

**Media Framing of Farmers and Herders' Conflict in *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune*
Newspapers between January 2019 and June 2019**

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Certification

This is to certify that this study was conducted under my supervision by Oluseyi Abiola Olarinde (LCU/PG/19/000809) for the award of Master of Science Degree (M.Sc.) in Mass Communication and Media Technology, Faculty of Communication and Information Science, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria and that this work has not been previously submitted.

Professor L.A Abioye

Date

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Date

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God and my late father, Deacon Olutayo David

Adegboye

DO NOT COPY. LEAD CITY UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to God Almighty for seeing me through this work .

I am also grateful to the management and staff of the African Newspapers of Nigeria Plc.(ANN),the publisher of Tribune Titles, The Punch Newspaper and the Lead city Library ,for giving me the opportunity to use the libraries while collecting data for the research work . I also want to appreciate Lead city University for the privilege of passing through the academic citadel of learning for my postgraduate.

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Although the above-mentioned institution and persons have assisted in the process of this research work, I alone stand responsible for the errors, if any, found in the work

Abstract

The Nigerian state has been faced with numerous internal challenges ranging from banditry attacks, kidnapping, and terrorism to farmers-herdsmen conflicts. Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have become a recurrent decimal claiming lives of humans and cattle, also leading to huge economic losses and food crises as a result of displacement of farmers. These conflicts have generally attracted media attention because of the worrisome dimension it is approaching Using the content analysis method, this study examined the stories of farmers – herdsmen in two Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch* and *The Nigerian Tribune*).The attention of the media drawn by the conflicts has warranted dynamics of framing by *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* newspapers. The instrument used for data collection is the coding sheet named as ‘‘farmer’s and herders’ conflicts reportage content analysis checklist’’. The results were analysed using descriptive and textual analysis techniques. Findings showed that *Punch* newspaper reported 37 (20.4%), farmers - herders conflicts between January - June 2019, the reports cut across regions ranging from attacks 14 (37.8%), losses 10 (27.0%), injuries and death 13 (35.1%). findings also showed that *Nigerian Tribune* reported 44 (24.3%), farmers - herders conflicts between the period under review, the reports also cut across regions of the country ranging from attacks 17 (38.6%) losses 7 (15.9%) injuries and death 20 (45.4%). The *Nigerian Tribune* captured more of hard news 29 (47.3%), features 9 60, cartoons 4 (66.7%) and less of editorial 2 (40%).The *Punch* reports mostly hard news 26 (47.3%) features 6 4.0 editorials 3 (60%), and 2 (33.3%) of cartoons. *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* newspapers are adjudged fair, balanced and accurate in their reports. The study therefore recommends that as the watchdog of the society, journalists should constantly cover and report cases of farmers-herdsmen conflicts so as to inform and educate the society on the dangers that are associated with unresolved clash of occupational interests and as a matter of Agenda-Setting,they should always give prominence to issues of farmers-herdsmen conflicts.

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Keyword: Editorial, Farmers, Herdsmen, Hard news, Investigation.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria like most nations of the world acknowledged agriculture as an ancestral occupation of its citizens. While nomadic agriculture is predominantly identified with the northern region, indigenous crop production is common among rural farmers in other regions of the country.

Nigeria with an arable land area of 34 million hectares: 6.5 million hectares for permanent crops, and 28.6 million hectares on meadows and pastures. Agriculture accounts for about 24 percent of Nigeria's GDP. The country is a leader in various types of agricultural production, such as palm oil, cocoa beans, pineapple, and sorghum. It is the largest producer of sorghum in the world just after the United States, and ranks fifth in the production of palm oil and cocoa beans. Nigeria is also a large global exporter in this sector. Oil, fruits, nuts, seeds are among the ten best performing export categories.

Agriculture is a key activity for Nigeria's economy after oil. Agricultural activities provide livelihood for many Nigerians, whereas the wealth generated by oil reaches a restricted share of the population. Recent survey indicates that 70 percent of households in Nigeria participate in crop farming activities, while about 41 percent own or raise livestock. In rural areas more people participate in agricultural activities than in urban areas.

Among households, the most common crops in Nigeria are maize and cassava, which are grown by almost 50 percent of households. In addition, other widespread

crops are Guinea corn, yam, beans, and millets. Among all major crops grown by Nigerian households, herbicides, inorganic fertilizers, animal tractions, and organic fertilizers are the most common farming inputs. Apart from household farming activities, Nigeria is a global leader in agricultural production, as mentioned before. In large production, palm oil crops experienced a significant increase in the past two decades, reaching over one million metric tons in the last three years. Similarly, milled rice and soybean production are being grown as well. On the other hand, some of Nigeria's largest agricultural productions dropped, such as millet crops(1).

Media as an agent of socialization and mobilization sensitized members of the public on farming activities. This is particularly so as people interact along social and economic line. As peasant farmers and herders engage in their economic endeavour, newsworthy events are covered and relayed to the masses.

The media being a strong force in moulding or swaying opinions towards certain direction is described as the eyes and ears of the public. The inalienable role of the media has influence on individuals and societies².

Media influence could be described as two sides of a coin, positive or negative, depending on which side of the divide a media organization might decide to stand, which can also be a function of political leaning or vested interest of the owner. The influence the media wields in public space accounts for why governments established media organisations⁴. The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Voice of Nigeria (VON) and the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) are broadcast establishment owned by the Federal government of Nigeria. The defunct Daily Times, a print media, was also owned and funded by Federal Government. There are also

media organisations funded by state governments. Few of these are the Broadcasting Corporation Of Oyo State, BCOS, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation, OSBC and Ogun State Television OGTV,. The Observer is also owned by Edo State government. Moreover, the nation's media space is also being littered with multiplicity of private media outlets. Among these are *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard*, *The Guardian Newspaper* and host of others. Blogsites, digital radio and on line television stations⁵ also exist directly or indirectly to promote news stories.

Government at both Federal and State levels conveniently censor what filters through media outlets funded by them. Independent media cannot be so tamed, especially in this era of information explosion.

The international Crisis Group in a publication in 2018 observes that between September 2017 and June 2018, at least 1,500 deaths were recorded in herders-farmers conflicts in the North Central states. A study states that herders-farmers conflicts in these states and others had led to deaths and displacement⁷. Over 18,000 people were internally displaced in eleven camps in Nasarawa State and the spiraling deaths is equally captured in a 2020 report by Amnesty International⁸.

The international body states that over 1,531 people died in inter-communal violence mostly between herdsmen and farming communities, as well as in attacks by bandits, in the North-Central and North-Western regions of Nigeria.

The spread of the conflict which goes beyond the traditional hotspots in the North to the South axis of the country, increased by drought and desertification which forced herders even further south and into conflict with farmers. Besides the killings in Igangan, a community in Oyo State in the south west of Nigeria the incessant crisis led to an eviction order by Ondo State

government for herders to vacate its forest, ⁸. As the crisis escalated further, governors under the aegis of the Southern Governors Forum, SGF, established Anti-Open Grazing Law, with the Governor of Ondo State Mr Rotimi Akeredolu as well as some governors in the Southwest region of the country signing the Anti-Grazing Bill 2021 into law. Besides bloodletting and displacement, herders-farmers conflicts have had economic implications⁹.

Giving the widening of the conflict to such national dimension, it is obvious that it is bound to gain traction in the media. In performance of their constitutional role, the Nigerian media, print, broadcast and digital networks have continued to publish, and air stories about the crisis. Considering the degree of damages suffered and lives lost, media professionals determine which item to be given priority in their publication thus setting the public agenda for the people.

Media framing is one of the tools the media employ to tell a news story. It is also an angle or perspective from which a news story is told. Framing of a news story do have influence on how the story has being investigated and is being reported.

Media frame emphasizes specific values, facts and other considerations.

Framing which is the way events and issues are organized by media professionals and how it makes sense to the audience entails perceived reality and makes it more salient in communicating to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and resolution.

Just as the media determine what dominates public discourse through priority and frequent coverage of an issue, they further determine how the set agenda or topic should be viewed. News presentation with a specific choice of words or from specific perspectives or angles plays an important role in media framing.

The position of conflict in the media content has prompted the submission that “conflict is the bread and butter of journalism. Oddity, bizarre and queer occurrences sell newspapers hence, the agitation to be the first to sell newspapers because of the negative stories that constitute some of its contents¹⁰.

It has also been established that news framing determines to a great extent, public opinion and decision-making on herdsmen-farmers’ conflicts in Nigeria. The placement of pictures that often create emotions in the newspaper are the by product of editors’ and reporters’ discretion on how pictures and stories should be positioned. It cannot be doubted that the reporters and editors who form part of the editorial meeting are mindful of the impression of what their action or inaction might generate among the audience or readers.

Thus, the way conflict stories on herdsmen and farmers' conflicts are framed in the newspapers are sometimes influenced by several factors among which are editors' perceptions, ownership and advertisers influence, perceived needs, and preference of audience political affiliate’s ownership influence¹¹

1.1.1 History of Nigerian Tribune Newspaper

The Nigerian Tribune Newspaper was established by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a lawyer, politician, author and statesman in 1949. The paper was set up as a business enterprise with the setting up of a limited liability company known as African Press Limited, which serves as the publisher of the Tribune Group. It began as a tabloid in a one storey building in Ibadan, Oyo state capital. The Nigerian Tribune newspaper began as a regional newspaper and the mouth organ of its proprietor, Chief Awolowo. The paper never pretended to be friendly with the colonial administration. The Nigerian Tribune newspaper which happens to be the oldest surviving private Nigerian newspaper is an English newspaper. It played an important role in

defending the interests of the Yoruba people especially in a period when different ethnic groups were struggling for ascendancy

1.1.2 The Punch Newspaper

It was founded by two friends; James Aboderin and Sam Amuka, a columnist and editor at the Daily Times of Nigeria. Amuka became the first editor of the Sunday Punch. In November 1976, the first print of its Sunday edition, the duo started printing their trade mark daily newspaper. It was noticed that both editions were designed to favour apolitical approach, to news reporting, combining footage of social events with everyday political news. The newspaper sustained itself by delving into broad issues that interests many people.

The Punch newspaper was registered on August 1970, to engage in the business of publishing newspapers , magazines and other periodicals of public interest. In November 1976, a few years after the first print of its Sunday edition, the duo started printing their trademark daily newspaper. The newspaper sustained itself by delving into broad issues that interests people. In a bid to perform its constitutionally assigned responsibilities , the company was shut down many times by government. Many of its employees were also embarrassed and detained by military regimes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Fast growth experienced in human and cattle population, urbanization, industrialization, have increased and caused a lot of pressure on the land. Also the existence of nomadic agriculture in the northern region, the south south, south east and southwest of Nigeria also host wide range of consumable crop productions.

While all of these on ground , the clash of occupational interest among farmers coupled with cultural diversities over the years had generated incessant conflicts between herders and peasant crop farmers . This is further worsened not only by government lackadaisical attitude to the

conflict by non availability of grazing zone but by the media disposition to such repeated conflicts.

Outcome of the conflicts which most media framed reflected ,loss of farmlands and livestock displacements of farmers ,crops ,livestock and humans.

The *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch Newspapers* considered in this study, report the conflicts by projecting the outcome of such conflicts on daily basis.

This study is therefore being undertaken to know how the two media organizations through its published contents between January and June 2019 have framed the conflicts between the farmers and herders through its publication strategies.

1.5 Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate media framing of farmers' and herders' conflicts in *the Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers in Nigeria between January 1 and June 30 2019. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify differences in herdsmen and farmers' conflicts publications in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper between January, 2019 and June, 2019;
2. ascertain the extent to which *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper publish herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories during the period under review;
3. ascertain the level of of prominence given to herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper between January, 2019 and June, 2019 through examination of its front ,back pages and repeated stories;
4. identify the sources of stories on herdsmen and farmers' conflicts in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper in the study period ;

5. discuss the media function(s) performed by *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper during the period under review in reporting herdsmen and farmers' conflicts.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Are there significant variations between the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* newspapers publications of herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories between January and June, 2019?
2. What extent does *the Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper publish herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories during the period under review?
3. What is the level of prominence given to herdsmen and farmers' conflicts in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper between January and June, 2019?
4. What are the sources of stories on herdsmen and farmers' conflicts in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper in the study period?
5. What is the function performed by *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers during the period under review in reporting herdsmen and farmers' conflicts

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study covered the media framing of herdsmen and farmers' conflicts in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper between January, 2019 and June, 2019. The newspapers were selected based on their national outlook, sustained publication, and their involvements in political events in Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will help reporters, editors, and communication scholars to understand what role the media play in the coverage of conflicts, especially in their choice of words, prominence, and balance. Also, it will draw the attention of media owners to how their influence on the content of their newspapers leads to escalation, expansion, or reduction of conflict. This study would draw

the attention of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Guild of Editors, Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC), and Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON) to how media can affect conflict.

The study will enable farmers organizations union at the grassroots to appreciate the media as a major actor in the efforts towards facilitating peace among farmers when clash of interest occurs. Through this study, audience of media would be able to carefully ascertain the objectivity of issues framed by the media. This study would add to available resource materials in media effect studies. It is hoped that this work would contribute to global research on how lack of adherence to professionalism in reportage by the media could aggravate or trigger conflicts. Besides, it will aid policymakers on how they should engage the media in curtailing conflict.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

The following are some of the terms used in this study and their meanings;

Conflicts: This refers to the violent confrontation between the herdsmen and farmers.

Media: This refers to the Main ways that large set of people receive information which are through Television, Radio, Newspaper and Internet

Media Framing: This refers to the projections of information on contending issues between herdsmen and farmers by newspapers .

Farmers: These are crop farmers who co-habit with herdsmen but suffered losses as a result of conflict that ensues between them over ancestral land and destruction of crops by cattle.

Herdsmen: These are the cattle breeders who migrate from one part of the country to another.

Newspapers: These are print media outfits that publish news stories as events unfold in the society.

Farmers Union: These are group of people mainly farmers who have common interests and come together to form a union.

Invasion: this refers to an entry into an area not previously occupied

Grassroots: This is the lowest tier of the society, always relating to rural areas.

Clash of occupational interest: This refers to people with different types of occupations trying to defend their occupations when there are challenges or conflicts threatening such occupation.

Surveillance: This is the act of carefully watching a person suspected of a crime or a place where a crime may be committed.

Correlation: This is a connection between two things in which one thing changes as the other does.

Agenda Setting: This is one of the roles being performed by the media by working on the psyche of people and make them think and behave in a certain way .

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

To provide empirical background to this study and also make this work comprehensive, the literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.3 Empirical Review

2.4 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Mass media

Mass media is a communication agents that operate on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in a society to a greater or lesser degree¹. It refers to several media that are now long-established and familiar, such as newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television, and photography. It refers to communication devices, which can be used to communicate and interact with a large number of audiences in different languages. A study observes that mass media is that part of the media that aims at reaching a wide audience; the media is used for addressing or communicating with the masses¹. Therefore, mass media could be said to refer to radio, television, newspaper, books, and the internet, because they reach a large audience and provide information to several millions of people.

Scholars note that mass media refer to a particular specialized part of the media that is designed to reach a fairly large number of target audiences³. This simply means that mass media is that media which focuses on a large number of audience present in a different location at a definite time¹. This highlighted that the importance of mass media is very crucial to mass communication.

Besides, scholars opine that the professional communicators used by mass communication to disseminate messages are referred to as mass media. He defined mass media as the professional journalists who engage in the spreading or publication of various happenings in the world to the people in a definite society². Mass media is also as the media used for addressing or communicating with the masses. In their opinion, anything that serves as a source of communication among a large audience is included in the category of mass media³. The mass media pass accumulated messages through a medium to a large and diverse audience, who are usually largely scattered.

2.1.1.1 Features of the Mass Media

- **A large number of the audience:** The audiences of mass media are extremely large, ranging from thousands and exceeding millions at a time. This characteristic makes mass media different from all other forms of communication due to its large audience who received its messages simultaneously.
- **Heterogeneous audience:** The mass media audience is not only large in number but also heterogeneous and anonymous. Its audience ranges from people of different ages, religions, sections, and groups.
- **Same message:** The same messages are distributed to its audience simultaneously to a vast and diversified audience.
- **Electronic media:** The mass media messages are disseminated through the use of mechanical or electronic gadgets to address its diverse audience.
- **Speedy and steady dissemination:** Mass media messages are rapid and continuous. Numerous copies of films, newspapers, books, and magazines can be distributed across the

vast geographical areas within few days while radio and television transmit messages instantly.

- **Professionalism:** Developing mass media messages requires the help of mass communicators. These include reporters, editors, actors, authors, writers, official spokespersons, and so on. Therefore, it needs a lot of money to operate.
- **Modern technology:** Various specialized modern technologies such as computer networks, fax, mobile phones, broadcasting media, among other gadgets are used in gathering ,processing and disseminating mass media messages to the general public..

2.1.1.2 Functions of the Mass Media

Research reveals that the media has immense power in a democratic government than any other society⁷. This is because the media serves as an intermediary between the government and the people, helps determine which issues should be discussed, and keeps people actively involved in society and politics. Mass communication requires a mass medium that serves as an institution for transmitting its messages to the anonymous and heterogeneous audience, due to the complexity of its messages. A lot of scholars have explained the functions of the mass media to society⁹.

A study opines that the three basic functions performed by the mass media in society are information, entertainment, and education¹⁰. First based on information function, mass media provides timely and important facts which influences our daily lives and also tries to evaluate and analyze such facts for better understanding of their listeners or readers. Another important function of mass media is the ability to help people to relax during leisure time, through the provision of movies, cartoons, and other entertaining programmes. More so, it tries to increase the level of the society in the understanding of certain things through the education function, by

...serving as an agent of reinforcing, modifying, and replacing of the cultural heritage of the society around them¹¹.

Information: The mass media provide timely and important facts which help the people in carrying out their daily activities, and also gives information on information on the happenings around them. In Nigeria , most individual depends on the mass media to provide them with information on the latest happenings around them.

Surveillance: Though the mass media are often accused of having a ‘liberal bias’, they serve as government watch-dog. They provide people the evidence of corruption, abuse of power, and ineffective policies, and programs.

Servicing the economic system: The media are used in the marketing and distribution processes of our goods and products. Advertising informs the public about a new products, convinces them of their value, and persuades them to buy. In the 2015 election, the mass media provided information on different political parties through their advertisement and left them to decide on whom and whom to cast their votes for.

Cultural glue: The mass media has a great influence on popular culture; the mass media is responsible for conveying what’s trendy in popular culture to the general public.

Agenda setting: This describes the ability of the media to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda. With this, the mass media make predictions on salient issues in society.

Interpretation of function: This is another main function performed by the mass media. They interpret messages in more or less explicit and ethical ways.

Servicing the political system: The mass media is the vehicle through which the government informs, explains, and tries to win support for its program and policies.

News: The mass media provide timely and important facts that help the people in carrying out their daily activities, and also give information on recent events that are unknown to them. In Nigeria today, most individual depends on the mass media to provide them with the latest news on latest events around them. The mass media provide timely and important facts which help the people in carrying out their daily activities, and also gives timely information on event as they unfold.

Analysis and interpretation: After providing news and information, the media go ahead with an evaluation of such events, placing them in a perspective best known to them. Some of the issues are technical and the readers require that the media give them some background to the occurrence.

Education: The media do perform educational functions such as socialization, general education, and classroom instruction. They help to reinforce, modify, and replace the cultural heritage of the parent society through their various teaching and enlightenment on such norms and culture. There are lots of educational programmes which the mass media engaged in, to teach the people the better way of doing things. Earlier before now, HIV/AIDS had posed a lot of fear into the mind of the people that nobody wanted to be reckoned with an infected person. Apart from this, people were scared of going for HIV tests, but due to the effort of the mass media, all these fear were curbed. They create awareness for the disease and let people know that being infected with HIV is not the end of the world. Consequently, the bad attitudes of the people towards the infected people were stopped, and everybody is eager to go for the test.

Persuasion and public relations: The media serve as instruments of propaganda and public persuasion. Government, business corporations, and individuals seek to establish or modify relationships with the people through the mass media.

Sales and advertising: The media are used in the marketing and distribution processes of our goods and products. Advertisement informs the public about new products, convinces them of their value, and persuades them to buy. In the 2019 election, the mass media provided different candidates who are running for one post or the other through their various advertisements. It was now left for the people to make their choice by choosing out of the ones they had seen in the media.

Entertainment: Media help people to relax during their leisure time. This escapist use of the media is an overlay function- which means that media entertain as they inform, persuade, educate, and sell. Different movies and cartoons are transmitted on television and radio to keep the people and relaxed in their minds. The print media also provide some form of entertainment through cartoon, picture puzzles, and crosswords.

More researchers explain that mass media diversified media technologies intended to reach a large audience by mass communication with eight basic functions they perform. Their functions are outlined as; to inform (a teacher function), surveillance (a watcher function), service the economic system, hold the society together (act as sort of cultural guide), act as a community forum (media equivalent of town meeting or group discussion), and lastly, service the political system¹².

The functions of the mass media are Surveillance, Interpretation, Integration (linkage), Transmission of cultural heritage, and Entertainment. According to him, surveillance refers to the news and information role of the media, interpretation function of the mass media refers to the provision of detailed analysis on information already relayed¹¹. That is, the media serve as the forum for exchanging comments and criticism of common barriers in the reaction of public discussion on the few news stories carried among several gatekeepers in the mass media.

Integration refers to the mass media's ability to join together by interpersonal channels different elements of society that are not connected. Transmission of cultural heritage is the ability of the media to communicate the norms, rules, and values of a society from one generation to another. Entertainment is the function of the media that helps the people in the provision of escapism and relaxation, in other to face the demands of life in general. This is done through the use of puzzles, games, advice, gossip, humour, and general entertainment feature in their contents. One of the most important function of mass media is to provide society with information that is happening around them. The need for information is basic to nearly all human groups. We need journalists to provide a check on governments and businesses, as well as neighbors and friends. Also, the media broaden our knowledge by teaching us things we know little about. That is, they enrich our knowledge of understanding through their education function. Without mincing words, the entertainment function of the mass media is important because through it they present messages that provide escapism and relaxation to the people, which go a long way in encouraging the people that there is more to life. Through the function of entertainment, the mass media provide us relief from boredom, stimulate our emotions, help fill our leisure time, keep us company, and expose us to experiences and events that we could not attend in person¹³.

2.1.1.3 Effects of Mass Media

Media today is forever changing. The fact that technology evolves and changes “drives the development of media. Because we as a society always use mass media, some consequences and effects have been laid on the forefront of mass media. Certain scholars, scientist, and researchers “believe that the mass media shape the way people view the world, especially when people have little direct experience; others point to the media as providing role model: positive and negative-imitated by members of the audience”¹⁴. The portrayal of violence in the media seems to be the

most talked-about issue, but other “behavioral areas are of concern”. These arguments tend to be based on “the supposition that the experience of the content presented by contemporary mass media differs in some qualitative way from other material that people have been exposed to since the beginning of social communication”. Attempts to “hold *mass-media corporations legally responsible for the criminal acts of the consumers of their products have failed, and a consensus has been reached that people will have to continue to be responsible for their behaviours in the age of mass media¹⁵.

2.1.1.4 Functional and Dysfunctional Roles of Mass Media

Several scholars have propounded what can be described as conceptual functions and dysfunctions of mass communication media¹⁶. This bothers on the dimension or approach to the form that the media takes and its implications or impact on the general public which constitute the media audience. Media scholars identify three functions of mass communication media which include: Surveillance, Correlation, Transmission of cultural heritage, and entertainment. Other media scholars based on their objectives and perhaps the outcome of their research on the media functions have argued that the media can as well be dysfunctional in the course of performing the functions listed above¹⁷.

With surveillance in the context of media means that the mass media inform and provide information to the society and keep watch on the activities of the government and indeed the activities of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict in the case of this study, and correct uncomplimentary occurrence. A typical uncomplimentary occurrence was the recent issue of hate speech and the correction of impressions by members of the public that COVID-19 (Coronavirus pandemic) is a fluke or deception. The use of the mass media in this regard had greatly assisted society to correct what the society perceives is right but which is very wrong.

This recent role had put an end to the potential threat that looms large. This complements the assertion by a study when it states that “Knowledge of such potential threats and or the opportunities within and outside the immediate environment enables members of the community to exercise control over their environment. The constant alert on flooding, mode of spread of COVID-19 as well as Fulani herders and farmers’ clashes have not only enabled members of the public including government to be conscious of widening waterways and drains, maintain safety protocols of COVID-19, but also be conscious of the crises ongoing in the grass roots and plan through before venturing into Agriculture business¹⁸.

On the dysfunctional aspect of surveillance, it was argued that media surveillance can create unnecessary anxiety. Citing the tumult that surrounds the Y2k bug. A study observed that” the media carried many stories about what might happen: airplane flying without radar, banks losing records of customers, deposit, powers failure, and generation disruption some people stockpile food to weather the chaos and some people followed the advice of experts the scare was bogus. The year 2000 began without any disruption, in cyberspace. About Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers crises, the recurrent crises; depending on how it is managed by reporters and editors are capable of discouraging agricultural investors from venturing into the agriculture business which may end up in food crises and unemployment¹⁹.

A study defines correlation as an interpretation that can take various forms, it explains that editorial cartoons, interpretative write up or experts’ critics are employed by the media to objectively analyze happening on an issue, and in the process direct the society on how to react to events that seem to pose threat to human society²⁰. It was further argued that the impact which this has on the audience boils down to individual been exposed to a large number of a different

point of view and so an individual can evaluate all sides of an issue before arriving at an opinion²¹.

Media scholars however presented the dysfunctional aspect of this when it was observed that “any criticism or praise of an individual, group or lifestyle might have positive or negative consequences for the medium involved²². In relating this to herdsmen-farmers' conflict, for instance, any medium that failed to remain objective in the coverage/reportage of herdsmen-farmers conflict (that show subjectivity or bias) might lose audience patronage due to hatred for such media outfit. Secondly, there is no guarantee that interpretations by media commentators and experts (interpretative news writer in the newspaper in the case of this study) are accurate and valid, and so his write up might have a negative impact on readers who have adequate background and knowledge of the herders-farmers' conflict in the most affected region. Lastly, there is the danger that an individual might in the long run, come to rely too heavily on the views carried in the media and lose his or her critical ability²³. Accepting without questioning the views of an influential newspaper or popular talk show host may be easier than forming individual opinions but it might lead to a dysfunctional situation in which the individual becomes passive and allows others to think for him or her²⁴.

Another function of the mass media is the transmission of cultural heritage. Mass media communicate information on values from one generation to another. This is called Socialization. Mass media according to the scholars perform this function alongside the teachers (educators), parents, and family members. It is however argued that most of the time the media perform a dysfunctional role in this regard as the indigenous culture is polluted because the media persistently portray foreign films dotted by violence and obscenity²⁵. This might therefore

aggravate the tendency of using weapons by the younger folk. A study explains that the mass media also entertain and the entertainment may take different forms.

2.1.1.5 Categories of the Mass Media

The Electronic Media; The electronic media refer to Radio, Television, motion pictures, videos, satellite system and the internet They refer to those form of mass communication that makes use of broadcasting means in the dissemination of their messages to the masses. It is the kind of media that requires the user to utilize an electric connection to access it and it is otherwise known as Broadcast journalism. They include:

- **Radio:** This is a technology of using radio waves to carry information, such as sound, by systematically modulating properties of electromagnetic energy waves transmitted through space, such as their amplitude, frequency, phase, or pulse width. A radio communication system requires a transmitter and a receiver, each having an antenna and appropriate terminal equipment such as a microphone at the receiver in the case of a voice communication system. Before the advent of television, commercial radio broadcasts included not only news and music, but dramas, comedies, variety shows, and many other forms of entertainment. Radio is unique among methods of a dramatic presentation in that it used only sound ²⁶.
- **Television:** The word “television” comes from the words “tele” (Greek for *far away*) and “vision” (sight). It was invented in the 1920s but the equipment was expensive and the pictures were poor. By the 1950s, these problems had been fixed and TVs became widespread. Television is a machine with a screen. The television receives broadcasting signals and turn into picture and sound²⁷.

- **Internet:** The internet is the global system of interconnected computer networks that use the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link devices worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic wireless, and optical networking technologies. The internet carries a vast range of information resources and services, such as the interlinked hypertext documents and applications of the World Wide Web (www), electronic mail, telephony, and file sharing. The origin of the Internet dated back to research by the United States government in the 1960s to build robust, fault-tolerant communication with computer networks²⁸.
- **The Print Media;** Print media are newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, billboards, and the likes. It makes use of written materials to disseminate information to the masses. In other words, it uses a physical object to distribute information to the masses. It refers to the lightweight, portable, disposable publications printed on paper and circulated as physical copies in forms of books, newspapers, magazines, and newsletters²⁹. Print media which is otherwise referred to as newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, billboards, and their likes. This one makes use of written materials to disseminate information to the masses. In other words, it uses a physical object to distribute information to the masses. It refers to the lightweight, portable, disposable publications printed on paper and circulated as physical copies in forms of books, newspapers, magazines, and newsletters. The publication of print media products is done daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly. It is believed to be the oldest form of mass media and is also considered as one of the most flourishing industries today.

- **Newspaper:** This carries all kinds of communication messages related to a variety of topics such as politics, current affairs, entertainment, finance, stocks, cartoons, games, movie reviews, book reviews, among others. It enjoyed the position of the most preferred medium to reach a wider audience until electronic communication emerged on the media scene³⁰.
Magazines: Magazines cover a plethora of topics like current affairs, business, finance, consumers, gadgets, self-help, luxury, lifestyle, beauty, fashion, entertainment, travel, and so on. Its frequency can be weekly, fortnightly, bi-monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly. Also, magazine serves as an avenue and the best forum for advertisers, because they have a niche of readership³¹.
- **Booklets and Brochures:** This is one of the promotional literature of a product or an organization. There are two types; pre-buying promotional and post buying promotion. Pre-buying promotion is distributed free to all while post-buying promotion is given with a product for better customer experience and easy usage of products³².
- **Billboards:** These are huge advertisements that are put up at a height in strategic locations to draw people's attention to a particular product or service³³.

2.1.2 The Idea of Newspapers

A study explains that newspapers enjoyed the position of the most preferred medium to reach a wider audience until electronic communication emerged on the media scene. In the early days, newspapers were said to be the only medium that masses depended on, for daily news since it carries all kinds of communication-related stories on topics like politics, finance, stocks, etc³⁴. All of these captivate the imagination and interests of readers, from all age groups, thereby; newspaper serves as an important platform of mass communication as it reaches every nook and cranny of the world where electronic media fails to reach. Apart from this, it also plays a vital

role in providing authentic firsthand information, building opinions, updating the knowledge of the readers, and serves as a good platform for advertisers to promote their products.

Another study notes that newspapers are most useful for geographical segmentation, because they usually have broad demographic readership. Newspapers are collection of printed pages folded together, which contains a variety of informative, educative, and entertaining messages to help keep the masses abreast of the happenings in the society, and the world at large. Newspaper is often printed on relatively inexpensive and low grade paper such as newsprint³⁵.

A newspaper typically meets four criteria:

Publicity: Its contents are reasonably accessible to the public

Periodical: It is published at regular intervals. Some are published daily, others weekly, monthly or quarterly.

Currency: Its information is as up to date as its publication schedule allows.

Universality: It covers a range of topics.

This simply shows that for a write-up or articles to be in a newspaper, it must be readily available to read for those who care for it each time they want to do so. Its content must be continuous, that is, a newspaper must be printed frequently, not printed once and abandoned. Also, for a paper to be called a newspaper, it must come out with different news items each time the publication is done; in other words, the same story must not be printed twice, unless it is a follow up to the previous one. Then lastly, a newspaper must have a variety of topics ranging from entertainment to education, to motivation and the likes.

2.1.2.1 Content Formats in Newspapers

A typical newspaper should contain at least most of these sections, if not all:

Local/domestic news- This contains the most important news in the towns and cities where the newspaper is published. It is usually found on the front page of the newspaper. The title of the most important news is printed in big bold letters. It is called the banner headline. Almost all the Nigerian newspapers have this section.

International news section- This part contains news from abroad. For instance, a newspaper in Nigeria can contain reports on Africa, Europe, Asia, as well as the America.

Business/finance/economy- This section provides businessmen and people interested in business with information on banking, foreign exchange rates, imports and exports, and also the prices of prime commodities.

Political section: This is where the news about the politicians of the countries and their political parties are found.

Sports section: It contains news about sports events in and out of the country. It also contains happenings about the people well- known in sports.

Classified advertisement- This section contains advertisements that fall under headings like Help Wanted, For Lease or Sale, Wanted to Buy. Also found in this section are personal and legal notices.

Entertainment section: Contains information about movies, radio, television, and other activities for entertainment. It also includes games and puzzles, comic strips and cartoons,. Stories about actors and actresses are also included.

Letters to the editor: This is the section where the views and opinions of the readers on the happenings around them are published.

Home and culture section: This section provides ideas about budgeting, food preparation, house improvement, proper plant care, and the like.

Society/people: This section contains news about important or well-known people who are celebrating special occasions or performing at a particular place.

Tourism/travel tips- This provides a guide to tourists. It directs them to scenic vacation places and gives information on the activities such places. Also found in this section are the schedules of the departure and arrival of ships and airplanes, both domestic and international.

Health & medicine section: In this column, the newspaper provides basic information that is related to the health of the masses. It also teaches some basic things that can keep people fit and maintain a good health condition.

Style & fashions: This section contains information about the latest style and fashion in vogue. It also gives information on how people can go about these latest trends. It also advises people on how to maintain a better look in their day-today activities.

Kids/Youth: This section is often found providing information on the activities of the youth. It also helps in educating the kids in their academic pursuits

2.1.1.2 Importance of Newspapers

Generally, a newspaper is the finest link between the government and its people because it provides people with every detail that is essential for everyday living. The following are the importance of newspaper in any society:

1. Newspapers carry the news of the world.
2. Newspapers provide information and general knowledge.
3. Newspapers provide news about a country's economic situation, sports, games, entertainment, trade, and commerce.
4. Reading a newspaper makes a good habit for it is already part of modern life.

5. Reading a newspaper makes people well informed. It enables them to take part in every discussion about the world's current events.
6. Reading newspapers will improve people's knowledge in general and it will be easy for them to relate with other people on current events and politics.
7. Through newspapers, an individual will have a clear idea and understanding of what is happening in his/her environment and the whole world.

2.1.2.3 Ownership and Coverage of Newspapers; Newspaper ownership is defined as “the proprietor or ownership whether individual, group or government of a newspaper”³⁶. This simply means that newspaper ownership refers to the individual who establishes and controls a newspaper organization to make a profit. It explains that there are currently two types of newspaper ownership; government ownership and private ownership.

Government ownership: The government-owned press includes almost all kinds of newspaper organizations that are mainly owned and controlled by the government. These newspapers are often the mouthpiece of the government and notify the masses only of what the government dictates. According to history, government newspaper organizations rarely last unless the government intends to use methods that seriously detract from democratic principles to sustain its media outlets regardless of their performance and level of success or failure³⁷.

Private ownership: This refers to where individuals, establish, finance, and direct the administration of the media outfits. It has the merit of giving the media the opportunity or freedom to criticize the ills noticed in the government, unlike the ones owned by the government. Private ownership is often sustained by commercial revenue but their continuity depends on not overstepping on the government power. In other words, they are often careful in their ways and

manners of operating so as not to override the government power which may lead to their censorship³⁸.

2.1.3 National Security and Human Security

National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection, and political power³⁹. Human security is a human right; it refers to the security of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states. Human security recognises that there are several dimensions related to feeling safe, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity.

National security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms, to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its border⁴⁰.

Human security and national security are complementary concepts and need not necessarily contradict each other. Both seek protection against harm. To organize and ensure human security, armed forces are necessary. To provide for national security, the removal of threats, at home and abroad, is needed. Defense of the "enlightened self-interest" leads one to affirm the central tenets of human security and the organization of human security on the international level leads to a respect for national security⁴¹. There are seven security that is associated with human security. These are economic security, food security, health security environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security⁴².

Economic Security: This is defined as the ability of individuals, households or communities to cover their essential needs sustainably and with dignity. Food, basic shelter, clothing, and hygiene qualify as essential needs, as does the related expenditure and access to the social safety net.

Food Security: United Nations' Committee defines food security as a situation whereby all the people at all-time have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Food security simply means access to basic nutrition and food supply.

Health Security: World Health Organization (WHO) defines health security as the activities required to minimize the danger and impact of acute health events that endanger the collective health of population living across geographical regions and international boundaries. Health security is more complex, and covers many issues like access to safe water, living in a safe environment, access to health services, access to safe and affordable family planning and basic support during pregnancy and delivery, prevention of various diseases, and basic knowledge to a healthy life³⁴.

Environmental Security means guiding against environmental degradation to preserve or protect human, material, and natural resources at scales ranging from local to global⁴³. It is straightforward and covers such issues as prevention of water pollution, prevention of air pollution, prevention from deforestation, irrigated land conservation, prevention of natural hazards such as droughts, floods, cyclones, earthquakes, etc.

Community Security is a process focused on promoting a community-driven approach to understanding and providing security. It has a clear focus on improving the relationships between and behaviors of communities. It covers the conservation of traditional and cultures, languages, and commonly held values. Community security includes abolishment of ethnic discrimination, and protection of indigenous people⁴⁴.

Political Security is concerned with the protection of human rights and the well-being of all people. It also includes protection against people from state repression such as freedom of the

press, freedom of speech, and freedom of voting. Abolishment of political detention, imprisonment, systematic ill-treatment, and disappearance are also under political security⁴⁵. Among the seven elements of human security are considerable links and overlaps.

A study classified the causes of insecurity in Nigeria into two; external and internal factors. However, it denotes that the internal factors override the external factors. Consequently, it explains the following as the internal factors affecting Nigeria security⁴⁶:

1. Elite manipulation of ethnicity and religious differences: Political and religious elite across the nation sometimes employ ethnic sentiments to achieve their selfish ambition. This way, the elites manipulate the consciousness of the people to arouse suspicion and distrust among various ethnic groups and the major religions in the country causing insecurity in Nigeria.

2. The Desperation of Politicians: Politicians in Nigeria want to win elections and remain in office at all cost, this has been responsible for electoral and political violence and general insecurity in Nigeria.

3. Corruption: Corruption, outright theft, and embezzlement of public funds hinder Nigeria's development. This is because corruption deeply threatens the fabric of Nigerian society, slows down economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor, and undermines the effectiveness of investment and foreign aid. It is responsible for massive unemployment in Nigeria, it is the reason Nigerian youths and entrepreneurs lack power (electricity) to run their businesses, it is the reason many businesses fail. Unemployment and poverty are two major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Corruption contributes to insecurity in Nigeria by causing unemployment and poverty.

4. Widespread Material Inequalities: A major factor responsible for insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities and disparities in life chances which lead to violent reactions by a large number of Nigerians. There is a general perception of marginalisation by a section of

Nigerian people in areas of government development policies, political patronage, and these serve as triggers of disaffection, resentment, and revolt. The activities of the Niger Delta militants and the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict in the Middle ecological belt of the country have contributed to insecurity in Nigeria by making the regions unsafe for people.

5. Organized Violent Groups: Organized violent groups such as ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions, and political thugs contribute in no small measure to insecurity in Nigeria in different ways. The emergence of these groups has been linked to factors such as military rule and the culture of militarism, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic dis empowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria's federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, ignorance and poor political consciousness.

6. Weak Security System: The nation's weak security apparatus and the system is another cause of insecurity in Nigeria. This weak security system can be attributed to several factors which include corruption, inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel.

7. Terrorism: This refers to the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction, or death, especially against unarmed targets, property, or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts.

2.1.2.1 The Concept of Invasion

A study opines that an invasion is a military offensive in which large parts of combatants of one geopolitical entity aggressively enter into territory controlled by another such entity, generally with the objective of either conquering; liberating, or re-establishing control or authority over a territory; forcing the partition of a country; altering the established government or gaining

concessions from the said government, or a combination thereof⁴⁷. An invasion can be the cause of a war, be a part of a larger strategy to end a war, or it can constitute an entire war in itself. Due to the large scale of the operations associated with invasions, they are usually strategic in planning and execution.

The main motive of invasion is pacification. Pacification of the region is the final and most important aspect of invasion⁴⁸. It is a situation whereby the region that invaded another region reduces all forms of the weapon of its capture region. Though this may not be completely possible, because continued opposition to an invasion often comes from civilian or parliamentary resistance movements, popular support is vital to the success of an invasion.

2.1.2.2 The Different Types of Invasion

- **Invasion by Land:** This is a straightforward entry of armed forces into an area using existing land connections, usually crossing borders or otherwise defined zones, such as demilitarized zone, overwhelming defensive emplacements, and structures⁴⁹.
- **Invasion by Sea:** This is the use of a body of water to facilitate the entry of armed forces into an area, often a landmass adjoining the body of water or an island. It is generally used either in conjunction with another method of invasion and especially before the invention of flight, for cases in which there is no other method to enter the territory in question⁵⁰.
- **Invasion by Air:** This is an invention of the 20th century and modern warfare. The idea involves sending military units to debark and attempt their objective, or the troops exit the aircraft while still in the air, using parachutes or similar devices to land in the territory being invaded.

2.1.2.3 The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a global phenomenon that has come into existence from creation. It has been accepted by some proponents and historians that the present condition of man was a result of the early conflict between man and God. Following the creation of man, the tragedy of human existence arising from envy, greed and disobedience had in its attendant, the deaths of many people, destruction of farmlands, and complete community dislocation and displacement. Of course, some social psychologists believe that conflict emerges as the disagreement between individuals, groups, societies, or nations. Such disagreement manifests when people or societies with differing interests interact. It is believed that conflict is inevitable especially among human beings and it is influenced “when two or more social entities (individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) come in contact with one another in attaining their socio-economic objectives⁵¹. People from the different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds cannot but interact and this sometimes leads to conflict. This however does not imply that conflict cannot be prevented from occurring when the needful is done through a peaceful approach. Conflict is a concept that connotes disagreements, disputes, or controversy in ideals or viewpoints held by two or more individuals or groups. It is believed that conflict represents a condition of disharmony within an interaction process usually as a result of a clash of interest between parties involved in some form of relationship⁵². The differences in the cultural and occupational background of people according to a study, have led to the intention of people involved in conflicts to want to inflict harm on others. It was given this that the scholars concluded that aggression which often leads to conflict as a complex form of behaviour⁵³.

Other scholars held opinion that crises or conflict should not be seen in isolation of other components of any given society. It is said to be one of the embodiments of human societies:

Conflict is more than mere disagreement because it is characterized by a situation in which people perceive a threat to their wellbeing. As such, participants in conflict tend to respond based on their perception (as a result of what they see, heard, or read especially through social media) of the situation rather than an objective review. Consequently, such people filter their perception and reaction through their values, culture, belief, information, expensiveness, gender, and other variables could the variables listed above responsible for the frequent clashes between herders and crop farmers over the years in Nigeria? It is therefore pertinent to undertake an overview of the herders and farmers conflict in Nigeria vis-à-vis factors that had been found responsible for the escalation of the crises.

2.1.2.4 Types of Conflict

Intrapersonal Conflict is a conflict experienced by a single individual when his or her own goals, values, or roles diverge. Intrapersonal conflict is the conflict humans face within themselves, it is a conflict between should and want. Should is always driven by the values, religious beliefs, upbringing, etc. wants, on the other hand, are driven by the environment which entices human to indulge overlooking should. Intrapersonal Conflict is a part of human life, at every points humans face intrapersonal conflicts between should and wants⁵⁴. Conflict arises when any kind of decision needs to be taken, be it important or unimportant. Simple decisions like buying a car or complex decisions like marriage or money. Every time a decision needs to be taken, should and want weigh in based on decision.

Interpersonal Conflict: This conflict is due to differences in goals, values, and styles between two or more people who are required to interact. This type of conflict is between individuals, the conflict can get very personal. Interpersonal conflict refers to any type of conflict involving two or more people⁵⁵. It is different from an intrapersonal conflict, which refers to an internal conflict

with oneself. Mild or severe, interpersonal conflict is a natural outcome of human interaction. People have very different personalities, values, expectations, and attitudes toward problem-solving. When one works or interacts with someone who does not share ones' opinions or goals, it will conflict result in conflict.

Intragroup Conflict: This is a conflict within a group or team, where members conflict over goals or procedures. For instance, a board of directors may want to take a risk to launch a set of products on behalf of their organization, despite dissenting opinions among several members. Intragroup conflict takes place among them as they argue the pros and cons of taking such a risk.

Intergroup Conflict: Intergroup conflict is when the conflict between groups inside and outside an organization disagrees on various issues. Conflict can also arise between two groups within the same organization, and that also would be considered an intergroup conflict. Within those types of conflict, one can experience horizontal conflict, which is a conflict with others that are at the same peer level as you, or vertical conflict, which is a conflict with a manager or a subordinate ⁵⁶.

2.1.3 Herdsmen and Farmers' Conflicts in Nigeria

Nigeria like many other countries in the world is replete with a plethora of crises or conflict, some which have called to question the relevance of government and its security operatives. Ever since the amalgamation of Northern and the Southern protectorate in 1914 which led to the birth of Nigeria, the country has continued to wallow in myriads of inter-ethnic, religious, political, and financial crises. Aside from the Agbekoya crises of Nigeria in the southwest region of Nigeria, the Aba Women riot, the Kaduna electoral crises as well as other minor political and inter-tribal rancours were notable conflict in Nigeria that had contributed to the remote and immediate cause of the 1967-1970 civil war. Among another post,-civil war conflict in Nigeria

that seems to still linger in the memory are the Kaduna riot, Niger delta conflict, the Odi conflict, Ife- Modakeke crises, the June 12, 1993, presidential conflict, the killing by the Jama'atul Ahl-Sunnatu Lil Dawa' at wal Jihad in the North-East region and the die-hard Fulani herders and Farmers crises⁵. The Fulanis are an ethnic group not found only in Nigeria. They can be found in several west and central African countries including Chad, Mali, Senegal, and South Sudan in North-East Africa. The Fulanis speak the Fula language. They are descendants from the Middle East and North Africa. The subsequent urbanization, in the northern region further dislocated the Fulani herdsmen from the ranches or dams and power projects (i.e. Mambila and Mokwa). This has equally led the Nomadic Fulani's to forcefully design their grazing corridors and or to acquire temporary sites which inevitably are farmland of farmers. Till date, the movement of herders into the nooks and crannies of Nigeria has been limitless⁵⁷.

2.1.3.1 Fundamental Causes of Herdsmen and Farmers' Conflicts

Competition for Grazing Land: The driving force of the conflicts among herders and farmers is the competition for available resources, especially grazing land. It is observed that the major source of tension between pastoralists and farmers is economic with land-related issues accounting for the majority of the conflict⁵⁸. This according to scholars can then be situated within the broader context of the political economy of land struggle, traceable to burgeoning demography in which there is fierce competition for fixed space to meet the demands of the growing population. The socio-economic consequences of pastoralists and farmers conflict at the social level lead to misunderstanding between the crop farmers and the nomadic farmers or grazers, create mistrust, tension, and open confrontations between the two opposing groups. An example of the above was the invasion of Uzo Uwani and other communities in Enugu State by herdsmen who slaughtered farmers and destroyed properties⁵⁹. The fundamental cause of the

conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers lies in the competition for natural resources. Herders and farmers compete to have access to land and freshwater these resources for the grazing benefit of their cattle and the latter the cultivation of crops. This competition has turned aggressive in recent decades due to the increasing scarcity of these resources; a phenomenon which has been alluded to as a direct effect of climate change⁶⁰. The feud between the two groups is often predicated on the accusation of acts of intentional deprivation or criminality against each other. Herders for instance accused farmers or members of the host community of having stolen or poisoned their cattle. Farming communities on the other hand accused herders of allowing cattle to stray into their farmlands to feed on and destroy growing crops. These accusations or the actual deeds tend to stir violent attacks and reprisal attacks leading to loss of lives and properties. Some scholars agreed that 'land remained a great source of disagreement among Fulani herdsmen and farmers for agricultural use. The disagreement which varies from communities to communities is also different in intensity and has constituted a serious threat to the means of survival and livelihood of both the farmers and herdsmen and what both the farmers and herdsmen are protecting and projecting.

Policy Failure: In 1964, the Northern region government gazette 6.4 million hectares of land enacted in 1965 in 144 locations or areas in the Savannah region of Northern Nigeria with about three between Oyo and Ogun States⁴⁸. The projects were however literally abandoned or not fully realized and have been massively encroached upon as grazing reserves. The grazing zones were provided with waters and vaccinations for the livestock while the herdsmen paid taxes to the government in return. However the discovery of oil and subsequent exploration and export made Nigeria an oil economy in the 1970s and 1980. Subsequently, the grazing reserves system was abandoned. The herdsmen began to resort to their traditional and seasonal grazing routes

which also experienced interruption due to industrialization, urbanization, demographics and other factors. This then led to conflicts with farmers and host communities ⁶¹.

Climate Change ; Climate change is a critical factor in the activities of herdsmen and farmers. The changing Climatic condition generally referred to as “global warming” is no doubt taking a toll on the survival of herdsmen and farmers' businesses. The desert encroachment from the Sahara towards the Sahel region and other associated climatic conditions have continued to affect the source of livelihood of herdsmen as they push further south in search of available space, pitching them against farmers and host communities. This global phenomenon is currently affecting many parts of the world with attendant consequences including the herdsmen and farmers conflict⁶².

2.1.3.2 Socio-Economic effects of Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict

Social Effects (Rising Death rates): The Human Rights Watch reports that the conflict between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers significantly contributed to inter-communal violence and the death of about 3,000 people in the North-central region of Nigeria between 2010 and 2013⁶³. On February 24, 2016, the Fulani herders were reported to have raided and killed over 300 people in the Agatu community in Benue State. This attack becomes so wanton and brutal that the Global Tourism Index rated the pastoralist as the fourth most deadly terrorist group in the world. A recent study by some scholars had forced a submission that the consequences of the herdsmen-farmers' conflict have been alarming as it is estimated that over 10,000 people have been killed over the past decade with more than 6,000 of them being casualties in the past two years⁶⁴.

The International Crisis Group in 2017 submitted that the death toll resulting from conflicts between herders and farmers in 2016 alone was about 2,500 and that between 2011 and 2016; fatalities averaged more than 2,000 deaths. Updated data from the Nigeria Security Tracker

documented that fatalities from herders farmers conflict in 2017 and 2018 were 1,041 and 2,037 deaths respectively⁶⁵. a study lent credence to the spate of killings by listing affected states to include Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Enugu, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Kebbi, Delta, Ekiti, Oyo, and Niger State. Due to the increase in the killing, the Global Terrorism Indexes ranked Herdsmen as the fourth deadliest militia group in the world with a record of the killing of 1,229 people in 2014⁶⁶. The Nigeria Watch Database recorded 615 violent death related to cattle grazing out of a total of 61,314 violent fatalities in Nigeria. Vanguard in its 28th February 2016 edition Duru in Markurdi reported that despite the efforts to stop the spate of killings in Benue State, over 100 people who were mostly women, children, and the elderly were slaughtered in villages and refugees camp at Ukure, Gafa, Per, and Tse-Gusa at Ukemgbiraghia Twarev ward in Logo Local Government. The Premium Times of 19th March 2016 quoted the interim National Secretary of Gan Allah Fulani Association saying the February bloody conflict in Benue was a reprisal attack on the killing of a prominent Fulani man.

On April 27, 2016 edition, the Vanguard newspaper reported that six bodies were recovered from bushes in the attacking spearheaded by over 500 Fulani herdsmen in Nimbo Enugu State. The leadership of the National Assembly condemned the killing and claimed that it was capable of threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria. The Premium Times on August 10, 2016, reported attacks by Fulani herdsmen in the North Central States of Benue that led to the killing of at least 1,269 persons⁶⁷.

Displacement of Households: Scholars attest to the fact that feud between Fulani herdsmen and farmers had led to the displacement of may households especially women and children. It is submitted that 300,000 farmers and pastoral children are out of schools and in the state of Benue, half of the twenty-four schools for pastoral children are completely shut down⁶⁸. A study found

out in their report that “over 180,000 persons were registered in eight officially designated internally displaced person (IDPs) camps in most of 2018 while over 500,000 displaced people have tuned to “refugees” in their various localities as they squat in an uncompleted building in the most deplorable condition⁶⁹. Other social effects of herdsmen-farmers conflict include sexual harassment of women, acquisition of weapons and arms: reduction in quality of social relationship; reduction of social support, high cases of rape, displacement of farmers⁷⁰.

It was also observed that a total of 210,354 persons were displaced from 171 towns across the North Western Region between 2011 and 2019 based on the Assessment conducted by the United Nations High Commission for Refugee’s¹⁹. From “January 2015 to February 2017, at least 62,000 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue, and Plateau states. In January 2018, the News Agency of Nigeria according to a report stated that over 18,000 internally displaced persons were in eleven camps in Nasarawa state. Yet till date, response to the crisis at both the federal and state levels according to International Crises Group has been poor⁷¹. The implications of herders-farmers crises are the rising number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). These herders-farmers conflicts have resulted in the displacement of many people from their ancestral homes thus turning them into refugees in their own country. The implication of internal displacement is evident at the micro and macro levels⁶⁰. At the micro-level, individuals and their families have suffered in diverse ways, namely the dignity of relying on state hand out and charity for survival, traumatization. Arising from this is the forceful dislocation from their ancestral environment and the destruction of their means of livelihood and consequent descent into poverty and depreciation in their overall quality of life¹².

Economic Effects: it is observed that “farming along the Benue River account for over 20,000 tons of grains annually and these areas were also fertile ground for Herdsmen to feed their cattle”

but the competition for land resources in the state had accounted for total or near neglect of farming in the area ⁷³.

Other economic effects of herdsman-farmers' conflict include loss of produce in storage; reduction in output and income of farmers and nomads; scarcity of agricultural product; loss of houses and properties; infrastructural damages. Desert encroachment from the Sahara towards the Sahel region and other associated climatic conditions have continued to affect the livelihood of herdsman as they push further south in search of available space, pitching them against farmers and host communities in a different parts of Nigeria¹. Research also indicates that Nigeria more or less lost about 13.7 billion dollars to herders-farmer conflict. In other words, Nigeria stands to gain 13.7 billion dollars in total macro-economic progress if herders-farmers conflicts were non-existence.

It was also observed that the low agricultural output as a result of the incessant herders-farmers conflict caused the deepening poverty in the country. This cannot be argued as failure to cultivate farmland for crop production amounts to job loss and hunger. The atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty created by the conflict generally reduces the capacity of both groups to produce optimally. Evidence from research conducted in 2015 and 2020 pointed to the fact that an average household in these conflict-prone communities experience at least 64% or potentially 210% decrease in income due to conflict. This is so because most of them would be afraid to pursue their households over long periods for security reasons. The impact is the Deepening food insecurity leading to famine, which will inevitably enforce malnutrition, an outbreak of preventable disease, stunting in children, and a rise in child and maternal mortality. It is therefore not only the earning of Farmers and Herders that suffer but their overall well-being. The various State governments in these areas where conflicts are prevalent also suffer the loss of income as a

result of the non-payment of taxes. It is estimated that States affected by Herders-Farmers conflicts lose an average of 47% of taxes ⁷⁴.

2.1.3.3 Governments Strategic Response to the Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict

Creation of Grazing Reserves: In 1965, the Northern Regional Government initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the Herdsmen-Farmers conflict in the country. The Grazing Reserves allocated large portions of land to be exclusively used by Herders to rear their Livestock. However, the Grazing Reserves system was not supported adequately. The Government was still in the process of initiating legislation to legitimize the Grazing Reserve before natural factors such as Population Growth and other related consequences like Urbanization and Migration encroached on these designated areas reducing the Herders' chances of accessing the reserves⁷⁵.

Establishment of National Commission for Nomadic Education In 1989 –Before the current high level of conflict between herders and farmers, the Federal Government had established the National Commission for Nomadic Education in 1989 to take care of Basic Education of children of Nomads⁷⁶. The numbers of Nomadic people in Nigeria are estimated at 9.3million of whom 3.1 million are school-age children. The enrolment rate of nomads in formal and non-formal education is very low.

The broad goal of the programme is to:

1. Provide the nomads with relevant and functional Basic Education.
2. To improve the Survival Skills of the Nomads by providing them with knowledge and skills that will enable them to raise their productivity and levels of income and also.
3. Participate effectively in the nation's Socio-Economic and Political affairs.

The Use of the Armed Forces to curb Internal Security: One of the Federal Government's immediate measures to address the Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts is the engagement of the Armed

Forces of Nigeria⁷⁷. Citing the conflict in Plateau State in 2001 for example, the Federal Government deployed a special task force called operation Safe Haven (SIF – OSH) to check insecurity resulting from the Herdsmen Farmers' clashes. The OSH mandate was expanded to replace operation Harbin Kunama II in the Southern Kaduna state whose mandate was similar to that of OSH in Plateau. Due to escalating conditions of security crises in some parts of the country, there are many calling for the declaration of State of Emergency in Benue and Plateau State as a result of the gruesome killing and displacement in these States. Nigerians according to scholars expect the government to activate all the necessary sections of the constitution regarding the use of the military in internal security. This call came as a fall out of the recent action taken by the government to suppress indigenous people of Biafra's (IPOB) agitations in the southeast and similar uprising in other parts of the country. The military was deployed in September 2017 in an operation code-named operation "python dance" to suppress the IPOB agitation and protest", yet the demands by the organization have remained consistent⁷⁸.

Establishment of the National Grazing Reserves Bill 2016:- A National Grazing Reserves bill was sponsored in 2016 at the parliament to address the herdsmen-farmers' conflict. The bill did not survive due to opposition from different stake holders. Those that opposed the bill hinged their rejection on the provisions of the land use act of 1978 which vested all powers related to the regulations on ownership, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors. Thus the land use acts is enacted by the National Assembly and unless it is amended, state governments and their representatives at the parliament have always opposed any attempt to establish grazing reserves in their domains, they consider it to be usurping the constitutional powers vested in them⁷¹.

Proposed Cattle Ranching System 2018: In reaction to the increasing conflicts and mass killings resulting from seasonal pastoral movements, the government as a matter of policy approved a ten year National Livestock plan at a cost of about 199 billion naira, the plan would lead to the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states of the federation. Again the state government especially in the south and north-central areas rejected the proposal on the ground of not having enough space for such project⁸⁰.

Law Prohibiting Open Grazing: As parts of measures to end the persistent conflict between herdsmen and farmers in various states, governments at state levels enacted legislation prohibiting open grazing in their states. This they hope would reduce the risk of herdsmen's destruction of farmlands and the associated conflicts. Benue, Ekiti, and Taraba states are leading this opposition by enacting state laws prohibiting open grazing. In May 2017, Benue state enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law 2017. Ekiti and Taraba states have also signed bills prohibiting open grazing in their respective states. This makes open grazing under any guise an illegal activity punishable by law. The Great Green Wall Agency of the Federal Government: In 2013, the Federal Government established the Great Green Wall agency to tackle desertification. This was in response to the 2007 African Union Great Green Wall Initiative that aimed at encouraging member states to plant 800 km of trees along the southern Sahel to counter the effect of desertification along the area. Continued desert encroachment along the Sahel region as a result of climate change is a major factor responsible for herdsmen's seasonal migration from one water and vegetation for cattle grazing⁸¹.

2.1.4 Concept of Framing

In context of mass communication framing operates in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, moral judgments, and suggest remedies. This shows that through framing, the

media inform the audience about the happening in the societies, tells them the reason behind the happening, what the society expects from them, and suggests the solution to such occurrences. The framing theory originates from the field of psychology and emphasizes the need to understand the importance of interpretative communication and strategic considerations behind policy positions⁸². In other words, the media hide under the objectivity pretense when presenting their news stories, thereby hiding the framing decisions every journalist make when presenting the information.

Although there may be doubts about the media's peacemaking potentialities. The news media can make matters a lot worse and can certainly contribute to the escalation of group conflicts and can lead to mass killings. This is especially so when the media are intentionally used as weapons to incite people to commit crimes against humanity. The media portrayal of a conflict can influence the outcome of such a conflict. Conflicts ranging from socio-political, economic intra-ethnic as well as others are shaped by the presence, type of presence, or absence that the media have in conflict situations. Conflicts such as the prolonged Syrian war, Libyan civil war, Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine-Israeli crises continue to raise questions on the role the mass media play in such upheavals. From the findings of various scientific inquiries, documentaries, and legal pronouncements on the Second World War; the Gulf War, and the Rwandan genocide, it is clear that the media can play key roles in the conflict⁸³.

Framing as part of a skill used in producing effects or understanding a certain issue⁸⁴. When an event is presented through a certain frame, it creates a type of meaning. Framing, therefore, refers to mass media capacity in choosing and stressing aspects of reality or event, till it becomes important. Sometimes, this can affect public opinion positively or negatively. A study adds that the frame is a persuasive invitation, a stimulus, to read a news story in a particular way. So that a

specific definition of an event, the causal and treatment responsibility for a societal topic, and a moral judgment of a person come more easily across the receiver's mind. Frames are therefore communication systems that aid a sender of media messages to package media content in ways that align with their opinion⁸⁵. The expectations we form about ourselves, other people, and our social world are one of the basic elements of social life. Some of these expectations are stereotypes, attitudes, racial and ethnic bias. These expectations form the basis of audience frames or individual frames – these serve as the lens through which media contents, social interactions, the human relationships among others, are viewed.

“Framing is a process through which a communication source defines and constructs a public issue or controversy and can have significant consequences for how people view and understand an issue”¹. The way a social issue is cast can have a significant effect on how one responds to it. For example, abortion receives different reactions from the audience, depending on whether it is framed in terms of immorality, saving lives, or killing. He explained that framing is a process of selective control over media content or public communication. Framing defines how a certain piece of media message or rhetoric is packaged, to allow specific political or social movement or organization to present their view or aspect of reality.

Framing thus provides a platform for political or other groups to present their views on given issues. For example, when the government in Nigeria plans to remove subsidies on petroleum products, it always frames the issue as the “need to stop smuggling” or “funding of other sectors” as the reasons for the hike. On its part, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), uses “high cost of living” or “workers welfare”, to oppose the move. What parties in conflict situations do is to push their frames in strong terms, to attract the attention of diverse segments of the society.

The study went further to explain the three major elements essential in media frames as language, thought, and forethought⁸⁶;

Language helps us to remember information and acts to transform how we view situations. To use language, people must have thought and reflected on their interpretative frameworks and those of others. Leaders can and should learn framing spontaneously in certain circumstances. Being able to do so has to do with having the forethought to predict framing opportunities. In other words, leaders must plan to be spontaneous.

Language may come in form of talking or writing, thought is the idea that an individual has in mind, forethought is the reflection of the consequences of one's thought before communicating it. Thought could be known with the use of language. However, a study simplified the three elements and came up with; message, an audience, a medium, images, content, and language². A message refers to the information the media intends to pass across to the masses. An audience is the group of people who have gathered to watch or listen to the message. A messenger is a person who delivers the message (it could be oral, written, or non-verbal). Image is the mental picture the messenger has about the message. Content is the body of the intended message, while language is the style of speaking or writing of the messenger to the gathered masses.

2.1.4.1 Types of Media Framing

The media framing suggests how issues should be thought about, thereby encouraging citizens to understand events and issues in particular ways. By defining what the essential issue is, and suggesting how to think about it, and later implies what should be done if there is any.

Emphasis Frame: This simplifies reality by forcing on a subset of relevant aspects of a situation or issue. That is, it offers qualitatively different, yet potentially relevant considerations which individuals use to make judgments. Emphasis Framing involves highlighting a particular ‘subset of potentially relevant considerations’. This way the meaning of a context in which the choice at hand will be evaluated, is influenced.

Equivalency Frame: This kind of media frame presents information based on the same facts, but the ‘frame’ in which it is presented changes, thus creating a reference-dependent perception. It offers different but logically equivalent phrases which cause the individual to alter their preferences. Equivalency frames are often worded in opposite terms, like ‘gains’ versus ‘losses’, ‘full’ versus ‘empty’, ‘fat’ versus ‘fat-free’, etcetera ⁸⁷.

About their observations, the emphasis frame is a persuasion technique where the focus is placed on some specific aspects of a solution that encourage certain interpretations of the meaningful context and discourage others. On the other hand, equivalency frame is the purpose of stating or portraying logically equivalent information in such a way that it encourages certain interpretations of the meaningful context of information, and discourages certain others. This simply means that unlike emphasis framing which focuses on the same information and tries to phrase that information in the most persuasive ways, the equivalency frame only focuses on some information and gives little or no regard to others ⁸⁸.

2.1.4.2 Framing Effect

Framing effects occur when a subject makes a different choice on a news story depending on whether the same outcomes are phrased as though they gain versus as though they were losses. The framing effect may refer to behavioural or attitudinal strategies and or outcomes that are due to how a given piece of information is being formed in public discourse. Besides, it opined that

the framing effect is an example of cognitive bias in which people react to a particular choice in different ways, depending on whether it is presented as a loss or a gain. One of the dangers of framing effects is that people are often provided with options within the context of only one of the two frames mentioned earlier⁸⁹.

The framing effect can be classified into two groups:

- Studies of framing as the dependent variable
- Studies of framing as the independent variable.

Studies of framing as the dependent variable refer to “Frame Building”. Frame building assumes that several media frames compete to set one frame regarding an issue, while one frame finally gains influence, because it resonates with popular culture, fits with media practices, or is heavily sponsored by elites. It talks of how frames create a societal discourse about an issue, and how different frames are adopted by journalists or media practitioners in the process of framing. This is related to three areas:

1. **Journalists Norms:** Journalists frame a certain issue based on at least five (5) aspects of news work; larger societal norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, external pressures from interest groups and other policymakers, professional routines, and ideology or political orientations they have

2. **Political Actions:** This second potential influence comes from the elite, including interest groups, government bureaucracies, and other political actors. Empirical studies show that these influences of elites seem to be strongest for issues in which journalists and various players in the policy arena can find shared narratives.

3. **Cultural Contexts:** This refers to the cultural contexts of a society which are also established in framing. It is also called ‘Cultural Resonance’ or ‘Narrative Fidelity’

Frame Building focuses on the dynamic of how speakers, such as journalists, choose specific frames in communication. Studies of framing as an independent variable refer to Frame Setting. Frame setting is the interaction between media frames and an individual's prior knowledge and disposition." Frame setting is concerned with the influence in communication on thought and the precise psychological processes at work ⁹⁰.

Frame setting occurs when people are exposed to a novel news frame, they often accept the constructions made applicable to an issue, but they are significantly more likely to do so when they have an existing schema. It is otherwise called the applicability effect. That is, when new frames invite people to apply their existing schema to an issue, the implication depends, in part, on what is in that schema. It is the interaction between media frames and individuals' prior knowledge and dispositions. Framing effects could be explained based on the following theories:

2.1.4.3 Framing and News Framing

Framing is a concept that has its origin in politics and psychology but was later applied in the study of how journalists shaped and control news. It was later reported that Goffman was the first to put forth framing as a theory. It is defined as the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by the media professionals and their audiences. A proponent of framing as a theory defined it "as a schemat of interpretation" that enables individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences or life experiences. Robert Entman according to the authors cited above modernized Goffman definition by specifying that "to frame a communication text or messages is to promote certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or a treatment recommendation. This definition is germane to the current

study set out to investigate newspaper treatment of herdsmen-farmers conflict by the way they project salient issues in the crises to the public ⁹¹.

Further explanations offered by media scholars point to the conscious or subconscious manner in which events reportage by journalists emphasizes a given issue more than the other. Framing for instance “consist of using certain words or phrases, making certain contextual references, choosing certain pictures or films, giving examples as typical, referring to certain sources and so on” there is no gainsaying that media professionals during the editorial meeting do deliberate issues and conclude on what to project in their content through headlines framing, picture usage, the position of content placement among others. It is also seen as referring to “how messages are encoded with meaning so that they can be efficiently interpreted concerning existing beliefs or ideas¹. It largely consists of how the media treat news which is often based on reporters' interpretation and understanding of issues. Based on this assertion, journalists according to media authors give their interpretations to news stories through the angle they choose to write or tell the news stories from; which in turn influences how the public understand, interpret and form opinions about social issues. It is the importance given to certain facets of an issue by the media which tend to set or alter the narrative of public discourse.

The choice of emphasizing one issue and de-emphasizing the other by a journalist is influenced by experiences and house style among other factors. The journalists use frames in treating news items thereby creating interpretations of the events being covered. The journalists call up “knowledge structures that are acquired through shared social learning, individual experiences and personal reasons. A study proposes five types of frames that media often adopt in treating news.

- a. Conflict Frame: This reduces complex social and political problems to simple conflicts, with emphasis placed on the performance and style of the combatants.
- b. Human Interest frame: This places emphasis on the personal and emotional side of an event, issue, or problem.
- c. Economic consequences Frame: This places emphasis on the economic impact or implication of an issue or event for the nation. This frame is used to make an event relevant to the public.
- d. Morality Frame: This adds a religious or moral charge to an event. It is often used in responses by news sources rather than the expressed views of journalists.
- e. Responsibility frame: This presents the crisis such that the responsibility for causing it lies with the government, an individual or group.

News framing; refers to interpretative structures that journalists use to set particular events within their broader context. The media framing prioritizes some facts, messages, or development over others thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events. On the question of how can one differentiate a news frame from an ordinary persuasive message or assertion, scholars submit that a frame repeatedly invokes the same objects and traits, using identical or synonymous words and symbols in a series of similar communications that are concentrated in time. These frames function to promote an interpretation of a problematic situation or actor and support a desirable response often along with a moral judgment that provides an emotional charge. It is important to note that reporters and news editors in mainstream national news media such as Radio Nigeria, NTA, the Punch, and the Nigerian Tribune newspapers engage in framing without intending to push any particular policy or political goal.

After a study of how the British press covers diplomatic scandal in Nigeria with Umaru Dikko affair, as a case study, it was found out that British newspapers gave quite a good amount of coverage that presented a most negative image of Nigeria to its national and international readers, during the period the affair took place. The above testifies to the perception of political reality which the major news media can create in public. This cannot be doubted because of the wide readership, listenership, and or viewership that the media commands in the comity media organizations in the country. The assumption of news framing stated that:

1. Journalist selects the topics they will present and decide how they will be presented. This determines the issues audiences think about and how they think about them.
2. Audiences interpret information through their frames that may overlap or contradict the media's frames.
3. Frames are reinforced every time they are evolved whether positively or negatively.
4. Frames' building is a systematic process that occurs over time.

The proper understanding of the media framing concept in this context is germane as this will enable the investigation being undertaken to properly define the relevant frames within which the newspaper selected for the study reported the farmers-herders conflict in the selected period in 2019. Regardless of the framing types that journalists project and the assumption of framing, the journalist especially the reporter is usually in the field covering the event and thus determine what is to be framed. The newspaper coverage and or the reportage of the herdsman-farmers' conflict had been scrutinized in some prior studies, some of which have come with traces of bias, and subjectivity. To this end, media scholars have criticized the disproportionate, sectional, sensational reportage of the conflict. This according to media scholars "may create perception challenges for the media involved because public perception of media coverage delineates what

news they have on the issues that are covered by the newspaper in an attempt to keep the public abreast of the current event”⁹². A study argues along this line as it held that audience perception of media outlets and news sources is critical to the success of the media industry. The importance of public perception is often underscored by the phrase “perception is reality”.¹ And crises are a reality which the press is expected to report. While presenting the reality of herdsman-farmers’ conflict in an attempt to resolve the conflict, the deconstructive role of the newspaper that can be seen through screaming sensational headlines and news contents also cause the probability of violent reaction among the conflicting actors. This, therefore, makes the media serve as a two-edged sword either by playing the negative roles in fueling the Fulani herdsman-farmers conflict or play constructive roles in preventing and resolving conflicts hence, contributing to peace-building. In the work of other media scholars, it is believed that newspaper in Nigeria in way contribute to the escalation of the herdsman-farmers conflict. This they blamed on the unprofessional act of sensationalism, consideration of conflicts context, inaccuracy and unfairness, unbalanced and incompleteness as well lack integrity and responsibility. The outcome of this by implication is that newspapers report of herdsman-farmers’ conflict is distorted and coloured with ethnic prejudice which now divides the three ethnic forms ⁹³.

2.1.5 A Global Perspective of Media and Conflict:

Conflicts that occurred before the 1980s were largely controlled by the contending governments in terms of media coverage. They monitored the rate or extent to which journalists could physically go in a conflict zone. However, satellite technology, and the internet, social media, journalists’ work-stations have given birth to the possibilities of media houses getting reports from conflict zones without having reporters on the ground. With simple internet-enabled camera phones people who witness conflicts now serve as I-reporters for media houses. Stakeholders in

the media including government and international agencies are interested in the ability of the media to influence contending parties to resolve conflicts. This interest is based on the view that sustained media reports of conflict can elicit government or international decisions to stop particular conflict.

The sustained media coverage of the conflict in Bosnia in the 1990s was what triggered the United States of America and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to wade into the killings that reached a genocidal level. Meanwhile, in the 1993 genocide in Rwanda, the reluctance of the West, led by America to intervene led to the hundred days of man's inhumanity to man, which led to one of the worst cases of killings in human history. The blame is also put on the doorstep of Western media, which initially ignored the conflict, at times giving it little mention or airtime where the situation was referred to as communal clashes ⁹⁴.

The notion is that the level or type of media presence in a conflict, especially at the international, national, regional, or communal level affects the resolution or escalation of the conflict. While evaluating the role of the media in conflict argue that "perhaps the media have generally been overlooked in analyses of conflict because on their own, they are rarely a direct cause". Nonetheless, as part of a larger factor, the media can be extremely powerful tools for promoting violence as witnessed in Rwanda, the former Republic of Yugoslavia, and the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. The media not only have the strength to reach peoples' homes but can reach their minds, shape thoughts, and consequently behavior. In essence, in a conflict situations, as we have seen in the Niger Delta region, the media play critical roles that could shape the outcome of a conflict positively or negatively.

During the Rwandan genocide, the majority of the Hutu tribe knew that what they heard through the official media or private media was designed to spread anti-Tutsi feelings of xenophobia

against the Tutsis and Hutus. These media which include Radio Television Libres Des Mille Collines were found culpable in the massive bloodletting in the tiny country. He noted that “they can see they are not being told the truth, once again, we have fallen into an era of suspicion and speculation, which is so favorable to the dissemination of the worst kind of propaganda”. Ironically, not all the receivers’ of the messages in the media believed what they heard or were directed to do. Some acted according to the script presented by the media: that of the extermination of the Tutsis. The media could unwittingly or otherwise stain their hands with blood, when they blatantly, tell the audience how, when, and why they have to slaughter fellow citizens, who found themselves on the other side of the ethnic divide.

Conflicts all over the world are usually affected by the shade of media presence during the progression of the conflict. Thompson adds that the coverage of disaster or conflict can affect the trend, solution, or conflagration it would take. It explains:

The analysis of 200 English language newspapers worldwide, the 2004 tsunamis in South East Asia generated more column inches in six weeks, than the world’s top ten “Forgotten” emergencies combined over the previous year. The media blitz prompted unprecedented generosity. By February 2005, the international community had donated the U.S \$500 for every person affected by the tsunami, compared with just 50 cents for each person affected by Uganda’s 18-year war⁹⁵.

A study argues that when the media give insight into conflicts or disasters, the global community can become aware, as well as join in finding solutions to the conflict. He states that in 1941, a journalist, Julius Streicher, in describing the Jews, just before the Holocaust wrote: “that if the

danger of reproduction of the cause of God in the Jewish blood is finally to come to an end, there is only one way- the extermination of that person whose father is the devil". Julius Streicher was found guilty of a crime against humanity and hanged for instigating hatred against Jews, having called for the annihilation of the Jewish race. Similarly, he explains that an issue in Kangura (hate newspaper during the Rwandan genocide) was titled "Tutsi? What arms shall we use to conquer the "Inyenzi" once and for all". In that edition, the Tutsi ethnic group was referred to as "Inyenzi" and labeled as the evil that should be stopped. The Rwandan media especially RTLM and Kangura through the hate messages they presented directed the Hutu majority on how to locate and kill their Tutsi neighbours. It is clear that in conflict situations, the media are weapons in the hands of contending parties. These media groups and their reporters were culpable in these conflicts, not because they used physical weapons of war, but because they sent hate messages against a people or a party in a conflict .

The import of the media in conflict situations especially in the international arena is growing. Nations including the United States of America, China, and the United Kingdom usually engage the media to promote their views in any conflict. Examples are the Gulf War in the early 1990s, the Libyan uprising, the Arab Spring, as well as the Syrian Civil unrest. In these conflicts, most of the news the global community heard was presented by the government in power. However, new technologies, such as the internet and smartphones have brought about citizens' participation in presenting the reality of a conflict state to the global community..

A study notes that by contrast on American television evening news broadcast by CNN, CBS, NBC, and ABC on October 12,2000, there were brief glimpses of the falling body and the crowd in the police courtyard as part of the framing of the story of Israel's retaliatory helicopter attack on terrorist targets in Gaza⁹⁶. The term "lynching" was absent in the reports of the four American

networks and instead the verb used was “attack” “killing” and “murder”, while the word “mob” appears once (on NBC).

The choice of words that combatants in conflict engage to communicate their views are critical issues that should be addressed. The words used by parties in conflict to describe opponents and contentious issues can go a long way in escalating the conflict. For example, how various groups involved in the Niger Delta conflict choose to report the conflict can affect its outcome. Parties, such as the Federal Government, host communities, International oil companies as well as the media can compound or aid the resolution of the conflict.

Other conflicts on the global scale: Darfur, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, Afghanistan, and the Congolese conflicts have had varying media coverage with attendant effects on the escalation or the reduction of such conflicts. For instance, sustained media coverage of the 2010 Japanese nuclear plant and earthquake disaster led to the world contributing to relief funds for the affected persons. Similarly, the earthquake in Haiti in 2009 was covered by the Western media, such that countries including Nigeria raised millions of dollars in aid of the victims. However, the Darfur conflict and the 20 years non-existence of a central government in Somalia did not get sustained reportage, only occasional reports whenever there was an outburst of fighting. The impact of the mass media in conflict or war situation has become a major issue in recent times, especially, after the Second World War, Vietnam War, Gaza conflict, Iraq conflict among others. In addition to the traditional media- radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, the new media have played critical roles in the conflict. This is done through the use of citizen journalism, I-reporters, social networking sites, online broadcast stations among others.

Ironically, some researchers argued that constant coverage of a conflict by the media can create more panic, produce terrifying effects and reduce the gate-keeping roles of editors. The gate-

keeping roles of the editors and reporters become limited because the people want to be updated on a given conflict. What type of coverage has the media given to the herdsmen and farmers' conflict? How did the media source information for the content? How balanced were the reports and what types of frames were used in presenting the herdsmen and farmers' conflict? A study states that the media can select conflicting issues in a specific order, and in a coherent stream of information, emphasizing them over other issues. This could be achieved through editing techniques, news writing, and gate-keeping. The study argues that the media can condition peoples' behavior, beliefs, and attitudes via the content of their reports. The people who have been exposed to the frames used by the media then begin to act in ways that are in tandem with the messages or angles presented by the media. Through the framing of content, the media influence the audience to take particular actions. However, the study did not weigh the effect of the readers' pre-existing knowledge on the effect of the frames. It is scientifically proven that for media frames to have strong effects they must have a strong correlation with audience background. For instance, print media journalists can decide to use frames such as "militants" or "irrational illiterates" to report the farmers who stage a march against the destruction of their farm produce.

The assumption of news framing stated that:

1. Journalist selects the topics they will present and decide how they will be presented. This determines the issues audiences think about and how they think about them.
2. Audiences interpret information through their own frames may overlap or contradict the media's frames.
3. Frames are reinforced every time they are evolved whether positively or negatively.
4. Frames' building is a systematic process that occurs over time.

The proper understanding of media framing concept in this context is germane as this will help to properly define the relevant frames within which the newspaper i.e. the tribune and the punch have reported the farmers- herders conflict being investigated in 2019.

Regardless of the framing types that journalist project and the assumption of framing, the journalist especially the reporters is in the back grounding determine what is to be framed. The newspaper coverage and or the reportage of the Fulani-farmers conflict had been scrutinized in some prior studies, some of which have come with the traces of bias, and subjectivity. To this and, media scholars have criticized the disproportionate, sectional, sensational reportage of the conflict this according to media scholars "may create perception challenges for the media involved because public perception of media coverage delineates what new they have on the issues that are covered by the newspaper in an attempt to keep the public abreast of current event a study argues along this line as they note that audience perception of media outlets and news sources is critical to success of the media industry. The importance of public perception is often underscored by the phrase "perception is reality".⁹⁷ Scholars also corroborated the authors above saying "the press the world over is presumed to perform the function of societal surveillance by reporting the reality. And crises are reality which the press is expected to report."⁹⁸

While presenting the reality of herders' farmers' conflict in an attempt to resolve the conflict, the role of the newspaper that can be seen through screaming /sensational headlines and news contents also cause the probability of violent reaction among the conflicting actors.

The media to serve as a two edged sword either by playing the negative roles in fueling the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict or play constructive roles of preventing and resolving conflicts hence, contributing to peace building. In the work of other media scholars contrived that newspaper in a way contribute to the escalation of herdsmen farmers conflict. This they blamed

on the unprofessional act of sensationalism, consideration of conflicts, context, inaccuracy and unfairness, unbalance and incompleteness as well lack of integrity and responsibility⁹⁸. The outcome of this by implication is that newspapers report of herdsmen farmer's conflict is distorted and coloured with ethnic prejudice which now divide the three ethnic forms

2.1.6 Symbolic Communication and the Mass Media Content

Symbolic communication has been defined as understanding others or expressing oneself with symbols, whether that which involves communicating linguistically or through another symbol expressed in speech, gesture, notation, or through some other means. Symbolic communications are the things that we have ascribed meaning to and which represent a certain idea that exists in place. It is the exchange of messages that change a prior expectation of events ⁹⁹.

By referring to objects and ideas not present at the time of communication, a world of possibility is opened. Symbolic communication provides an example of how members of an organization interpret their environment. Symbolic communication is intentional communication, using learned socially shared signal systems of propositional information transmitted via symbols. In symbolic communication, the messages are presented through symbols and the receiver decodes those symbols to decipher the intended message. In essence, communicators in a given encounter can interpret messages based on the symbols used. Such symbols are usually meant to people who share similar views, culturally, politically, and professionally. Language and verbal symbols, slangs, and specific code systems among diverse groups such as religious, cultic, ethnic, and professional groups are examples of symbolic communication.

Symbolic communication provides examples of how members of an organization interpret their environment. It is therefore important in socio-cultural, political, and religious communication considering the differences in the interpretation of events, items or words, and even symbols or

iconography by people. Conflicts usually occur in societies, because people operating from sub-groups interpret or understand in diverse ways, same symbols such as words, sentences or phrases. When reporting the herdsmen and farmers' conflict, issues such as resource control, derivation policy, federalism, and social responsibility are interpreted differently by people from different segments of the society. These interpretations might be influenced by political, ethnic, religious as well as knowledge issues. This might result in a conflict situation, because of the misunderstanding that might arise.

Symbolic communication is the intentional communication using socially learned and shared signal systems of propositional information transmitted via symbols. For instance, the American flag is a symbol that represents freedom for the Americans. However, to some other countries, it represents imperialism and evil. In essence, in symbolic communication, especially in multi-religious and culturally diverse nations like Nigeria, the media must be tactical in the production of their content. This is so because, the presentation of issues, especially as it regards religion, culture, politics, resource control, and ethnicity need to be packaged in a way that would not lead to the aggravation of conflict, as being experienced in the Niger Delta. For content on the herdsmen and Farmers' conflicts to make meaning to the readers, especially, Nigerians, it must engage language, cultural and political communication modes that the people are familiar with. The catchphrases, words, proverbs, as well as iconography, must have some correlation with the experiences of the people. When any form of symbolic communication is not used appropriately and in the right context it could create contentions that could rise to the level of conflicts. A contemporary example is the concerns over racism in football, where 'Monkey Chants' are used as racist gestures against Black players. This symbolic communication has become a shared code among the global football community as meaning something derogatory to Black players.

Human interactions are often filtered and shaped by public and private representational systems, in which one symbolic system may be affected by another. Therefore, the use of a specific notational system affects how events are conceptualized and described.¹ Symbolic systems include syntax, semantics, and phonology. A study adds that language involves socially shared symbolic systems. Languages are viewed as social because they emerge within a social system, where the meanings incorporated in them are shared between individuals¹.

For symbolic communication to work, the symbols used and their associated meanings have to be understood by both the sender and receiver of the communication. In symbolic communication, the sender encodes the intended message into symbols and the receivers decode those symbols to decipher the intended message. In the Niger Delta conflict, government, oil firms, communities, the media, and other stakeholders see things differently, hence the continuation of the hostility. Thus in framing the herdsmen and farmers' conflict; the mass media have to be aware of the symbolic communication modes that are used in Nigeria and are understood by most of the stakeholders in the issue.

2.1.7 Newspapers Dynamics in Conflicts: Framing of Herdsmen and Farmers'

Conflicts in Nigeria

The focus on negative stories is partly due to the need to survive the competition. While most newsmen are fault finders, they still give commendation in their editorial comments for desirable actions taken by the government¹⁰⁷. A similar opinion was also given by another author when he observed that "people are more interested in bad news than good ones. Ironically, the media use this as an advantage and or opportunity to exaggerate stories to sell their paper in the case of newspaper and magazine and provocative images or video clips on television to sustain viewership and patronage.

Consequently, because the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many to remain at home, cases of crimes that become common occurrences also provided the profitable platform for media to give strong promotion to conflicts and bad news. The fault-finding stance of newsmen especially in their preference for coverage of conflicts also confirms the subjective attitude of the newspaper workers. For instance, a study observed that while objectivity has been described as utopian or unattainable height in news gathering and reporting, a reporter still needs to ask whether he has been fair to all sides in his story. Those who believe objectivity is utopian say that a reporter cannot be completely detached or involved in the event being reported for the following reasons:

1. He does not come to assignment with blank minds; something is already there which may bias the coverage even when he wishes to be objective.
2. He is limited by experience and perception. He reports based on his experience and selective perception.
3. Reality is not out there for us to discover, each person creates his reality.
4. There is no fact anywhere in the world as an individual always manufacture facts.

Having given the background on the concept of negative or bad news and the issues surrounding objectivity while reporting, it can be subsumed that newspaper's behaviour in the coverage of conflict has a direct or indirect relationship with background reality and the mindset of the journalist covering such conflict. The world is ridden with conflict and crises ranging from climate change (that affect farm or grassland), war on terror, militarism and warfare, national poverty, financial meltdown, energy crises, food security, forced migration, fast-moving pandemic, and right abuses and the world each day draws to the brink. How we collectively recognize and respond to these different threats to humanity depends on how they become

defined and deliberated, constructed and contested in contemporary news media¹⁰⁰. An aspect of media theory is limited effect theory which underscored the selective exposure of media audience. Despite this proposition, however, it is argued that there are strong beliefs by many people that the media are key instruments for “negotiation” of the outcome of conflicts¹⁰⁸.

Media reports according to scholars is regarded as critical factors escalating or reducing tensions. The patterns of media reports on contemporary society with specific reference to crises are capable of setting the entire nation on fire. While referring to the submissions by other scholars, the author whose work is being reviewed in this context observed that “conflict by its nature, holds a forceful attraction for the mass media.

Other communication scholars corroborated the submission above stating that “the media are naturally attracted to conflict,” and that “most of the media concentrate on bad news. They are problem-focused. Well! They say bad news is good news and this is what sells the paper!” The media are often sensational and emotional in tone. All these portrayals are influenced by personal values, professional standards, media ownership, and control structure, and the news ethnic of the organization.

Compared with the painful process of monitoring a development project by a journalist to write a good story, the negative stories consume less time in most cases. Secondly negative stories are consistent with cultural expectations or fixation about people in other nations than those that are culturally close. Thirdly, since human preference tilts towards the positive, a hidden negative event is most likely to generate awareness about the other side of life. Therefore, the negative event makes news. Fourthly is that media focus on violence or conflict and other negative issues may be due to the ease with which anti-social behaviors are noticed is against pro-social ones.

Many people including newsmen easily noticed killings and fights than birth or pro-social behaviours like cooperation and pursuit of peace between groups and individuals¹⁰¹.

Notwithstanding the preference of newspapers to report negative or conflict stories, several scholars whose works were given consideration so far believed that newspaper as a typical media institution has the tendency to escalate or de-escalate conflicts. It is for instance submitted that the media tend to be selective in their reportage of conflicts. The news media do not give equal focus to conflicts situation; while some may enjoy maximum reportage, others are under-reported or not reported at all¹⁰². For a conflict situation to be newsworthy, the newspaper first considers the prominence, status, or the importance of conflicting parties, or issues at hand with what the audience cares about. In other words, a minor conflict that seems to attract few audiences or less valued might be under-reported. That the audience is factored in the process of conflict coverage and reportage, may primarily be because the media plan and execute news coverage against the background of a cost-benefit analysis¹⁰³. Other scholars hold similar opinion saying there are certain factors which usually condition the press in the performance of its functions. These include the prevailing political system and political culture, the level of economic and strength and independence enjoyed by the press, the ownership structure, the level of education and training, the nature of the audience in terms of what interest the audience in newspaper content, the time of the occurrence of the conflict and the status of the medium are also important determinants.

These factors played up in the study of some American newspapers' handling of some conflict within the diversity pluralistic group interest in the U.S in 1985. The study discovered that newspaper types and ownership were the critical factors that influenced the coverage of the conflict they identified in the newspapers. Communities with more diversified group interest had

their conflicts reported more often in the newspaper than was the case for conflict that occur in less pluralistic communities. The background orientation on the need to capture and retain the interest of the audience which determines what to cover was also given corroboration by Vladimir and Liss when the scholars submit that “a common journalist principle is that “if it bleeds, it leads”. Meaning that violent conflict will be headline news, not news of cross-cultural dialogue, and understanding. The media mostly cover conflict, not peace building. This tendency to cover conflict and violence destroys reality and leads many people to think that conflicts are persuasive and peace is the abnormal.

Several studies have suggested that the impact of the media on conflicts is greater than the impact of the media on conflict prevention and peace-building¹⁰⁴. The media play a destructive role in an attempt at making peace. The media play a constructive role and some are destructive. It is suggested that journalists need to be aware of the fact that reports of crises have the tendencies to either escalate or diminish crises. Reports on crises generate reactions from different people within and outside the place where the crises are taking place the year 2000 crises in Kaduna, some journalists reported that virtually all the Igbo in Kaduna State have been killed and this made the Igbo in Onitsha to begin to attack all the northerners in an attempt to revenge. The reporting of any conflict can influence the situation in many ways. It is affirmed that media coverage can strongly influence how the parties relate to a conflict and the players within it by the choice of stories that are covered or omitted, the sources used and the stand that is taken toward ethical reporting,

Other media scholars observed that the media can play a positive or negative role while reporting conflict, on the one hand, the output of the media can incite or escalate conflict and on the other hand, the media can facilitate the mitigation or even the resolution of a conflict situation. It is

also acknowledged that conflict coverage may be a source of prestige in mainstream media culture. Journalists are often encouraged to represent realities of a conflict in clear cut polarities and with primordial sentiments because of the openness to discourse that enhances the news value of war. The social-cultural binary of “us” and “them” or “we” and “they” is very much a reality” in media coverage of conflict¹⁰⁵. News media coverage of conflict tends towards ethnocentrism, contributing to the exacerbation of conflict situations.

Findings of a study holds that since the way the conflict is reported goes a long way in either assuaging or provoking the parties involved there is an urgent need to explore the way such reportage and coverage are perceived by the conflict victims and actors beyond merely critiquing the content. It is argued that operating within the canon of objectivity, accuracy, and balance is crucial for the media to exert constructive impacts during a conflict period ¹⁰⁶.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Addressing the research problem appropriately, theories that can serve as building blocks for the study on which the study rests have been identified.

2.2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting theory is one of the famous theories of mass communication that has attracted scholar’s attention globally. It was though formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. The first chapter of Walter Lippman’s 1922 book; *Public Opinion*. Lippman argued that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. Without using the term “agenda settings”, Walter Lippman wrote about what we today call agenda settings. Following Lippman, in 1963, Bernard Cohen observed that the “press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think. The world “will look

different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read. As early as the 1960's, Cohen had expressed the idea that later led to the formalization of agenda-setting theory by McCombs and Shaw. Thus, in 1922, Walter Lippman's book on Public Opinion set the stage for the theory of agenda-setting by arguing that the news media construct our view of the world.

In the 1968 Chapel Hill Study, McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation coefficient between what residents (of Chapel Hill North Carolina) thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public perception of the most important election issue, McComb and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determine public opinion¹⁰⁷.

The major assumption of the theory is that "the media set agenda for the public to follow and that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about most of the issues we discuss are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media. In other words, the media powerfully shaped and directed what the public should discuss, think, or worry about. From the forgoing, it implies that the newspaper "play drums and when they play the drums, we begin to dance to the tune of their music.

The elements or what determined the agenda-setting theory include the following:

- The numbers of times or frequency and quantity of reporting.
- The prominence is given to conflict stories or reports through the way the headline is cast, display of pictures layout, graphic placement, etc.
- The degree of conflict generated in the report and cumulating media effect overtime.

Two important issues in agenda-setting of the media critical to this discussion are: -

- The “reciprocal effect” is concerned with the very presence of the media at the scene of an event especially the scene of herdsmen-farmers’ conflict.
- The “Landslide effect” which refers to the usually exaggerated impressions created by the kind of media handling or reporting waving crowd,³² the victim such as bodies of children, women, and men massacred and farmlands destroyed by cattle and herdsmen who carry arms and ammunition while on the farm with their cows.

By application, therefore, it suggests that the newspaper through prominence given to the herdsmen-farmers’ conflict will to a large extent determine what members of the public should think about when it comes to the herdsmen-farmers conflicts.

2.2.2 Gatekeeping Theory

The Gatekeeping theory was proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1947. The theory assumes that the media select what to emphasize and what to de-emphasize. It deals with the processes and factors which influence the decisions of media organizations to select or project potential newsworthy items for publication. Gatekeeping in the media field is the process of deciding on what should be made known to the media audience and what should not be made known to the media audience. Be it a reporter, editor, or sub-editor, a journalist is first and foremost a gatekeeper in the news movement¹⁰⁸. Gatekeeping is nothing but voluntary self-censorship performed by the media themselves. Gatekeeping emanates from the understanding by the journalists that apart from legal restrictions, on what is to be published, including photographs; journalists possess the moral obligation to be socially responsible to their readers in whatever materials they package for them¹⁰⁹

Other media scholar enumerates three functions of gatekeeper in news transition.

1. To limit the information the public receives by editing this information before it is disseminated to them.
2. To expand the amount of information the public receives by giving them additional facts or views and
3. To organize or interpret the information.

There are factors that determine the gatekeeping activities of the media professionals:¹

- **Ownership Interest/ Pattern:** The owner of a media house can dictate what to be reported. This is mostly done when he wants to use the media to protect his interest. This is because “he who pays the piper dictates the tune”. In most cases, the media house mounts serious pressure on the journalists to publish a particular story or to kill such story¹¹⁰. In the view of other media scholars, the public (government) owned media organizations tend to be more authoritative as they are prone to self-censorship, publishing stories that are more favorable to the government¹¹¹.
- **Timing/ Deadlines:** There is the time limit within which the report must be published. Deadlines mean working under extreme pressure daily; pressure that forces them (journalists-reporters) to spew forth the ideas, thoughts, and words at often an unsettling pace.
- Failure to meet the deadline means such a story may be stale/ dead when it is unable to meet the publication deadline. And so this may influence what is covered by the journalist.
- **Economic:** The desire to make a profit often influences what is given publication by the media. The media will rather publish a story that will fetch them profit and abandon those that will not attract profit to the outfit etc.

- **Management Policy:** Every media outfit has one policy or the other that influence what is to be given publication. Every reporter in such an organization is conscious of what to cover to avoid being sanctioned.
- **Professional Ethics:** There are ethics guiding media professionals. Most media professionals will not go against the ethics of their profession due to the dangers that are associated with it.
- **Legal Restrictions:** There are legal restrictions which determine what the media professional process and disseminate to the public. Some stories are injurious to the segment of the society, individual, or government. However juicy such a story may look, publishing it implies legal tussle and fines which might in the long run jeopardize the integrity of such an organization. Other factors include the editor's perception of reality, the level of competition, the perceived needs and preferences of the audience; ideological perspectives and political orientations; influence of the advertisers; availability of photographs or film footage.

By application, therefore, the publication of news stories on herdsmen-farmers' conflict is subject to certain factors. Such factors, especially ethical conservation, legal implications, and editor's or reporters' perception of reality will in no small measure determine the publication or suspension of the news stories.

2.2.3 Social Responsibility Theory

Social responsibility Theory is an offshoot of libertarian theory. Social responsibility Theory has tried to reconcile Independence with obligations to society¹¹². The theory emerged because the press abused the freedom which they enjoyed as a result of the free press. Under free press, there is supposed to be a flow of objective information that will allow citizens to make intelligent political decisions and other decisions affecting their lives.

The excesses in sensation did not allow these objectives to be achieved. The press engaged in sensationalism, invasion of privacy defamations of character and other negative activities that fell short of the libertarian goals

As the press grew larger in the 20th century, it became an object of criticism. As a result of the negative activities by the press due to press freedom, the Hutchins Commission was set to look into the criticism of the press. The committee after its meetings made it clear that freedom and responsibility go hand in hand and the press should be periodically reminded of its responsibility. To this end the social responsibility theory rests on the notion of free press acting responsibly

Basic Assumptions of social responsibility theory give the main principles of Social Responsibility Theory as follows:

- That media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to the society.
- That, through professional standards of truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance, these obligations can be met.
- That media should regulate itself within the framework of law and established institutions to be able to carry out their responsibilities
- That whatever might lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or offence to majority groups, should be avoided by the media
- That the media should reflect the society's plurality, giving access to various points of view and granting all the right to reply.
- Based on the principle of no(1), the society has the right to expect high standards of performance from the media, intervention can only be justified to secure public good
- Accountability of media professionals should be to the society, employers and the market.

From the foregoing, the mass media especially the Nigerian Tribune and the Punch newspapers selected for this study no doubt have been living up to their responsibilities through timely information provision. While the media operators i.e. content providers have to a certain extent allowed professionalism

2.3 Empirical Review

Several studies have been conducted to examine the behavior of Nigerian newspapers in the course of covering the herdsmen-farmers conflicts.

In a research conducted on how newspaper cover the herdsmen-farmers' conflict in Benue state, it was found out that "the sampled newspapers, mostly reported straight news and only covered the conflict when it happened with little attention given to the conflict when it reduced. The study revealed that though the herdsmen-farmers' conflict had spread across Nigeria, the North-central region of the country is the hot spot of the conflict. Some scholars established that newspaper reportage of the herdsmen-farmers conflict in Nigeria has been associated with an unprofessional act of sensationalism, consideration of interest, accuracy, balance and complements, integrity, and responsibility¹¹³.

Also in the study where it investigated newspaper coverage of the herdsmen-farmers conflicts in central Tiv land, Benue State, it was found out that "indeed newspaper in Nigeria gave coverage to the issue, however, it was more episodic as it covered the issue as it happened and paid little or no attention to the victims of the conflicts. The researchers also found out that the stories that were published were mainly placed in the inner or middle pages. In a study on the issue of herdsmen and farmers, it was observed that since the advent of Fulani herdsmen-farmers clashes, newspapers have been flooded with streaming headlines; most of which have been said to be inciting, others abetting while others could be said to be moderate.¹¹⁴

A research on media reportage of farmers and herdsmen conflicts revealed that the Fulani herdsmen were reported in a demonizing manner suggesting that Fulani herdsmen are portrayed as stubborn, unforgiving and the demonization of the Fulani as a tribe may not help in extenuating the conflict. Rather it will spread the hatred of the tribe to all parts of Nigeria, thereby escalating the conflict and pushing the country further into danger spot¹¹⁷. This corroborated another content analysis in the *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust*, and *Leadership* newspapers which found out that reports on herdsmen-farmers' conflict were violent, specific, and narrowed featuring words like "killers" herdsmen, gun-carrying herdsmen, jihadist herdsmen, greedy farmers and so on. These words according to the scholars were more of violent oriented journalism than peace-oriented journalism.

A study relating to newspaper framing of conflict between Fulani –herdsmen, and farmers found out that newspapers and other media reports of conflict are contributory to conflict¹¹⁵. This view was shared by other media scholars where it was observe that for a long time news media have been participating in the spectacle of war and conflicts ¹¹⁶.

A study on the dimension of newspapers framing of herdsmen-farmers conflict which has also gained research focus is the mobilization of solitary in the conflicts. Group solidarity in the conflict between herdsmen and farmers concluded that the use of group solidarity by both pastoralists and farmers contributed to aggravating the crises in a wider dimension to a communal conflict. As powerful as the media is, the media particularly the newspapers have been blamed greatly for inciting the eventual 1994 genocide in Rwanda that claimed over 800,000 lives. Aside from the case of the Rwanda genocide, there are quite some studies conducted on newspaper content some of which focus on the behaviour of newspapers. While reporting conflicts in some European countries, a qualitative content analysis of three newspaper

coverage of the conflict between Indian and Pakistan and concluded that the selected newspapers: *The Times of India*, *Dawn of Pakistan*, and *The New York Times* of USA predominating gave negative farmers to the conflict than positive coverage that could have engaged in the resolution of the conflict¹¹⁷. In 2013, research was conducted to examine the coverage of newspapers' roles played in the Turkish ethnic conflict between the Kurds and the Turks. The study concluded that stories in the selected newspapers were mainly from a belligerent violence journalism perspective but radical newspapers dominantly adopted a peace journalism approach somewhat reflecting the newspaper ideological and political learning.

The study on the protracted ethnic conflict in Cyprus which adopted the content analysis research method, the news media from the Northern and Southern parts of the country-*the Greek Cypriot press* and *the Turkish Cypriot Press* were studied comparatively on their reportage of news relating to the proposals to reduce the conflict. Consequently, *the Alithia Haravghi*, *the Phileleftheros*, *Politis*, and *Simeini* newspapers were selected to represent the *Greek Cypriot Press* while *the Volkam*, *Halkinsesi*, *Afrika*, *Kibris*, and *Yeni Duzen* newspaper represented the *Tunish Cypriot Press*. The results of the study show that both sections of the press tended to be neutral in their reportage even though as some finding affirmed the hypothesis that *the Greece Cypriot Press* published.

A research on the study of the role of the print media in the resolution of the conflict between the government and rebel groups in northern Uganda. The researcher's content-analyzed two newspapers in Uganda; *The Monitor* a privately owned newspaper and *the New Vision*, a government-owned newspaper. Findings of the study showed that *the Monitor* published more stories relating to the conflict than *the New Vision*.

An empirical study of how the local media can be influenced by societal idiosyncrasies even in their coverage of their home countries which they are not directly involved. And so four newspapers from four separate countries in southeast Asia were content analyzed to study the coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The researchers examined *The Star* of Malaysia, *The Philstar* of the Palestine, *The Jakarta Post* of Indonesia, and *The Nation* of Thailand to ascertain how they reported the Israel-Palestine conflict after the Gaza war in 2009. Findings revealed that the two newspapers from Islamic countries; *The Star* of Malaysia and *The Jakarta Post* of Indonesia slanted their coverage in favour of Palestine, and the newspaper within a Christian setting, *The Philstar* of the Philistines slanted its coverage in favour of Israel, while *The Nation* of Thailand, a presumably neutral and non-aligned country, was sympathetic to the Palestine in its coverage of the conflict.

In another media research, which investigated newspaper coverage of the war between the United States of America and Iraq 2003. One U.S newspaper *The New York Times* and one newspaper-each from two Arab countries; from Egypt- *The Arab News* and Sandi- Arabian's *The Middle East Times* were selected and comparatively analyzed. Findings of the study showed that *The New York Times* relied more on U.S officials as the source of information while *The Arab News* and *The Middle East Times* depended more on Arab officials for information and this affected their blinkers. In the same vein, Goddard, Robison, and Parry in 2008 examined the reportage of the 2003 Iraq war in the British press using *The Sun*, *The Independent*, *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Daily Mirror Newspaper* as the focus of analysis. The newspapers were selected along the line of the down market, upmarket and mid-market, which reflected reporting styles and the readership profiles of the newspapers. The study was aimed at ascertaining the degree of support the newspaper gave to the involvement of the British

military in the conflict. Although the tone of reporting was significantly different among the three newspapers, there were similarities in their subject agenda.

In a study assessing how the Uganda military involvement in the south Sudan conflict was portrayed in the country's media, presented empirical evidence showing that the military deployment was mainly depicted as a "peace-keeping and enforcement mission and as a rescue mission" in the selected newspapers. Study examining the prominent frames used in newspapers reporting the violent conflict between native Bodo community people and Muslim settlers in Assam, Northeast of India. Editions of *Asomia Protidin*, an Assamese language newspaper, and The Assam Tribune, an English language newspaper were content analysed, and the result revealed their violent frame was prominent in the Assam Tribune newspaper coverage¹¹⁷.

A study tried to examined Nigerian mass media coverage of Angolan crises in its early stage and found out that Nigerian newspapers were excessively dependent on the transnational news of the conflict and that much of the stories were buried in the inside pages of the newspaper with little appearing on the front pages¹¹⁸.

Research on Nigerian press coverage of the invasion of Guinea by French military forces in November 1970. The study observed that the five newspapers studied relied heavily on the monitoring of radio headlines and stories told by the person who had just been evacuated from the invaded country. The newspapers paid little attention to the organization of African Union headquarters at Addis Ababa and United Nations in New York where some discussions of the invasion were discussed when it was going on. The papers indulged in the presentation of sensational account of the crisis and published no background interpretative information on the conflicts. The *Punch*, *Daily Sun*, and the *Guardian* coverage of herdsmen attacks on the host communities revealed that not much depth on space was given to stories on herdsmen attack the

host communities. The study also showed that in terms of direction, the papers reported more negative stories than positive ones. The review made on the related studies so far attested to the fact that newspapers covered conflicts in no small measure. However, sensationalism among other misdoings has been linked with the newspapers in terms of headline casting, position or placement of news stores, imbalanced and inaccurate reporting. These weaknesses considered as some common errors of the media in covering herdsmen-farmers conflicts. These are presented below:

1. The reporting of inter-group conflicts out of their fundamental sociological, economic, political, and other contexts; in many cases, media persons merely respond to statements of politicians, ethnic champions, religious zealots, and other interested parties rather than initiate their independent inquiries about specific social conflict.
2. Promoting by selective reporting, prejudicial stereotypes about group and individuals
3. Making generalized statements not supported by facts and figures.
4. Attributing statements by individuals to collectives.
5. Publishing rumors as facts.
6. Publishing unfair and discriminating adverts or advertorials.
7. Use of inflammatory language in news reporting
8. The problem of editors allowing the letter column and opinion pages to be used to make an inflammatory statements against some people or groups.
9. The use of inflammatory, misleading and sensational headlines to attract sales.
10. The demonization of certain ethnic, religious, or political groups in an already divided and tensed society.
11. The use of cartoons to malign a community or group or individual.

12. Use of unrepresentative pictures
13. Un-objective and biased reporting against some groups, individuals, or communities.
14. Appropriate use of language in reporting conflict stories.
15. Out on some groups, individuals, or community
16. Shallow and episodic coverage.
17. Exposition of sources of information which leads to harm; many times information is divulged in such a way that exposes victims of violent attacks to further attacks; caused by journalistic failures,

The last is the failure of journalists to abide by the professional code of ethics which emphasizes objectivity, balance, fairness, thoroughness, and honesty.

A lot of media outfits under the coverage of conflicts and diversity “often de-emphasizes how to contribute towards peace building.¹ Consequently, A scholar in his book on “Introduction to Intermediate Newswriting and Reporting” gave the following guidelines while covering or reporting conflicts:

- They must not cultivate the use of demonizing adjectives like “vicious”, “fundamentalist”, “terrorist”, “fanatic”, “barbaric” more so when a party involved in the conflict is using it to describe others. Emotive words like “massacre”, “decimated”, “genocide” should be avoided as much as possible except when they are the only option available for them to capture the reality of a conflict situation. The same applies to words like “devastated”, “defecates”, “pathetic” and “traffic”
- Rather than portray a conflict as involving only two parties you must mention all groups and individual affected by it

- Avoid making value references to any ethnics or radical groups or individuals in a conflict. You must not base your description on stereotypes or any form of prejudicial generalization.
- Avoid cosmetic or superficial reporting
- Place conflict in appropriate historical, political, economic, and sociological contexts. All aspects of the conflict such as reading conflict manifest, reconciliation process, and conflict resolution and rehabilitation effort must be reported. You may be guilty of sadism if you come to the conflict stage and refuse to report the resolution process
- Sensational headlines and portrayal of conflict locations as a theatre of death should be minimized in conflict reports. This may trigger off the crisis in other areas.
- Equal time or space should be given to all groups involved in a conflict to be seen as fair.
- Avoid open usage of names as this will expose you to danger at conflict locations. In that case, you can stay on a high-rise building close to the spot or any hidden spot where you can have an unobstructed view of the incident.
- Be cautious while moving around at conflict locations to avoid being harmed or killed. Move close to security or law enforcement agents around.
- Humanize your story by stating how many people have been injured, killed, and rendered homeless without any affection.

2.4 Literature Review

There is an increasing concern among contemporary scholars from various areas of study that the renaissance and frequency of Farmers and Herdsmen conflicts in the nation is not only affecting the unity but affecting the democratic dispensation and co-existence of the nation. In this study, it was stressed by different scholars that farmers and herdsmen is inevitable phenomena in a nation like Nigeria with diverse ethnic groups. Literature reviewed in this study stress the fact

that one can look at farmers and herdsmen as part of the species of psychological warfare waged through the media, which means that while people know farmers and herdsmen conflicts force influences the media, media coverage also influences it. Literatures reviewed in this study indicate that the causes of recurrent farmers and herdsmen conflicts in Nigeria in the past decades to this era are due to one factor or the other, showing that the factors are multi-dimensional.

Some of these factors are infrastructure construction, climate change, poor governance, cattle theft among others. . Other reasons given by scholars were late effect of colonialisms, inefficient state mechanism, impunity and scarcity of resources.

The literature reviewed in the study, suggests revealed that the only way out of farmer and herdsmen conflicts is good governance. The conflict between farmer and herdsmen have led to attacks, losses, injury and death.

Literature reviewed further showed that among the core responsibilities of the media is the surveillance function which takes a critical role. The media are expected to bring to the consciousness of the public impending dangers; this function places a demand on the media to cover, analyse and report impending dangers that are threats to lives and properties of a given society. Writing on media surveillance, some scholars have said is a process of collecting and distributing information about local, national and international events and conditions.

It is further revealed that the mass media can contribute to national security, but have failed to maximise such ability for the benefit of Nigerians. And that when the media present security reports such as threats of some possible attacks by some violent groups, the citizens, the security agents and others involved will move to avert the danger. Another study supports the earlier positions which suggest that the Nigerian mass media have not effectively played the

surveillance function in their reportage of farmers and herdsmen conflict in Nigeria. This is because instead of just waiting to report these attacks, the media should thrive to secure national security by adopting the investigative approach to uncover and thwart their plans and where it is extremely difficult to abort the plans proper alternative measures could be put in place to minimize the effect on the people and the nation.

The reviewed works, among other things suggested various ways of tackling farmer and herdsmen conflict, but not much has been done on the role of the mass media as an institution in reporting, management and resolution of these violence. An appraisal of these works highlighted so far reveals also methodological “affinity” among most of them in the area of causes and consequences of farmer and herdsmen conflict. The main limitations noticed in some of these works, positions, theories and perspectives on farmers and herdsmen conflict reviewed, are that, most of them only attempted to expose the causes of these crises. Others chronicled the root of these conflicts, while some touched on the adverse effects of these protracted crimes. Some of the scholars have tended to lay emphasis on a single factor for explanation.

From the foregoing, one would observe that, not much attention has been given in a comprehensive manner to the framing of farmer and herdsmen conflicts by Nigerian mass media in a democratic dispensation. Also, not much attention is given to the sensitive nature of farmer and herdsmen conflicts and the need to develop a new approach to the reportage of farmers and herdsmen conflicts by media practitioners – what is now being referred to as conflict sensitive journalism or peace journalism. There is therefore, the need for research on media framing of farmers and herdsmen conflicts of Nigerian mass media in a democratic dispensation. This work therefore, greatly contributes to the understanding of the relationships between Farmers and herdsmen conflicts, *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch* and democratic dispensation.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter deals with the research method that was adopted by the researcher for this study.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted content analysis research design in investigating farmers' and herders' conflicts in Nigeria between January 2019 and June 2019.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of publications of *the Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune Newspapers in Nigeria* between January, 2019 and June 2019. The total number of publications in the study period are 362 publications.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample

The study adopted the Census Technique. The rationale for the choice of method was because it provided a true measurement of the population from which a benchmark data was obtained for future studies. The census technique is also adopted in the study due to the recurrent cases of herders/farmers conflicts framed by *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* newspapers in the limited period being focused in this study. Detailed information about small sub-group within this period (January, 2019 and June, 2019) was purposely acquired. While, the motive to study the total editions (census) was based on the assertion that, if the period for the study is within a short period of time, the entire content could be studied so as to ensure reliability and validity of data.

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument

The instrument that was used for this study was the Coding Sheet named as Farmers' and Herders' Conflicts Reportage Content Analysis Checklist (FHCRCAC). The coding sheet was adopted to bring the real manifest contents of *the Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers on

farmers' and herders' conflicts. The code was constructed based on the unit of analysis and content categories. In addition, the code sheet was filled based on the coding instruction. The coding instructions was properly articulated in the content code sheet below to guide the coder in the coding of the contents of communication

3.4.1 Content Categories

Unit of Analysis

News contents of the selected newspaper will be adopted as units of analysis for the study.

They are coded as follows;

a) **Farmers' and herders' Conflicts:** It was coded as

- i. Yes
- ii. No

b) **Frequency of Conflicts based report:** coded as

I. Number of newspaper editions with crime-based report

B. **Placement of conflicts-based report in *Nigerian Tribune*:** coded as

- i. Front
- ii. Inside
- iii. Centre Spread
- iv. Back

C) **Type of Publication:** coded as

- ii. Editorial
- iii. Hard news
- iv. Features
- v. Cartoons

E) Functions of Publications

- i. Surveillance
- ii. Correlation

3.4.2 Content Coding Sheet: Content analysis checklist on farmers' and herders' conflicts reportage (CACFHCR).

The study assigned numbers to the categories to organise the data according to their homogenous subset as they are being collected. The design of the content code sheet of this research is as follows:

1. Frequency	A
1. Theme of editions (A)	
Attacks	A1
Losses	A2
Injury & Death	A3
2. Prominence (b)	
Front page	B1
Back page	B2
Inside page	B3
Centre spread	B4
3. Functions (D)	
Surveillance	D1
Correlation	D2

4. Sources (E)

In-house	E1
Private Individuals	E2
Un-identified Sources	E3
News Agencies	E4

3.5 Validation of the Research Instrument

The Code Sheet instrument was subjected to content and contextual validity by the researcher's supervisor and other lecturers in the Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University Ibadan, Oyo State. The lecturers examined the instruments with regards to their relevance in terms of items, clarity, appropriateness of contents and representativeness of the various areas of the study. The comments and observations made independently by the lecturers had helped the researcher to modify and produce the final copy of the instrument.

3.6 Administration of Research Instrument

The publications that fell within the period of January, 2019 and June, 2019 had been collated and analysed by the researcher. Research assistant was hired and trained by the researcher to assist with the data analysis.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data presentation and analysis was descriptive and textual analysis in essay form.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Data

In this chapter, the researcher collected data for the study through content analysis. This chapter depicts a descriptive analysis of the information collected in the course of the study. The data generated from the examined newspapers were discussed by using them to find answers to the research questions.

The researcher visited the morgue in the university library in Lead City University Ibadan and examined copies of the daily newspapers for a period of six months; January 1st and June 30, 2019. The total number of edition for the selected newspapers were 362, this figure represents 50% of each newspaper considered for the study. 81 percent of the total publications captured farmers/herders conflicts. Analyses of the total newspapers edition and report on farmers - herders conflicts in the period under review were presented below. This is further followed by the application of analysed data in answering the research questions earlier raised for the study in chapter one.

4.1.1 Data Presentation

Table 4.1.1.1: Total Number of Editions with farmers-herders stories in *The Punch*

Months	Newspaper	
	Total Number of Editions	Number of Herdsmen-Farmers reports
January	31	7
February	28	4
March	31	9
April	30	4
May	31	8
June	30	5
Total	181	37

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table showed that in January, The Punch had 31 editions while 7 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In February, there were 28 editions while 4 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In March, there were 31 editions while 9 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In April, there were 30 editions while 4 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In May, there were 31 editions while 8 editions carried

reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In June, there were 30 editions while 5 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts.

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Table 4.1.1.2 Total Number of Editions with farmer-herders stories in Nigerian Tribune

Newspaper

Months	Total Number of Editions	Number of Herdsmen-Farmers reports
January	31	9
February	28	6
March	31	10
April	30	7
May	31	5
June	30	7
Total	181	44

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table showed that in January, The Punch had 31 editions while 9 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In February, there were 28 editions while 6 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In March, there were 31 editions while 10 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In April, there were 30 editions while 7 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In May, there were 31 editions while 5 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts. In June, there were 30 editions while 7 editions carried reports of herdsmen-farmers conflicts.

4.2 Presentation of Data

In this section, the five (5) research questions raised in chapter one of this study were answered. The information was collected from the newspapers editions through the application of content analysis. These were arranged and analysed in line with the research questions. The newspaper content analysis presentation involved a tabular form of analysis as published by the *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* between January 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019.

4.2.1 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: Are there significant variations between the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* newspapers publications of herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories between January and June, 2019?

Table 4.2.1.1: Stories of Farmer-Herdsman conflicts in The Punch and Nigerian Tribune (January 1, 2019– June 30, 2019)

Sample	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>Nigeria Tribune</i>
Number of editions with Farmer-Herders reports	37(20.4%)	44(24.3%)
Number of editions without Farmers-Herders reports	144(79.6%)	137(75.7%)
Total (%)	181	181

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table shows that 37 (20.4%) of the editions from *Punch* carried Farmer-herder conflicts stories while 44(24.3%) of the *Nigerian Tribune* editions carried Farmer-herder conflicts stories. The

table also shows that 144(79.6%) of Punch Editions are without Farmer-herder conflicts stories whereas 137(75.7%) of *Nigerian Tribune* editions were without Farmer-herder conflicts stories.

Research Question Two: To what extent does The Punch and The Nigerian Tribune newspapers publish herdsman- farmers conflict stories between January and June ,2019

Table 4.2.1.2: Extent of Editions in Punch and Nigerian Tribune (January – June 2019)

Sample	The Punch	Nigeria Tribune
Number of editions with Farmers-Herders reports	37(20.4%)	44(24.3%)
Number of editions without Farmers-Herders reports	144(79.6%)	137(75.7%)
Total (%)	181	181

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table shows that 37 (20.4%) of the editions from *Punch* carried Farmer-herder conflicts stories while 44(24.3%) of the *Nigerian Tribune* editions carried Farmer-herder conflicts stories. The table also shows that 144(79.6%) of Punch Editions are without Farmer-herder conflicts stories whereas 137(75.7%) of *Nigerian Tribune* editions were without Farmer-herder conflicts stories.

Table 4.2.1.3 Frequencies of Farmers-Herders conflict stories in *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* according to themes

Themes	The Punch	Nigeria Tribune
Attacks	14(37.8%)	17(38.6%)
Losses	10(27.0%)	7(15.9%)
Injury & Death	13(35.1%)	20(45.4%)

Total	37(100%)	44(100%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table shows that *The Punch* had 14 (37.8%) stories on attacks while Nigerian Tribune had 17(38.6%) *Punch* had 10 stories(27.0%) Losses while Nigerian Tribune had 7(15.9%). *Punch* also had 13(35.1%) stories related to injury and death whereas Nigerian Tribune had 20(45.4%).

Research Question Three: What is the level of prominence given to Farmers/herders conflicts in the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch Newspapers* between January and June, 2019 ?

Table 4.2.1.4: Types of *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* reportage

Newspapers	Features	Editorial	Cartoons	Hard News
The Punch	6(40%)	3(60%)	2(33.3%)	26(47.3%)
Nigeria Tribune	9(60%)	2(40%)	4(66.7%)	29(52.7%)
Total	15(100%)	5(100%)	6(100%)	55(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table indicates that *Punch* published 6(40%) features on Farmers-Herders conflicts whereas Nigerian Tribune published 9(60%).*Punch* published 3(60%) editorials while Nigerian Tribune Published 2(40%) within the period under review. The table also showed that *Punch* had 2(33.3%) cartoons while Nigerian Tribune published 4(66.7%). 26(47.3%) hard news stories on Farmers-Herdsman conflicts were published in *Punch* whereas 29 stories representing 52.7% were published in the Nigerian tribune.

Table 4.2.1.5: Placement of Farmers - herders conflicts stories in *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* Newspapers.

Placement	The Punch	Nigeria Tribune
Front Page	8(21.6%)	5(11.6%)
Inside Page	19(51.4%)	21(47.7%)
Back Page	6(16.2%)	11(25%)
Centre Spread	4(10.8%)	7(15.9%)
Total	37(100%)	44(100%)

The table shows that 8 (21.6%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported on the front pages of *The Punch*, while 5(11.6%) was on the Nigerian Tribune. 19(51.4%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported in the inner pages of *The Punch* while 21(47.7%) was reported on the inside pages of Nigerian Tribune. 6(16.2%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported on the back page of the Punch while 11(25%) was found on the back pages of Nigerian Tribune. 4(10.8%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported on centre spread of the Punch while 7(15.9%) was found on the similar page of the Nigerian Tribune.

Research Question Four: What are the sources of stories on Herdsmen and farmers conflicts in The *Punch Newspaper* and *Nigerian Tribune Newspaper* under the period of study?

Table 4.2.1.6: Sources of Farmers-Herdsmen conflicts stories in The Punch and Nigerian Tribune Newspapers

Newspapers	In-house	Private	Un-identified sources	News
		Individuals		Agencies
The Punch	11(42.3%)	9(60%)	7(41.1%)	10(43.5%)
Nigeria Tribune	15(57.7%)	6(40%)	10(58.8%)	13(56.5%)
Total	26(100%)	15(100%)	17(100%)	23(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The Table indicates that The Punch had 11(42.3%) stories sourced in-house, while the Nigerian Tribune had 15(57.7%). 9(60%) of sources in the Punch were Private Individuals while Nigerian Tribune had 6(40%) of such stories. 7(41.1%) of sources in the Punch were un-identified sources while the Nigerian Tribune had 10(58.8%). Lastly 10(43.5%) of sources in Punch were news agencies while Nigerian Tribune had 13(56.5%)

Research Question Five: What is the function(s) performed by *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers during the period under review in reporting herdsmen and farmers' conflicts

Table 4.2.1.7: Functions performed on farmers- herders conflicts reportage

Editions	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>Nigeria Tribune</i>
Correlation	21(70%)	31(73.8%)
Surveillance	9(30%)	11(26.2%)
Total	30(100%)	42(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that 21(70%) of the *Punch* editions had correlation while 31(73.8%) of the *Nigerian Tribune* editions performed the correlation functions. 9(30%) of *Punch* editions and 11(26.2%) of the *Nigerian Tribune's* editions performed surveillance functions of the media. Both newspapers performed more of correlational function by reporting the news as it breaks without carrying out surveillance function to discover more stories behind the news.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This research was guided by five objectives from which five research questions were formulated

Research Question One: Are there significant variations between the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* newspapers publications of herdsmen and farmers' conflicts stories between January and June, 2019?

Findings shows that 37 (20.4%) of the editions from *Punch* carried farmers-herders conflicts stories while 44(24.3%) of the *Nigerian Tribune* editions carried farmers-herders conflicts stories. The table also shows that 144(79.6%) of *Punch* editions are without farmers-herders conflicts stories whereas 137(75.7%) of *Nigerian Tribune* editions were without farmers-herders conflicts stories.

Thus, it can be said that stories of farmers-herdsmen conflicts were identified in the *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers within the period of study. Both newspapers carried different stories relating to farmers-herdsmen conflicts. The findings are in tandem with the literature reviewed in the study which stated that “The mass media as agent of expression of public opinion have long been recognized as having social and constitutional responsibilities in monitoring government and other agencies and exposing their excesses and ensuring that they are accountable for their actions and inactions”¹. The press has a paramount role to play in providing information, discussion, and debate, and act as watchdogs of the society. The media consistently surveyed the environment and convey salient issues or mediated messages to the audience in order to reduce fear and anxieties in the society.

Research Question Two: To What extent does *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* newspapers publish herdsmen - farmers conflicts between January and June, 2019?

Data gathered shows that 37 (20.4%) of the editions from *Punch* carried farmers-herders conflicts stories while 44(24.3%) of the *Nigerian Tribune* editions carried farmers-herders conflicts stories. The table also shows that 144(79.6%) of *Punch* Editions are without farmers-herders conflicts stories while 137(75.7%) of *Nigerian Tribune* editions were without farmers-herders conflicts stories. Table 4.6 shows that *The Punch* had 14 (37.8%) stories on attacks while *Nigerian Tribune* had 17 stories representing 38.6% . in the same vein *Punch* had 10(27.0%)

stories on losses while Nigerian Tribune had 7(15.9%). Punch also had 13(35.1%) stories related to injury and death whereas Nigerian Tribune had 20(45.4%).

The *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* reported cases of farmers-herdsmen Conflicts under the period reviewed. It reported all forms of farmers-herdsmen conflicts ranging from attacks, losses to injury and death. The findings are in line with assertions in the literature reviewed in the study which stated that by drawing attention to the issues of farmers-herdsmen conflicts, media can raise public awareness and generate outside pressure from the public against farmers-herdsmen conflicts². Hence, sustained and continuous coverage of farmers-herdsmen related issues will awaken the public to frown at it in all its manifestation. Although the study also differs from the assertions of literature reviewed which posits that the mass media in Nigeria often give more coverage to political issues than other pressing issues of national interest. To a significant extent, it can be submitted that the two media selected for the study reported farmers-herders conflicts in the study period.

Research Question Three: What is the level of prominence given farmers- herders conflicts reportage by *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* Newspapers between January and June, 2019 ?

Findings revealed that *Punch* published 6(40%) features on farmers-herders crises whereas *Nigerian Tribune* published 9 stories accounting for 60%. *Punch* published 3(60%) editorials while *Nigerian Tribune* Published 2(40%) within the period under review. The table also showed that *Punch* had 2(33.3%) cartoons while *Nigerian Tribune* on the other hand published 4(66.7%). 26(47.3%) hard news stories on farmers-herdsmen conflicts was published in *Punch* and 29(52.7%) in the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper. Findings also showed that 8 (21.6%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related stories were reported on the front pages of *The Punch*, while 5(11.6%) stories were published in the period . The *Nigerian Tribune*, 19(51.4%) farmer-herdsmen

conflicts related items were reported in the inner pages of *The Punch* while 21(47.7%) was reported on the inside pages of Nigerian Tribune. 6(16.2%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported on the Back Page of the Punch while 11(25%) was found on the back page of Nigerian Tribune. 4(10.8%) farmers-herdsmen conflicts related items were reported on center spread of the Punch while 7(15.9%) was found in the mid pages of the Nigerian Tribune.

In line with the findings, the Agenda Setting Theory of the media is hereby confirmed as the analyses shows that the media can give prominence to news stories through its layout (front, inside, centre spread and back pages) in the newspapers as it is stated that media concentration on a few issues and subjects lead the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues³. According to the Agenda Setting Theory *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspapers direct their readers' attention to issues of farmers-herdsmen conflicts for public discussion. This indicates that readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance is attached to the issue from the number of information in a news story and its position. In the same vein, the Social Responsibility Theory imposes on them an obligation to be socially responsible in discharging their duties. These were fulfilled by showcasing the incidents and happenings around the nation in the paper's editions.

Therefore, if placement of stories at strategic areas on the newspapers can make them famous than another, it might be right to posit that "the media lack powers to suppress concern. But they can do more than stimulate interest. By directing attention to these concerns they provide, a context that influences how people will talk and influence what and how people will think about it".

Research Question Four: What are the sources of stories on Herdsmen - farmers conflicts in *The Punch* Newspaper and *Nigerian Tribune* Newspaper under the period of study?

Data gathered revealed that The Punch had 11 stories (42.3%) sourced in-house stories, while the *Nigerian Tribune* on the other hand had 15(57.7%). 9(60%) of story sources in the *Punch* were from private individuals while *Nigerian Tribune* had 6(40%). 7(41.1%) of story sources in the *Punch* were Un-identified Sources while the *Nigerian Tribune* had 10(58.8%). Finally 10(43.5%) of story sources in *Punch* were linked with from News Agencies while *Nigerian Tribune* generated 13(56.5%) from News Agencies .In Nigeria , a major news agency is the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN.

The Findings corroborate the Social Responsibility Theory which encourages total freedom to press and no censorship, but it should be regulated according to social responsibilities and external controls. Content is also filtered through public obligation and interference. In Social Responsibility Theory, the press is for the people and society⁴. The tasks of the press is to make a code of conduct and follow it, to develop a standard in journalism, to make journalism better, to protect journalists and to have penalties if any journalist violates the code of conduct.

This way, the facts provided by the press are analyzed and interpreted so that the people get true information and understandable news. This helps maintains social harmony by revealing social evils like corruption and discouraging other bad conducts. The media gives voice to the voiceless and develop public opinions where each and every person has the right to speak, express and publish. It is considered not an end but a tool for social development. Therefore, the objectives of media are stated to inform, educate, inform, document, analyze, interpret, mediate and mobilize by creating and finding solutions.

Research Question Five: What is/are the function(s) performed by *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* Newspapers during the period under review in reporting herdsmen and farmers' conflicts?

Findings revealed that 21(70%) of the *Punch* editions and 31(73.8%) of the *Nigerian Tribune Newspaper* editions performed the correlation functions while 9(30%) of *Punch* editions and 11(26.2%) of the *Nigerian Tribune's* editions performed surveillance functions of the media. Both newspapers performed more of correlational function by reporting the news as it breaks without carrying out surveillance function to discover more stories behind the news.

The findings supported the literature reviewed that stated that;” the traditional responsibility of the mass media in conscientising the society at every circumstance and situation are enormous, vital and have far-reaching implications. The mass media often plays a key role in reporting of farmers-herdsmen conflicts⁵. Also in line with social responsibility function of the media, if the Nigerian media responsibly play their surveillance role of warning the masses including the security agents of an impending/imminent danger, it will help to initiate proactive steps to forestall such danger in the country; thus, engendering national security. The media is often referred to as the fourth estate of the realm and the watchdog of the society or the environment within which it exists. This implies that the media exists as an organ of information (sourcing and disseminating information) educational promotion, surveillance role, social enlightenment and mobilization functions. These functions set the media apart as an important link/factor in the relationship between the government and the governed and make them sine qua non to societal growth and development.

Endnotes

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings from the study. It subsequently states the contributions to knowledge and suggests areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Central to this study is media framing of the recurrent farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. Two newspapers; the *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* were selected for the study.

Being a scenario that had persisted for many years till date, the study limited its focus to six months publications of the *Punch* and the *Nigerian Tribune* spanning between January 1 and June 30.

Outcome of the study lent credence to editorial manipulations by the news editors who framed the conflicts through prominence reflected in the front, back and inner page placement of the herders-farmers conflicts as well as opinion of the issue promoted by the media within the period. Findings also showed that *Nigerian Tribune* published more stories on the herders - farmers conflicts than the *Punch* though with a minimal margin.

The study showed that due to the difficult nature of the issue, the two media outfits generated most of its stories through news agencies and individuals within the outfit with informed knowledge of the conflicts.

The study also confirmed the resilience of Nigerian media in reporting conflicts through its surveillance and correlational roles.

The study recommended decisive and holistic approach to the conflicts in view of the precarious implications of the conflicts on sustained food security.

The study also recommended professionalism spiced with unbiased and balanced reportage of the conflicts and replicate same to other areas of human endeavour.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* newspapers reported farmers-herdsmen conflicts under the period of study and their reports ranged from attacks, losses, injury to deaths.

The Punch and *Nigerian Tribune* reported more of hard news followed by features and less of editorials and cartoons; high number of reports on farmers-herdsmen conflicts were used on the inner pages of both newspapers.

Both newspapers performed more of correlational function by reporting the news as it breaks without carrying out much surveillance function to discover more stories behind the news.

The Punch and Nigerian Tribune newspapers gathered stories of farmers-herdsmen conflicts from different sources ranging from in-house, private individuals, un-identified news sources to News Agencies.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. As the watchdog of the society, Newspapers should constantly cover and report cases of farmers-herdsmen conflicts so as to inform and educate the society on the dangers that are associated with unresolved clash of occupational interests.

- ii. Newspapers as a matter of Agenda-Setting, should always give importance to issues of farmers-herdsmen conflicts as the media filter and shape reality and make public to perceive issues as more important than other issues based on media concentration and presentation.
- iii. Newspapers as watchdogs and the fourth estate of the realm in the society should go beyond just reporting cases of farmers-herdsmen conflicts. As they break herders – farmers conflicts stories, they should equally undertake surveillance by investigating issues behind such incidents.
- iv. Newspapers should constantly present balanced reports by getting information from different sources involved in stories.
- v. Newspapers should strive to carry out thorough investigations on cases of Farmers-Herdsmen conflicts in order to ensure accurate and unbiased reports.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The study evaluates how the *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* report farmers-herdsmen conflicts in a democratic dispensation between January and June, 2019. Editions of the *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* were content-analysed, looking at the extent, prominence and nature of functions performed by the media. From the study, there were significant contributions to literature, theories, research, practices and policies.

The study has given insight into farmers-herdsmen conflicts reportage therefore it will help media organisations to do more in reporting conflicts between farmers- herdsmen, in order to perform more surveillance function, since the findings shows that The *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* performed less of surveillance function.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies

It is practically impossible for a study to cover the entire available field in its area or scope. As such, the following are suggested for further study;

1. Further research can be carried out on the public perception of newspapers reportage of the conflicts between farmers and herdsmen.
2. Further research can also be conducted on farmers-herdsmen conflict and its impact on the economy of Nigeria.
3. Other research techniques and methodologies can be used to evaluate media reportage of farmers-herdsmen conflicts.
4. Finally, further research should be carried out on the correlation between media coverage and reportage on farmers-herdsmen conflicts.

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