

Thematic Analysis of Al Jazeera Documentary, *Unrest Forces Farmers Off Their Land*, on Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

Semiu Bello¹, Bashirat Damilola Subair^{2*}, Yusuf Bolokale Suleiman³, Odukunle A. Atewolara-Odule¹

¹Department of Mass Communication, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

²Department of Mass Communication, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

³Department of Information, Journalism and Media Studies, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author: bashirat.subair@kwasu.edu.ng

Submitted: 5th January 2025

Revised : 27th February 2025

Accepted: 23th March 2025

ABSTRACT

The conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria has, over time, impacted adversely on ethnic tolerance, agriculture, source of livelihood, sheltering and lives of many. In the process, the media have been noted to have exerted a great deal of influence on the perception of people on the array of issues reported by the media. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine the portrayal of Unrest forces farmers off their land, a documentary produced by Al Jazeera, on specific themes portrayed in the documentary, government responsibility towards the conflict, the portrayal of language in the documentary and to determine the consequences of the conflict portrayed in the documentary. A qualitative content analysis was performed on the documentary having determined the content categories. The study found that the documentary moderately portrayed peace journalism, government's inability to do enough in curbing the conflict between farmers and herders, which affected the effectiveness and outcomes of the peace journalism. This is akin to the notation that the media engagement of the conflicting parties, in order to allow them to state their needs, wants and expectations from the other conflicting party and the government, will go a long way in the settlement of the conflict. Therefore, the media are one of the determinants of the escalation or de-escalation of conflict issues. The media should therefore practice continuity in the ways by which they handle conflict issues and to contribute immensely to conflict resolution, peace building of conflict-related issues, to prevent reprisal attacks. More so, the conflict between farmers and herders would subside if government gives adequate attention and act duly in resolving the conflict.

Keywords: Al Jazeera, Conflict, Farmers, Herders, Peace journalism

INTRODUCTION

Security is akin to peace and unity. A state of peace, free from hatred, attack, intolerance and subjugation brings peace of mind. More so, if the environment itself is safe, the inhabitants and normal activities are likely to follow the path of safety. This apparently contributes to the progress and integration of such an environment. However, conflict in human settings seems inevitable, it can arise even in a beforehand peaceful environment if misunderstanding and disagreement set in. This may leave parties to be concerned about their interests and consequently, violence and disaffection among conflicting parties take place. Globally, internal conflicts of different sorts have remained the most devastating incidence destabilising growth and development especially in developing societies. (Ibeh, 2017) Furthermore, the mismanagement and misapplication of individualistic purposes in Africa has deteriorated security conditions in most of the states in Africa. (Tsuwan & Odigbo, 2017) In spite of her global contribution to peace and security, Nigeria still battles insecurity internally, affecting socio-political and economic challenges since 2000. (Ibeh, 2017)

A critical look into one of the contending security threats confronting Nigeria includes the perennial conflict between farmers and herders across the federation. (Gever & Essien, 2017) Fasona & Omojola (2005) contend that, of all conflicts and other forms of unrest reported in the northern region of Nigeria from 1991 till date, farmer-herder conflict accounted for 35%. It is averred that the proliferation of firearms is a major factor endangering the violence between farmers and herders. (Olomjobi & Ajilore, 2018) The causalities of these confrontation usually go beyond the farmers and herders because it always has undertones that affect the whole gamut of socio-economic life of society. (Tsuwa & Odigbo, 2017) The fear of insecurity, preventing farmers from going to their farmlands due to threats by herders, poses a heavy threat to agriculture.

However, every sensitive issue, most especially security breach, is not meant to be left unbroken to the mass; sensitive issues are meant to create awareness and hold attention all over the society. Evidently and in the process, one of the most critical stakeholders in the affairs of national security are the media. The media are capable of drawing attention to serious national issues the process of which is complex to make or mar a nation. (Yalwa & Pali, 2017) Conflict, being a security issue, has the potential of disrupting healthy relationships among parties. Given

this effect, people need to be informed about conflict because of its overarching effects on society. The aim of conflict reporting is to create awareness of such conflict, generate ideas on how to solve the conflict or reduce it, publicise the plight of the victims of violence or conflict for necessary assistance, and to prevent the conflict from escalating. (Galadima, 2002) Conflict coverage by the media gives leverage for necessary authorities to intervene in the conflict, makes society sees consequence of the conflict and facilitates campaigns against criminality. This pre-supposes that even in the sphere of national security, the media shape the perception of the government, and influence public opinions on good governance, democracy and people-oriented policies. Such role, as Pate and Oso (2017) argue, was evidently played by the Nigerian media in the early days of post-civil war by the coinage and usage of ‘no victor, no vanquished’ which helped immensely in the rehabilitation, reconstruction, reintegration and reconciliation of the nation.

Apparently, the media can shape the views and thoughts of people on farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. In this regard, documentary is an essential and strategic form of media channel where issues, ideas, beliefs, ideologies and any stimuli are conveyed or disseminated to specific or general audience with intended and unintended meaning to elicit reactions, actions and directions from consumers. As noted by Chattoo (2018), documentary is a mediated storytelling genre and communication practice shaped by the creative freedom of scripted entertainment storytelling alongside the aspects of research, reporting practices, and outputs of journalism. The uniqueness of documentary underpins the fact that beyond the conventional straight news or news broadcast, or media announcement, documentary allows for an elaborate, extensive and stimulating approach in reporting issues, promoting ideas, organisations and individuals, selling products and upscaling services among others. By default, therefore, documentary communication has the potential to portray issues, confer status, define and contextualise any phenomenon. The strength associated with documentary, therefore, informed why the thesis of this article is woven around the portrayal of farmer-herder conflict in Al Jazeera documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land.

Statement of Problem

The farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria has been a contending security issue and has, therefore, attracted attention in the media. The frequent attacks on farmers, their farmlands and retaliation by the herders result in irreparable damage and loss of lives in Nigeria. (Okoro, 2020) Consequently, the situation poses a serious challenge to national security, social cohesion, agriculture, and national development. (Okoro, 2020) However, since one of the media's major roles is to serve as a watchdog to the environment by reporting issues of public interest to the public for deliberation and informed decisions (Anaeto et al., 2008), it is the responsibility of the Nigerian media, as well as international media, to provide a balanced reportage on the farmer-herder conflict and other forms of conflict. Often times, media portrayal can exacerbate the narrative of conflicts (Sen, 2011) and non-reportage or under-reportage of certain aspects of conflict by the media can also determine the mitigation and resolution of such conflicts. (Olomajobi & Ajilore, 2018)

Documentary, as a unique media genre, is more crucial in projecting and conveying insights based on real-life events and experiences. (Jekins, 2022) In other words, documentary permits real-world events to be more engaging, fascinating, and intriguing. (Jekins, 2022) This, therefore, defines why this study is conceived and designed to investigate the Al Jazeera documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land. This documentary, which focuses a salient and critical public issue in Nigeria, farmer-herder conflict, is a practical demonstration of the comprehensive and intriguing features of the media genre (documentary). Arising from the above insights, this study examines the thematic analysis of farmer-herder conflict in the Al Jazeera documentary: Unrest forces farmers off their land in order to: (i) to determine the specific themes portrayed in the documentary (ii) to find out how Unrest forces farmers off their land, portrays the role of government in the conflict (iii) to examine the portrayal of language in Unrest forces farmers off their land and (iv) to determine the consequences of the conflict portrayed in the documentary.

Overview of farmer-herder conflict and the media (documentary)

The farmer-herder conflict was widespread in the 20th century in the western part of Africa, in nations like Guinea, Sudan, and the Sahel Savanna, where crops were produced on a small scale and with little rainfall. (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010) It is believed that Fulani pastoralists migrated from the Senegambia region to the east and arrived in Nigeria sometime in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The Fulanis have a long history of involvement in politics, academia, and wealth; by the early nineteenth century, a sedentary urban class of religious intellectuals was well established. The herdsmen left the south for the humid and sub-humid zones due to their special demand for veterinary medicine, the control of disease threat, and the expansion of farming operations (Tonah, 2006) It is also documented that the large number of animals on West. Africa's coast increases demand for natural resources and fuels competition between farmers and herders for those resources. (Adebayo, 1997; Tonah 2006) Also, there seems to be an agreement among observers that the farmer-herder conflict spread in the 20th century in the coastal nations of West Africa. (Tonah, 2006)

The Farmer-herder Conflict has been a problem in Nigeria, though, for more than a century since the country's independence. The enormous expanse of grassland provided the herders with comfort up until irrigation was introduced to Nigeria's savanna belt, and during the dry season when grazing became inaccessible to cattle herders, the herders moved to the coastal region where there is longer rain and soil absorbs water for long in search for water and pasture. (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010) The 417 grazing reserves in the Norths, where the government gave space, water, and vaccinations to cattle and where the cow herders were required to pay taxes, appear to have been abandoned by the northern administration in 1965. (Egbuta, 2018) The government neglected the grazing reserve over time due to its preoccupation in oil and other natural resource, forcing herders to resort to traditional and seasonal grazing, which has led to conflicts with farmers. (Egbuta, 2018)

About 35 million people were thought to live in Nigeria at the time of independence; 64 years later, that number rose to over 200 million. As a result, industrialisation and urbanization have used up most of the country's natural resources, and this resulted to the competition of the available resources between farmers and herders. (Egbuta, 2018) Disagreements between herders and local farmers over the use of vital resources including cropland, grazing areas, and water are

another factor contributing to the conflict between farmers and herders. (Audu, 2013) Each party finds something wrong with the other, leading them to accuse one another. For instance, the herders accuse the farmers of the host community of stealing or poisoning their cattle, while the farmers of the host community accuse the herders of letting their cattle graze on their developing crops and destroying them. (Olomojobi & Ajilore, 2018) The main reason for the violence, especially in the Northern States, was thought to be an inadequate supply of grazing resources since growing crop cultivations and poor management of the existing grazing reserves had significantly reduced the amount of resources available for animal feed (Adisa, 2012). More than 500,000 Hectares in Zamfara State have been designated as grazing reserves for the development of livestock (cattle routes and animal drinking ponds).

The hostility of the conflict has raised concerns about farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. For instance, a dispute between farmers and herders in 2005 left 2500 farmers homeless and 28 individuals in Densina Local Government of Adamawa State thought to be dead. (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010) In the north central region of Nigeria, there has been a severe farmer-herder conflict. Since Nigeria is home to many different ethnic groups, the attack could jeopardize relations between herders, host towns, and various ethnic groups. Additionally, the issue has resulted in thousands of cases of displacement, murders, and property destruction. For instance, in 2014, separate attacks resulted in the deaths of over 100 villagers in Kaduna State, 69 villagers in Katsina State, and 37 villagers in Benue State (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010).

In 2015 alone, the violence between farmers and herders cost the lives of approximately 2000 individuals, according to a report published by SMB Intelligence. (Amzat et al., 2016) Numerous nomads were killed during the conflicts, and the host populations also killed nomads in reprisal. The livestock herds of numerous nomads were also wiped away. The rapidly expanding Nigerian population is faced with huge challenges as a result of the decline in the agricultural labor force in these areas. (Imo, 2017) Many of the affected rural areas force farmers out of their homes, forcing them to finally seek safety in neighboring states. People who live in the villages are wary of visiting farms in remote locations due to the possibility of herders' violence. It is worrying how this situation is affecting food production. (Isola, 2018)

In this context, the media social role of the media comes to the fore as they have the potential to determine what the people hold as important. The more the contingent reporting on conflict related issues, the more the importance the people attach to the issue. This is due to the dependency of the media in today's society. (McCombs & Shaw, 1976) The framing of public mind, in today's well-developed field of media, is to shape ideologies, set agenda, execute propaganda and to prime public mind on issues. Even with modernity and the presence of technology, it is amusing that the media still thinks for us. Frames appears to look unimportant to us when in form of a text, but when it gets structured into paragraphs or an article or audio-visual piece, the framing effects take place. (Thomas, 2019) Conflict frame is said to be responsible for number of both negative and positive outcomes on citizens and a good example is, as claimed, by Mutz & Reeves (2005), that conflict fame is responsible for political distrust.

Documentary and peacebuilding in society

The relationship between media and society has long been established as both phenomena modulate and affect each other. (Hanson 2008; Kenix, 2011; Oso & Bello, 2012). Most media genres like television, radio, newspapers have related symbiotically with society. For instance, an account shows that as early as 1920's, filmmakers were exploring the use of documentary films to instigate change and educate audiences. (Aufderheide, 2007) Given that documentary film has long been found crucial to play an inspiring role in peacebuilding in society, an array of documentary producers, directors, institutions, communities and sponsors have emerged for peace building in society. (Townsend & Niraula, 2016) Essentially, it has been reported that documentary filmmakers in Georgia have been in the vanguard of peacebuilding initiatives. (Zurabashvili, 2015) Accordingly, these filmmakers have managed in collaborating with their counterparts in airing opposing conflict sides of conflicts.

RESEARCH METHODS

Results

The exclusive focus of this research is on the analysis of visual and audio material of the Al Jazeera documentary, *Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land*. It is an effort to investigate farmer-herder conflict portrayal, comprehend it, and analyze it using qualitative content analysis. The media content analyzed in this study is the documentary, *Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land* by Al Jazeera, which focuses solely on topics relating to the conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria. Following the transcription of *Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land*, texts were reviewed, developed into themes and concepts, understood, assessed, and interpreted. This methodology is considered appropriate for this study since the provided data is a televised documentary. The content analysed involves the use of text, thereby making content analysis the right choice of analysis. Al-Jazeera, an international television station is chosen as the medium for this study, particularly its documentary on farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria, “*Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land*”, produced in 2019. The qualitative content analysis studied the texts in the documentary holistically; the portrayal of crisis in the Al-Jazeera documentary, “*Unrest forces farmers off their land*”, and other themes of the crisis.

Text was studied from the transcription of the documentary *Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land*. After reading the text, as many headings as necessary are scribbled in the margins to summarize every section of it. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) The coding sheet was utilized to code text from the documentary and used as the data collection tool for the content analysis.

The unit of analysis and content categorization

Unit of analysis: Entire text of the documentary “*Unrest Forces Farmers off Their Land*” produced in 2019 (19 minutes footage). With the above, unit of analysis categorized, which to include; audio and video of the documentary, i.e; portrayal of themes, portrayal of government intervention, language portrayal and portrayal of consequences.

The below items were adapted from the literature of this study (Olomajobi and Ajilore (2018); (Gever & Essien, 2017; Egbuta 2018); (Audu, 2013); (Amzat , Fagbemi, Lawal, Wantu & Fagbemi, 2016); (Ofuohu & Isife, 2010) and the data (*Unrest forces farmers off their land*).

A. Portrayal of theme is categorized as follows;

- i. Peace and Unity
- ii. Violence and Destruction
- iii. Displacement

B. Portrayal of Government Intervention;

- i. Responsible ii. Irresponsible

C. Language of Portrayal;

- i. War/ Horror ii. Peace/ hope iii. Escalation

D. Portrayal of Consequence

- i. Destruction of properties ii. Displacement iii. Deaths
- ii. Loss of means of livelihood v. In access to education
- iii. In access to health care

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Themes portrayed in Al Jazeera documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land

- i. Peace and Unity

According to the documentary, the central ideas portrayed on peace and unity includes a forum held by religious leaders that has in attendance; women of different faith. The sole aim of the forum was to hold a peace meeting on how to put a stop to farmer-herder violence. Also, a forum held by traditional leaders with the aim of reaching a common goal of creating peace between farmers and herders' community. The following narration in the documentary depicts this finding. "Religious leaders hold peace forum like this one that has brought women together from different faith to help ease tension and relatively, traditional leaders also hold their own peace meeting, they too are from different religions and ethnic groups' (Narrator, 2019, 13:43)

- ii. Violence and destruction

According to the documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land, the central ideas portrayed on violence and destruction involve the destruction of farm crops and villages as stated by victims of the attack and the narrator. It is also portrayed that the violence is not limited to destruction of properties alone but killings of villagers. Three farmers gave an account of how their villages and farm were destroyed during the attack. The narrator also made mention of destruction of farms and houses four times. The following lines imported from the documentary drive home

this finding. For instance, “Abubakar Usman said he lost everything when cattle destroyed his crops a few days ago. He says his family could go hungry this year if he does not get a loan to replant” Narrator (2019: 15:10). Additionally, ‘They came at night, by dawn everything is gone. I don’t know where to go and what to do. According to Abdullahi Usman, a farmer, it happens every time around here all the time. Sometimes, violence erupts and people gets hurt’ (Farmer, 2019: 14:05). The narrator also added that, Abdullah Usman (Farmer) blames the cattle herders for the damage to his two farms. Accordingly,

More than sixty armed men came to this village in December, they burnt homes and killed people including a fourteen-year-old girl who lived in this house. Also, Moses Saaku and others in the camp say their homes were burnt when the conflict erupt. It was also narrated that, it has been months since their village was attacked by herdsmen, everything they owned has been destroyed (Narrator, 2019: 14:35)

In addition, the narrator captures some specific lines that speak to the theme of violence and destruction. For example, “Adamu Idris, a farmer laments that they came to our village and burn our houses’ Adamu Idris (Farmer, 2019: 12:48) Similarly, it was said that “more than sixty armed men came to this village in December, killed people including a fourteen-year-old girl who lived in this housed” (Narrator, 2019, 12:01). This is also apparent to the claim that, “cattle-keeping family show their own scar of battle, they said over twenty-five people buried here were killed in the price of attacks” (Narrator, 2019, 12:41). “My son was out grazing when he was attacked and killed by raiders from the farming community” (Adamu Idris, 2019, 12:45). It was added that, “thousands of people in Benue have been killed and over the past three years, more than two thousand people have been killed across the country as a result of the conflict” (Narrator, 2019, 4:23). It was added that, “2017 was one of the deadliest years in the farmer-herder conflict, with about one thousand people killed. Hundred have been killed this year, hundred people have been kidnapped for ransom” (Narrator, 2019, 4:44). Violence and destruction are the most occurring themes in the documentary. Thus, according to the documentary, 13 scenes describe the violence and destruction caused by the conflict between farmers and herders. Farmers recount the loss of their farmlands to the price of the conflict. Additionally, homes and valuables belonging to the

farmers and herders were said to have been burnt by the narrator. Thousands of people are also said to have lost their lives to the attack, victims express their grievances over the death of their loved ones to the conflict.

iii. Displacement

As noted in the documentary, one of the themes depicted is displacement, as it is narrated that thousands of people have been displaced since the occurrence of the conflict. Some of the lines below excerpted from the documentary reflect on the theme. “Over thirty thousand people are displaced this year (2019) as a result of the conflict” (Narrator, 2019, 4:44). It was added that, “Charity, her husband, Moses and lots of others fled their village in Bajinna to come and reside in this camp when they were attacked last January” (Narrator, 2019, 6:16). Similarly, “there are more than thirty thousand evacuees living in this camp alone and the number keeps rising” (Narrator, 2019, 6:32). Also, it is narrated that “in Benue state alone, at least a hundred and eighty thousand people have been displaced and more than sixty percent of them are children. They have been living in camp like this one without basic facilities” (Narrator, 2019, 7: 05).

B. Portrayal of Government in Unrest forces farmers off their land

i. Government as a Responsible Stakeholder

As depicted in the documentary, government action towards the conflict between farmers and herder, shows on one side, appreciable sense of responsibility while on the other side, the government is said not to be proactive. It is depicted that the government provides displacement camps and food supplies for the victims of the conflict, introduces some measures, schemes and grazing reserve to stop violence that erupted between farmers and herders due to competition for farmland by the duo. The narrator made mention of this on four occasions with emphasis on how a farmer shared a testimony regarding the positive impact of government schemes on cattle rearing business. In this case, the commissioner in Sokoto State argues for the essence of the government’s introduction of the scheme. As narrated in the documentary, “some governments have introduced desperate measures including death penalty to stop the violence” (Narrator, 2019, 4:50). The narrator cited the case of the Sokoto State government which started the programme of herd

management in order to stop violence that sweep many parts of Nigeria as they compete for land and water between livestock farmers and those growing crop. According to the aforementioned commissioner, “the state is expanding the programme, just as hundreds of cattle farmers forced from the Southern part of Nigeria by the violence are moving to the North” (Narrator, 2019, 9:42). The commissioner further states that, ‘we have nineteen grazing reserves that are provided for these herders and we have started demarcating some of them so that the farmers will now know their limit and avoid encroachment. (Narrator, 2019, 9:49)

ii. Other Stakeholders as Supportive Players

The documentary narrated the roles played by other stakeholders aside the government. The narrator identified Community Peace Forum, which comprises religious leaders and women of different faith, Traditional Rulers Peace Forum, a platform for the traditional rulers to meet to find remedy to the conflict and the Nigerian Cattle Breeders Association (Garus Gogolo). The narrator noted that these stakeholders play significant roles in the conflict between herders and farmers from time to time.

C. Portrayal of language

i. War/horror

According to the documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land, the language used portrayed conflict between farmers and herders as horror and the affected areas are presented to be war zone. According to some victims of the attack and the narrator, their villages were burnt, farmlands were destroyed, some were kidnaped and several others were killed. As presented by the narrator, “Moses Saaku and others in the camp say their homes were burnt when the conflict erupted and it has been months since their village was attacked by herdsmen, everything they owned has been destroyed” (Narrator 2019, 6:26). Similarly, “more than sixty armed men came to this village in December, they burnt killed people including a fourteen-year-old girl who lived in this house” (Narrator, 2019, 12:01). Furthermore, some of the victims, who recount their experience is the cattle-keeping family. As narrated, “cattle-keeping family show their own scar of battle, they said over twenty-five people buried here were killed in the price of attacks” (Narrator

2019, 12:41). Relative to this is the case of Adamu Idris' son, who as reported by his father, "was outside for grazing when he was attacked and killed by raiders from the farming community" (Adamu Idris, 2019, 12:45). In another claim, it is stated that, "over the past three years, more than two thousand people have been killed across the country as a result of the conflict" (Narrator 2019, 4:23).

ii. Peace/hope

According to Unrest forces farmers off their land, the language of portrayal for peace and hope is reflected in the peace and unity gathering/measure instituted in curbing the conflict. This includes the peace forum formed by religious leaders and traditional rulers of various faiths and ethnic groups. "Religious leaders hold peace forum like this one that has brought women together from different faith to help ease tension" (Narrator 2019, 12:45). Also, the narrator added that "traditional leaders also hold their own peace meeting, they too are from different religions and ethnic groups" (Narrator, 2019, 13:43). Similarly, the language portrayal of peace and hope is further reflected that "the Sokoto State Government started the programme of herd management to stop violence which is sweeping many parts of Nigeria as competition for land and water intensified between livestock farmers and those growing crop. The State is expanding the programme, just as hundreds of cattle farmers forced from the Southern part of Nigeria by the violence are moving up North" (Narrator 2019, 9:42). "We have nineteen grazing reserves that are provided for these herders and we have started demarcating some of them so that the farmers will now know their limit and avoid undue encroachment" (Abdulqodir Usman Junaidu, Sokoto State Commissioner for Animal Health 2019, 9:49)

iii. Escalation

According to the documentary Unrest forces farmers off their land, the language that is likely to escalate the conflict is the portrayal of Muslim Fulani Herdsmen as the perpetrators of the conflict, the documentary seemingly portrays the conflict as an ethnic/religion conflict by describing the conflict to be between the Christian farmers and the Muslim herders. Accordingly,

It is mainly between the farming communities and ethnic Fulani Muslim herdsmen as the attack on civilians continue to escalate. This is why the Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom,

accuses ethnic Fulani herdsmen of being behind the attacks. In the same view, the Global Terrorism Index says the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria killed more than one thousand two hundred people in 2014 making them the world fourth deadliest group. The Nigeria government also claims that they have killed more people than Boko Haram this year. In summary, conflict between Christian farmers and Muslim herders over land for grazing and farming are not new. But politics, climate change and villages tension have made things worse (Narrator, 2019 14:52).

D. Portrayal of consequences

Some of the critical consequences portrayed in the documentary include lack of access to education as the Narrator states that the displaced children are unable to go to school. As narrated, “here in Benue State, children of the displaced are unable to go to school” (Narrator 2019, 7:20). Another consequence critical in this conflict is the fact that there was lack of health care. This is because the displaced have limited or no access to medical care, which resulted to death of children who were affected with measles and left unattended to by doctor. In the narration, it was stated that:

Charity is dead and, Izial also died of measles two months ago in this camp. Additionally, the situation in this camp is particularly more difficult for children. At least 27 children have already died since the conflict began in January. There is a measles outbreak here and there is no a single doctor available. Also, majority of the children who died here have no access to doctors (Narrator 2019, 6: 40).

In addition to lack of access to education and medical care, massive economic loss was identified as noter consequence. According to the documentary, Unrest forces farmers off their land, the conflict resulted into poverty and losses of livelihood, since the outbreak of the conflict. Most farmers have lost their source of livelihood. Three farmers gave account on the loss of their farmland to the conflict. “For seven months, Muhammed Aliyu said he walked this narrow street begging for food, he and hundreds of others escaped the tightest unleashed dozens of villages in Nigeria Northwest, effectively stopping farming and economic activities” (Narrator, 2019, 00: 23). In another narration, “we were a bit comfortable living off our farm, until there is a series of attack

and the attackers took everything, as you can see, the conditions here are not so much different. Look at us now, we have abandoned our farms. I was to cultivate 15 to 16 hectares before this conflict erupted” (Moses Saaku, 2019, 6:13).

Discussion

This documentary highlights "peace and unity" as a primary theme, aligning with the first research objective to identify themes portrayed. This is evident in a community peace forum led by religious leaders, women of different faiths, and traditional rulers from various ethnic groups, aiming to give voice to the affected parties and find lasting solutions to conflicts. Another key theme is "violence and destruction," emphasizing the vandalism of farmlands, homes, and properties, resulting in injuries, deaths, and hatred among conflicting groups. This aligns with the study of Ofuohu and Isife (2010), who noted that displaced farmers in conflict zones become dependent on others. Similarly, Aliyu (2015) highlighted the destruction of properties and crops in Katsina State, worsening poverty. In addition, "displacement" also emerges prominently, as victims recount losing their homes and moving to IDP camps. According to Premium Times Research (2018), over 80,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were registered in Benue State camps. Governments are depicted as "responsible stakeholders" attempting to curb the conflict with measures like banning open grazing and enforcing penalties. However, their efforts are seen as insufficient.

The documentary also portrays "war and horror," depicting villages ravaged by arson, massacres, and abductions. This reflects the urgent need for enhanced security measures and citizen awareness. Conversely, "peace and hope" are seen in peace meetings by religious and traditional leaders and initiatives like Sokoto State's grazing reserve demarcation programme. These efforts aim to foster dialogue and coexistence. Furthermore, "escalation" is another significant theme, linking specific tribes and religions to the conflict, potentially fueling intergroup disaffection. Osimen et al. (2015) argue that language can either exacerbate or resolve conflicts. The documentary's framing risks intensifying divisions. Regarding the fourth research objective, the conflict's major consequences include displacement, as victims flee to IDP camps. The

Premium Times report corroborates Ofuohu and Isife (2010), who noted similar patterns. Other consequences include inadequate healthcare, as highlighted by outbreaks like measles in IDP camps, leading to fatalities. Oli et al. (2018) report over 458 deaths and the displacement of 350 communities in border areas. The conflict also disrupts education, forcing children to drop out, and impoverishes victims through the loss of farmland and livelihoods. Ofuohu and Isife (2010) estimated annual crop losses worth millions due to cattle invasions in southern Nigeria, exacerbating community struggles.

CONCLUSION

The documentary, *Unrest* forces farmers off their land themes encompasses; peace/unity, violence/destruction and displacement. The documentary frames the attitude of government towards the conflict to be responsible, however, the effort of the government towards the conflict is not enough. The documentary language depicts war/horror, peace/hope and escalation. The finding of this study also reveal that Farmer herder conflict has impacted negatively on the affected parties by causing as loss of properties, displacements, ethnic intolerance, fall in agricultural produce and economy. This suggests that if farmer-herder conflict is left unattended to overtimes, irreparable loss will continue to be recorded. The stakeholders (government, media and NGOs among others) should uphold the conflict between farmer herder as an issue that demands special attention and contribute immensely to the curbing of the conflict so as to put in decline the adverse consequences of farmer herder conflict in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Adebayo , A. (1997) Contemporary dimensions of migration among historically migrant Nigerians. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 32; 93-10.9.
- Anaeto, S.G., Onabajo,O.S, & Osifeso,J.B. (2008). Models and theories of communication. African renaissance books incorporated.
- Adisa, R.S. (2012). Land Use Conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen: Implications for Agricultural and Rural Development in Nigeria. In: R.S. Adisa (ed.), *Rural Development: Contemporary Issues and Practices*. IntechOpen.
- Aliyu, A. S. (2015). Causes and resolution of conflict between cattle herders and crop farmers in Katsina State. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, School of Postgraduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Amzat, A., Fagbemi, A., Lawal, I., Wantu, J., Akingboye, O. (2016). Menace of Fulani Herdsmen versus Host Communities. *The Guardian News*, 8 January. Retrieved from: <https://guardian.ng/features/menace-of-fulani-herdsmen/> (18.08.2022).
- Audu, S. D. (2013). Conflicts among farmers and pastoralists in northern Nigeria induced by freshwater scarcity. *Developing Country Studies*, 3(12), 25–32.
- Aufderheide, P. (2007). Documentary film: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.
- Chatto, B. (2018). Documentary and communication. Retrieved from www.oxfordbibliographies.com.
- Egbuta, U. (2018). Understanding the Herder-Farmer conflict in Nigeria. Accord: The African Center Publisher.
- Fasona, M.J. and Omojola, A.S. (2005). “Climate change, human security and communal clashes in Nigeria”. Paper at international workshop in human security and climate change. Oslo Oct. 21-23.
- Galadima, D. J. (2002). Basics of conflict reporting. In U. A. Pate (Ed.), *Introduction to conflict reporting in Nigeria* (pp. 55–69). Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Gever, C. V., & Essien, C. F. (2017). Newspaper coverage of the herdsmen-farmers conflict in central Tiv Land, Benue State, Nigeria. *SAGE Journals of Media, War and Conflict*, 12(1), 1–16.
- Hanson, R. E. (2008) *Mass communication, living in a media world*. Washington DC: CQ.
- Hsieh ,H. & Shannon, S. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15, 1277-1288.
- Ibeh, C. E. (2017). The Nigerian state, crisis of peace, security, and development. In *Readings in Peace and Conflict* (pp. 61–75). Society for Peace Study and Practice, University of Ibadan.
- Imo, C.K. (2017). The demographic implication of nomadic herdsmen and farmers clashes in Nigeria. *International journal of development and management review*. Vol. 12 ,No. 1.
- Isola, O. (2018). Herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria: a threat to peacebuilding and human security in West Africa. Retrieved from//: *Africa up close at Wilson Center blog*.
- Jenkins, P. (2022). 20 reasons why documentaries are important. *Brillantio blog*. Retrieved from <https://brillantio.com/>

- Kenix, L. J. (2011). *Alternative and mainstream media: the converging spectrum*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1973). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.
- Mutz, D., & Reeves, B. (2005). The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust. *American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 1–15.
- Ofuoku, A. U., & Isife, B. I. (2009). Causes, effects, and resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflict in Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1(2), 47–54.
- Okoro, J. P. (2020). Herdsmen-farmers' conflict: Implication on national development. *International Journal of Scientific and Engineering Research*, 11(2), 1–10.
- Oli, B. B., Ibrahim, M. A., & Musa, A. (2018). Prevalence of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 4(8), 1–14.
- Olomojobi, O., & Ajilore, K. (2018). Press coverage of herders-farmers crisis in selected Nigerian newspapers. ResearchGate Publication.
- Osimen, G.U., Angia, U.G., & Bateye, O.R. (2015). The impact of language in conflict management and peace building. *American journal of research in humanities, arts and social sciences*, 10(2), pp 165-171. Available at <http://www.iasir.net>
- Oso, L., & Bello, S. (2012). Conceptualising media audiences: contextual and contrasting perspectives. In E. N. Tobechukwu, N. S. Ngoa & I. Sobowale (Eds.), *Critique and application of communication theories* (pp. 228-258). Ota, Nigeria: Covenant University Press.
- Pate, A. U., & Oso, L. (2017). *Multiculturalism, diversity, and reporting conflict in Nigeria*. Evans Brothers.
- Premium Times. (2018, January 10). Benue killings: 80,000 internally displaced persons registered. Premium Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/255073-benue-killings-80000-internally-displaced-persons-registered.html?tztc=1>
- Sen, A. (2011). *Peace and democratic society*. Open Book Publishers, 95–99.
- Thomas, T. (2019). Toward a psychology of framing effects. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 160, 1–19.
- Tonah, S. (2006). Managing farmer-herder to African politics in Ghana's Volta Basin. *Ibadan journal of social sciences*, 4(1), 33-45.
- Townsend, D., & Niraula, K. (2016). Documentary filmmakers: Bridging practice and scholarship in peacebuilding. *International Journal of Conflict Engagement and Resolution*, 4(1), 28–40.
- Tsuwa, S. B., & Odigbo, J. O. (2017). The socio-economic impacts of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 5(3), 45-56
- Yalwa, A., & Pali, N. A. (2017). Media and national security in Nigeria: A narrative review. In *Readings in Peace and Conflict* (pp. 190–195). Society for Peace Study and Practice, University of Ibadan.

Zurabashvili, T. (2015). 20 years of filming conflicts: Building trust through documentaries in Georgia. Peace Insight. Retrieved from <https://www.peaceinsight.org/>