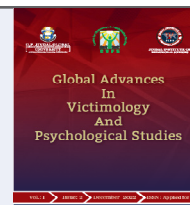


Online ISSN: 2583-5335

Global Advances in Victimology and Psychological Studies



The Dynamics of Victims of Farmers-Herdsmen Violent Clashes in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the changes of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria. Farmers-herdsmen violent clashes seemed to have taken dire consequences on the lives of victims in Nigeria. Many scholars associate the changes of this phenomenon with the inability to control small arms and light weapons proliferation and secure lives and property in Nigeria. The study seeks to examine the effects and coping mechanisms of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State. The paper adopts Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (1985) to explain the phenomenon in question. The methodology utilized in this study is both primary and secondary data. The former utilizes in-depth interviews, while the latter adopts a documentary review of the literature and statistical data analysis of the violent clashes. Findings show that clashes have led to the displacement of victims in Benue State, leaving them in vulnerable conditions. Further findings show that victims of the violent clashes continue to bear the brunt of these violent clashes as they suffer various forms of abuse such as loss of loved ones, rapes, killings and destruction of livelihood sources. It further led to a mass population of widows and widowers as many spouses got killed in the violent clashes. Other effects of these violent clashes include school drop-out due to loss of livelihoods, and funds, abuses and child labour, family separation, as well as exposure to climatic hazards. Victims of these clashes normally cope by seeking shelter in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps as well as staying with friends/relatives in places considered safe during clashes. In conclusion, the paper notes that Nigeria is bedeviled with the ills of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes which have negative consequences on the lives of victims. However, the government and other stakeholders have failed to address it sustainably. The paper recommends that the federal government must redouble its efforts to curtail the violent clashes to avoid the drift of younger people into the impunity of small arms and light weapons proliferation as well as ethnic militancy. Furthermore, the federal government should end the killings by taking decisive action by further improving security and tackling the impunity of the actors behind these violent clashes. The governments should provide immediate soft loans for victims of these violent clashes to enable them to establish small-scale business ventures that will complement their means of sustenance in either IDP camps or other host communities.

Keywords: Dynamics, Farmers, Herdsmen, Victims, Violent and Clashes

1. Introduction

The greatest danger confronting humankind today all over the world is the security of life and property. Mysterious

attacks on communities have come to represent the only option for some individuals and groups to vent their anger and seek recognition which adversely affects the victims (Eze, 2012). About a decade and a half ago, stories

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of farmer-herdsmen violent clashes and other violent forms of criminal activities were rare within the vicinity (Eze, 2012). Today, it has become so rampant to the extent that law enforcement agents are finding it difficult and this has raised the bar for the crime rate in the society. The national dailies (newspapers, magazines among others) have found excuses for inundating their air time and space with the issues of abstract and mysterious killings or insecurity. Various parts of the continent have experienced dangerous scenes of insecurity which have occurred between communities, ethnic groups and religious groups, especially in Africa (Aver, 2021).

However, farmers-herdsmen violent clashes have become the most prominent and common violent clashes in Africa (Tonah, 2006). Before the beginning of the 20th century, farmers-herdsmen violent clashes were mainly restricted to the savanna belts of West Africa (Tonah, 2006). Herdsmen were mainly prevalent in the Guinea, Sudan and Sahel savanna belts where crop production was carried out mainly during the short rainy season on a small scale and piece of land located close to the home. The increasing population over the years in the country especially over the years from the 1950s through the 1980s, 1990s to 2000s has changed virtually everything resulting in deteriorated farmers-herdsmen relationships in which adversaries affect victims (Dyson, 2010; Reed & Mberu, 2014). The growth of population paved the way for an increase in agricultural activities which led to the introduction of agricultural policies like the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP), the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-Operative Bank (NACB), the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFU), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Green Revolution Programme (GRP), Agricultural Development Project (ADPs), among others in every state of Nigeria (Aver, 2021). These policies encouraged large-scale mechanisation in agriculture and were supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and World Bank, over time, occasioned unprecedented increases in human and livestock population (Abbass, 2012). The introduction of irrigation farming and the acquisition of large tracks of land by retired military and top civil servants in the Savanna belt of Nigeria led to violent clashes on the land scale (Aver, 2021).

The foregoing backdrop led to the use of tractors, herbicides and fertilizers that gave raised to the

agricultural revolution in the country as such reducing the grazing lands extensively in Benue State (Iro, 2010). More so, the increasing withering of pasture during the dry season, and less available pastures for the cattle is also another factor that led to the farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State. During the dry season, the herdsmen move southward to the coastal zone where the rainy season is always longer and the soil retains moisture for a long, in search of pasture and water a transhumance movement that tamped on farmers' crops resulting in violent clashes (Tonah, 2006). This gave the herdsmen the impetus to access a vast area of grazing field. This, created a very serious pressure on the land, which paved the way for farmers-herdsmen confrontations especially when cattle stray into the farms and destroy crops in Benue State (Aver, 2021). In due respect, the search for space by herdsmen has been perceived as a threat by farmers which often leads to violent clashes (Boone, 2012; Kyama, 2012). Fasona and Omojola (2005) posit that the rising human and animal populations gave the impetus for the intensification of production activities. This has necessitated the fiercer struggle for the use of land for planting and grazing in Benue State. The rampant cases of acts of and aggression violent clashes on defenceless civilians abound which is unprecedented and unimaginable.

These often forced many of the victims to seek refuge in schools, churches and private residences for survival (Tsa, 2014). It is perplexing to note that most victims are forced migration which inadvertently thrust sudden changes on the rural economy and the family (Oluyemi-Kusa, 2010). There is an opportunity for gradual adaptations to develop and agricultural production stops completely. During these clashes, lives are lost, and relationships broken, as such leading to induced trauma for the victims (Mercy Corps, 2015). The victims from both parties are killed, maimed or forced to leave for IDP camps. Where there is a lack of potable water, inadequate sewage facilities and severe overcrowding in dangerous and unsanitary conditions (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for, 2017). Disease remained pervasive in cramped, poorly ventilated IDP camps which had chronic shortages of medical supplies for the victims. It is against this backdrop that this study is set to examine the dynamics of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Research Problem

The frequent eruption of clashes has some deleterious effects on victims in societies (Gbenro, 2008). Firstly, the social elements in the society become socialized into a culture of clashes, thereby, threatening the evolution, growth and consolidation of a credible society. Secondly, the culture of investment is discouraged as a result of expected clashes. Thirdly, society developers become destroyers of the same society. The family members who survived the clashes become displaced members of the refugee community and try to establish their new household in an alien setting without the comfort and resources of the rural economy, which they left behind due to the violent conflict (Aver, 2021).

Although the situation of victims' farmers-herdsmen clashes in various communities and IDP camps is diverse and varied depending on several factors. The vast majority of the victims in these communities and IDP camps need assistance, including food, water, shelter, sanitation, medical services and support in rebuilding livelihoods (Aver, 2021). Many victims have been forced to flee for their lives, to other communities or IDP camps, leaving behind land, property and livelihoods, and often witnessing and experiencing traumatic conditions in the process. In the course of the violent clashes, households and family members are often separated; men, women and children who are usually left behind are forced to flee without their property. Many people have been separated from family members as a result of the displacement and do not know the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones resulting in traumatic conditions (International Committee of the Red Cross-ICRC, 2006). Some are completely displaced from their residents and geographical locations to other places considered safer. These victims are displaced thus; they suffer malnutrition, food shortage and inadequate access to medical facilities in the IDP camps (Aver, 2021). This often leads to higher rates of deaths of adult males, such as making them become widows (ers) thereby occupying the position of bereaved breadwinners of their families. They also have to endure the loneliness and vulnerability of separating from their families, as a result of the loss of their partners. More so, their displacement often entails finding new sources of livelihood to cope with the new demands of life. Globally, 40.8 million people are living in IDP camps as a result of violent conflict (Internal

Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2016). The victims such as women and children are exposed to epidemics, suffering, trekking long distances, hunger and famine leading to deaths. These have geometrically increased in prostitution and child labour areas due to the effect of these violent clashes in Benue State (Musa *et al.*, 2014). Inadequate medical treatment caused many victims including the orderly to die from treatable illnesses, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis among others. This is due to a severe lack of drugs and healthcare services (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for, 2017).

The issue of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes is completely omitted in the literature of discourse as a social problem in society both the media and the social science research scholars in Benue State, Nigeria. Similarly, whenever the issue is mentioned scholars always treat it as a mere appendix of social problems in the state. Material facts on the ground, however, showed that the victims of these clashes go through agonies that cannot be overruled because they do not have arms and weapons to defend themselves from these clashes. Few scholarly studies that focused on these clashes ignorantly neglected the salient part of the victims of these clashes centering more on the killings and destruction of property. Similarly, the above studies are more theoretical than empirical and, as such, lack the empirical data or evidence to support their claims. The implication of this is that policy formulation and implementation become impossible due to a lack of empirical data on victims of farmers-herdsmen clashes in Benue State, Nigeria. This identified gap in knowledge, therefore, gives renewed insight into the importance of empirical research on the dynamics of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria. This means that one must endeavour to understand the narratives and descriptions of the dynamics of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria. It is against this background that this study sets out to investigate the dynamics of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria to ameliorate the problem.

3. Research Questions

The general research question of this study is: what are the effects of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State? The specific questions include:

- i. What are the effects of the victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State?
- ii. What are the coping strategies adopted by these victims of farmers-herdsmen violent c victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State?

4. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to ascertain the effects of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State. The specific objectives are as follows:

- (i) To ascertain the effects of the victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State.
- (ii) To identify the coping strategies adopted by these victims of farmers-herdsmen violent victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State

5. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This section examines the literature review and theoretical framework

5.1 The Effects the Victims of Farmers-Herdsmen Violent Clashes

The eruption of violent clashes is manifested to victims in many ways and angles. Maier (2000) posits that during violent clashes, there is displacement of people leading to an increase in all dimensions of suffering victims. On the other hand, government buildings are destroyed during the clashes. Hagher (2013) states that several hundreds of non-combatant men, women and children have been killed and maimed; over five thousand people are reported to be refugees in their country Nigeria. Consequently, the clashes have caused the 'imprisonment' of many families in camps across the country. UNICEF (2014) reports that the large majority of victims of farmer-herdsmen violent clashes are women and children and the host families within communities who are themselves poor and consequently putting pressure on already scarce resources to accommodate over 90 per cent. The effect of the violent clashes can be physical, psychological and social. Gbabo (2017) maintains that women and children in most camps often come down with different sicknesses. If it is not

cold, it is catarrh, pneumonia or malaria. They are faced with the rigours of long journeys, psychological trauma, safety challenges, harassment, and frequent sexual abuse and children are confronted with molestation and forced labour. More than 60% of children who are supposed to be in school are forced to drop out (Duru, 2017). Aluko (2017) opines that many children in the camps who have experienced horrible scenes of how family members and friends were either killed or burnt alive are traumatized and they are engaged in the psychological trauma healing process to recover from the shock.

Food insecurity is the major problem of victims of farmers-herdsmen clashes living in IDP camps due to their inability to carry out economic activities (Ekpa & Dahlan, 2015). Thousands of displaced women and children continue to suffer in camps across the nation as a result of violent clashes. It is in this regard that Leigh-Sherman (2000) asserts thus:

We are the victims. We are the ones who are raped. Our sons are the ones who go to war and die. Our children died from starvation. The infrastructure is broken up. We have a common enemy called war.

The perpetrators of the violent clashes, rape and carry out other forms of violence against women as bounties for the violent clashes (Aluko, 2017). The short and long-term effects, particularly, affect everyone in these groups. There are complaints of abuses and atrocities committed against victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes such as abduction, murder, raping of women, burning of houses and shops, destruction of crops and the killing of livestock among others (Duru, 2017). Muhammad (2018) captured the traumatised views of a widowed victim in one of the IDP camps who kept recounting the shooting of her husband and children thus:

I am still in shock after watching my husband and children being killed. I lost my loved ones. My husband was sitting by the entrance of our house where he met his premature death, while my children were killed inside the house. I am now all alone in this world, my husband and four kids were killed, the house burnt down in one attack over a night, and so I had nothing on this earth again.

Communities have lost more men than women and children as victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes. The manifestation of these violent clashes is mass rape, sexual slavery, physical assault, forced prostitution, forced marriages and forced pregnancies, sex for survival, and sex in exchange for food, shelter and protection by

victims. It is sad to note that victims of farmer-herdsmen violent clashes in IDP camps go through many agonies.

5.2 The Coping Strategies Adopted by these Victims of Farmers-Herdsmen Violent Clashes

Coping is thus a series of strategic actions based on a conscious assessment of alternative plans of action within the limited options available to distressed households and victims who choose the plan of action that is calculated to be the most useful to them. A coping strategy is a cognitive, emotional and behavioural method that one utilizes to manage or reduce stress and its effects (Dada, 2006). Van Hear and Cohen (2015) asserted that remittances are often a lifeline in situations of forced displacement, helping households cope with and recover from insecurity and helping people escape conflict. Leaving the displaced people to seek shelter and survival, some are forced to seek refuge in the IDP camps. It is estimated that there are about 26 million people mostly women and children among other victims in IDP camps in Nigeria as a result of violent clashes (Anaana, 2015). As such, they indulge in many sharp practices to survive; many engage in armed robbery as a result of the violent clashes to survive. The pressures imposed on some youths by violent clashes push them into crimes such as armed and petty robbery as a means of survival (Gbenro, 2008). Displacement leaves negative social and economic imprints on millions of people especially the victims worldwide (Olukolajo *et al.*, 2014). Wachira and Vukets (2009) affirm that more than a year and a half after people fled their homes in the wake of violent clashes, many women living in IDP camps in Nigeria have taken to prostitution to earn a living.

Several state governments also assisted in providing relief materials to victims of violent clashes in the country (Gbenro, 2008). Since the majority of those displaced in Nigeria are women and children with little affinity with relatives, their living in camps is inevitable (Jelili & Olanrewaju, 2016). Most of these displaced women have to make ends meet while in the IDP camps. It is in this regard that the camp officials and non-governmental organisations working with IDP camps reported an increase in cases involving desperate women prostituting to feed their children. Okau (2020) also affirmed that Nigerian women who flee from violent clash zones prostitute for food and overdose of cough syrup for

food to suppress hunger due to inadequate provision in government IDP camps. Some of the displaced are compelled to take up menial jobs such as working on other people's farms, serving concrete, Manson blocks at building sites, and cleaning offices among others to eke out their living. Some of the IDPs from the farmers-herdsmen violent clashes take to begging for foodstuff and money for their families (Gbabo, 2015). Many of the victims turn to one form of self-help or the other especially women and children who turn to prostitution and joining militias to cope with life's challenges.

6. Theoretical Framework

This section dwells specifically on the theoretical framework of the study

6.1 Agnew's General Strain Theory

Agnew's general strain theory came into existence (1985, 1992) the central thrust of the theory is built upon the general strain theory work of Merton (1938). Though, Merton maintains that crime was caused by strain, Agnew (1985) on the other hand maintains that, Merton has failed to explain why only some individuals reacted with criminal behaviour when confronted with strain (Agnew, 1985, 1992). Thus, the theory proposes that; various forms of strain cause individuals to experience negative emotional states such as anger, depression and fear. Crime occurs when persons seek criminal means to cope with their negative emotions. Theorist observes that Merton failed to explain, that not all individuals resort to crime to cope with their negative emotional states. Agnew further argues that an individual's coping strategy when confronted with strain determines whether or not one will engage in crime (Agnew, 1992).

Agnew (1992) argues further that kept Merton's five adaptations to strain, expanding upon Merton's theory by providing a rationale for why individuals choose one adaptation over another (Agnew, 1992). Individuals differ in their adaptations to strain due to variations in their coping mechanisms (Agnew, 1992). The types of strain that are most likely to result in the commission of crime are those perceived to be unjust, high in magnitude, correlated with low self-control, and perceived to encourage illegitimate coping mechanisms (Agnew, 2001). There are conditioning factors that influence an individual's reaction to strain. Agnew (1992) posits

that these conditioning factors include the importance an individual attaches to threatened values, goals, or identities; the individual's coping skills, and resources available to the individual such as money, self-esteem, and social supports. Others include the level of social control, association with delinquent or non-delinquent peers, the individual's access to alternative (sheltering) values, goals, and identities and other coping resources available to the individual, such as intelligence and problem-solving skills (Agnew, 1992). For instance, individuals who have high stakes in pro-social institutions such as a strong relationship with family or an established career are less likely to choose criminal behaviour as a source of coping for fear of losing the institutions or persons to whom they are attached (Agnew, 2001). Thus, criminal or delinquent behaviours are not inevitable outcomes of strain. Strain produces only pressure toward crime and deviance as there are many ways people adapt to pressure (Agnew, 1992, 2001).

Victims especially those in IDPs and others seeking refuge with relatives and friends and on rented property in host communities like most vulnerable populations are often deprived of access to basic needs such as food, safe drinking water, shelter, and educational and medical services due largely to the nature of their displacement as a result of farmer-herdsmen clashes. This deprivation increases the likelihood of negative emotions such as anger and frustration. These emotions create pressure for corrective action, and crime is one possible response adopted especially in situations where strains are seen as unjust, high in magnitude, associated with low social control, or create some incentive to engage in criminal coping (Agnew, 1992).

The strength of Agnew's theory lies in its facts that most victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in IDPs seeking assistance from relatives, friends, religious and traditional institutions and on rented property within neighbouring communities have a likelihood of adopting criminal coping mechanisms continue to reduce their suffering. Another significant strength of the theory is that a vast improvement over Merton's strain theory.

The drawback of the theory lies in its ability of Agnew to create a theory that is too broad. The theory is far too vague and nearly any factor or event could be interpreted as strain (Jensen, 1995). Another major pitfall is it problematic of testing an unlimited number of variables that would consistently yield support making strain theory unable to be proven false (Jensen, 1995). Despite

all these shortcomings, the Agnew general strain theory remains relevant for studies of the dynamics of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in Benue State, Nigeria. The major assumptions of this theory endeared the researcher to employ it for this study, hence the Agnew general strain theory is accepted as a basis for the paper analysis of the circumstance.

7. Methodology

The techniques utilised for this paper are primary and secondary methods. The primary sources are in-depth interviews. The secondary source adopts a documentary review of the literature and statistical data analysis of the violent clashes. Other sources of information are obtained from textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and reports from the radio. This study adopted a random probability sampling technique in selecting three (3) farmers and three (3) herdsmen participants. Their participation was based on availability and willingness to participate in the research process.

8. Data presentation and Analysis

This section contains data presentation and analysis

8.1 The Effects of Victims of Farmers-Herdsmen Violent Clashes in Benue State Nigeria

On the effect of victims of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes in the study area, the in-depth interview held with some victims revealed that the majority stated that the violent clashes have claimed many lives, destroyed farmlands and properties and rendered thousands of victims homeless in recent times. One of the victims of farmers maintained that:

Scores of our people have been killed, and displaced as such causing serious humanitarian crises, especially for us and our children through the aggravated killings by herdsmen. The herdsmen killed our women, opened up the womb of pregnant women they killed, brought out the fetus, butchered it into pieces and abandoned the parts of the slain fetus on the dead mother's body. Many of us who fled our homes are now sleeping in primary schools in neighbouring villages exposing us to epidemics, suffering, trekking long distances, hunger and famine leading to diseases and deaths.

A victim of farmers who opined that corroborated the views:

Most of our victims are women who are subjected to pain and hardship because they have to worry about the fate of our children. Some of our women and children were killed, others were wounded and others were raped by the herdsmen.

On the other hand, findings from herdsmen victims on ways by which the violent clashes affected them in the study area. Findings from herdsmen showed that victims suffered, they lost their children and parents, and victims were displaced through aggravated killings. Herdsmen maintain that further thus:

If our women are killed aggressively, Nigerians never even look at it as if the crime is being committed against humanity. If we demand the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of the heinous crimes against us, they will delay it as if nothing happened. We choose to remain in law without seeking any revenge yet Nigerians do not see it.

According to a herdsmen victim:

So many of us are affected by the violent clashes in negative ways. We suffered aggravated killings, injuries, forcefully abducted and raped among other agonies. In places like Logo, Guma, Makurdi, Gwer-West, Agatu, among others, we are abducted by the farmers, killed, maimed, raped and abandoned in a state of comma in the bush Benue State.

Both respondents from farmer-herdsmen concluded that most of the victims were not only physically hanged but also sexually abused and degraded. However, one will conclude that a lot of victims are killed, maimed and raped among other atrocities during the violent clashes. Some who managed to escape are now taking refuge in most of the IDP camps with their miserable conditions.

8.2 The Coping Strategies Adopted by these Victims of Farmers-Herdsmen Violent Clashes

The in-depth interview conducted with some farmers victims of the clashes confirms that the Benue State government provided IDP camps for them officially. A farmer's victim confirms the finding thus:

Benue State Government has provided IDP camps for us to take refuge. The state governor and many Non-Governmental Organizations which I don't know their

names have responded to our plight immediately by providing relief materials and shelter to us like food items, and some used clothes among others.

Corroborating the view, another farmer victim states that:

The Benue State government constructed one major IDP camp for us in Abagana in Makurdi Local Government Area through a central task force to campus who were displaced from our homes by the activities of herdsmen to stay in although the camp is now overcrowded. So, it cannot accommodate many of our people. It is in this regard that other IDP camps now spring up like Daudu IDP camps I, II and III among others.

Furthermore, another farmer victim posits that:

Apart from the official camp constructed by the Benue State Government, there are other satellite camps also established in several villages in Benue State like Anyiin, Ugba, Gbajimba, Ukpyam, Daudu, Yeriwata, Makurdi, Obagaji, Apa and Utukpo, among others which forced most primary schools to close and the pupils sent home so that the school structures accommodate us.

Cross-validating the findings with herdsmen victims, however, elicited a different reaction as both of them affirmed that the Benue State government did not provide IDP camps for them. One of the herdsmen victims observed thus:

The government has not provided any IDP camps for us in Benue State. Throughout the violent clashes, the government has allowed us to be wandering around with our families. The government of the day is very partial and biased in managing the violent clashes. In the course, we are moving our families from one relative to another, from one place to another. We cannot even afford to eat the kind of meals those children in IDP camps are eating. We are not provided with any IDP camps, we are just struggling to cope for ourselves during the violent clashes.

Corroborating the findings, another herdsmen victim maintains that:

Imagine our people have become refugees in their land moving from one relative to the other to settle our families. The situation has led to us running helter-skelter as refugees in search of food for our families and pastures. We own many cattle and we do not play with our cattle; once you do anything to our cattle, we will exert revenge no matter how long it takes us to take revenge. We are

people of integrity and good character, but those people have come and damaged our reputation in Nigeria.

Another herdsmen victim asserts further that:

Our extractions in the country are of good character and integrity, but immigrant herdsmen are damaging our reputation. The armed herdsmen terrorizing people are not Nigerians, so they are not our brothers. We too have encountered security challenges in rearing our cattle. Not all of us are bad, there are many good people among us, but those herdsmen coming from neighbouring countries are the ones spoiling our names. We wonder how the government has allowed us to be suffering rather than providing IDP camps and relief materials for us like the farmers.

Herdsmen victims concluded that since the government had not provided IDP camps for them, it should compensate them for allowing them to suffer in the bush with their families and the agonies they went through due to the violent clashes. One will conclude that most of the victims of the violent clashes especially the farmers are taking refuge in some IDP camps provided by the government and other non-governmental organizations, from time to time, they are being shared food items, clothes, and other relief materials by both government and NGOs in the IDPs camps to take care of themselves. However, the reverse is the case for herdsmen as no IDP camps have been provided for them by Benue State Governor. They are not receiving any relief materials from the Benue State Governor and any NGOs except family relatives and friends out of the clashes-ridden areas.

9. Conclusions

In conclusion, the paper notes that Nigeria is bedeviled with the ills of farmers-herdsmen violent clashes which have negative consequences on the lives of victims. However, the government and other stakeholders have failed to address it sustainably.

10. Recommendations

The paper recommends that the federal government must redouble its efforts to curtail the violent clashes to avoid the drift of younger people into the impunity of small arms and light weapons proliferation as well as ethnic militancy.

Furthermore, the federal government should end the killings by taking decisive action by further improving security and tackling the impunity of the actors behind these violent clashes.

The governments should provide immediate soft loans for victims of these violent clashes to enable them to establish small-scale business ventures that will complement their means of sustenance in either IDP camps or other host communities.

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