with one another, conflicts are bound to occur (Gambo, 2008).

According to Wilson (2008), conflicts could take different forms. Among the various forms, the source states that ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts have become the most pervasive in Africa and Nigeria in particular. It is noted among scholars like Schaefer (2008) that conflict situations can be endemic in nature, and their major causes revolve around the distribution of highly valued and scarce resources, divergent interests associated with class, economic, ethnic, religion and racial differentiations. However, Owugah (2008) opines that, ethnicity, religion, gender and racial differences cannot necessarily be accompanied by violent conflicts, except where there is scramble for scarce resources and inequality in human rights abound.

Gambo (2008) argues that conflict is not necessarily dysfunctional. It could indeed be a veritable trigger of socioeconomic development of

society. Nonetheless, when conflict assumes violent dimension, it becomes absolutely dysfunctional (ActionAid, 2008). Violent conflicts could result in huge losses in terms of human lives and property (Gambo, 2008). Consequently, means of livelihood are destroyed and social relations embittered such that cooperation necessary for development becomes impossible. In addition, there is mass incidence of human displacement, a phenomenon that has its own unique challenges (Alubo, 2011). Usually, there is massive outmigration from such conflict-ridden zones; and economic and social activities of such places are grossly affected (Onlinenigeria, 2015). This means that violent conflicts do not only retard development but also actually result in underdevelopment and retrogression.

Meanwhile, this study is a conscious intellectual effort at determining the impact of violent conflict between Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Guma is a farming community and survive on such agricultural products as yam, cassava, millet, rice, maize and different perennial crops. In recent time, Fulani herdsmen, who have settled in the land and enjoyed cordial relationship with the indigenes for several years have suddenly turned against their host, leading to violent altercations. The violent nature and rapid escalation of the conflict as reported by Osigbe (2014) poses enormous security challenges, and is a source of serious worry not only to the local government but also to the state and of

course the nation. Of very serious concern is the tendency for the conflict to take wild and raging dimensions like other armed conflicts taking place globally. According to Ugber (2014), the local combatants now go on sophisticated arms like mini chemical explosives to wreck maximum havoc in most parts of Tiv farms. Duru (2013) quotes Honourable Frank Adi, Chairman, Guma Local Government Council as lamenting that aside from the conflicts leading to loss of lives of his people on a daily basis, it is also taking its toll on finances of the Council. Jimin (2014) describes the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict as bloodbath in Benue. In spite of its ostensible consequences, several issues have remained inadequately explored about the conflict. For instance, Fulani residency in Benue State generally and Guma LGA in particular has a long history. Therefore, there is the need to understand the relationship between the two ethnic groups prior to the conflicts as well as genesis of the conflicts. Such knowledge will provide a reliable roadmap for realistic intervention towards a peaceful society that conduces to rapid socioeconomic development.

### Research Questions

This study is designed to address the following questions:

- i. What was the relationship between Tiv and Fulani ethnic groups prior to the conflict in Guma Local Government Area?
- ii. What are the causes of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict in Guma Local Government Area?
- iii. How has the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict affected social activities in Guma Local government Area?
- iv. What is the impact of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict on economic activities in Guma Local government Area?
- v. What is the lasting solution to the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Guma Local government Area?

### Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To assess the relationship between Tiv and Fulani ethnic groups prior to the conflict in Guma Local Government Area.
- ii. To identify the causes of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict in Guma Local Government

Area.

- vi. To determine effects of the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict on social activities in Guma Local government Area
- vii. To find out the effects of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict on economic activities in Guma Local Government Area.
- viii. To explore the lasting solution to the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Guma Local government Area.

### Historical Relationship between Tiv and the Fulani People Prior to Conflict

Conflict is ominous, evil, and condemnable. If all things could be equal, the Tiv and Fulani should never be fighting, at least, not to go to war. They are social cousins (Hagher, 2013). According to Tiv chronicles, a proto-Bantu ethnic group came in contact with the Fulani around the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century as they migrated into Nigeria. The Tiv established farms and kept their own cattle (muturu) that were restricted around their homes. The Fulani on the other hand were nomadic herdsmen. They had a social relationship, as the Tiv produced food for the Fulani's while the Fulani served as standing army to defend the Tiv against invading tribes (Ingbilla, 2013). Over time, they intermarried and considered themselves inseparable.

Hagher (2013) documents Tiv Chronicles revelation of how the Tiv and Fulani parted ways over complaints that the larger populated Fulanis were marrying all Tiv daughters, leaving the Tiv with fewer daughters to propagate their group. They agreed to part as friends and cousins. The Tiv called the Fulani 'Upul' and the Fulani called the Tiv 'Munchi', a nickname they gave Tiv after an incident involving Fulani household. As narrated by Unongo (2013), the Fulani men had gone south with their cattle during dry season to pasture. After several months, they returned home to find the women they had left behind under Tiv supervision to be pregnant. When the Fulani met his Tiv social cousins, the Tiv accepted responsibility. In agreeing to part as friends, the Tiv and Fulani elders made a treaty to live in peace as social cousins. This treaty has been observed on both sides with great care. It is encoded in Tiv and Fulani social rituals.

Ati (2013) also remarks that, the Tiv of the middle belt of Nigeria, who have suffered most of these conflicts and Fulani of Northern Nigeria, have always had a relationship, be it cordial or frosty. History also has it that, the two ethnic groups were once friends living together and all fending cattle but when the Tiv

decided to migrate to the middle belt, they demanded for their share of the cattle to which they were obliged. After the successful migration, the Tiv who are known for their deep penchant for meat, consumed their cattle. Upon the next meeting with the Fulani's, they were asked the whereabouts of their cattle to which they responded in Hausa, "Munchi", meaning, "have eaten it", a name that has stuck with them for years. Unfortunately, the once convivial relationship has become a vinegary one. Almost at all points where these former bedmates met, there tends to arise a confrontation and the relationship turns frosty.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is founded upon the conflict theory. Conflict perspective is derived from the works of Karl Marx (1818-1883) who saw the society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. Social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic and social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, often in opposition to other groups. According to conflict theory, inequality exists because those in control of a disproportionate share of society's resources actively defend their advantages. The masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion in the hands of those in power. This perspective emphasizes social control, not consensus and conformity. The theory maintains that groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society. Luwing Gumplouvicz (1838-1909) as cited in Idyorough (2002) describes how civilization has been shaped by conflict between cultures and ethnic groups. He theorized that large complex human societies evolved from these wars and conquests.

The conflict perspective is very appropriate and so adopted for this study. It insists on interpreting man's consciousness and activities in the society based on the competitive balance and satisfaction of economic factors or considerations among different groups. It is the value attached to materials things that resulted to conflict between Tiv (valued land i.e. agricultural produce) and Fulani (valued cattle). When there is clash of interest and values among the groups, conflict results. It is on the basis of this that the conflict theory is considered as the most appropriate for the analysis of this study.

### Research Methodology

This study was carried out in Guma Local

Government Area of Benue State. The local government has a population of 191,599 (NPC 2006). The population of the study, which adopted cross-sectional survey design, was all residents of Guma LGA. It was a very large population, being estimated at about 191,599 (NPC, 2006) and could not be studied entirely. Thus, the researcher chose 421 respondents that constituted sample for the study. Given that the study focused on agriculture and security, farmers, community leaders and Divisional Police Officers in study area were included in the sample.

In selecting sample for the study, Yamane (1967) formula for sample size determination was used. The (Yamane, 1967) suggested that for a known population, the sample size should be obtained using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Universe (study population)

1 = Constant

e = Level of significance (usually 0.05 or 95%).

The population of Guma LGA put at 191,599 (NPC, 2006). Substituting the above formula, we have:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{191599}{1 + 191599(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{191599}{479.9975} \\ &= 399.1666623 \\ &= 400 \text{ (applying rule of integer)} \end{aligned}$$

The researchers anticipated that 95 percent of the respondents would complete and return their questionnaires. To compensate for the five percent non-response rate, a formula recommended by Araoye (2004) was used. It is stated as:

$$n_2 = \frac{N}{r}$$

Where:

n<sub>2</sub> = Actual sample size

N = Calculated sample size

r = Expected return rate

Substituting the formula, we have

$$n_2 = \frac{400}{95\%}$$

$$n_2 = \frac{400}{0.95}$$

$$n_2 = 421$$

Thus, taking into cognizance the expected return rate of questionnaires, 421 respondents were served questionnaires. A combination of simple random, systematic random and purposive sampling procedures were used to select the 421 respondents as well as farmers, community leaders and divisional police officers.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were utilised. To generate quantitative data, an open-ended questionnaire was used. The instrument was divided into two sections A and B. Section A dwelt on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. In section B, there were carefully framed questions and statements designed to elicit responses that provided the required data. The instrument was structured in such a way as to allow the respondents express their opinions and clarify certain issues regarding subject. Qualitative data was obtained through structured in-depth interview sessions, which were held with the farmers, community leaders and Divisional Police Officers. The interview served to complement as well as validate data from the questionnaire

### Results

A total of 421 questionnaires were administered during the study. However, only 374 questionnaires were returned. Forty-seven questionnaires were either mutilated, had invalid responses or not returned at all. Data obtained through these questionnaires and interview sessions are presented and analysed below.

Fulani before the conflict. They pointed out that the two ethnic groups were used to inter-marrying, sharing things in common before conflict escalated. A community leader in Agasha had this to say:

*Our relationship with the Fulani in the past was so cordial that what is happening now beats everyone's imagination. We used to socialize freely with them, trade with them, exchange gifts during festivities and of course inter-marry with them. All that have become things of the past; today a Tiv man and a Fulani man hardly see eye-to-eye. Even though they still roam about and graze on our land, they are no longer welcome*

Another respondent, a police officer however, expressed optimism that the conflict will end soon since both groups were former friends, who could reconcile. He said:

*As friends and 'brothers', the Tiv and Fulani in Guma have no choice than reconcile and forge ahead. They have known one another for years and have lived happily together. As a security institution, the police will continue to do its best to ensure that law and order is maintained; the Tiv and Fulani have lived together long enough to become brothers and sisters, so they should forgive and forget their differences*

We therefore, wanted to know the causes of this conflict and the result is presented on Table 2.

Table 2 above shows responses to the causes of Tiv farmers Fulani herdsmen conflict in Guma Local Government Area. The data shows 20(5.3%) of the

**Table 1: Respondents' Views on the Relationship between Tiv and Fulani Prior to the Conflict in Guma Local Government Area**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Friendly	225	60.2
Unfriendly	131	35.0
I don't know	18	4.8
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Data presented on Table 1 was collected on the relationship that existed before the Tiv and Fulani before the Guma conflict. Some 225(60.2%) of the respondents revealed that there was a friendly relationship between the Tiv and Fulani before the conflict. 131(35%) of respondents revealed that the relationship between the two ethnic groups were not friendly and cordial while 18(4.8%) of the respondents said they had no idea. Responses from the interview shows that all the respondents agreed that there was cordial and friendly relationship between the Tiv and

respondents who agreed that lack of ranches were the cause of Tiv-Fulani conflict in the area. 39(10.4%) other respondents identified encroachment into farm lands by Fulani herdsmen for grazing. Again, 65(17.5%) identified illegal acquisition of farmlands from community members without their knowledge. 60(16%) also identified poor attitude of government towards conflict management while majority of the respondents 190(50.8%) identified lack of building of ranches, encroachment into farmlands by Fulani herdsmen for grazing, illegal acquisition of

**Table 2: Respondents' Views on the Causes of Tiv Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Crisis in Guma Local Government Area**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of ranches	20	5.3
Encroachment into Tiv farms by Fulani herdsmen for grazing	39	10.4
Illegal acquisition of farmlands from community members without their knowledge	65	17.5
Biased attitude of state security forces deployed to prevent conflict	60	16.0
All of the above	190	50.8
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

farmlands from community members without their knowledge and poor attitude of government towards conflict resolution as the causes of the conflict.

A community leader who spoke with the researchers in Daudu stated that the principal cause of the conflict is encroachment of cattle into farms for grazing. According to him:

*The Fulani are wicked; yes, they are callous. These people (Fulani) deliberately allow their cattle to feast on the crops we cultivate with our sweat. If those cows are valuable to them as a source of livelihood, then they should remember that our source of survival is the farm. Therefore, to answer your question simply, I can say the primary and principal cause of this conflict is the Fulani's attitude of grazing their animals on our farms.*

Another respondent, a farmer in Yogbo, confirmed this position. He disputed the allegation of cattle theft often made by Fulani herdsmen as a cause of the problem arguing that the herders graze their cows carelessly not minding whether crops or water points

are destroyed in the process. He proceeded to blame the state security apparatuses for the persistence of the conflicts lamenting that Fulani herdsmen are allowed to freely carry (and use) sophisticated weapons on innocent, defenceless farmers while the indigenes have not only been dispossessed of all ammunitions but actually emasculated leaving them vulnerable to the attackers.

Having determined causes of the conflict, the researchers proceeded to find out its effects on socioeconomic development of Guma Local Government. The data obtained is presented below:

**Table 3: Respondents' Views on the Effects of Tiv Farmers and Fulani herdsmen Conflict on Social Activities in Guma Local Government.**

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
People become afraid of mixing up in a social gathering for fear of been attacked by the conflicting group	42	11.2
People no longer visit Guma Local Government Area as regularly as before for fear of been attacked by the conflicting parties	33	8.8
Many lives and properties were lost during the conflict	45	12.0
Many people were displaced during the conflict	40	10.7
Many people lost their loved ones during the conflict	15	4.0
All of the above	199	53.3
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2016

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All of the above	199	53.3
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2016

In Table 3, the data show that majority of the respondents 199(53.3%) opined that people get afraid of mixing up in social gatherings for fear of been attacked by the conflicting groups. They no longer visit Guma Local Government Area as regular as before, for fear of been attacked by conflicting parties; many lives and properties were lost during the conflict; many people were displaced during the conflict, and many people lost their loved ones during conflict. Again, 87(23.2%) confirmed the above statement of the weak social relationship as a result of the conflict. While 40(10.7%) respondents expressed dismay that people were displaced during the conflict. These views were re-echoed by the respondents interviewed. A police officer in Gbajimba revealed that his office receives on daily basis reports of attacks, counter attacks, human deaths and destruction of property especially houses and farm produce. Asked to specify the exact casualty rate, the Officer stated:

*Exact figures are difficult to establish. I however, must admit to you that lives have been lost and property worth millions of naira destroyed and looted. Note also that these losses have been recorded on both sides; farmers and communities have lost their crops, farm produce, houses, domestic animals and business premises while the herders have lost their cows. Therefore, every party to the conflict has recorded losses.*

Asked about the implications of these losses on the nation, the Officer stated that it portends serious food security dangers since Benue is the food basket of Nigeria. A farmer at Ukpan lamented the losses he personally suffered as well as that suffered by other

property to safety. His words:

*We were not prepared for the kind of attacks they launched on our community. The weapons used and the military expertise deployed were simply too sophisticated for our strength and experience. Thus, we fled like children; everyone fled for dear lives leaving behind everything. The marauding attackers killed a number of community members, looted and destroyed property. I doubt if these attackers are the ordinary Fulani we used to know. Hundreds of people were displaced and it will be difficult to fully recover from impact of these attacks.*

A community leader at the same locality who spoke to the researchers on the effects of the conflict on social relations lamented:

*There is fear in the land; complete fear and uncertainty. Everybody is afraid of going about normal activities. Our markets have been closed down, social activities like weddings, naming ceremonies and burials are done either secretly or not at all. Schools have been closed down and children evacuated to internally displaced persons camps. In a word, I can say social life in our community is truncated.*

Having determined the consequences of the conflicts, we proceeded to assess the effects of the conflict on socio-economic development in Guma LGA.

The table above shows that majority of the respondents 179(47.9%) indicated that the conflict did scare investors away from the Local Government, as there existed no market where goods and services could be sold or exchanged. Farmers mostly lost their

**Table 4: Respondents' Views on Effects of Tiv Farmers and Fulani herdsmen Conflict on Economic Activities in Guma Local Government**

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Scares investors away from the local government area	5	1.3
No market where goods and services be sold or exchanged	15	4.0
Farmers lost their livestock during conflict	7	1.9
Farmers crops were destroyed during conflict	32	8.6
It distorts preparation for next season farming activities	60	16.0
Farming activities are in a minimal level in GumaLGA	20	5.3
The Tiv-Fulani conflict leads to hunger and starvation	61	16.3
All of the above	174	46.6
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

farmers in the locality. According to him, though they were aware of the conflicts, the community never anticipated it to escalate to the proportions it did. Thus, they were completely taken unawares and thus could neither resist the attacks nor move their

livestock during the conflict while farmers' crops were destroyed. The conflict also distorted preparation for next seasonal farming activities, and with the minimal level of farming activities, this consequently resulted in hunger and starvation in Guma Local Government

Area. Again, 95(25.3%) were of the opinion that farming activities which forms the main economic activities of the area were at the minimal level during the conflict that leads to hunger and starvation in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. A community leader at Ortese who spoke to the researchers asked rhetorically: *How can you expect economic development of a farming community when it can no longer go to farm?* He proceeded to reveal that the conflicts have left farmers devastated and afraid. Thus, they can no longer go about their normal farming activities. According to him, the result has been deepened poverty, hunger and frustration. Another respondent, a female farmer at Yelewata lamented that she was very prosperous as a tomato and pepper farmer. However, since the conflicts erupted, her entire farms have been destroyed leaving her beggarly without a sustainable means of livelihood. Being a widow, she said her children can no longer go to school and even feeding them has become a very difficult thing.

He revealed further that even farmers who keep domestic animals like goats, sheet and even chicken try to confine them in a fence or cage at certain periods of the year to avoid destruction to crops. He questioned: *If smaller animals like goats and sheep are prevented from roaming the farms, how can cows that consume a lot be given such freedom if the interest of crop farmers is to be protected?*

The police officer interviewed in this regard said that ranching is not only the best option out of the present situation but also is actually the global standard practice in cattle rearing. His words: *Ranching is the most modern acceptable practice in cattle rearing. It does not only ensure peaceful coexistence between cattle breeders and farming communities, it ensures security and health of the cows themselves.* All the community leaders and farmers interviewed also held overwhelming opinion that prohibition of open grazing and establishment of ranching remains the single most enduring solution to the crisis.

**Table 5: Respondents' Views on How to Solve the Tiv Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Crisis in Guma Local Government Area**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Establishment of ranches	278	74.3
Creation of grazing routes	16	4.3
Prevention of illegal acquisition of arms	68	18.2
Expulsion of Fulani herdsmen	12	3.2
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 5 indicates an overwhelming view (74.3%) in favour of establishment of ranches. The respondents who expressed the view further suggested outright prohibition of open grazing in the local government. Further, 68(18.2%) respondents called for complete disarmament of all who are in possession of firearms as well as prevention of such illegal possessions. Very few respondents 16(4.3%) and 12(3.2%) called for creation of grazing routes and expulsion of Fulani herdsmen from Guma Local Government respectively. Data from interview also indicate that ranching is the most reliable solution to the problem. A community leader at Agasha told the researchers that the only way Fulani herdsmen and farmers can live together is for the herders to confine their cows in a place. He noted:

*Cows relish crops; thus, it is impossible to allow them free movement where crops are growing because they will eat them. Farmers live on crops and will not accept them being consumed by cows. Therefore, for the two groups to live peacefully in one place, cows have to be restricted from free movement so that they will not disturb crops.*

## Discussion of Findings

**Research objective one:** The relationship between Tiv-Fulani ethnic group prior to the conflict in Guma Local Government Area. Responses from the questionnaire, as well as those of the interview discussion help in providing answer to this research objective. The finding shows that there was a friendly and cordial relationship between the Tiv and Fulani before the conflict, as revealed by 60.2% of the respondents. This finding agrees with Hagher (2013) who states that the Tiv and Fulani were more of brothers, as they had a social, security and agrarian relationship, whereas the Tiv were used to producing food for Fulanis, while the Fulanis would serve as standing army to defend the Tiv against invading tribes.

He pointed out that over time, they intermarried and considered themselves inseparable. The finding also tallies with Ati (2013) who states that, the Tiv and Fulani were once friends living together and all fending cattle. Hagher (2013) also pointed out that,

in agreeing to part as friends, the Tiv and Fulani elders made a treaty to live in peace as cousins and this treaty has been observed on both sides with great care. And it was even encoded in Tiv and Fulani social rituals.

**Research objective two:** The causes of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict in Guma Local Government Area. Responses from the questionnaire as well as those from the in-depth interview, all helped to provide answer to this research objective. The study revealed that lack of grazing route, encroachment into farmlands by Fulani herdsmen, illegal acquisition of farmlands from community members without their knowledge by Fulani herdsmen, bias attitude of state security forces deployed to prevent Tiv-Fulani conflict in Guma, were all responsible for the Tiv-Fulani conflict in the area. This finding agrees with Hagher (2013) who said that in all cases, conflict starts with the Fulani herdsmen driving their cattle into crop farms to graze. The farmers in order to protect their crops, farm and livelihood, attack the Fulani or attempt to chase them away. The Fulani would then retaliate, by opening fire or violently defending their cows by killing or maiming the farmers. This finding is also in accord with the position of conflict theorists that in any society, groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources (Idyorough, 2002).

**Research objective three:** The effects of Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict on socioeconomic development in Guma Local Government Area. Responses from the questionnaire as well as those of the interview session all provided answers to this research objective. Specifically, the responses revealed that, the conflict affected the social development in the area, as indicated by 53.3% of the respondents. It was also indicated in that people are always afraid of mixing up in social gatherings for fear of being attacked.

**Research objective four:** To explore the lasting solution to the Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Guma Local government Area. Data from both the questionnaire and interview sessions persuasively indicated that ranching is the most lasting solution to the problem of Fulani herdsmen and Tiv farmers' conflicts in Guma Local Government Area. This finding is in line with what Alubo and Hindu (2013) found from their study of conflicts in Nasarawa State. It is also consistent with the position of Benue State Government on the matter.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings, one can conclude that the rising incidence of ethnic conflicts

particularly Tiv-Fulani conflict in Nigeria that results to loss of lives and property seems to be pointing towards the direction of a failed state. The ethnic conflict that was used to be associated with the use of local weapons like bow and arrows, cutlasses, knives and local guns have now metamorphosed into the use of sophisticated weapons of mass destructions as theorized by Mills (1962). The Tiv-Fulani conflict is no longer limited as a struggle against the grazing area, but intention to eliminate the opponent. This situation has gotten to such a parlous and worrisome level that it was reported during the Tiv-Fulani conflict that the Fulanis hired other people who were equipped with chemical weapons to destroy lives and property in Tivland. That, they (Fulanis) do call on their fellow Fulanis, especially from neighbouring countries to come and assist them. These mercenaries will come, strike and disappear in thin air.

## Recommendations

Based on the result of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Ranches should be established as alternative to open grazing that is highly problematic.
- ii. Federal Government should create avenues of checking all security agents to ensure they do not take side with one of the warring groups during their peacekeeping missions in Guma Local Government, as this can also avert more aggravation of such crisis.
- iii. Federal Government should lend a helping hand and initiate a process of rehabilitation of the victims through provision of financial grants, agricultural seedlings, and reconstruction of the affected areas to enable them re-engage in their agricultural and economic activities for the growth of the nation.
- iv. There is the need for a sincere and comprehensive disarmament process in all conflict areas. Guns and other weapons of military warfare illegally held be unauthorized persons must not only be retrieved but the possessors be prosecuted for holding such weapons. In particular, Fulani herdsmen must not be allowed to carry sophisticated guns since such privilege has given occasion to unprovoked attacks on defenceless communities.

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