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IMPACT OF FARMERS-HERDERS' CONFLICTS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of farmers-herders' conflicts on the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children in Plateau State. The paper relied on descriptive survey design to carry out the study. An infinite population of women and children was computed out of which a sample size of 371 respondents was selected using purposive and simple random sampling method. A 5-point self-designed questionnaire was used to collect the data. Frequency tables, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Multiple Regression was used for hypotheses testing. The findings revealed that farmers-herders conflict has severely impacted on the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children in Plateau. These specifically, include deepening of women poverty level, loss of livestock and assets, reduces women income from farming activities and loss of access to farmlands. Herders and farmers conflicts have led to malnutrition among children, reduced access to healthcare services, psychological trauma and worsened health conditions and maternal healthcare risk for pregnant risks. It was revealed that the conflict had led to the transfer of teachers to safer schools, close of schools, destruction of school facilities, and increase in dropout rate and disruption of children education. The results showed that farmers and herders conflicts have led to poor nutritional status in children, food shortages, and increase in the prices of food stuff, hunger and malnutrition among children. The study concluded that farmers-herders' conflicts have impacted negatively on the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children. It recommended among others that the State government should strengthen collaboration with security agencies to reduce the escalation of conflicts, it is also recommended that the state government should enact a law on anti-open grazing, it is also recommended that community policing should be encouraged among other recommendations.

Keywords: Herders-Farmers, Conflicts, Socioeconomic, Wellbeing, Women and Children

1. Introduction

Globally, most crises and violent conflicts in communities are triggered by the scarcity of economic resources such as land, forest, and water. A herder is a worker who leads a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, caring for domestic animals in areas where they graze on pasture lands. Pastoral lifestyles are not unique to Africa, as they also exist in places like South America, particularly in Bolivia and Peru, among the Andean herders of llamas and alpacas (Akerjiir, 2018). Historically, herders and farmers in Africa coexisted harmoniously in symbiotic

relationships. In many rural communities, nomadic herders were allocated grazing areas, often referred to as "Ruga," where they settled their animals. Farmers benefited from the cow dung as fertilizer, while herders shared milk in return. According to the International Crisis Group (2017), traditional leaders used conflict management strategies to maintain peace.

Unfortunately, this peaceful coexistence has deteriorated due to violent conflicts between herders and farmers. Population growth, resource scarcity, drought, and desertification caused by global warming have intensified competition for resources. Herders seeking pasture for

their livestock have migrated from the far North to the North-Central and Southern regions of Nigeria, leading to frequent clashes (Oli, Ibekwe & Nwankwo, 2018). These conflicts, particularly in North-Central states like Plateau, Benue, and Nasarawa, have escalated into a major social problem (Search for Common Ground, 2018).

The violence has resulted in massive killings, destruction of farmlands, displacement of communities, and the loss of livelihoods. Women and children, being the most vulnerable, have suffered disproportionately from rapes, kidnappings, and killings (Olusola, 2018). Many displaced families now depend on relatives or live in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Idowu, 2017). Women, primarily responsible for household chores and childcare, have been disproportionately affected. They face increased workloads, reduced access to education, poor healthcare, and heightened vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Children have been forced out of school, losing opportunities for future development. Entire communities have been displaced, leading to the loss of social networks, cultural heritage, and traditional livelihoods. Many have argued that the incessant conflicts between herders and farmers is partly attributed to poor governance in managing the state's diversity and the inefficiency of security agencies in preventing and de-escalating violence. This has disrupted the socio-economic life of affected communities, as women are unable to engage in their economic activities for fear of violence. While the North-Central region has been widely documented as a hotspot for herders-farmers conflicts, there is limited research on how these conflicts specifically impact women and children. Against this backdrop, this study aims to assess the socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflicts on women and children in Plateau State.

Plateau State, located in Nigeria's North-Central region, has endured years of violent conflict between farmers and herders. The herders and farmers conflicts in Plateau State, Nigeria, primarily stem from competition over land resources, with the predominantly rural farmers often clashing with nomadic Fulani herders over grazing land, leading to violent confrontations fueled by ethnic tensions and historical grievances. These conflicts have

profoundly impacted the socio-economic wellbeing of women and children, disrupting lives and livelihoods. Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, rampant attacks on communities have caused humanitarian crises, forcing many into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps across the state's three senatorial zones. The conflicts, which intensified since 2001, have disrupted farming activities, reducing food security and incomes.

Successive state administrations have attempted to address the crisis through measures such as the establishment of the Plateau Peace Building Agency, the state inter-religious committee, and Operation Rainbow to improve security. However, these efforts have yielded limited results, as attacks and killings persist. According to the International Crisis Group (2018), Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue states recorded the highest incidents of deaths and attacks in the North-Central zone. A report by the West African Network for Peacebuilding (2021) revealed that in August 2021, Plateau recorded 122 deaths from violent attacks, contributing to a national total of 693 deaths that month. In 2018 alone, approximately 300,000 people were displaced in North-Central states, including Plateau. This suggests that if these conflicts persist, the socio-economic wellbeing indicators of women and children may face further deterioration.

Although scholars like (Ishaku, Maigari, Iliya & Patrick, 2024; Olanrewaju & Balana, 2023; Gema, 2023; Ahmed, 2022) among others have carried out empirical studies on herders-farmers conflicts, these studies either failed specifically assess the impact of the conflicts on the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children or concentrated on the situation in Plateau State. Furthermore, there is no consensus on the specific socio-economic impacts on women and children in Plateau State among the few studies that captured socioeconomic related variables. While the study on Cinjel and Kefas (2024) carried out on herders-farmers conflict was done in Plateau State, the researchers only focused on the situation in Mangu Local Government Area. This implies that limited attention has been given to the gender dimensions of the conflict, its long-term effects, and the state-specific challenges face by women and children. This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by

investigating how herders-farmers conflicts have affected the socio-economic wellbeing of women and children in Plateau State.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of farmers and herders' conflict on the socio-economic wellbeing of women and children in Plateau State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include to:

- i. find out the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict impacts on the economic livelihoods of women in Plateau State.
- ii. evaluate the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects the health of women and children in Plateau State.
- iii. examine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict influences accessibility to the education of children in Plateau State.
- iv. determine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects food and nutrition of women and children.

The following research questions were used as guide in the process of data collection:

- i. find out the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict impacts on the economic livelihoods of women in Plateau State.
- ii. evaluate the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects the health of women and children in Plateau State.
- iii. examine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict influences accessibility to the education of children in Plateau State.
- iv. determine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects food and nutrition of women and children.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and analyzed:

H₀₁: Farmers-herders' conflicts have no significant impacts on the economic livelihoods of women in Plateau State.

H₀₂: Farmers-herders' conflicts do not significantly affect the health of women and children in Plateau State.

H₀₃: Farmers-herders' conflicts have no significant influence on children access to education in Plateau State.

H₀₄: Farmers-herders' conflicts do not significantly affect food and nutrition of women and children.

2. Literature Review

Globally, women contribute significantly to the development of families and nations, especially when key determinants of their socioeconomic wellbeing remain intact. Socioeconomic wellbeing, a complex and multidimensional concept, includes both objective factors like income and education and subjective perceptions of one's placement on the socioeconomic spectrum. Income enables access to goods, services, and experiences that improve quality of life (Huang et al., 2017). While socioeconomic standing influences outcomes like income, health, and education (Navarin-Carrillo et al., 2020), the wellbeing of women in developing regions like Plateau State is often defined within the context of social conflicts, such as the farmer-herder clashes.

Conflict, characterized by incompatible goals or values, occurs when individuals or groups feel offended or unjustly treated (Okoro, 2018). Historically, Nigerian farmers and Fulani herdsman coexisted peacefully through mutual respect and cooperation. However, farmer-herder conflicts, primarily disputes over farmlands and grazing lands, have become more frequent due to factors like population growth, land scarcity, and climate change. Nigeria's population grew from 33 million in 1950 to 200 million in 2020, reducing rural land for farming and grazing (World Statistics, 2021). This scarcity has forced herders to migrate into new areas, often permanently, intensifying conflicts (Nte, 2019). In response, legislation banning open grazing has exacerbated tensions, sparking further violence.

Between 2010 and 2015, herder attacks in North-Central Nigeria caused 6,500 deaths, with over 2,500 fatalities recorded nationwide from January 2015 to February 2017 (Kwaja, 2017; Abubakar, 2017). In Plateau State, conflicts have led to displacement, disrupted agriculture, and growing populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs), predominantly women and children (Gyang, 2022). Women, already vulnerable due to gender inequalities, face further hardships, including loss of

livelihoods, widowhood, and family instability. Many are evicted from farmland, leaving them susceptible to economic and sexual exploitation (Crisis Group, 2017).

Farmer-herder conflicts also disrupt agricultural activities, which are primarily managed by women in rural communities. Ali (2024) noted that resource scarcity, particularly land, has escalated tensions into violent confrontations, displacing populations and impeding economic progress. Disruptions in farming result in food insecurity, while women, often responsible for feeding their families, face increased burdens. Many women engaged in small-scale farming lose their income sources due to crop destruction or livestock losses. Furthermore, conflict often forces families into IDP camps, where living conditions are deplorable. Women and children face challenges like limited access to food, healthcare, and education. Ahmed (2022) observed that women-headed households are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, with 37.5% experiencing moderate to severe levels compared to 20.5% of male-headed households.

The impact of conflicts on education is profound. Farmer-herder clashes reduce school attendance due to safety threats, displacement, and poverty (Justino, 2016). Schools are often destroyed or occupied by IDPs, and children may avoid attending due to perceived risks or involvement in the conflict. Girls, in particular, face early marriage or child labor as coping mechanisms, further diminishing educational opportunities. Ishaku et al. (2024) revealed that clashes in Numan Local Government Area have subjected girls to kidnapping, rape, and abduction, compounding their educational challenges. Healthcare access is also severely affected in conflict zones. Women face challenges accessing reproductive healthcare, including prenatal and postnatal care. Onah et al. (2017) highlighted that women's physical vulnerability is heightened due to their reproductive roles. In IDP camps, women and girls are exposed to gender-based violence, mental health issues, and deplorable living conditions, which increase their susceptibility to chronic illnesses (Henry et al., 2022).

The conflict also exacerbates poverty by destroying wealth-yielding assets and livelihoods, leaving households, especially those headed by women, in severe economic hardship. Disruptions in farming and grazing limit economic opportunities, leaving women unable to support their families or maintain financial independence. Olanrewaju and Balana (2023) found that violent conflicts in Nigeria often stem from economic disparities and competition for resources, which have detrimental effects on food security and socioeconomic development. Evidence from reviewed literature suggest that farmer-herder conflicts in Plateau State have profound implications for the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children. Displacement, loss of livelihoods, disrupted education, food insecurity, and poor access to healthcare were in literature as some of the key challenges faced by women and children in conflict-affected areas. However, the extent of the impact of these conflicts on women and children socio-economic wellbeing indicators based on extant literature is still a debating issue.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored the environmental scarcity theory developed by Homer-Dixon in 1994. The theory argues that scarcity of resources due to environmental degradation, population growth, and unequal distribution of resources can contribute to social instability and conflicts between resource users. It states further that high population in many developing countries is by caused the scarcity of four environmental resources which include: fresh water, cropland, forests and fish. Agyemang (2017) opined that the scarcity of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use or degradation, population growth, climate change and access to these resources leads to competition over the scarce ecological resources among groups, and may under certain circumstances trigger off conflicts. The conflict between herders and farmers experienced in North-Central States and Plateau State in particular has been driven by the scarcity of land, and competition between the farmers and herdsman to ensure their viability in the area. The scarcity of land is due to climate change and shrinking ecological space, human and cattle population explosion, and resource depletion. In the light of this assumption when either farmers or

herders have limited access to these resources, conflict may become the order of the day. In Plateau State for example, land is a scarce commodity that almost all families are confronted with due to population growth that has led to the fragmentation of family land as traditions and culture demand. Therefore, when herders who probably have stayed on the native lands do not have access to such lands, or land resources, including water, it often times results to violent conflict.

2.2 Empirical Review

Ishaku, Maigari, Iliya and Patrick (2024) investigated the effects of herders' farmers clashes on girl-child education in Numan local government area revealed that as a result of the clashed, many girls' have been badly affected because they are being subjected to kidnapping, rape and abduction and that scarce space for agricultural and grazing activities are the major causes of the conflicts. The study is relevant to the work because it focuses on the girl-child, but its major weakness is that it was carried out in Numan Local Government in Adamawa State, while the present research is on the situation in Plateau State. In their study, Cinjel and Kefas (2024) examined the conflict between the Mwaghavul Arable farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. Data were elicited from documentary facts. Questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and observations were used as instrument for data collection. These instruments were subjected to face and content validation. Findings revealed that the conflict was triggered by the damages of crops of the Mwaghavul arable farmers by the herds of the Fulani herdsmen. The study also found the conflict has adverse effect on socio-economic development which include schools, businesses, mutual trust and agricultural production.

Similarly, Olanrewaju and Balana (2023) study on conflict-related shocks and household food security in Nigeria found revealed that the bulk of the violent conflicts are due to economic disparity, competition for productive resources, and antagonism between different ethnic and religious groups as their root causes. The strength of this study lies on the fact that is concentrated on food security, but its major weakness is that it was not

delimited to women and children. Also, Gema (2023) research on the phenomenon of farmers – herders' conflict and impacts on socio-economic development of Benue state revealed that the conflict has affected access to quality education as well as gainful employment. This study is relevant to the work because it focuses on herders-farmers conflict and socio-economic development, which encompasses the wellbeing of women and children.

Furthermore, Cinjel, Musa and Umaru (2018) conducted a study on the assessment of herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria, from 2000-2017 using meta-Analysis and documentary research design. The documentary facts were extracted from array of published and unpublished materials relevance to the study. The primary data were collected from structured interview whose content comprised of open and closed ended questions. The findings revealed that factors such as porous borders, population explosion, bad governance among others contributes to herders- Farmers conflict in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey design to determine the prevalence and impact of farmers-herders conflicts on women and children in Plateau State. The population comprised women and children affected by farmers-herders conflicts in Plateau State, focusing on five conflict-prone LGAs: Bassa, Barkin Ladi, Bokkos, Mangu, and Riyom. A sample size of 384 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula. Purposive sampling was used to target women and children, while simple random sampling ensured equal chances of selection.

Data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A of the instrument covers the personal information of respondents, while Section B addressed the research objectives using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The face and construct validity were established by experts in English and conflict management.

Reliability of internal consistency of the item was assessed through a pilot study conducted in Benue State. The result yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.839, indicating high reliability.

Descriptive statistics, namely; simple percentages, mean, standard deviation, while inferential statistics Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression were used as tools of analysis. However, ordinal data collected using the questionnaire were transformed to numerical data to enable the researcher applied the OLS regression method of analysis. A criterion mean of 3.0 determined responses to the research questions. Data triangulation from questionnaires, interviews, and secondary sources provided robust findings.

3.1 Model Specification/Estimation

The study used farmers'-herders' conflicts (FHC) as the independent variable and socio-economic wellbeing of

$$SEW = f(GLC, CRC, TAC) \dots \dots \dots 1$$

However, given that the explicit form of an OLS regression where Y is the independent variable and X is

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 2$$

Therefore, since X in the implicit form of the model in equation 2 represents the independent variable and Y is the dependent variable, while the parameters β_0 and β_1 represents the intercept and slope of the relationship and the unexplained denoted by ε in the model. The explicit

$$ELH = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GLC + \beta_2 CRC + \beta_3 TAC + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 3$$

$$HWC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GLC + \beta_2 CRC + \beta_3 TAC + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 4$$

$$CAE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GLC + \beta_2 CRC + \beta_3 TAC + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 5$$

$$FAN = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GLC + \beta_2 CRC + \beta_3 TAC + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 6$$

Where:

GLC = Grazing land resources conflicts

CRC = Cattle rustling motivated conflicts

TAC = Transhumance Motivated Conflicts

ELH= Economic livelihood of women and children

HWC= Health of women and children

CAE= Children access to education

FAN= Food and Nutrition

β_0 = Intercept Parameter

$\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Parameters measuring the slope

women and children (SEW) as the dependent variable. Based on the specific objectives of the research, the explanatory variables of the independent variable include; grazing land motivated conflicts (GLC), cattle rustling motivated conflicts (CRC) and transhumance activities motivated conflicts (TAC), while the indicators of socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children which is the dependent variable include; economic livelihood (ELH), health of women and children (HWC), children access to education (CAE) and food and nutrition (FAN) respectively. It is expected that there are other farmers and herders' conflicts triggers that may affect the socio-economic wellbeing of women and children, not necessarily the explanatory variables captured in the model. These unexplained variables are denoted in this model by the error term (ε). The specification of the model using the OLS regression in a functional form takes is expressed as follows:

the dependent variable takes is generically expressed as follows:

form of the models, showing the relationship between the farmers and herders' conflicts and socio-economic wellbeing of women and children explanatory variables are:

ε = Error Term

The *a priori* expectation from the sign and size of the estimated coefficient of the parameters based on theoretical postulation is that the coefficients of the explanatory variables of farmers and herders' conflicts (FHC) are expected to carry negative signs, showing the existence of a negative relationship between herders-farmers conflict and socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children in the study Area.

4. Results and Discussion

Research Question One: Find out the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict impacts on the economic livelihoods of women in Plateau State.

Table 1: Mean Rating of Impact of Farmers and Herders Conflicts on Economic Livelihood of Women

SN.	Statement of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Reduces women income from farming activities	3.633	1.068	3 rd	Agree
2	Loss of access to farmland	3.596	1.114	4 th	Agree
3	Deepened women poverty level	3.728	1.134	1 st	Agree
4	Leads to difficulty in maintaining businesses	3.536	1.113	5 th	Agree
5	Loss of livestock and assets	3.674	1.097	2 nd	Agree
	<i>Cumulative Mean</i>	3.633			<i>Agree</i>

The results of analysis in Table 1 revealed that respondents agreed that the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts in the economic livelihood of women include deepened women poverty level (3.728), loss of livestock and assets owned by women (3.674), reduces women income from farming activities (3.633), loss of access to farmland (3.596) and women find it difficult in maintaining businesses (3.636). However, the cumulative

mean value of 3.633 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, signifying that the respondents agreed that farmers and herders conflicts exert impact of the economic livelihood of women in Plateau State.

Research Question Four: evaluate the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects the health of women and children in Plateau State.

Table 2: Mean Rating of Impact of Farmers and Herders Conflicts on Health of Women and Children

SN.	Statement of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Psychological trauma	3.536	1.101	3rd	Agree
2	Less access to healthcare services	3.706	1.154	2nd	Agree
3	Worsened health conditions	3.531	1.111	4th	Agree
4	Malnutrition among children	3.763	1.018	1st	Agree
5	Exposes women to maternal healthcare risk for pregnant risks	3.512	1.137	5th	Agree
	<i>Criterion Mean</i>	3.610			<i>Agree</i>

The findings from Table 2 showed that respondents agreed that farmers and herders' conflicts impact on health of women and children because conflicts lead to Malnutrition among children (3.763), less access to healthcare services (3.706), psychological trauma (3.536) and worsened health conditions (3.531). They also agreed that the conflict exposes women to maternal healthcare risk for pregnant risks (3.512). Thus, since the cumulative

mean value of 3.610 is higher than the criterion mean of 3.0, it implies that farmers and herders conflicts have impact on the health of women and children in Plateau State.

Research Question Three: Examine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict influences children access to the education in Plateau State.

Table 3: Mean Rating of Impact of Farmers and Herders Conflicts on Children Access to Education

SN.	Statement of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Close of schools	3.642	1.138	2 nd	Agree
2	Destruction of school facilities	3.658	1.047	3 rd	Agree
3	Increase in dropout rate amongst children	3.590	1.117	4 th	Agree
4	Transfer of teachers to safer schools	3.814	1.113	1 st	Agree
5	Disruption of children education	3.566	1.136	5 th	Agree
	<i>Criterion Mean</i>	3.654			<i>Agree</i>

The results of analysis in Table 3 indicated that respondents held the view that the conflict between herders and farmers have led the transfer of teachers to safer schools (3.814), close of schools (3.642), destruction of school facilities (3.658), increase in dropout rate amongst children (3.590) and disruption of children education (3.566). The results found a cumulative

mean value of 3.654 which is greater than 3.0 used as the criterion mean; hence the conclusion that farmers and herders conflict has impact on children access to education in Plateau State.

Research Question Four: Determine the extent to which farmers-herders' conflict affects food and nutrition of women and children.

Table 4: Mean Rating of Impact of Farmers and Herders Conflicts on Food and Nutrition of Women and Children

SN.	Statement of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Food shortages	3.695	1.128	2 nd	Agree
2	Hunger and Malnutrition among children	3.623	1.140	4 th	Agree
3	Increased in the prices of food stuff	3.639	1.092	3 rd	Agree
4	Leads to poor nutritional status in children	3.747	1.093	1 st	Agree
	<i>Criterion Mean</i>	3.676			<i>Agree</i>

The findings from the results of analysis in Table 4 revealed that respondents agreed that farmers and herders' conflict has led to poor nutritional status in children (3.747), food shortages (3.695), increased in the prices of food stuff (3.639) and led to hunger and malnutrition among children (3.623). Furthermore, the results showed a cumulative mean value of 3.676 which is greater than 3.0 used as the criterion mean; hence the

conclusion that farmers and herders' conflicts have impact on food and nutrition of women and children in Plateau State.

Hypothesis One: Farmers-herders' conflicts have no significant impacts on the economic livelihoods of women in Plateau State.

Table 5: Results of Estimated OLS Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient (β)	S.E	T	p-value
(Constant)	3.289	.266	12.370	.000
GLC	-.226	.090	-2.912	.004
CRC	-.291	.074	4.017	.000
TAC	-.040	.061	.668	.504

R=.706, *Adjusted R Square* =.635 *Durbin Watson (DW)*= 1.737

The results above showed that grazing land farmers and herders' conflicts (GLC) had a coefficient of -0.226 and probability (p-value) of 0.004. This further shows that 1% increase in conflict due to grazing land leads to 22.6% decreases in the economic livelihood of women in the study Area. It was found that cattle rustling motivated conflicts (CRC) had a coefficient of -0.291 and p-value of 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis was rejected which implies that 1% increase in the conflicts due to cattle rustling leads to 29.1% decrease in economic livelihood of women. The results revealed that transhumance activities motivated conflicts (TAC) had a coefficient of -0.040 and p-value of 0.504, indicating that it had an insignificant negative impact of economic livelihood of women. Thus, a 1% increase in farmers and herders' conflicts due to transhumance

activities motivated conflicts (TAC) leads to 0.4% decrease in the economic livelihood of women. The combined correlation (R) estimated as .706 indicates a strong positive correlation between the farmers and herders' conflicts and economic livelihood of women, while the adjusted R square shows that 63.5% changes on the economic livelihood of women is explained by herders and farmers conflicts. Durbin Watson (DW) value of 1.737 implies that there was no serial correlation in the model, meaning that the estimated regression model was not spurious

Hypothesis Two: Farmers-herders' conflicts do not significantly affect the health of women and children in Plateau State.

Table 6: Results of OLS Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	S.E	t	p-value
(Constant)	1.491	.203	7.365	.000
GLC	-.623	.068	9.600	.000
CRC	-.064	.057	-1.061	.289
TAC	-.007	.046	-.153	.879

R=.576, *Adjusted R Square* =.527 *Durbin Watson (DW)*= 1.840

The results of analysis in Table 6 showed that grazing land motivated conflict (GLC) had a coefficient of -0.623 and p-value of .000, cattle rustling conflict (CRC) had a coefficient of -0.066 and p-value of 0.289, while transhumance activities motivated conflicts (TAC) had a coefficient of -0.007 and p-value of 0.879. These results revealed that 1% increases in GLC leads to a significant 62.3% decrease in the health of women and children, while a 1% increase in conflicts due to CRC leads to an insignificant decrease of 6.4% in the health of women and children. Also, it was found that 1% increases in TAC leads to an insignificant 0.7% decrease in the health of

women and children. However, an adjusted R square coefficient of 0.576 implies that 57.6% of the changes in the health of women and children was due to the farmers and herders' conflicts, the DW coefficients indicates the absence of serial correlation. The combined correlation (R) of 0.527 showed that there is a strong relationship between the farmers-herders' conflicts and health of women and children in the study Area.

Hypothesis Three: Farmers-herders' conflicts have no significant influence on children access to education in Plateau State.

Table 7: Results of Estimated OLS Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient (β)	S.E	t	p-value
(Constant)	0.525	0.195	2.691	0.007
GLC	-0.153	0.065	2.726	0.007
CRC	-0.590	0.055	1.292	0.000
TAC	-0.009	0.044	0.230	0.818

R=.709, *Adjusted R Square* =.599 *Durbin Watson (DW)*= 1.779

Table 7 revealed that grazing land motivated conflicts (GLC) had a coefficient of -0.153 and p-value of .007, cattle rustling motivated conflicts (CRC) had a coefficient of -0.590 and p-value of 0.000, while transhumance activities motivated conflicts (TAC) had a coefficient of -0.009 and p-value of 0.818. This results indicated that a 1% increases in GLC and CRC had significant negative effect of 15.3% and 59.0% respectively on children access to education, while conflicts motivated by TAC had an insignificant negative

effect of 0.9% on children access to education. The coefficient of correlation (R) which is 0.709 shows a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while adjusted R square value of 1.779 which is approximately 2 means that the estimated model is free from the problem of serial correlation.

Hypothesis Four: Farmers-herders' conflicts do not significantly affect food and nutrition of women and children.

Table 8: Results of Estimated OLS Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	S.E	T	p-value
(Constant)	3.167	0.271	1.615	0.000
GLC	-0.116	0.092	-1.519	0.130
CRC	-0.062	0.067	-0.883	0.378
TAC	0.284	0.312	5.030	0.000

R=.662 Adjusted *R* Square = .661 Durbin Watson (DW)= 1.575

The findings from the results of analysis in Table 8 showed that grazing land motivated conflicts (GLC) had a coefficient of -0.116 and p-value of 0.130, cattle rustling motivated conflicts (CRC) had a coefficient of -0.062 and p-value of 0.378, while farmers and herders conflicts associated with transhumance activities (TAC) had a coefficient of 0.284 and p-value of 0.000. This results showed that only TAC had significant negative effect 28.4% on food and nutrition of women and children, but conflicts due to GLC and CRC had insignificant negative effect of 11.6% and 6.2% respectively. Also, it was found that the combined correlation (R) which is 0.662 shows a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, adjusted R square of 0.661 indicates that 66.1% of changes in food and nutrition of women and children were due to farmers and herders' conflicts and the model based on the DW coefficient of 1.575 is free from serial correlation problem.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The review of literature established that farmers and herders' conflicts is one of the social conflict common in most States in Nigeria, including Plateau State. The results of analysis of the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts on economic livelihood of women revealed that

respondents agreed that the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts in the economic livelihood of women include deepened women poverty level, loss of livestock and assets owned by women, reduces women income from farming activities, loss of access to farmland and women find it difficult in maintaining businesses. Solomon (2021) also found that the rising number of farmer-herder conflicts has resulted in low productivity, unstable food supplies, low food consumption, inaccessible food, and insufficient food availability. The findings revealed that while farmers-herders conflicts motivated by grazing land issues and cattle rustling had significant negative effect, transhumance activities motivated conflicts had insignificant negative effect on the economic livelihood of women. Ali (2024) argued that stemming from resource scarcity, particularly land, tensions between pastoralists and farming communities have escalated into violent confrontations, disrupting livelihoods, displacing populations, and impeding economic progress.

The results of the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts on health of women and children showed that respondents agreed that farmers and herders' conflicts impact on health of women and children because conflicts lead to malnutrition among children, less access

to healthcare services, psychological trauma and worsened health conditions. They also agreed that the conflict exposes women to maternal healthcare risk for pregnant risks. Also, it revealed that grazing land motivated conflicts had significant negative effect on the health of women and children, while conflicts due to cattle rustling and transhumance activities of herders had insignificant negative effect in the health of women and children. This supports Onah, Diara and Uroko (2017) who found that physical vulnerability of women and adolescent girls is higher than that of men and adolescent boys due to their sexual and reproductive roles. They added that the Particular risks women face includes STDs, including HIV, AIDS and vesico-vaginal fistula, trauma, mutilation, complications from botched abortions, uterine problems, scarring of the vagina and problems having a normal sexual life or giving birth in the future.

The results of analysis of impact of farmers and herders' conflicts on children access to education indicated that respondents held the view that the conflict between herders and farmers have led the transfer of teachers to safer schools, close of schools, destruction of school facilities, increase in dropout rate amongst children and disruption of children education. It was found that herders and farmers conflicts that relate to grazing land issues and cattle rustling had significant negative effect on children access to education, while conflicts motivated by transhumance activities had an insignificant negative effect on children access to education. This agreed with the view of Justino (2016) that the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts include resource reduction for educational purposes, recruitment or engagement of children into armed groups, safety threats in and on the way to school, and the consequences of poverty and food insecurity.

The findings from the results of analysis of the impact of farmers and herders' conflicts on food and nutrition for women and children revealed that respondents agreed that farmers and herders' conflict has led to poor nutritional status in children, food shortages, increased in the prices of food stuff and led to hunger and malnutrition among children. Crisis Group (2017)

observed that after the conflict women economic and social conditions render them more vulnerable to sexual and economic exploitation. The results found that transhumance activities of herders had significant negative effect on food and nutrition of women and children, while conflicts due to grazing land and cattle rustling had insignificant negative effect. Buttressing this, Iorheman (2018) stated that these women and children have no access to medication, they are forced to live in deplorable living conditions, for instance they sleep on bare floors anywhere they found themselves, a development that exposes them to chronic cough due to cold.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the study revealed that the economic livelihood impacts of farmers and herders' conflicts include deepening of women poverty level, loss of livestock and assets owned by women, reduces women income from farming activities and loss of access to farmland. Its impact of health includes malnutrition among children, reduced access to healthcare services, psychological trauma and worsened health conditions and it exposes women to maternal healthcare risk for pregnant risks. On children access to education, it was revealed that the conflict had led to the transfer of teachers to safer schools, destruction of school facilities, and increase in dropout rate amongst children and disruption of children education. Furthermore, it showed that farmers and herders conflicts have led to poor nutritional status in children, food shortages, increased in the prices of food stuff as well as increased hunger and malnutrition among children. The study concluded that farmers and herders' conflicts have impacted negatively on the socioeconomic wellbeing of women and children in Plateau State.

The following have been recommended based on the research findings and the conclusion drawn:

- i. The State government should ensure enact laws that regulate open grazing and punish cattle rustlers in order to curbing incessant conflicts between herders and farmers so as to improve the economic livelihood of women.

- ii. Herders and farmers conflicts, especially those motivated by grazing land related issues should be tackle headlong in order to enhance the health of women and children in the State.
- iii. Government should ensure that grazing land and cattle rustling motivated conflicts that impact negatively on schooling are addressed so that children can have easy access to education.
- iv. There is need for government should collaborate with traditional institutions to ensure that herders on transhumance activities are closely monitored in a manner that farmlands will not be destroy in order so that the food and nutrition wellbeing of women and children can be enhanced.

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