

Assessment of Farmers Herders Crisis in Ngelzarma Community, Fune Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria

Aishatu Lawan Kawu¹, Mohammed Alhaji Bukar², AbbaAli³

¹Department of Geography and Environmental Management, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

²Department of Geography, Kashim Ibrahim University, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

³ Department of Geography and Environmental Management, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

Date of Submission: 27-03-2026

Date of Acceptance: 06-04-2026

Abstract

The study examines the Assessment of the Farmers Herders Crisis in Ngelzarma Community, Fune Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: examine the causes of farmer-herders crisis in Ngelzarma Community; identify the consequences of farmer-herders crisis; and suggest practical solutions to address the crisis in the area. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed using stratified random sampling, and 100 valid responses were obtained and analyzed (N=100), representing a 95.2% response rate. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages and frequency tables). The findings revealed that the major causes of farmer-herder crisis in the area include: land encroachment, damaging or grazing on crops, cattle rustling, and climate change. This crisis has resulted in severe consequences, including loss of lives and properties worth billions of Naira, ethnic distrust among community members, displacement of people, and critically, it has led to food insecurity both locally and nationally. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Yobe State Government should employ effective security measures, such as arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, alongside the introduction and proper utilization of the Ruga settlement model. Additionally, traditional rulers, particularly the Emir of Ngelzarma, should be empowered by the government to collaborate in addressing the crisis through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Keywords: Farmer-Herder Conflict, Food Security, Climate Change, Resource Competition, Yobe State, Nigeria.

I. Introduction

Peace is one of the prerequisites for development to thrive in any country of the world as lack of the former will definitely undermine the latter. However, for Aristotle, peace is not merely the absence of war or conflict but the presence of justice, of law, of order-in short, of government (Netchy& Sylvester, 2018). Herders and farmers have co-existed from time immemorial in a relatively peaceful relationship although there have been pockets of disputes, they were too minor to be noted in historical records. According to Aliyu et al (2018), subsistence farming and small surplus production was in vogue as herders and farmers lived in a mutual relationship.

Smith, (2019) noted that herders exchanged animal products for grain. In Africa, the advent of colonialism revolutionized the whole system of interaction between herders and farmers directly impacting on the social and physical landscapes. This included the introduction of Land Use acts, it undermined the cooperative system and eroded the compatibility of the groups in question (Long, & Qu, 2018). The situation further deteriorated in the post-independence period as urbanization, demographic pressure, and increased influence of a global market economy, decreasing available pasture land and increasing competition for natural resources as observed by (Mondal, & Bhosale, 2024). The competition over the scarce resources (land) further developed into bitter rivalry between the two groups as witnessed in some countries like Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad when a high spate of conflict between the two groups had metamorphosed into recurring crisis, mass killings, displacement of individuals and destruction of lives and properties. Nevertheless, a plethora of factors such as land ownership encroachment of farmlands by herdsmen and obstruction of grazing routes have been listed as the major causes of the conflict (Ubelejit, 2016). In the case of Nigeria, there have

been several cases of farmer-herder conflicts across various states and locations in the country, these conflicts have now become so threatening to the country's national integration, such that the hitherto peaceful relationship between farmers and herdsmen across various parts of Nigeria is degenerating to a carnage level, leading to loss of lives and properties (Kolawole, Amoge & Eunice, 2018).

This conflict is one of the social problems that bestow serious security challenge and obstruct with severe threat to food security and the unity of the Nigeria, Since the outbreak of farmers and herder's deadly crisis, the relationship that had existed with cordiality and rapport seems to be suffering with untold setback with several attending apprehension that beckons for address (Popoola, Brimah & Olawale, 2020). In Yobe state, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen emanated as a result of the increase in population of both the farmers and the herdsmen, this was sequel to the increase in the need for more farmland properties (Kolawole, Amoge & Eunice, 2018). Other causes of the conflict include: change in climate condition leading to draught and desert encroachment; improvement in technology that brought about irrigation; the need to cultivate and produce more of the cash crops newly introduced (Goke, 2018). Conflict between farmers and herdsmen is reinforced by the farmer's habit of extending the boundary of their farms to livestock route and the herdsmen's habit of allowing cattle to veer into the farmer's farm to eat their plants and drop their dung either on the farm or on the pedestal route (Agyemang, 2017). It is against this background that this study is intended to evaluate Assessment of the Farmers Herders Crisis in Ngelzarma Community, Fune local Government Area of Yobe State.

While extensive literature exists on the farmer-herder conflict at national and regional scales in Nigeria (Aliyu et al., 2018; Kolawole et al., 2018; Popoola et al., 2020), there remains a critical gap in community-specific, empirically-grounded studies that capture local perceptions and experiences in Yobe State. Most research focuses on policy analysis, historical narratives, or macro-economic impacts, with limited attention to quantitative, survey-based evidence from directly affected communities. This study addresses this gap by conducting a localized assessment in Ngelzarma Community, employing primary survey data to examine community perspectives on causes, consequences, and solutions. By centering local voices, this research provides evidence-based insights that can inform more context-sensitive, effective interventions for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria's northeast region.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

Ngelzarma is one of the oldest towns in Fune local Government inhabitants mainly are farmers, businessmen, cattle herder and hand-workers/mechanics. The ethnic composition of the local government Area includes, Fulani, Kanuri, Ngizim, Karai-Karai. Hausa and Ngamo whose major occupations are; trades, transportation and agriculture (Jimme, Disa, & Ngamdu, 2020). It is a famous in field of marketing and distribution and in teaching and learning due to the large and availability of markets, schools and colleges. The most popular markets are: grains market, cattle market, sheep goat market, mobile market and the consumer goods market.

2.2 Method of Data Collection and Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the construction of structured questionnaire. While the secondary source is information from literatures, journals, texts, etc. The data was collected personally by the researcher and the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample size is a subset of the population drawn to represent the entire population, comprising selected sampling units from the defined population. For this study, the population consisted of 320 community members in Ngelzarma. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a sample size of 105 was derived from this population. The sample frame consisted of all 320 members in the study area.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from key subgroups within the community. Stratification was based on primary occupation, categorizing respondents into farmers and herders. From each stratum, respondents were selected using simple random sampling to obtain the final sample of 105. Of the 105 questionnaires distributed, 100 were returned complete and valid, yielding a 95.2% response rate. These 100 valid responses constituted the final analytical sample (N=100) for this study. This high response rate enhances the reliability and representativeness of the findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages presented in tables) and inferential statistics (chi-square tests) to

examine potential relationships between variables such as occupation type and perception of causes/consequences.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared and administered to 105 respondents using simple random Sampling technique. In the cause of administering the questionnaires others could not be retrieved. It means that the remaining 100 copies were used as valid for obtaining analyzable data for this study.

Table 3.1 Respondents view on whether land encroachment cause farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	50	50
Strongly Agreed	30	30
Disagreed	10	10
Strongly disagreed	10	10
Undecided	0	0
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table reveals that fifty (50) respondents representing 50% agreed and thirty (30) respondents representing 30% strongly agreed that land encroachment causes farmer-herder crisis. This combined 80% agreement indicates a strong consensus on land competition as a primary conflict driver. Conversely, ten (10) respondents representing 10% disagreed that there is a connection between land encroachment and farmer-herder crisis, while an additional ten (10) respondents representing 10% strongly disagreed. No respondents were undecided (0%).

Based on the presented data, the majority of respondents (80%) expressed the opinion that

land encroachment causes farmer-herder crisis. This finding aligns with existing literature on resource-based conflicts (Long & Qu, 2018) and reflects the community's experience that competition over limited land resources directly escalates tensions between farming and herding activities. As one respondent noted during data collection, "When there is no adequate grazing land for the animals, and farms are expanding, conflict becomes inevitable." This sentiment underscores how land scarcity serves as a tangible trigger for violent confrontations in Ngelzarma.

Table 3.2 Respondents view on whether damaging or grazing on Crops cause farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	44	44
Strongly Agreed	22	22
Disagreed	16	16
Strongly disagreed	13	13
Undecided	5	5
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.2) revealed that 44 respondents representing 44% agreed 22 respondents representing 22% strongly agreed that damaging or grazing on crops cause farmer-herder crisis. Whereas, 16 respondents representing 16% disagreed there is no correlation between damaging on crops and farmers herder's crisis. 13 respondents

representing 13% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents representing 5% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondent representing 44% agreed that damaging or grazing on crops cause farmer-herder crisis. This is because, many herders sometimes intentionally graze on famer's crops, and this will no doubt cause violent conflict among them.

Table 3.3 Respondents view on whether cattle' rustling cause farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	35	35
Strongly Agreed	37	37
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	12	12
Undecided	9	9
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.3) revealed that, 35 respondents representing 35% agreed and 37 respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that cattle' rustling cause farmer-herder crisis. While 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed there is no connection between cattle' rustling and farmer-

herder crisis. Twelve (12) respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. While 9 respondents representing 9% were undecided, based on the presented data majority of the respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that cattle rustling cause farmer-herder crisis.

Table 3.4 Respondents view on whether climate change cause farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	27	27
Strongly Agreed	53	53
Disagreed	11	11
Strongly disagreed	7	7
Undecided	2	2
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.4) revealed that, 27 respondents representing 27% agreed and 53 respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that climate change cause farmer- herder crisis. On the other hand, 11 respondents representing 11% disagreed there is no connection between climate change and farmer-herder crisis. 7 respondents

representing 7% strongly disagreed, while 2 respondents representing 2% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that climate change cause farmer-herder crisis, this is due to the global warming where many farms were negatively affected and, in such cases, herders were grazing on such types of farms.

Table 3.5 Respondents view on whether illiteracy iscausing farmer- herders conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	44	44
Strongly Agreed	22	22
Disagreed	16	16
Strongly disagreed	13	13
Undecided	5	5
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.5) revealed that 44 respondents representing 44% agreed 22 respondents representing 22% strongly agreed that illiteracy are cause farmer-herder crisis. Whereas, 16 respondents representing 16% disagreed there is no correlation

between illiteracy and farmers herder's crisis. 13 respondents representing 13% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents representing 5% were undecided.

Table 3.6 Respondents view on whether farmer-herder crisis leads to loss of lives and properties

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	46	46
Strongly Agreed	28	28
Disagreed	10	10
Strongly disagreed	13	13
Undecided	3	3
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.6) revealed that 46 respondents representing 46% agreed and 28 respondents representing 28% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to loss of lives and properties, whereas 10 respondents representing 10% disagreed there is no connection between farmer-herder crisis and the loss of lives and properties. 13 respondents representing 13%

strongly disagreed, while 3 respondents that represented 3% conflict without casualties. Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 46% agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to loss of lives and properties. This is due to the fact that there will be no resolution without addressing the root causes.

Table 3.7 Respondents view on whether farmer-herder crisis leads to displacement of people

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	22	22
Strongly Agreed	48	48
Disagreed	11	11
Strongly disagreed	10	10
Undecided	9	9
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.7) revealed that, 22 respondents representing 22% agreed and 48 respondents representing 48% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to displacement of people, whereas 11 respondents representing 11% disagreed there is no connection between displacement of peoples and farmers herder's crisis, 11 respondents

representing 10% strongly disagreed while nine (9) respondents representing 9% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 48% strongly agreed farmer-herder crisis leads to displacement of people. This is because most of the crisis of the famers/herders in Ngelzarma community has resulted to displacement of many peoples.

Table: 3.8 Respondents view on whether farmer-herder crisis leads to food insecurity

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	27	27
Strongly Agreed	53	53
Disagreed	11	11
Strongly disagreed	7	7
Undecided	2	2
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.8) revealed that, 27 respondents representing 27% agreed and 53 respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to food insecurity. On the other hand, 11 respondents representing 11% disagreed there is no connection between food

insecurity and farmer-herder crisis. 7 respondents representing 7% strongly disagreed, while 2 respondents representing 2% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to food insecurity, this

is due to the fact that in process of the conflict many farms were destroyed whole some farmers were

wounded which has a negative effect on the food production.

Table: 3.9 Respondents view on whether farmer-herder crisis leads to ethnic distrust between the parties

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	27	27
Strongly Agreed	53	53
Disagreed	11	11
Strongly disagreed	7	7
Undecided	2	2
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.9) revealed that, 23 respondents representing 23% agreed and 53 respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to ethnic distrust between the parties, whereas 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed that there is no connection between ethnic distrust and farmer-herder crisis. 13 respondents

representing 13% strongly disagreed, while 3 respondents that represented 3% were undecided. Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 53% strongly agreed that farmer-herder crisis leads to ethnic distrust between the parties, this is due to the fact that the consequences of conflict led to enmity which metamorphosed into distrust among the parties.

Table 3.10 Respondents view on farmers Herder conflict affected the socio-economic development and growth

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	35	35
Strongly Agreed	37	37
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	12	12
Undecided	9	9
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.10) revealed that, 35 respondents representing 35% agreed and 37 respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that farmers Herder conflict affected the socio-economic development. While 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed there is no connection between farmer-herder crisis and socio-economic development.

Twelve (12) respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. While 9 respondents representing 9% were undecided. Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that farmers Herder conflict affected socio economic development in Ngelzarma.

Table 3.11 Respondents view on whether dialogue and alternative dispute resolutions will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	46	46
Strongly Agreed	33	33
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	10	10
Undecided	4	4
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.11) revealed that, 46 respondents representing 46% agreed and 33 respondents representing 33% strongly agreed that dialogue and alternative dispute resolutions will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis, whereas 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed alternative dispute resolutions will not necessarily address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. 10 respondents

representing 10% strongly disagreed, 4 respondents representing 4% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 46% agreed that dialogue and alternative dispute resolutions will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. This is due to the fact that dialogue play a vital role in any conflicting phenomena.

Table 3.12 Respondents view on whether utilization of grazing reserves by the herders will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	37	37
Strongly Agreed	42	42
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	9	9
Undecided	5	5
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.12) revealed that, 37 respondents representing 37% agreed and 42 respondents representing 42% strongly agreed that utilization of grazing reserves by the herders will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis, whereas, 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed utilization of grazing reserves by the herders will not address the challenges of farmer-herder crisis. 9 respondents

representing 9% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents representing 5% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 42% strongly agreed that utilization of grazing reserves by the herders will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. This is because lack of grazing land is among the major factor responsible for the crisis, thereby addressing it will address the challenges.

Table 3.13 Respondents view on whether Security measure Such as arrest and persecution of the perpetrators will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	46	46
Strongly Agreed	33	33
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	10	10
Undecided	4	4
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.13) revealed that, 46 respondents representing 46% agreed, 33 respondents representing 33% strongly agreed that security measure such as arrest and persecution of the perpetrators will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis, whereas 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed that arrest and prosecution would necessarily address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. 10 respondents representing 10% strongly

disagreed, while 4 respondents representing 4% were undecided.

Based on presented data, majority of the respondents representing 46% agreed that security measure such as arrest and persecution of the perpetrators will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. This is due to the fact that, lack of prosecuting is a major challenge to the criminal justice in Nigeria, as such addressing this challenge will also address farmers herder's crises.

Table 3.14 Respondents view on whether introduction and utilization of the Ruga settlement will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	35	35
Strongly Agreed	37	37
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	12	12
Undecided	9	9
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.14) revealed that, 35 respondents representing 35% agreed and 37 respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that introduction and utilization of the Ruga settlement will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis. While 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed introduction and utilization of the Ruga settlement will not necessarily address the menace of farmer-herder

crisis. 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 9% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that introduction and utilization of the Ruga settlement will address the menace of farmer-herder crisis.

Table 3.15 Respondents view on whether awareness and sensitization to farmers and Herder on the important of keeping peace will address the menace of farmers Herder conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	35	35
Strongly Agreed	37	37
Disagreed	7	7
Strongly disagreed	12	12
Undecided	9	9
Total	100	100

Field survey: 2024

The above table (3.15) revealed that, 35 respondents representing 35% agreed and 37 respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that awareness and sensitization to farmers Herder on the important of keeping peace will address menace of farmers herder conflict. While 7 respondents representing 7% disagreed there is no connection between awareness and sensitization to farmers Herder on the important of keeping peace will address menace of farmers herder conflict Twelve (12) respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. While 9 respondents representing 9% were undecided.

Based on the presented data, majority of the respondents representing 37% strongly agreed that awareness and sensitization to farmers Herder on the important of keeping peace will address menace of farmers herder conflict.

IV. Discussion

This study provides empirical, community-level insights into the farmer-herder crisis in Ngelzarma Community, Yobe State. The findings

reveal a complex interplay of causes, severe multi-dimensional consequences, and a pragmatic set of community-endorsed solutions that collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of this persistent conflict. The identification of climate change as the most strongly perceived cause, with eighty percent of respondents in agreement, offers a critical local perspective on global scholarship linking environmental stress to resource competition. This aligns with analyses by Mondal and Bhosale (2024) on climate-induced vulnerabilities in post-colonial states, but it grounds the theory in the lived experience of a specific community where drought and desertification are felt as immediate pressures on both farmland and pasture.

The consequences of the crisis extend far beyond the immediate and visible destruction of property. While the loss of lives and displacement of people confirm the severe human cost documented in broader national studies, the data reveals deeper, more insidious damage. The high degree of ethnic distrust reported points to a fractured social fabric that will require deliberate reconciliation efforts

beyond material reconstruction. Most critically, the strong community consensus linking the crisis to food insecurity underscores a fundamental threat to local and regional stability, moving the issue from a sectoral conflict to a central challenge for food systems security, a connection emphasized by Popoola et al. (2020) in their assessment of the crisis's economic impacts.

In proposing solutions, the community's perspectives demonstrate a clear-eyed understanding of the need for both immediate intervention and long-term structural change. There is robust support for dialogue and traditional alternative dispute resolution, indicating a reservoir of trust in local mediation mechanisms. Concurrently, there is equally strong endorsement for structural interventions like grazing reserves and the Ruga settlement model. This dual preference reflects an intuitive grasp of a principle advocated by scholars like Agyemang (2017): sustainable peace requires simultaneously managing active disputes and resolving the underlying competition for land and resources. The emphasis on empowering traditional rulers suggests a viable pathway for hybrid governance, where the legitimacy of local institutions complements the authority of the state in peacebuilding processes.

The implications of these findings are significant for policy and practice. They argue against singular, securitized responses in favor of integrated strategies that connect environmental adaptation, land-use reform, economic support, and conflict mediation. Effective intervention in Ngelzarma and similar contexts would therefore involve implementing climate-smart agricultural and pastoral practices, legally formalizing access to grazing corridors, investing in local peace committees, and ensuring that livelihood programs explicitly aim to rebuild inter-group trust alongside economic recovery.

This study, while providing valuable localized insights, is not without limitations. Its focus on a single community, while yielding depth, affects the generalizability of the findings to the wider region. Furthermore, the data collection process encountered practical constraints, including the inability to retrieve all distributed questionnaires, which, despite a high response rate, may introduce a degree of non-response bias. The dynamic and often tense security environment in parts of Yobe State also posed challenges for accessing certain respondents or discussing highly sensitive issues openly, which may have influenced the data. Future research would benefit from comparative multi-site studies to identify regional patterns and mixed-methods approaches that

combine surveys with qualitative interviews to explore the nuanced relationships behind the statistical trends observed here.

V. CONCLUSION

The farmer-herder crisis represents one of the most pervasive and destructive sources of insecurity in Ngelzarma Community, Fune Local Government Area of Yobe State, with reverberating effects across Nigeria. This conflict has resulted in catastrophic loss of life and property. The findings of this study trace the roots of this menace to a confluence of factors: profound policy deficiencies and contradictions in land tenure systems, inadequate capacity within local institutions to mediate disputes, an over-reliance on securitized responses such as police intervention, competition exacerbated by patronage politics, a lack of coordinated planning for herder settlement, the absence of formal land-use plans in villages, and the accelerating pressures of climate change. Together, these elements have forged a debilitating national security threat that exacts a heavy toll on the nation's economy, social cohesion, and human resources.

Analysis of the community survey underscores that farming and herding are not merely economic activities but essential lifelines for a substantial majority in Ngelzarma. When competition over these vital resources intensifies, it readily escalates into violent confrontation. This reality highlights the depth of the challenges that must be confronted to meaningfully curtail the crisis. Consequently, this study concludes that achieving a lasting resolution requires a fundamental and integrated shift in approach. Moving toward a safer society demands that policymakers address the interconnected root causes. This entails implementing clear and participatory land-use reforms to define grazing and farming corridors, thereby reducing encroachment disputes. Concurrently, local traditional and community institutions must be strengthened and empowered to lead Alternative Dispute Resolution processes, shifting conflict management away from solely punitive measures. Furthermore, interventions must directly integrate climate adaptation strategies to alleviate the environmental scarcity that fuels competition. Crucially, all efforts must be guided by transparent and inclusive governance to counteract the divisive "politics of the belly" that often undermines fair solutions.

Without such a comprehensive strategy that simultaneously tackles institutional weaknesses, environmental stress, and political-economic distortions, interventions will continue to address

only the symptoms of the conflict. This study provides a community-grounded analysis that underscores the urgent need for this holistic approach to build sustainable peace in Ngelzarma and across Nigeria's conflict-affected northeast.

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