BOOK REVIEW

Obodo, Nneamaka Ijie[1]

Book Title: The Root Cause of Farmers-Herders Crisis in North Central Nigeria

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The main purpose of this book as Suchi & Musa explained is to unravel the root cause of the crisis between farmers and herders in North Central Nigeria (p. 2). Though the farmers-herders crisis as opined by the authors is an age-old phenomenon that is rampant in African societies its frequency in North Central Nigeria has persisted and taken a violent dimension (p. 1). The crisis has become widespread with recorded incidences across the six geo-political zones of the country (p. 3). The North Central zone is particularly hit by increasing herders' attacks on farming communities which has culminated in a crisis with adverse consequences for the security of the region (p. 3). This has led to the destruction of lives, property, and human displacement (p. 1).

The authors believe that there is no consensus as to state the real reasons for the crisis even though opinions like The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment in 1979 which Nigeria is a signatory to have enhanced/given the right to

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the free movement of herders to the North Central zone (p. 2). This in essence is attributed to speculation that has foremost caused the crisis between farmers and herders. Also, without taking into consideration human and housing growth and development and the probable eroding of grazing routes, is seen as a contributory cause. Other speculations include; border porosity and ineffective border control, exploitation of identity mainly religion and ethnicity for political purposes.

The impacts of the crisis as reviewed by the authors in the literature includes; heightened fear of people in affected communities thus hindering their social, economic, and political activities, loss of crops and cattle, and movements of people are restricted (p. 10). There are also reports of a disturbing pattern of failure on the part of security forces to protect people from vicious and deadly attacks by armed groups (p. 15). Notwithstanding the glaring causes, Suchi & Musa resorted to know the root cause as the causes stated above are seen as either assumptions or surface causes of the crisis between farmers-herders in North Central Nigeria. The book is segmented into the introduction; background and research questions, literature review and theoretical framework, methodology, results, and discussion, and finally, policy implication and conclusion.

This research study aimed at understanding the root cause of the crisis between farmers and herders in North Central Nigeria. The theoretical framework was hinged on resource scarcity theory but no information was given as to who propounded the theory, its strengths or weaknesses if any. By doing so, it avails the readers of the opportunity to further understand the theory better. Then, the authors delved into rural banditry and explained that it is tied to the incessant conflict between farmers and herders (p. 17). In addition, they argued that the crisis between the farmers and the herders cannot be understood outside the underlying socio-political and economic structures of inequality and injustice in Nigerian society (p. 17).

Basing the arguments to explain the theory using identity issues dividing the people along ethnic lines is somewhat perceived as a deviation from the original focus of explaining the crisis using resource scarcity or eco-violence theory as earlier stated as the theory adopted

for the study. Instead, the authors would have explained the identity crisis issues of the contending parties by incorporating another theory that best explains real or imagined threats of a group using theories like identity or integrated threat theory. This in essence takes care of the identity component of the culture, tradition, or beliefs of the tribe or ethnic group while the resource scarcity or eco-violence theory takes care of the climate change issues leading to resource scarcity, thus a movement towards North Central Nigeria resulting into a crisis between the warring parties. The methodology used in the study was appropriate. The population and sampling used were appropriate also as they were able to justify the reasons for their selection. The results and discussion were to answer the research questions bothering on the root cause of the farmers and herders crisis in North Central Nigeria.

Given the current state of knowledge, as regards the farmers/herders crisis in north-central Nigeria, the book provided precise answers on the root causes of the crisis. It was able to distinctively identify the drivers of the crisis between the farmers and herders. However, the book failed to answer other research questions. It was also observed that there were more respondents other than the Fulani herders. It gives a form of bias in the analysis. The book partly achieved its objectives as the major goal to unravel the root causes of the crisis was achieved.

In comparison to books with similar titles published in the same year like 'Increasing farmer-herders conflict in Nigeria: an assessment of the clashes between the Fulani Herdsmen and Indigenous Farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Enugu State by Akerjiir, A.S' and 'Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Western Zone of Bauchi State Nigeria by Garba, M, Usman, H & Salawu, J.A' amongst other books, the root cause of the farmers-herders crisis in North Central Nigeria has shown its relevance to the scope of deliberations centred around farmers and herders and it is also an added knowledge to literature.