
The Impact of Open Grazing Prohibition Law on Rural Livelihood in Benue State, 2017 – 2022

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Abstract—Farmers-herders' conflicts in Nigeria have intensified in the last two decades. To end these conflicts, the Benue State Government enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law criminalizing animals from openly grazing within the state. Against this backdrop, this study examines the Open Grazing Prohibition Law (OGP&RE) and rural livelihoods in Benue State, 2017-2022. In an attempt to achieve this objective, the study employed a descriptive survey design while data was generated from questionnaires and interview instruments. Galtung's Peace Theory provided a theoretical lens for the study. Findings from the study revealed that the destruction of crops by cattle, forceful taking over of lands and violent clashes between farmers and herdsmen serve as triggers for the enactment of the OGP&RE Law 2017 in Benue State. Also, since the implementation of the law in 2017, there have been a series of violent clashes between farmers and herders. The increase in the number of attacks since the implementation of the law has negatively affected the economic activities of the rural people of Benue State. The study concluded that the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law has negatively affected rural livelihood in Benue State. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others that the Benue State Government put in place stringent measures to address the issue of confiscation of the cattle heads arrested for violating the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment by Livestock Guard to forestall the attacks by herders on communities where these cattle heads are arrested. Also, the Federal Government's cooperation is required to ensure that the laws meet the set objectives.

Keywords: Open Grazing, Prohibition Law, Farmers-herders conflict, Ranches, Peace, Attacks.

1. Introduction

The farmers-herders crisis remains one of the most challenging and devastating conflicts in the history of Nigeria. The conflict is responsible for one of the worst humanitarian and economic disasters since the Nigerian civil war of 1967 (International Crisis Group, 2017). North Central States of Benue, Nassarawa, and Plateau States have experienced the most violence and destruction from the conflict. Amnesty International report (2018) estimated that between January 2016 and October 2018, at least 3,641 lives were lost to the conflict between farmers and herdsmen; of which Benue State alone accounted for 20 percent of the reported statistics by the international body like the International Crisis Group. This figure excludes the over 6,500 lives reported to have been lost between 2010 and 2015 around the country from the conflict alone.

In Benue State between January and the first week of March 2018, no fewer than 176,070 internally displaced persons were registered at the six internally displaced camps located in Makurdi, Guma, and Logo Local Government Areas of the state (Omeje, 2021). Also, hundreds of thousands of children have been forced out of schools due to their displacement from their homes and the destruction of schools. Statistics from the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) show that it has registered 80,000 internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across four camps located in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of the State. The State Governor, Samuel Ortom claimed that the State had lost assets and property worth over N95 billion and over 2000 lives to the crisis (Daga, 2018).

Both the government and non-governmental organizations have responded to these violent attacks. The State government response includes deployment of security forces to conflict areas for peace-keeping, supply of relief materials, the establishment of Commissions of Enquiry, initiation of social programs meant to stop hostilities and embrace peace and tolerance, and inauguration of a task force code-named, '*Operation Zenda*' to combat crime in the state. Non-governmental organizations on the other hand have organized workshops and seminars meant to sensitize the people on the dangers of armed conflicts. Despite these efforts, the clashes between herdsmen and farmers persist in the state and buoyed the policies such as farm settlements apart from ranching will tend to accentuate a highly discriminatory settlement policy that will encourage mutual distrust and segregation among ethnic nationalities and aggravate the seemingly already strained unity of the Nigerian federation (Daka, Olaniyi & Wantu, 2019). The Benue State government enacted the Anti-Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 which came into effect on 1st October 2017. This study is an assessment of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State. It seeks to analyze the impact of the law on rural livelihoods in Benue State.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Galtung's theory of peace as its theoretical framework. According to Galtung, conflicts erupt because of the basic human needs. He refutes the idea of scarcity and refers to politics as a main determinant of priorities, goals, and programs of development. These programs are almost the main reasons for conflict between the state and society because of their ineffectiveness and political life. Galtung divided the basic human needs into four progressive categories; the most basic needs (life, survival), basic needs (food, health, education), near-basic needs (freedom, career, political participation), and relation to nature (partnership), corresponding to the main contemporary problems, which are, violence, misery, repression, and environmental deterioration. He (Galtung) expanded the scope of his research in recent times to what he has called, "structural violence" which means

that social, political, and economic institutions could harm individuals and people by preventing them from their basic needs, which causes either disability or death and leads to cultural violence.

Going by the provisions of the Benue State anti-grazing bill which has been signed into law, many farmers who are indigenes of the state feel protected as the occupation is guaranteed. However, while a few of the herdsmen are complying by applying for formal grazing lands, others consider it a threat to their occupation and livelihood. This makes Galtung's theory of Peace (1967) suitable for the study as the theoretical framework.

3. Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- i. What are the factors that led to the enactment of the Anti-Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 as a measure of resolving the perennial conflict between farmers and herders in Benue State?
- ii. How has the implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 impacted the rural livelihood of the rural people in Benue State?
- iii. What are the challenges associated with the implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State?

4. Review of Literature

4.1 The Concept of Open-grazing

The phrase 'Open Grazing' which surfaces in this study is defined by the Anti-Open Grazing Law as 'the act of pasturing livestock to feed on dry grass, growing grass, shrubs, herbage, farm crops among others in open fields without any form of restriction. Open grazing is a method of feeding in which herbivores or ruminants feed on plants such as grasses and other multi cellular organisms such as algae (Jooji, 2020). Open-grazing may be viewed as the age-old practice of roaming about with animals in open field, plains and nearby bushes in search of pasture or food for the animals. It is mostly practiced in Nigeria by Fulani herders who move for days on foot with their herds from the north to the more rain-fed southern parts of the country pasturing their flock as they go. Olugbenga (2017) observes that many have come to take this type of animal grazing as an indiscriminate way of grazing with several attendant negative consequences. The system may be described as the opposite of sedentary/settled or ranching system which has led breeders (mostly the Fulani) to lead nomadic lifestyle- moving about with their flock and family all year round, and could be said to be necessitated mainly by the need to save costs, find easy market for the animals, escape drought prone areas, escape conflict and desertification prone zones and to escape from human and livestock diseases.

4.2 The Concept of Ranching

Ranching is the practice of rearing herds of animals on large tract of land. Ranchers commonly raise grazing animals such as cattle and sheep. According to Gambo (2019) ranching is a secured tract of land used for animal nurturing farm, particularly for grazing and rearing of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses and any other animal.

4.3 Livelihoods and Rural Livelihood

Livelihood includes all forms of economic generation and employment such as agriculture, small businesses and trade activities that support health and wellbeing of the people (United State Agency for International Development (USAID), 2005). It comprises of means by which households obtain and maintain access to the resources necessary to ensure immediate and long-term survival. These essential resources can be categorized into physical, natural, human, financial, social and political (Young, 2009). Households used these assets to support their livelihood strategies and their well-being. Sustainable livelihood can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future. Many researchers are advocating for sustainable livelihood approach as the strategy for disaster and conflict prone areas in order to ensure immediate and long-term survival.

4.4 Rural Livelihoods in Benue State

Livelihood assets such as farmland, knowledge and tools become redundant, influencing sustainable livelihood strategies and ways of utilizing livelihood assets (Ukamaka, Danjuma, Mbolle, Achonam and Mbadiwe, 2017). Amidst such eventualities, affected farming communities' assets become underutilized which threatens the economic prosperity and survival of the inhabitants of the region. Pressure on livelihood systems due to competition between sedentary farming and pastoralists, are integral to the underlying causes of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in Benue state. Violent conflicts between crop farmers and herdsmen have, for a long time, been a common feature of economic livelihood strategy in the region with consequences on human and animal lives, properties, peaceful coexistence, and orderliness in the state.

Rural livelihoods in Benue State have been devastated most visibly as a result of the systemic destruction of livelihood associated with direct asset-stripping and forced displacement. The livelihood strategies of all groups, including farmers and herdsmen displaced, many of the grievances on different sides and underlying causes of conflict, involve livelihood issues (land tenure, access to water, pasture, access to markets and economic opportunities, development of human capital). In Nigeria and Benue state in particular, displaced persons were denied access to their ancestral land culminating to pressure on available land in their destination locations (Shabu, Bwala, Ukula, 2019).

4.5 Review of Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Creation Law of 2017

In response to growing violence in Benue State and the wider Middle Belt region, the Benue State Government passed the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017. The Law prohibits open rearing and grazing of livestock and calls for the establishment of ranches and livestock administration, regulation, and control. Section 35 of the Law outlined the goals that the law seeks to achieve: (i) prevent the destruction of crop farms... by open grazing; (ii) prevent clashes between nomadic livestock herders and crop farmers; (iii) protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and over grazing of livestock; (iv) optimize the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population; (v) prevent, control, and manage the spread of disease and... enhance the production of high quality and healthy livestock for local and international markets; and, (vi) create a conducive environment for large scale crop production. In order to achieve this agenda, the Law restricts the free movement of cattle and requires that livestock be bred in ranches.

To actualize these objectives, Section 19 (1) of the Law stipulates that no individual or group shall after the commencement of this law engage in open nomadic livestock herding or grazing in the State outside the permitted ranches. Section 19 (2) stipulates that any person or group of persons who contravenes sub section (1) above shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to five years' imprisonment or one million Naira (N1,000,000) fine or both. While Section 19 (3) further stipulates that, in event of damage to farm, crops or property of any person the owner or manager of such livestock shall after evaluation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources of the damage, pay the prevailing value of monetary compensation of the farm, crops or property so damaged to the owner.

Section 19 (4) prohibits movement of livestock on foot from one destination to another in the State and such movement shall only be by rail wagon, truck or pick-up wagon and any person or persons found moving livestock on foot within or across urban centres, rural settlements or any part of the state commits an offence and if the person is a fi

rst offender, the person is liable to a fine of Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N500, 000) fine or one-year imprisonment. But if the person is a second offender, he is liable to One Million Naira (N1, 000,000) fine or three years' imprisonment or both.

Section 24 of the law provides for the establishment of a Special Livestock Open Grazing Prohibition Task Force for the State with units in each Local Government Area of the State. The Special Task Force shall comprise the following, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security as Chairman while other members include, State Chairman of the Benue State Community Volunteer Guards; representative of the Commissioner of Police; representative of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps; representative of the State Chairman of Nigerian Legion of ex-service men and the representative of Commissioner for Agriculture not below the rank of deputy director as secretary. The Special Task Force is mandated to arrest and detain any person or group of persons engaged in open grazing and other acts prohibited by the provisions of this Law. Such persons shall be handed over to the police or other security agencies immediately.

5. Methodology

The research adopted the cross-sectional survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative (mixed) methods. The sample population for this study was drawn from groups that were either directly affected by the conflict or involved in the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017. These groups included: The members of the State House of Assembly, the members of Civil Society Organisations, the members of the Herdsmen and Farmer's communities, and leaders of the farmers and herders' communities in Benue State.

Multi-stage Sampling was used to select respondents. Multi-stage sampling is a situation when a population is distributed into a number of first-stage sampling units and a sample of the unit is taken. Benue State has twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas. The state has three senatorial districts; namely: Benue North-East senatorial district; Benue North-West senatorial district; and Benue South senatorial district. This procedure was adopted to ensure thoroughness in the sample selection. Three local governments were selected one from each of the three senatorial zones in Benue State. These Local Governments are Agatu, Logo, and Makurdi. The total population of the study is Logo, 228900; Makurdi 405500 and Agatu, 156000. The justification for the selection of these three

Local Government Areas is purposive (most affected Local Government Areas by farmers and herders conflicts). Therefore, the total population for the study is 790400. The sample size of 400 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula.

Table 1: Sample Size Allocation

Zones	Local Government Areas	Population	Sample size
A	Logo	228900	116
B	Makurdi	405500	204
C	Agatu	156000	80
Total	3	790400	400

Source: Compiled by the researcher

This study adopted a questionnaire and key informant interviews. About three hundred and eighty copies of the questionnaire were administered to farmers while twenty (20) Key Informant Interviews (KIIS) were conducted with the police, staff of Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource, Livestock Guard Personnel, leaders of farmers and herders association, legal practitioners, journalist, members of the Benue State House Assembly and members of the civil society organizations.

The analysis of data from this research work was based on the various instruments utilized for data collection. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyze the quantitative data collected. This was done in simple percentage tables. Qualitative data were transcribed almost immediately after the interviews where the English language was not used so that errors would be minimized before the actual commencement of the data analysis. Content analysis was used to analyze the key informant's interviews based on themes raised in the interviews.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section examines the issues that led to the enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State and also x-rays the consequences of the enactment of this law on rural livelihoods in Benue State. However, the section begins with the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

6.1 Demographic Attributes of Respondents

The demographic attributes of respondents which include, sex, age, educational attainment, local government, and position held were collected and are presented below:

Table 2: Demographic Data of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	239	66
Female	125	34
Age		
21-30	81	22
31-40	121	33
41-50	87	24
51 and above	75	21
Educational Status		
Primary	-	-
Secondary	78	21
Tertiary	286	79
Marital Status		
Single	131	36
Married	210	58
Divorced	23	6
Occupation		
Livestock guard	65	18
Staff of Ministry of Agric. & Natural Resources	52	14
Herders	32	9
Farmers	183	50
Personnel of the Nigerian Police	32	9

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Result in Table 2 present result on demographic characteristics of respondents. The result shows that 239 (66%) of the sampled respondents are male while 125 (34%) are female. The result imply that majority of the respondents are men. This demonstrates that men have taken over available opportunities in Benue's public space.

The age distribution of respondents shows that 81(22%) of the respondents are between the ages of 21-30 years, 121(33%) are within the age range of 31 to 40. The age distribution also shows that 87(24%) of the sampled respondents are aged 41 to 50, while 75(21%) are 51 years and above. The result implies that the majority of the respondents are between the ages

of 31-40 years. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents are mature adults which implied that they have good knowledge of the anti-open grazing laws and its impacts on the livelihoods of the people.

The result on the educational status of result shows that, out of the 364 respondents, 78 (21%) of the respondents completed secondary school while a huge majority 286 (79%) attained tertiary education. Thus, the study inferred those opinions expressed came from the enlightened or well-informed minds.

Information on the marital status of respondents shows that 131 (36%) are single, 210 (58%) are married, while divorced had 23 (6%). The result implies that the majority of the respondents have families hence the issue of livelihood is important to them.

The result on the occupation of respondents shows that 65(18%) of the respondents are livestock guards, 52(14) are staff of the Benue Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and 32(9%) are herders. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents 183 (50%) are farmers while 32(9%) are personnel of the Nigerian Police Force (Benue State Command). The result implies that farmers constitute a chunk of the respondents and their livelihoods are mostly affected.

6.2 Factors that led to the Enactment of Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State

Table 3: Factors that led to the Enactment of Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State

Options	SA	A	U	D	SD
Destruction of farmlands resulted to the enactment of Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State	144 (40%)	102 (28%)	36 (10%)	69 (19%)	13 (3%)
Cattle theft contributed to the enactment of the Law	53 (15%)	63 (17%)	29 (8%)	107 (29%)	112 (30%)
Forceful taking over of lands contributes to the enactment of the law by the Benue State Government	111 (30%)	139 (39%)	34 (9%)	59 (16%)	21 (6%)
The desire of the Benue State to provide lasting peace among farmers and herders led to the enacted of the law	156 (43%)	78 (21%)	56 (15%)	42 (11%)	33 (9%)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The result in Table 3 above indicates that 144(40%) of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that the destruction of farmlands is one of the factors that informed the Enactment of Open Grazing Law in Benue State, 102(28%) agreed while 36(10%) were undecided. The result also designates that 69(19%) disagreed and 13(3%) strongly disagreed respectively that the destruction of farmlands is one of the factors that informed the Enactment of Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State. The result implies that the destruction of farmlands is one of the factors that informed the Enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State.

The result above indicates that 53(15%) of the respondents strongly agreed that cattle theft is a contributory factor to the enactment of the law, 63(17%) agreed with the above position while 29(8%) were undecided. The result further avails that 107(29%) of the respondents disagreed that theft is a contributory factor to the enactment of the law and 112(30%) strongly disagreed with the above proposition. The result implies that cattle theft is not a contributory factor to the enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State.

Furthermore, the result in Table 3 indicates 111(30%) of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that the forceful taking over of lands contributes to the enactment of the law, 139 (39%) agreed while 34(%) were undecided. The result further demonstrates that 59(16%) disagreed and 21(6%) strongly disagreed respectively that forceful taking over of lands contributes to the enactment of the law. The result implies that the forceful taking over of lands by herders contributed to the enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Creation Law in Benue State.

Similarly, most of the participants for the key informant and in-depth interviews also averred that the incessant conflicts between the herders and farmers which have led to loss of lives, farms, and properties are what motivated the enactment of the law. A member of the livestock Guard through KII retorted that: The main reasons for the enactment of the anti-open grazing law are due to the number of clashes, killings, and maiming of people, many women and children, so this brought about a lack of peace generally. To buttress this, an in-depth interview participant, in Abagana IDP camp, a neighboring village along Makurdi-Lafia road puts it this way: the law is to protect we the farmers and I can say the law is to protect the farmers so that they can work well.

6.3 Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 and Rural Livelihood in Benue State

Table 4: Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 and Rural Livelihood in Benue State

Options	SA	A	U	D	SD
The implementation of the laws resulted to the return of peace in the rural areas of Benue State	66 (18%)	49 (13%)	13 (4%)	124 (34%)	112 (31%)
The implementation of the laws economic activities such as farming have resumed in the rural areas of Benue State	54 (15%)	21 (6%)	17 (4%)	117 (32%)	155 (53%)
The implementation of the law has improved the general livelihoods of the rural people of Benue State	66 (18%)	49 (13%)	13 (4%)	124 (34%)	112 (31%)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The result in Table 4 indicates that only 66(18%) strongly agreed the implementation of the laws resulted in the return of peace in the rural areas of Benue State, 49(13%) agreed while 13(4%) were undecided. Also, 124(34%) disagreed that the implementation of the laws resulted in the return of peace in the rural areas of Benue State while 112(31%) strongly disagreed with the above assertion. The result implies that the implementation of the laws has not resulted in the return of peace in the rural areas of Benue State.

In his words, the Chairman of MACBAN Benue state chapter equally argued that the law has increased the violence. According to him, the law has affected farming in the state since the farmers cannot go to farm freely and the herders are affected too since their herding activities now come with the condition for ranching.

Also, the result in Table 4 above shows that 54(15%) of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that the implementation of the law economic activities have resumed in the rural areas of Benue State, 21(6%) agreed while 17(4%) were undecided. Furthermore, 117(32%) of the respondents disagreed that the implementation of the law economic activities has resumed in the rural areas of Benue State, and 155(53%) strongly disagreed. The result demonstrated that the implementation of the law has not resulted in the resumption of economic activities in the rural areas of Benue State.

Most of the participants for the qualitative study gave varied negative consequences of the law ranging from soured intergroup relations, impeded farming, increased violence, and affected beef price among other reasons. The study found that the relationship between these groups was once more mutual but has turned sour in the last decade. With the enactment of the Open Grazing Law, the relationship has even become characterized by mistrust, suspicion, violence, and fear. The intensification of the conflict has resulted in a situation where most farmers have abandoned their homes and farms. This has a tremendous impact on their livelihoods.

The result in Table 4 indicates that only 66(18%) strongly agreed that implementation of OGP&RE has improved the general livelihoods of the rural people in Benue State, 49(13%) agreed while 13(4%) were undecided. Also, 124(34%) disagreed that the implementation of OGP&RE has improved the general livelihoods of the rural people in Benue State. The result implies that the implementation of OGP&RE has not improved the general livelihoods of the rural people in Benue State.

One of the respondents who is the deputy chairman of the All-Farmers Association Benue state chapter put the negative consequence of the conflict in relation to farming this way:

Now, farming activities are really difficult because how many soldiers will you have to guard the farmers on their farms? How can it improve? Do you have enough soldiers to be guarding farmers on their farms so that they can farm freely? No! Even when they are sleeping in their house, they go and kill them and you want farming activities to improve, in what way?

6.4 The challenges associated with the implementation of Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State

The implementation of Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State is confronted with some challenges; the objective here is to unravel some of these challenges identified by the respondents.

Table 5: Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State

S/N	Challenges	Respondents	Percentages	Ranking
No:364				
1.	The uncooperative attitude of the Federal Government agencies like the police	356	98%	1 st
2.	Total failure to persecute offenders across the Local Government Areas	350	96%	2 nd
3.	Lack of constitutional powers by the Benue State Government to enforce the law	345	95%	3 rd
4.	The law violates the constitutional rights of herders and their way of life	319	88%	4 th
6	Confiscation of the cattle heads arrested for violating the OGP&RE	319	88%	5 th
7	The inability of the Benue State Government to provide ranches for lease	298	82%	6 th

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 presents results on the challenges affecting the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State. According to the result, respondents were of the view that the uncooperative attitude of the Federal Government agencies like the police is one of the major challenges affecting the implementation of the open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State, represented by 356 (98%) (1st position). Relatedly, 350 (96%) of the respondents identified total failure to persecute offenders across the Local Government areas as the second most prevalent challenge affecting the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State. The third challenge of the law is the lack of constitutional powers by the Benue State Government to enforce the law 345(95%) of the respondents attested to this. The law violates the constitutional rights of herders and their way of life is the 4th challenge with 330(90%). The fifth problem on the ladder of challenges affecting the implementation of the law is the confiscation of cattle heads arrested for violating the OGP&RE. The inability of the Benue State Government to provide ranches for lease is the least challenge affecting the implementation of the law scores of 298 (82%). The result demonstrates that the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State has been confronted with several challenges.

7. Discussion of Findings

This study sought to achieve three specific objectives: in light of the first objective, the study found that several factors led to the enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Creation Law in Benue State. Some of these factors include the destruction of farmlands; the forceful taking over of lands by herders and the desire of the Benue State Government to provide lasting peace among farmers and herders led to the enactment of the law.

Herders' interpretation of the anti-open grazing law however differs from that of the farmers and other participants interviewed. The herders though see the law as bringing to end the conflicts between them and the farmers; they contend that the solution was aimed at chasing them out of the state unlike the purported reason given. In a key informant interview with one of the officials of the Benue state Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) on reasons for the enactment of the (OGP&RE, 2017) law in the state, he opined that:

according to me am looking at maybe because of the lingering crisis, the solution to him according to what the governor was saying on the media is that he is tired of the crisis, let him implement that law so that Fulani can move out of Benue state, let them look for other places because he has been saying it on Channel TV station, my interaction with the governor, he lamented that he is tired of the killings.

The pastoralists view the law as a plan and strategy to make them leave Benue state completely because they are not indigenes of the state. When probed further the Chairman of MACBAN Benue state chapter posited that the law was aimed at ostracizing them because the Fulani are mostly the ones that keep large numbers of cattle unlike other ethnic groups who may keep only 3-10 cattle, therefore according to him ranching few cattle is possible but ranching a large number of cattle like theirs is almost not possible taking into cognizance the cost. This finding supports the assertion made by Ahmed-Gamgum (2018) and Olugbenga (2017) who argued that the Fulani herders view the anti-open grazing law enacted in Benue, Taraba, and Ekiti states as a gambit for oppression and term the law as draconian and a recipe for anarchy. They alluded to the recent confrontations between the herders and farmers in some states to the recently enacted anti-open grazing law.

The result elicited from the second objective demonstrates that implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law has not cushioned the effects of conflict rather it has exacerbated the destruction of the livelihood of the rural people in Benue State such as destruction of farmland, land, and properties among other economic activities. The above finding supports the submission made by Mercy Corps (2016) that the incessant attacks have a drastic effect on food security. Similarly, Idowu (2017) in his study of the farmers' herders' conflicts in Nigeria posited that the conflict results in the displacement of farmers and herders which subsequently affects food, meat, and milk production.

8. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Summary

This study was organized into four sections. The first section provided a general background to the study under investigation. The section also attended to the statement of the research

problem, research questions, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. In the second section basic variables like open grazing, ranching, and rural livelihoods were reviewed. The section ended with a theoretical framework where the study is anchored. Section three dealt with data presentation analysis. The study ended in section four with a summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

8.2 Conclusion

This study examined the Open Grazing Prohibition law and rural livelihoods in Benue State, 2017-2022. The findings of this study revealed that the destruction of crops by cattle, forceful taking over of lands and violent clashes between farmers and herders serve as triggers for the enactment of the OGP & RE Law 2017 in Benue State. The enactment of the OGP & RE Law 2017 in Benue State is interpreted differently by both the herders and farmers. This has increased more tension and suspicion between them.

The study found that the enactment of the law brought negative consequences because, since the implementation of the law in 2017, there have been a series of violent clashes between the farmers and herders. The increase in the number of attacks since the implementation of the law has negatively affected the economic activities of the rural people of Benue State. The displacement and inability of farmers to go about their farming activities affect food production and subsequently affect the farmers' income as well as resulting in poverty and hunger. All these have negative effects on the livelihoods of the rural people in Benue State.

8.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are suggested going forward:

- i. To avoid forceful takeover of lands by herders, the Benue State Government should put in place a mechanism for herders to access land for ranching and to obtain grazing permits within the state. The Benue State Government should engage investors to invest in industrial ranching and can develop incentives to stimulate ordinary herders to establish subsistence and community-based ranches in the short, medium, and long term.
- ii. The implementation strategy of the law should be reviewed. The livestock guard should go after the violators of the law (herders) and not the cows.
- iii. The Benue State Government put in place stringent measures to address the issue of confiscation of the cattle heads arrested for violating the OGP&RE by the Livestock Guard to forestall the attacks by herders on communities where these cattle heads are arrested.
- iv. The Benue State Government should address the issue of corruption by livestock guards who have turned to methodological cattle rustlers and thieves.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. **Sex:** a) Female [], b) Male []
2. **Age:** a) 21-30 [], b) 31-40 [], c) 41-50 [], d) 51 and above []
3. **Educational Status:** a) Primary [], b) Secondary [], Tertiary []
4. **Marital Status:** a) Single [], b) Married [], c) Divorced [],

Section B: Open Grazing Prohibition and Rural Livelihood in Benue State, 2017 to 2022.

1. Factors that led to the Enactment Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State

Options	SA	A	U	D	SD
Destruction of farmlands has resulted to the enactment Open Grazing Prohibition Law in Benue State					
Cattle theft contributed to the enactment of the Law					
Forceful taking over of lands by herders contributes to the enactment of the law by Benue State Government					
The desire of the Benue State to provide lasting peace among farmers and herders led to the enacted of the law					

2. Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 and Rural Livelihood in Benue State

Options	SA	A	U	D	SD
The implementation of the laws resulted to the return of peace in the rural areas of Benue State					
The implementation of the laws economic activities such as farming have resumed in the rural areas of Benue State					
The implementation of the law has improved the general livelihoods of the rural people of Benue State					

3. Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 in Benue State

S/N	Challenges	Respondents	Percentages	Ranking
1.	Uncooperative attitude of the Federal Government agencies like the police			
2.	Total failure to persecute offenders across the Local Government Areas			
3.	Lack of constitutional powers by the Benue State Government to enforce the law			
4.	The law violates the constitutional rights of herders and their way of life			
6	Confiscation of the cattle heads arrested for violating the OGP&RE			
7	Inability of the Benue State Government to provide ranches for lease			
