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### Fulani herder-farmer conflicts in rural Ghana: Perspectives of communities in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District

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#### ABSTRACT

Fulani herder-farmer conflict has existed for long across sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years, the incident has become a daily norm in the West African sub region. Using a cross-sectional mixed method research design, the study explored the causes of conflict between the Fulani herdsman and the farmers, the effects of the conflicts on agriculture and food security and the resolution and settlement procedures. The study used the purposive sampling technique to select four communities (Vodieli, Saro, Kpali and Tagalteng), the snowball sampling to locate the Fulani herdsman and simple random sampling to select the individual farmers at the household level for the study. Data collected was analysed descriptively and thematically. The results show that, destruction of crops and theft cases were the main perceived causes of conflict between Fulani herdsman and farmers. The study recommends the need for the traditional authorities, district assemblies and the district police command to enforce local and national regulatory policies to regulate the activities and movements of the Fulani-herdsman and their cattle so that their presence in the areas do not play antagonist role to the activities of farmers.

### 1. Introduction

In recent times, Livestock Breeders particularly, pastoralist and sedentary farmers have engaged each other in an internecine warfare that is threatening peace and stability of many farming communities in Africa (Bob, 2010 & Soeters et al., 2017). Blench (2010) observed that conflicts between farmers and pastoralist have existed for decades. Empirical evidence found limited access to adequate and secure land as one among many factors causing pastoralist and smallholder farmers' unrest in rural Africa (Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015; Flintan, 2012). Fabusow (2010) opined that, conflicts between farmers and herdsman usually occur when the cattle of the herdsman are allowed to move into farms during the growing season and eat or trample the crops due to the herdsman's lack of attention. In some parts of Africa, farmers allow herders to have access to harvested crop fields to feed their animals on free range basis, while the animals' droppings fertilize their farmlands for the next planting season (Tonah, 2006). This complementarity between farmers and herders has broken partly due to population growth in Africa and the unceasing apportionment of land and labour between crop producers and large cattle herders (Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015; Contula et al., 2004). The fallout between herders and farmers has been the result of the former negligence of allowing cattle to graze into farmers' crops during farming seasons (Folami, 2010). Besides, land conflicts in Africa are associated with the continuous pressure on already diminishing land caused by higher land values and demographic characteristics (Yelsang, 2013). Throughout

West Africa, the continuous increase cases of farmer-herder conflict and the associated violence have become a matter of concern for the sub-region (Tonah, 2006). Bob (2010) observed that, key to the pronounced causes of farmer-herder conflicts in the sub-region is associated with increasing crop cultivation, inadequate grazing field and poor policies in the management of the existing grazing resources, notably in the Guinea Savanna regions and the Sahelian. This has brought about greater pressure on land and other natural resources leading to occupation of traditional pastoral areas (pastures and cattle routes) resulting in greater tension between transhumant livestock breeders and other users of natural resources [crop farmers and foresters] (Moritz, 2010).

In Ghana, destruction of crops is often found to be the most common reason of farmer-herder conflict (Ayariga, 2013 & Dosu, 2011). Herdsman are often accused of carelessly allowing their cattle to move onto farmers' farms, especially in the farming season and immediate post-harvest period. Tonah (2006) observed that, the close location of many pastoralists near settlements and farms prompt cattle to wander into farms the least mistake the herdsman make. For instance, in the planting season, pastoralist must carefully meander their way out every single day to feed their livestock without cattle trampling on crops. As reported, during farming seasons, cattle belonging to herdsman are often found to destroy or consume ripened crops as they are being led to the field to feed (Bukari & Schareika, 2015; Opoku, 2014).

Activities of herdsmen in Ghana are found to be of serious threat to peace and security (Ghana Network for Peace Building [GNPB], 2016). For instance, GNPB survey conducted in 2016 under the project “Ghana Alert Project” observed that herdsmen engage in various nefarious activities including setting fires on crops farms, allowing cattle to destroy yam mounts, and draining streams and other water bodies farmers use to irrigate their farms in the dry seasons. Donko (2014) reported massive destruction of farmlands and crops by the activities of the Fulani herdsmen in the Afram Plains. The most affected region in Ghana is Brong Ahafo, Volta, Northern, Savannah, Upper East, Upper West, Eastern and Ashanti regions (northenghana.com).

In northern Ghana, farming communities in the Gushegu district recorded one of the highest documented Fulani herder-farmer conflicts in 2015. Over thirty (30) people were reported dead, and several others injured due to native farmers’ retaliation against alleged atrocities committed by the Fulani herdsmen (Bukari & Schareika, 2015). The Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District is one of the areas in the northern part of Ghana that continue to suffer the Fulani herder menace. The Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District has over 80% of its populace engaged in subsistence agriculture and mostly cultivate yams, millet, guinea corn, groundnut among others (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). However, the insurgence of the Fulani herdsmen with their cattle in the district has destroyed large acreages of farmlands resulting in conflicts between farmers and the Fulani herdsmen (Donko, 2014). Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the causes of the conflicts, their effects on agriculture and food security in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District. The study is also aimed at identifying practicable resolution mechanisms that would be amenable to stakeholders to help minimize the recurrence of farmer-herder conflicts in the study area.

## 2. Theoretical and conceptual issues

### 2.1. Land resource use and the theory of political ecology

The paper applies the political ecology approach in exploring the Fulani herder-farmer land use relationships in the STK District. Political ecology examines the interconnectedness between land scarcity and the politics of land access and control by competing land users as well as the ecological effects of the land resource (Gössling, 2003; Peluso & Watts, 2001; Turner, 2004). In the context of the paper, the same land resources are a key resource to Fulani-herders for pasturing and to crop farmers for cultivation. Since the same land resource cannot be used to satisfy both herder and crop farmers’ needs at the same time, there is the tendency for herdsmen and farmers to control and exclude each other in the use of the common land resources for its maximum benefit thereby antagonizing each other. These conflicts could be in the form of destruction of livestock and plants to losing human lives (Olaniyan, 2015; Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015).

Political ecology enables a holistic understanding of localized land conflict process in relation to broader developments and changing patterns of resource claims (Van Leeuwen, & Van Der Haar, 2016). In this way, the paper contributes to not only to the understanding the localized actor and power dynamics and strategies in controlling and using the scarce land

resource but also in contributing to local specific land resource conflict solutions (Boone, 2012). The advantages of exploring causes, effects and land use conflict and resolution dynamics from the perspectives of both Fulani-herders and smallholder farmers advised the adoption of the political ecology approach in this study.

### 2.2. Fulani herder-farmer conflict: the determinants

Generally, the term ‘conflict’ suggests differences, disagreements, strives and struggles. According to Collier (2007), conflict is the interaction of independent people who have different opinions over a subject of concern. For Adisah (2011) and Agunwamba (1995), the interaction, whether consensus or conflict, defines pattern of social group or organization. Tonah (2006) opined that, critical to most conflicts experienced in society is due to competing interest over scarce resources. As defined by the mainstream conflict theorist (Cunningham, 1998), antagonism over scarce resources precipitate conflict between economic agents. All conflicts share common qualities. The first is that there is a kind of contact between the parties that are involved; secondly, the parties in conflict perceive conflicting views, and finally, one of the parties always wants to redress existing contradictions. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) opined that, conflict is known to be a fact of life and it truly exists and happens in our lives. Wilmot and Hocker further viewed conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.

Farmer-herder conflicts have been in existence for decades. In Ghana and Africa as a whole, most of these conflicts are often driven by environmental and land scarcity. In most parts of northern Ghana, especially in the Northern, Savana and North-East regions, land is vested in chiefs (Kasanga & Kotey, 2006). Persons occupying the various chieftaincy skins exercise ownership and control over land (Kasanga, 2008). Strangers and migrants are not guaranteed access to land in northern Ghana (Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015). A stranger who requires land on which he intends to settle must consult the chief. Tonah (2002) studies in northern Ghana found that most chiefs and landowners prefer to lease portions of their land to pastoralists and migrant farmers rather than to indigenes because the former can make substantial rent payments both in cash and in kind, while indigenes only make token payments for the use of land. Kuusaana and Bukari (2015) in their studies on farmer-herder land conflicts found that, in some districts in northern Ghana, though, the Fulani activities have seen us unfriendly to the environment, assemblies see it as a source of mobilizing revenue from the herdsmen. Yeboah and Shaw (2013) stated that, assemblies should not use revenue mobilization as an excuse to harbour the herdsmen and close their eyes to the huge destruction that they are causing to the environment and farm produce.

In Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya, land use conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have existed for long with most clashes resulting to untimely loss of life and destruction of property (Fabusow, 2010; Dosu, 2011; Ayariga, 2013). For instance, in Tanzania, Fabusow (2010) reported places that have

experienced conflicts between farmers and pastoralists to include: Kilosa and Kilombero districts in the Morogoro region and Kilindi and Handani districts in Tanga region in the Mbeya region. In Nigeria, control over scarce resources, searching for pasture, incompatible values, less-diseased regions, water scarcity and proximity of farms to roads were found as the major cause of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen (Moritz, 2010). Again, Tonah (2006) observed that the southward movement of Fulani herdsmen into the humid and sub-humid regions due to availability of veterinary medicine and the expansion of farming activities into that hitherto served as pasture lands have contributed to the rampant cause of conflict between the pastoralists and the farmers. The study further noted that due to the rise of human and livestock population in the coastal population since the 1950s, there have been increased in competition over natural resources between farmers and herdsmen. Catley et al. (2013) study revealed that, the Fulani herdsmen have recognized land use conflicts as the most important problem they face in recent years and therefore asked for the need for government intervention.

In Ghana, Fulani-herder conflict has been one of the most rampant conflicts experienced over the last three decades. Crop destruction by cattle has always been cited as one of the most observed conflicts between herdsmen and farmers (Abdulai & Yakubu, 2013; Adisah, 2011a, 2013; Dosu, 2011). Thus, with herdsmen often maintained that it was never their interest to allow their animals found their way into people farms, the farmers consistently blamed the herdsmen of carelessness and indiscipline. Bob (2010) observed that the frequent accusation of chiefs, landowners, and police personnel of citing with herdsmen in cases involving the destruction of farms by cattle serve as a breeding ground for the unending Fulani herder-farmer conflict. What that means is that, when farmers lost the trust they have in their chiefs, landowners and the police services, the possibility to choose what they think is right is high and could have implication for the security of the communities and people.

It is not uncommon to hear farmers say that the chiefs and the police do not act on complaints brought to them concerning the destructive activities of Fulani herdsmen (Abubakari, 2014). Generally, relations between farmers and Fulani herdsmen are tense throughout the farming communities where Fulani are found. In June 2000 there were violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the Nkoranza District following the alleged destruction of crops and the environment by cattle herds. Similarly, the Fulani and the Chakosi clashed at Prang in June 2005 following the destruction of crops by cattle (see Daily Graphic, June 8, 2000, and June 24, 2005). Kuusaana and Bukari (2015) reported the same occurrence in the Sekeyere-Central District in the Ashanti region. In the Sekyere Afram Plains, the Assembly in 2009 imposed a curfew (after two Fulani attacked a family of six, killing 43-year-old) to restrict the movement of Fulani herdsmen following incidents involving the nomads that threaten security.

Cotula et al. (2004) observed that, conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen have not only heightened the level of food insecurity but have also demonstrated high potential to

exacerbate the food crisis in most countries including Ghana due to loss of farmer's lives, animals, crops and valuables.

### 2.3. Herder-farmer settlement relationship in Ghana

In most tribes in Ghana, especially in the northern sector land is vested in the chiefs, persons occupying the various chieftaincy stools exercise ownership and control of land (Basset 1993, Poguchi 1950, Kasanga 1988). Strangers and migrants are not guaranteed access to land in northern Ghana. A stranger who requires land on which he intends to settle must see the chief. In the same way, Fulani pastoralists who wish to settle within a particular locality would normally obtain information on settlement from other pastoralists, livestock traders and middlemen in the livestock business.

Upon conviction that the resources of the area are favourable and adequate for livestock herding, a pastoralist would then inform other Fulani living in the settlement or the livestock trader about their intention to settle in the area. The established Fulani would contact the Chief/Landowners on behalf of the new migrant (Rabbe, 1998). On the payment of the appropriate fees and the observance of any traditional rituals, the new migrant would be allocated a piece of land by the chief on which to settle. It is quite common for two or more pastoralists to jointly offer livestock to the landowners as rent for settling in the area and for using available pasture and water resources.

Generally, the indigenous populations benefit directly from the presence of the Fulani (e.g., the chiefs, landowners, stockowners, etc.) welcome them to their community. Fulbe pastoralists pay such landowners rent in cash and in kind to allow them settle on their property and use adjoining land for farming and as pasture.

According to a report compiled by the police in 2009, earnings from rent paid by migrant Fulani herdsmen constituted a major source of income to chiefs and landowners in these impoverished areas. "Chiefs prefer to give land to the migrant Fulani, especially the herdsmen, who are rich in cattle and can afford to make substantial payment as settlement fees. For instance, some of the Fulani herdsmen who hitherto settled in the northern part of Ghana found their way to Agogo a decade ago. Upon arrival they were subsequently sent to the Agogo Traditional Council, and it was agreed by the chief that they will be allowed to settle based on the following conditions.

- The will keep their cattle very deep in the forest, far from the farmland
- The area to house the cattle should be fenced by the cattle owners to prevent them going astray.
- The cattle owners shall dig wells which will provide water for the animals to prevent the animals from destroying water bodies. The cattle owners will pay for any destruction to property and farm produce caused by their animals.

- And a cow from each herdsman will be donated to the Agogo paramountcy every year (Ampratwum, 2011).

Tonah (2002) observed that, most chiefs and landowners prefer to lease portions of their land to pastoralists and migrant farmers rather than to indigenes because the former can make substantial rent payments both in cash and in kind, while indigenes only make token payments for the use of land. Rent paid by migrant pastoralists for the use of pastureland has become a major source of income for many impoverished landowners in the district.

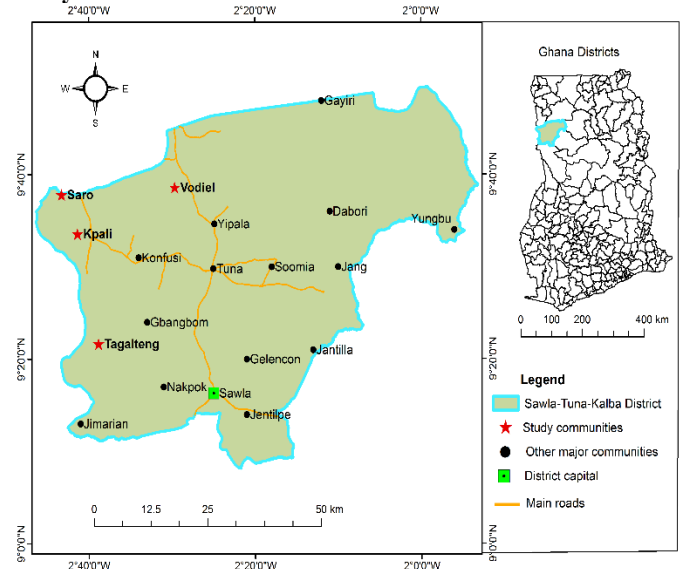
### 3.0. Method and materials

#### 3.1. The Study Area

The Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district is in the Savannah region of Ghana. The district is in the western part of the region and positioned between latitudes 8°40' and 9°40' North and longitudes 1° 50' and 2° 45' West. The district is located north to Wa West district in the Upper West Region, West Gonja to the east, Cote d' Ivoire and Burkina Faso to the west and Bole district to the south. Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district has 4, 601 square kilometres which represents 6.14% of the entire land mass of the region. The district has a population of 84,664 with 43, 064 being females and 41,600 being males (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). The district is rural with 15% of the population residing in urban areas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

The district falls within the tropical continental zone characterized by shrubs and grassland with dispersed medium size trees to include shear, mango and dawadawa which are drought tolerant. These trees serve as a major source of livelihood to the people of the district especially women who depend so much on environmental resources to support household income and food. The district observes variation of annual rainfall with mean annual rainfall about 100mm with its highest around August. Agriculture is the mainstay of the district economy, employing about 87% of the population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Crop farming dominates their agricultural activities with majority of the farmers operating on subsistence basis. Crops such as guinea corn, maize, rice, millet and vegetable production are the common ones cultivated by the farmers. The migration and presence of the Fulani in the area is partly due to the vast land especially around the Black Volta enclaves. The Black Volta corridor in the district over the years has been the home of the Fulani herdsman due to the availability of greener pasture and water for the animals.

**Figure 1: Map the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District showing study communities**



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2010

The same area in the district is a fertile zone which is occupied by smallholder farmers for food crop production. Due to the interest of both Fulani herdsman and the smallholder farmers in the area, there have recorded yearly conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsman, with the later always accuse of leaving their animals to destroy their farms.

#### 3.2. Sampling, data collection and analyses

Based on the paradigm of pragmatism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), a cross-sectional mixed-methods research design was adopted for this study. The communities sampled include: Vodiel, Saro, Kpali and Tagalteng along the Black Volta River corridor in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba (STK) district of Ghana. Cross-sectional embedded concurrent mixed method is an approach to data collection and analysis where data is collected and analysed from a population at one specific point in time. These four communities normally experience conflict with Fulani herdsman and therefore, were purposively selected for the study. In each of the communities, the household heads were targeted as the unit of analysis.

The sample size of 139 from a sample frame of 1185 was arrived at using Yamane (1967) formula,  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$  and proportional distributed among the four sampled communities. Systematic sampling method was then employed in selecting the requisite number of households in each of the communities stated above. Purposive sampling was used to obtain information from the District Coordinating Director, District Police Commander, the District Director of Agriculture, sub-Chiefs and District assembly representatives of the four communities. The snowball sampling technique was used to recruit 24 Fulani herdsman for the study. Data was collected using household questionnaire and key informant interviews. Household questionnaires were closed ended questions and were granted to the household heads and Fulani herdsman (household heads) while the key informant interviews were conducted with the District Coordinating

Director, District Police Commander, the District Director of Agriculture, the sub-Chiefs and District assembly representatives of the four communities. Quantitative data was analysed with the help of SPSS Version 16. Household head for this paper refers to someone who has the final say over decisions even when they do not earn the most income of a household. Questionnaires were administered to 15 female-headed households and 124 male-headed household heads. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyse causes of farmer-herder conflict, forms of farmer-herder conflicts and the effects of Fulani-herder conflict on agriculture and food security.

For the qualitative information, thematic analysis using deductive coding approach was adopted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Basically, the transcripts from the interviews were analysed using the procedure as suggested by Saunders et al. (2016): becoming familiar with the data set, doing the coding, examining themes, recognizing relationships, and refining themes. Finally, validation sessions were organized at each of the four communities to confirm or otherwise results of the findings.

## 4.0. Results

### 4.1 Settlement processes of the Fulani herdsmen

In the settlement processes of the Fulani, the interviews held with households across all the communities revealed that, Fulani herdsmen sought permission from community chiefs before getting a piece of land to settle. They further reported that, the chief is vested with the powers to either accept or reject the herdsmen request to settle in their communities. The authority of chiefs in the communities is because of the powers vested in them as the *Tengdaaba* (land priest/owners) who hold land in trust for the community. Our interview with the STK District Coordinating Director confirmed the powers of the chiefs to either accept or reject Fulani herdsmen who wants to settle in their communities. The Coordinating Director, however, indicated that, for the purpose of taxes and basic rates, the District Assembly was notified anytime they gave settlement permit to any Fulani herdsman. As part of the settlement processes, the interviews conducted across the study communities revealed that herdsmen were subjected to some conditions before settlement permit is granted. For instance, the herdsmen are to pay some specified amount of cash or number of cows to chiefs and other traditional authorities before they were granted permission to settle. Interviews with the assembly members in all the four communities also confirmed that herdsmen choose to give cows to the chiefs or money before settlement. Besides the direct benefits that the chiefs and the assembly received from the Fulani herdsmen, other conditions such as prevention of cattle from destroying food crops and water bodies, disassociating oneself from criminal activities such as stealing, and marrying natives were part of the negotiation and settlement process.

### 4.2. Causes of the farmer-herder conflicts

The results of the study revealed that the triggers of conflict in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers emanate from several dimensions.

From the results (see Table 1), 37% of the herdsmen, and 65% of the farmers interviewed all cited the destruction of crops in farms as the major trigger of conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers. This was corroborated by the Assembly members interviewed across the study communities. Interview with the Assemblyman in *Vodiel* community reported that:

*Farms are constantly being destroyed by the cattle of the Fulani herdsmen. A relative's farm on several occasions has been invaded by cattle of the Fulani. On one occasion when I tried to drive the cattle out of the farm, the Fulani herdsman warned me not to attempt hitting any of his cows. Am not the only witness of the destruction of farms by Fulani herdsmen and their cattle, other community members have also complained about it. The recent incidence happened in Saro, a nearby community. The herdsmen drove their cattle to feed on crops at night. It is very bad and frustrating. Farmers are getting discouraged in this community (In-depth Interview in February 2019).*

In-depth interviews with chiefs across the study communities mentioned an incidence in *Tagalteng* community where Fulani herdsmen attacked and killed a farmer on his farm with the claim that the farmer killed their Fulani brother. Again, reprisal response from parties to the farmer-herder conflict seem to be another significant cause of the conflict between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district. The results from the study revealed that, 16% and seven (7%) (see Table 1) of the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers respectively believed that reprisal response is another major cause of the conflicts.

Theft of farm produce is also cited as a cause of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers. The results in Table 1 revealed that, 26% and 12% of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers respectively cited thievery as a cause of conflict between the herdsmen and farmers in the study communities. The results revealed that, while the farmers accuse the Fulani herdsmen of stealing their farm produce, the herdsmen also claimed they are being accused wrongly. According to the Fulani herdsmen, they are constantly being accused of stealing farm produce and the animals of the farmers in the communities. In-depth interview with a Fulani herdsman reported that:

*Anytime there is an incidence of any form of criminality of which the culprits are not known, we the Fulani are often cited or targeted as the prime suspects or even sometimes labelled as the offenders without any proof. The farmers in the community think that it is only a Fulani who can steal their farm produce, this is unfortunate. Farmers usually come to attack us when their farm produce get missing from their farms because we are the only people who can go to their farms in the bush and steal, they think (In-depth Interview in February 2019).*

A sub-chief interviewed in *Saro* community confirmed this situation when he reported that:

*We are constantly handling cases in which farmers come to complain to us that either Fulani herdsmen have stolen their farm produce, in most cases tubers of yam or their animals. Sometimes these accusations and counter accusations lead to conflicts between the farmers and the Fulani before the chiefs are even informed (In-depth Interview in February 2019).*

Thievery as a cause of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers has not been interrogated much in the extant literature. One other cause of the farmer-herder conflict in the study communities revealed are reported cases of harassment and rape of women and girls in the farms. From the study results in Table 1, no Fulani herdsmen mentioned rape and harassment of women and girls in farms. Contrary, seven percent (7%) of farmers, sub-chiefs and assembly representatives in the study communities mentioned rape and harassment as one of the causes of the conflicts. Interview with an Assembly Woman in *Kpali* reports that:

*People laugh when women complain that they are being harassed, raped, or chased by the Fulani herdsmen in farms. It is not a laughing matter or a joke. I can tell you that, cases of harassment and raping of girls and women on farms or on their way home from farms are real. I have seen several rape victims in this community. Women and girls who are mostly not in the accompaniment of males in the farms suffer from Fulani. So, each time I go to my farm, I make sure I have male companions to protect me. Women are afraid or cannot go to farms alone. Why all this? (In-depth interview in March 2019)*

The District Superintendent of Police (DSP) in an interview confirmed this when he indicated that they have received several reported cases of rape and harassment of women and girls in their farms by the Fulani herdsmen. He reported that:

*I do not understand why some of the Fulani decide to do this. My office has received several complaints of the atrocities of the Fulani from different communities in which they live. I can confirm to you that, the worst case I have heard was involving a rape of a 15-year-old schoolgirl on her way to the father's farm. But unfortunately, we cannot even trace the where about of the culprits who committed the crime (In-depth interviews in March 2019)*

Women and girls that participate in farming activities are constant prey to the Fulani miscreants. Women are now even afraid to go to farms unaccompanied. In an interview with two sub-chiefs in *Kpali* and *Tagalteng*, they indicated that they have arbitrated rape cases involving Fulani herdsmen in the community.

Lastly, pollution of water bodies as sources of drinking water for farmers and their livestock was mentioned as another source of conflict between farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in the study communities. Farmers have accused the herdsmen of constantly and intentionally driving their cattle into ponds and other water bodies which provided drinking water to the people. As indicated in Table 1, 21% and 9% of

the herdsmen and farmers respectively agreed that the pollution of water bodies is a source of conflict.

Table 1: Causes of herder/farmer conflicts

Causes of herder/farmer conflicts	Herdsmen		Smallholder farmers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Destruction of crops	9	37	91	65
Pollution of water bodies	5	21	12	9
Thievery	6	26	16	12
Reprisal responses	4		10	
		16		7
Rape and harassment of women on their farms	-	-	10	
				7
Total	24	100	139	100

Source: Field survey, 2019

#### 4.3. Effects of the herder-farmer conflicts on agriculture and food security

From the study results in Table 2, 91% of the smallholder farmers reported that the continual destruction of their food crops by Fulani cattle has demoralized most farmers from farming. Again, 64% of the farmers reported that, the yearly conflicts with the herdsmen have resulted in reduction in their farm productivity while 59% of the smallholder farmers indicated long-term hatred for the herdsmen. Thus, the farmers reported that, the conflict has led to constant hatred and bad blood between the farmers and the Fulani in their communities. An interview with the Assembly member in *Kpali* reported that:

*Anytime the Fulani fight with the farmers, the Fulani just target farmers in their farms; they attack the unarmed farmers, injuring many of them, destroying their farms by setting fire on their farm produce. This as a matter of fact demoralizes most farmers in the community (In-depth interview in March 2019).*

Table 2: Effects of farmer/herder conflicts on famers

Effects of the conflict on smallholder farmers	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Demoralizes farmers from farming	127	91	12	9
Reduction in farm productivity	89	64	50	36
Injuries and deaths of farmers	47	34	92	66
Destruction of properties of farmers	44	32	95	68
Constant Hatred between farmers and Fulani	82	59	57	41

Source: Filed survey, 2019

Farmer-herder conflicts do not only affect the farmers, but it also affects the herdsmen. Responses on the effects of the yearly conflicts between herdsmen and farmers, in Table 3 shows that, 93% of the Fulani herdsmen indicated that, their cattle are mostly prevented from grazing anytime they have problems with the farmers in the community. They further indicated that, they are mostly discriminated against in the community and made to pay fines to farmers. Again, 71% and 79% of the Fulani also said that the conflict has led to the injuries/deaths and destruction of their properties respectively. This was confirmed by District Police Commander who reported that:

*Sometimes I pity the Fulani, they are attacked with least provocation, they sometimes have their animals killed, their properties are being destroyed at will by the farmers in retaliation for allegedly allowing their cattle to destroy their farms, and their houses burnt too. Some must spend several days and months in the hospitals for injuries sustained during these conflicts and some are forcibly ejected from the communities (In-depth interview in January 2019)*

The Fulani have also complained that farmers kill or steal their cattle when there is conflict. Majority (86%) of the Fulani said their cattle are often stolen when they conflict with farmers. The Fulani herdsmen have blamed the farmers for sometimes shooting the cattle even when the cattle have not destroyed any farm produce.

The conflicts between the Fulani and farmers have also brought about hostile and volatile relationships between the herdsmen and communities in the district as this manifest in mutual mistrust and animosity. Thus, while the farmers perceived the herdsmen as strangers and have no right to settlement, the herdsmen perceived the community member as foes of their survival and destiny. This causes tensed atmosphere accompanied by threats of peaceful relationship, security, and stability of society.

Table 3: Effects of the conflict on Fulani Herdsmen

Effects of the conflict on Fulani Herdsmen	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Prevention of our cattle from grazing	23	93	1	7
Stealing and killing of cattle	18	86	6	43
Injuries and deaths	20	71	4	29
Destruction of our properties	21	79	3	21
Hatred and discrimination by community members and farmers	24	100	-	-

Source: Field survey, 2019

#### 4.4 The farmer-herder conflict resolution and settlement

The study revealed that when conflicts arise between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen, the parties to the conflicts often first report to the chiefs. The chief's palace is often the first point of call for litigations and are actively involved in the resolution and management of conflicts in their areas. All the Fulani interviewed were unanimous that they report to the chiefs when conflicts arise. This points to the proposition that, it is the chiefs who support their stay in the communities, and it is the chiefs who granted them the permission to stay, and so, they report to the chiefs when they have problems.

The findings also show that, the police/court were least resorted to for conflict resolution in the study communities. The Fulani reports that, the police often exploit and brutalize them in the event of reported conflicts. This was, however, denied by the Police. In an interview with the District Police Commander, it was revealed that:

*The Fulani do not even normally report conflict cases to the police, they always send their cases to the chiefs. The most reported cases of conflicts come from farmers and other community members (In-depth interview in March 2019)*

An interview with a Fulani herdsman reports that,

*People perceive us to be rich people and always want us to pay whatever fees is imposed on us in the law court or at the police station irrespective of the outcome or verdict (In-depth interview in March 2019).*

Discussions with farmers revealed that, some of the herdsmen are taking care of cattle owned by some community chiefs and so, conflict of interest arises when conflict cases between herdsmen and farmers are reported to the chief.

The methods used in resolving conflict according to the respondents depends on the nature and magnitude of the conflict. In most cases, a conflict that occurred because of crop destruction by cattle of the herdsmen, with the herdsmen admitting the situation, local conflict resolution approach is adopted with the chiefs and community leaders acting as mediators. According to the chiefs, the compensation to affected farmers depends on the magnitude of crops damaged. In an interview with the chief of Saro, it revealed that both farmers and the Fulani prefer their cases to be settled by their respective chiefs. He reported that:

*Sometimes, when conflicts are reported, parties of the conflicts come again to tell us they want to settle the issues with their traditional authorities, depending on the magnitude of the case, we allow them to go to their chiefs to have their cases settled (In-depth interview in February 2019).*

According to the chiefs, Alternative Conflict Resolution (ADR) methods are mostly used to resolve conflicts in the community when such issues occur as farmers always ask for unrealistic and outrageous compensation when left alone to decide on settlement agreement with the herdsmen. ADR

developed by the community chiefs and *ArDOS* helps to fix reasonable compensation terms for herdsmen.

## 5. Discussion

According to Collier (2007), conflicts are necessary conditions for societal transformation. In many societies, conflicts have helped change rules and regulations and put society in line with development. However, when conflicts become more violent rather than mere disagreements between parties or societies, it retards development. This is particularly more devastating when such violent conflicts remain unresolved and become prolonged.

Over the years, herdsmen-farmers conflicts have hit many countries especially developing countries where mechanisms in preventing such conflicts are limited (Kaldor, 2007; Fabusow, 2010; Folami, 2010; Soeters et al., 2017). Many of these conflicts are related to natural resources use. As indicated by the political ecology theory, conflicts will continue to occur where there exists natural resources and their use for development. Irrespective of how they occurred, the degree, and frequency, most of them have had hard implications on development and policy. Ali (2006) observes that, conflicts, especially violent ones have dire consequences on development and could affect economic growth and prosperity. In this study, the results revealed that, herder-farmer conflicts have existed in the district for long. The study revealed that destruction of crops by livestock, water pollution by cattle of the Fulani and farmers, thievery, reprisal responses and rape and sexual harassment of women have been the major sources of conflict between the herdsmen and smallholder farmers. As observed by the theory of political ecology, resource use especially land will continue to cause conflicts between competing parties with common resource use interest. These findings corroborate with literature on pastoralist and farmer conflicts in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa (Bob, 2010; Fabusow, 2010). The Fulani herder-farmer conflict situation in Ghana has been interrogated by scholars and analysts from a variety of analytical perspectives (Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015; Soeters et al., 2017). An exegesis of some of these contributions is germane to situate the subject matter on a sound analytical frame. Soeters et al. (2017) espoused that, crop destruction by cattle is one of the major causes of conflict between farmers and herdsmen. While crop farmers often accused the herdsmen of negligence and indiscipline, the herdsmen often maintained that it was never their intention to lead cattle into people's farms as reported by the study.

Albert (2009) espoused that the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers are not only linked to crop destruction, but also linked to theft cases and social vices that are alleged to have been committed by the herdsmen against farmers. As reported by the study, herdsmen were accused of rape, theft and other social vices which usually contribute to the conflict situation in the area. In the study, women and girls were to be victims to these incidences. The study reported that, women are now even afraid to go to farms unaccompanied due to the alleged arbitrated rape cases involving Fulani herdsmen in the community. Earlier studies have reported on cases of rape and

sexual harassments between herdsmen and women in Northern Nigeria (Olaniyan et al. 2015; Adisah 2014). In Ghana, Kuusaana & Bukari (2015) reported similar cases of women and girls who were raped by herdsmen in Agogo in Ghana. Abubakari and Longi (2014) observed that environment and pollution of water sources which are used by community residents including the herdsmen themselves remains one of the causes of herdsmen-farmer conflict in Ghana and other parts of the world. According to Tona (2005), this contributes partly to the many clashes between the herdsmen and the farmers along the Black Volta River Corridor in Ghana.

No doubt, when conflict occurs, it comes with challenges such as food insecurity. As reported by the study, herdsmen-farmer conflict in the area has resulted in reduction of food crop production, injuries and death of potential farmers who could actively engage in activities of agriculture to support in meeting the household food need. Studies have reported on the effect of herdsmen-farmers conflicts on household food insecurity in Ghana and Africa (Afolayan, 2009; Chukwuma & Atelhe 2014; Olaniyan et al., 2015). Olaniyan et al. (2015) study in Nigeria reported that destruction of properties, mostly farm produce, injuries and sometimes death to some farmers or their relatives have reduced farm output with hard implication for household food demand.

Notwithstanding the yearly occurrence of herdsmen-farmer conflicts in the study area, the study has revealed that there were some conflict resolution mechanisms respondents use to remedy the situation when that happens. For the respondents, the chiefs, the police, and the assembly were used as conflict mediation forces for their conflict resolution and management. According to Afolayan (2009), instances where farmer-pastoralist interpersonal relationship are conflictual because of destruction of farm produce, conflicts are resolved by the community chief and the leader of the herdsmen (*ArDOS*).

## 6. Conclusion and policy recommendation

The study concluded that, conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen occur very often and is because of crop destruction, stealing of farm produce and destruction of water bodies by the Fulani cattle. These conflicts have effects on farmer's productivity and negatively affect household food security. The conflict resolution processes are often mediated by the community chiefs. This mostly leaves farmers dissatisfied because the chiefs are seen colluding with Fulani herdsmen sometimes.

Hence, the study recommends that, the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district assembly should enact by-laws and establish conflict mediation committees in the study communities. The committees should constitute the traditional authority, security officers, the farmers, herdsmen, and assembly members and youth groups. To make the committees vibrant and efficient, the study recommends that the committees meet bi-monthly particularly in the dry season to devise mechanisms to prevent any conflict and discuss issues related to the confrontations. Again, the committees should employ available methods to address confrontations that could possibly result into violent conflicts in their bi-monthly



deliberations. In this way, the study thinks it would go extra miles to reducing the frequency of conflicts between the herders and farmers in the study communities. Finally, the ADR approach in conflict resolution should be encouraged so that opportunity is given to the parties in conflict to decide on the settlement process with chiefs and leaders of herdsmen (Ardos) playing a facilitation role. This will help solve complaints by herders that farmers make a fuss of compensation claims which the study uncovered.

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