

Chapter Fourteen

ARMER-HERDER ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN NIGERIA VIS-À-VIS GABRIEL MARCEL'S INTERSUBJECTIVE PHILOSOPHY

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Executive Summary

The article reflects on the perennial Farmer-Herder crisis in Nigeria that has become bloodier in recent times. It acknowledges the many material and non-material efforts made by government and other concerned individuals, bodies or organizations to check the crisis. It also acknowledges that these efforts haven't yielded significant fruits toward resolving the crisis, hence the present spread of the crisis across all the regions of the country, not just the North Central as it were in the past. Contrary to the ecological and climatic factors fingered as the causes of the crisis, the article identifies the loss of respect for human dignity and equality of all human persons as the fundamental cause. It argues that proper attention has not been given to restoring these values among farmers and herders, and this is the reason why all measures put in place to curb the crisis have been futile. Through an analysis of Gabriel Marcel's dialogical philosophy, the article demonstrates how the lack of these vital virtues has led to the worsening farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria. It concluded, therefore, that more efforts should be geared towards re-inculcating these values among herders and

farmers, and by extension, among all Nigerians. Until this is achieved, the end to the crisis may never be in sight.

Keywords: Crisis, Dialogue, Ecology, Farmer, Herder, Intersubjectivism.

Introduction

Since the present democratic era, one of the most gruesome ills that has plagued Nigeria and defied all attempts at resolution is the farmer-herder crisis. The crisis has even degenerated and taken a more devilish incline assuming the form of banditry and kidnap. A great many factors contribute to this perennial disturbance. These factors which are also of historical relevance are tinted with ethnic, religious, political and even selfish colouration. Of course, the clashes have become more violent and bloody in recent times due to an increasing political bias.

Politically, pre-independent administrative system imposed on Nigeria by the British colonialists continues to have effects, albeit more negatively, on the country. Under the auspices of Britain, Nigeria was broken into three regions with different administrative systems. Gursoy rightly observes that British colonial administration divided the land into three administrative parts as North, East and West. The coastal regions and whole Eastern and Western protectorates were under direct rule of British, while the Northern region was ruled indirectly by British through Nigerian traditional governors. Therefore, the Northern region had its different rules and regulations than other regions (4). This pre-independence administrative structure is the bane of the regional inequality and political instability being experienced in Nigeria today because it gave the North excessive privileges that armed her with more political power. After the independence in 1960, the administrative regions of the country were further divided into smaller ones

until it reached 36 states (Penrose, Jean-Paul, Bdliya, & Chettleborough 44). This did not in anyway undo the political advantage of the North because the North even with the creation of states remained the majority as she has more federating units and senatorial zones, and hence more parliamentary representative than the South. This political advantage is apparently one of the factors engineering the Fulani onslaught on farmers because the group feels protected by the Northern or even Fulani elites who command so much political power in Nigeria.

Being a very densely populated country with an extensive land mass, Nigeria is blessed with different climates in her different regions. She has arid, semi-arid, sub-humid and humid zones, which all allow different kinds of lifestyles and means of living (Gursoy 4). Climatic condition and land arability are significant factors among Nigerians, since around 70% of the population constitutes locals who engage in plant and animal husbandry (International Crisis Group 12). Of course, since the discovery of oil, the leaders abandoned the huge potentiality and benefits the country enjoyed from agricultural products and exports. This explains the dearth in agricultural management, the gravest effect of which is felt in the intergenerational herder-farmer clashes experienced in Nigeria today.

This article seeks a philosophical solution to this perennial crisis since a lot of the efforts made by government and non-governmental forces to halt the crisis have proven abortive. Effort is made to present Gabriel Marcel's ethic of interrelations founded on his philosophy of intersubjectivism as a means of repairing the almost irreparable relationship between the herders and farmers. The article is convinced that although there

are ecological lapses fueling the crisis, if the farmers and herders are made to understand that they share the same dignity as persons and very similar business orientations as persons into plant and animal husbandry, both groups would be able to swallow their grievances and find friendly ways to manage the scarce resources that has primarily instigated the crisis.

Ecological Crisis Fuelling Farmer-Herder Crisis

Ecological crisis refers to crisis resulting from changes to the environment of a specie or population which threatens the continuous existence of the organisms within the environment. Some factors that may lead to ecological crisis include: degradation of an abiotic ecological factor (like increase of temperature, less significant rainfall, etc); increased pressure from predation; increase in population (overpopulation). In the case of the farmer-herder crisis the undermining environmental factors that has brought about the ecological crisis is climate change and increase in population in relation to land use, water and irrigation needs.

There are so many causative factors for the unending farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria. Some of these factors are man-made, others are imposed by nature. Some are politically instigated; some are influenced by religious and ethnic predispositions. However, no matter the nature of the causative factor, the crisis revolves around control over farming, grazing land and water (Omawumi par. 14). The factors fuelling the crisis are therefore considered to be primarily ecological in nature. Farmers claim ownership of land and water because such are founded in their ancestral home. Herders claim right of use for water and grazing lands because they believe such are God's gift to all, and to none specifically. Conroy rightly notes that the Fulani view land as a common resource which cannot be personalized, while the sedentary communities usually treat land as their exclusive

preserve which no other community should encroach into (12). Adeleke notes further that farmers accuse herders of damaging their crops by failing to control their animals while the herdsmen equally claimed that the farming communities steal their cattle (38). Ahmed-Gamgum observes that in recent times, illegal invasion of farmland has led to severe conflicts between them due to the harm they have caused to crops and fallow land left to replenish nutrients after long years of use (34). Alozie buttresses that sometimes the herdsmen's cows wander into the farmland of the farmers without permission and kill crop nurseries or full-grown crops, which they hope will be harvested and sold. This kind of behaviour makes farmers to go after their animals, showing that the reduction in ecological space and resorts creates an environment of eco-scarcity that increases the stakes and places a premium on the resources available (43). This leads to rather fierce competition and a desperate struggle for subsistence. Therefore, conflict becomes not only inevitable; it literally becomes a question of survival (Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu 702).

There are some other causative factors leading to farmer-herder crisis revolving around the struggle for control over water, farming and grazing lands. They include; climate change, breakdown in herder-farmer dialogical relations, expansion in plant husbandry, and bad governance. They are discussed briefly below.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the natural factors fuelling the crisis. Gleick notes that "Climate change has been tipped as the biggest single factor in causing migration and relocation of the population" (336). Nigeria's northern regions face desertification

problem which affects the livelihoods of many people (Okeke 73). The amount of rain decreases every year. In the last 30 years, the rain season decreased from 150 days per year to 120 days. According to United Nations, the area which turned into desert or semi-desert in the past sixty years is around 350,000 square kilometer in Nigeria (Gursoy 8). The desertification continues towards southern parts of the country with the speed of 600 meters each year (Shehu 359). The effects of drought and desertification are vital for the people who earn their living from the soil itself. Water resources and grazing lands decreased in northern parts of the country, which drifted the grazing routes of herders into more southern areas. Similarly, the farmers look for new lands to cultivate as they lost some of theirs because of climate change. This naturally leads to clashes between the herders and farmers as both groups jostle for scarce land for grazing and farming respectively.

Expansion in both Plant and Animal Husbandry

Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu observe that expansion in farm production caused by encroachment of pastureland by farmers is also responsible for the aggravating conflict. Initially not cultivated land was regarded as a potential pastureland. With the expansion in agriculture, the available pastureland has narrowed down thereby compelling the pastoralists to encroach into farmlands that were not supposed to be theirs (702). Clara buttresses that where these basic needs of livelihoods of the pastoralists are not met either because of expanding land cultivation or desert encroachment, the pastoralists tend to move to some other places where they can have access to pastures (69). However, where they constitute more pressure to the available land resource, their presence is not always welcomed. This has been found to result into conflict with the settled people of the community (Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu 702).

Breakdown in Herder-Farmer Dialogical Relation

Another driving reason for the conflict between herders and farmers is some pastoralist herders changing to sedentary lifestyle step by step (Gursoy 9). Therefore, in some regions the grazing of animals is done by younger Fulani generations. The younger herdsman are usually not well experienced in negotiating with the farmers like their older peers. Traditionally, herdsman used to go to farmers in dry season right after the harvesting time and ask for allowance to use their land for grazing. This method worked successfully among the two groups for a long time (Gursoy 10). The younger generation is not able to solve the issues with farmers because they do not know how to negotiate and be political with them. This causes violent disputes among the groups (Shehu, 358).

New Husbandry Methods

Another factor triggering the crisis is the changing farming and pasturing practices in recent times due to changes in environmental and ecological factors. As an example, the Tiv ethnic group can be mentioned in here. Tivs are the most populous ethnicity in central Nigeria, living mostly in Benue state with around 4 million population (it was 800000 in 1953) (Gursoy 10). Tiv are settled farmers and their population is not concentrated but instead spread around the county. Due to the rapid population growth and the need to produce more, the Tiv began occupying more arable land and gradually decreased the amount of land they leave to fallow during dry season. This means less space for herdsman in this region to graze their livestock (Genyi 145). Of course, the consequence is conflict especially since the herders of this generation lack the moral savvy or predisposition to dialogue with the farmers for grazing space.

More so, some irrigation projects from the government (such as Agricultural Development Project) allowed farmers to cultivate more land during dry season. While some farmers got more income and found employment in dry season, many herders lost the grazing paths they used to utilize before (Gursoy 10). With the government's National Fadama Development Project (since 1993) which allowed farmers to engage in irrigation farming even in dry season, the space left for pasturing narrowed even more. These changes in usage of land created problems among both groups as all fight for their livelihood which depends on scarce resources (International Crisis Group).

Bad Governance

The Grazing Reserves Act was enacted in 1964 by Nigerian Federal Government, in order to separate certain areas for pastoralist activities. This law was the first official step to encourage sedentarism among pastoralist herders. According to the Act, the government designated 415 specific areas for grazing purposes. However, the aim was not realized because only 114 of those were given the grazing land status officially (Gursoy 9). Even those which were given the status were not properly protected as grazing areas. The ones without an official status mostly ended up as new construction areas, either for business or housing (International Crisis Group).

With the creation of new administrative units after independence, some of the grazing lands became parts of two different local governments. The Land Use Act which was accepted in 1978 gave the decision-making power about land leasing and renting to these units with powers conferred on the State Governors and sometimes Local Government Chairmen (Oladotun & Emmanuel 7). Herders, owing to their lifestyle and cultural disposition (land is everybody's), could not benefit as

expected from the promulgation of the Land Use Act. They continued to depend on their perceived freedom to graze wherever they wish, heightening the tension between local farmers and herders. Moreover, the political elites, those occupying public offices lack the political will to deal with the situation. No arrest of any kind has been made in spite of the very destructive actions of some herders. The general view among farmers and other observers is that herders enjoy some level of protection from the government in spite of the fact that they have been declared one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations internationally.

Failing Efforts Made to Resolve the Crisis

Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin (9-11) rightly captures the following strategies as the response of government and civil organizations to resolving the perennial farmer-herder crisis.

- **Creation of grazing reserves:** In 1965, the northern regional government of Nigeria initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the crisis of pastoralism that was linked to emerging conflicts between farmers and herders in the country. The *Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965* created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. While initially considered a legislative solution to the crisis, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves (7). In addition, herders were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the confines of the reserves due to climate changes and poor maintenance.

- **Establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE):** The federal government established the NCNE in 1989 through Decree 41. It is presently known as *Nomadic Education Act, Cap No. 20 Laws of the Federation*. The main goal of the program was to economically and socially integrate nomadic pastoralists into the national life, through the provision of relevant, functional, and mobile basic education. It was also designed to help the pastoralists modernize their techniques of rearing cattle to maximize their economic potential, including dairy processing and marketing, animal vaccinations, and modern herding techniques (7). This strategy also failed to resolve the crisis due to challenges such as dilapidated infrastructure and human resource deficits and the recalcitrance of herders to change.
- **Deployment of security:** The deployment of security agencies has been a dominant feature of the federal government's response to farmer-herder conflict. In Plateau state, a Special Task Force – Operation Safe Haven (STF-OSH) – has been deployed since 2001 to restore law and order. This Task Force is composed of officers and infantry of the armed forces, including the police, with the mandate to restore order and stability. Recently, the federal government expanded its mandate to include Kaduna state, thereby replacing Operation Harbin Kunama II, (Scorpion Sting) (8). In the Southern part of Nigeria security outfits like *Amotekun* (in the South-west) and *Ebubeagu* (in the South-east) have been set up to check the excesses of the marauding herders. These have reduced the incidence of herder attacks on farmers in rural communities in the South but the crisis is still horrible in the North.
- **State-level legislations prohibiting open grazing:** Benue State Government enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017, on May 22, 2017, in response

to the lingering conflict between farmers and herders in the state. Implementation of the law began on November 1, 2017. In the wake of the Benue State legislation, other states have considered similar legislation to respond to lingering conflicts between farmers and herders within their borders (8). More recently, it is now a common administrative strategy among the governors of the Southern region of Nigeria. As at 2th September 2021 about ten southern governors have prohibiting open grazing by herders within their territory. This too does not ensure a stop to the crisis because herders are still seen indulging in open grazing within regions where it is prohibited by law.

- **The Federal Government's Comprehensive Livestock Development Plan:** In 2015, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) formulated what was referred to as a "comprehensive livestock development plan." The plan was to address lingering conflict between farmers and herders across the country and develop grazing reserves as well as cattle routes, through a review of the existing program (9). This too failed due to lack of political will to implement the strategy.
- **The Great Green Wall Initiative:** In response to the economic, political, and security challenges posed by climate variability and environmental degradation, the African Union introduced the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) in 2007. The GGWI set out to create an 8,000km (nearly 5,000 miles) of trees along the southern Sahel, accompanied by rural development and ecosystem management initiatives, to combat the encroaching desertification of the Sahara Desert. This project collapsed in Nigeria due to inadequate funding.

- **Community-level conflict management and resolution:**

Traditional and community leaders have been major influencers in conflict management and resolution for localized conflicts between farmers and herders (10). This community based interventions haven't proved sufficient too to resolving the crisis. Heads of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and heads of local farming communities led by mediatory bodies have not been able to resolve the crisis through dialogue due to irreconcilable differences.

- **The Use of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT):** cattle theft has often led to herder and farming community clashes. In response to cattle theft, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), in partnership with Zycom Surveillance Nigeria and Datamars of Switzerland, has developed and adopted a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) system that is capable of tracking and monitoring the movement of cattle (10). The Cattle Rustling Information System (CATRIS), which was designed by the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) is able to provide real time information and alerts on cattle rustling in states within the North West region of the country (10). This effort hasn't done anything concrete to check the spate of herder-farmer clashes and the banditry that has become a consequence of both the herder excesses and Boko Haram insurgency.

There are many other known, recorded and possibly unrecorded strategic interventions made by civil societies and individuals, apart from government efforts, to bring an end to the perennial clashes between herders and farmers. The commonality among all these interventions is that they have all failed albeit at different magnitudes to put a permanent end to the problem. Of course, the crisis has worsened in recent times due to the

changing unfriendly climatic conditions within the Sahel and specifically within Northern Nigeria, and the softness with which the central government is handling the herders' excesses due to perceived tribal cleavages. It cannot, however, be concluded that there can be no ways to proffer solution to this ugly crisis since a great many proffered solutions have already failed to yield fruit.

It is pertinent to observe that herders and farmers were not sworn enemies from the beginning. In the 1970s through 80s, 90s and even earlier in the 2000s, farmers and herders went about their activities serenely. There were no issues between the two sets until later in the 2000s. If the two groups enjoyed cordiality in times past but now find themselves in an unending struggle for resources, it means that there is something that went amiss in their way of interaction with each other that led to the crisis. And since all efforts made to resolve the crisis have proven abortive since Adam, it also means that until the missing element in Farmer-Herder relationship is restored nothing productive may be recorded toward curbing the crisis between the two. In what follows, effort is made to spot this missing element by reflecting on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of intersubjectivity.

Gabriel Marcel's Intersubjective Philosophy

Marcel emphasizes two general ways of comporting ourselves towards others that can be used as a measure for human relations; they are *disponibilité* and *indisponibilité*. These words—generally translated as either “availability” and “unavailability” or, less frequently, as “disposability” and “non-disposability”. These bear meanings for Marcel that does not fully apply synonymously in English language. The term *disponibilité* refers

to the measure in which I am available to someone, the state of having my resources at hand to offer; and this availability or unavailability of resources is a general state or disposition. While it may appear that there is the possibility of a selfish allocation of one's resources, the truth is that when resources are not available, their inaccessibility affects both the other and the self. Marcel comments frequently on the interconnected nature of the treatment of others and the state of the self.

Indisponibilité (unavailability) can manifest itself in any number of ways; however, "unavailability is invariably rooted in some measure of alienation" (Marcel, *The Philosophy* 40). Pride is an instructive example of *indisponibilité*, although the same state of non-disposability would also exist in a person who has come to view herself in functional terms, or one who is blinded by a purely technical worldview. Pride is not an exaggerated opinion of oneself arising from self-love, which Marcel insists is really only vanity; rather, pride consists in believing that one is self-sufficient (Marcel, *The Philosophy* 32). It consists in drawing one's strength solely from oneself. Marcel notes: "The proud man is cut off from a certain kind of communion with his fellowmen, which pride, acting as a principle of destruction tends to break down. Indeed, this destructiveness can be *equally* well directed against the self; pride is in no way incompatible with self-hate..." (Marcel, *The Philosophy* 32). For the person who is *indisponible*, other people are reduced to "examples" or "cases" of genus "other person" rather than being encountered *qua* other as unique individuals. Instead of encountering the other person as a 'Thou', the other is encountered as a 'He' or 'She', or even as an 'It'. Marcel explains:

If I treat a 'Thou' as a 'He', I reduce the other to being only nature; an animated object which works in some ways and not in others. If, on the contrary, I treat the other as 'Thou', I treat him and apprehend him *qua* freedom. I apprehend him *qua* freedom because he *is* also freedom and not only nature. When I treat the other person as a He or She, it is because he or she is kept at arm's length but within my grasp, outside of the circle that I form with myself in my *cogito* but inside the circle of "my world" (Marcel, *Being and Having* 106-07).

In contrast, "the characteristic of the soul which is present and at the disposal of others is that it cannot think in terms of *cases*; in its eyes there are *no cases at all*" (Marcel, *Being and Having* 41). The person who is *disponible*, who is available or disposable to others, has an entirely different experience of her place in the world: he acknowledges her interdependence with other people. To be *disponible* to the other is to be present to and for him, to put ones resources at the other's disposal, and to be open and permeable to him. *Disponibility* is therefore the character of a balanced human relationship founded on a subject-subject (I-Thou) relation. *Indisponibility*, on the other hand, is the character of a disbalanced, denigrative and exploitative human relationship founded on a subject-object (I-It) relation.

Marcel gave to existentialism a view of freedom that marries the absolute indeterminacy of traditional existentialism with the view that transcendence out of facticity can only come by depending upon others with the same goals. Freedom is defined by Marcel in both a negative and positive sense. Negatively, freedom is, "The absence of whatever resembles an alienation

from oneself,” and positively it is when, “The motives of my action are within the limits of what I can legitimately consider as the structural traits of my self” (Marcel, Truth and Freedom 232). Freedom, then, is always about the possibilities of the self, understood within the confines of relationships with others. For Marcel, therefore, freedom is participation in selfless relationship with others. In other words, the one who extricates himself from others because he thinks he is powerful and free is realistically not free at all.

Marcel’s Intersubjectivism and Farmer-Herder Crisis: Way Forward

Marcel’s philosophy of intersubjectivism is a dialogical ethic that emphasizes the importance of a balanced interrelation between persons based on mutual beneficence. He demonstrated what an ideal relationship is using the I-Thou as against the parasitic and exploitative one represented by the I-It. In the I-Thou all persons or parties involved have mutual respect for one another or each other depending on the parties involved. The mutual respect is inspired by the knowledge that all persons involved in such a relationship are equals; they are all equals because they share the same humanity. Consideration is not given to necessary accidental differences that may exist among the parties such as level of education, intelligence, political affiliation, level of wealth, tribe or ethnicity, religion, etc. This is because in the I-Thou, all are viewed as subjects. What determines the bond is not the material nature of each person but the essential fact that all participants are persons with a common humanity, the same dignity as persons, and therefore, equal rights. In fact, according to Marcel, in this manner of relationship, each party is always

predisposed to contribute to the welfare of the other. The goal is therefore not who becomes greater than the other, but who outshines the other in acts of charity and self sacrifice. Each party applies his resources always to the wellbeing of the other.

This is the manner of relationship that must be re-engendered between herders and farmers in order to put a final stop to the perennial crisis. Regrettably, the farmers and herders relate on the level of I-It, subject-object relationship; one always seeks opportunity to undermine the other's welfare. Each always sees the other as an enemy to his economic prosperity. The herders see the farmer as never ready to apply his pastures as grazing reserves for their cattle; they therefore seek every opportunity to bulldoze their way into farming territories, graze their cattle, destroy cash crops, and more recently, attack, maim and kill the helpless farmers. In response, the farmer now sees the herder as the devil's incarnate; hence, instead of permitting herders to graze their flock on his land before or even after harvest when the land is free of plantation, he rather sets it on fire. Farmers fret at the presence of herders because their presence have become synonymous with death; herders too seek opportunities to destroy whatever they can and loot whatever valuable they see that belongs to farmers as they go about their trade. Consequently, instead of mutual beneficence based on love and trust that I-Thou relations promote; mutual distrust and exploitation is the norm that underlines the I-It relations that exist between Farmers and herders. The result of this is the humongous wreck that has engulfed many communities in the North Central region of Nigeria due to farmer-herder struggle

for resources. Of course, the ripple of this is now being felt across boards in the country.

Based on Marcel's dialogical philosophy, it is obvious that the fundamental cause of this crisis is not the inadequacy of scarce ecological resources imposed by climate change; it is rather a sudden awakening of a hideous consciousness among herders and farmers that the trade of one party is more important than that of the other; that the tribe of one party is superior than that of the other; that because one party is superior to the other, they can rightfully possess what belongs to the other illegally; and consequently, that because one party's trade is nomadic and some criminal elements use the trade as opportunity to cause harm to others, all those who belong to that trade should be treated as animals and be rejected by the society. This malicious consciousness implies that the two groups suddenly lost the sense of humanity with which they saw, related and treated each other *ab initio*. One suddenly began to see the other as 'less' humans, an 'It' and vice versa. This lack of 'human touch', the loss of the consciousness that whether herder or farmer, Fulani or any other farmer tribe, we all equally 'human' with same dignity as persons, is the quality that went amiss leading to the breakdown in herder-farmer relationship in Nigeria. And until this lack is restored, all other attempts at resolving the crisis will continue to prove futile. In fact, it is possible that even if the Sahel region turns green with beautiful grazing lands available all through the year, there is every chance that the crisis will continue because hate and dissent is already sowed between both parties for generations. Seemingly, one party now sees it as a responsibility to kill, destroy and claim the property of the other.

Conclusion

As noted already, a lot of energy, resources and manpower has been fruitlessly channeled by government and other concerned bodies to nick this crisis in the bud. These measures have been futile because they failed to address the root cause of the crisis which is the sudden but wrong realization by one party that the other's trade is not as important as theirs; one party is more important or even more human than the other. This malicious consciousness is fuelled by tribalism and religious bigotry especially on the path of some political elites and religious heads who are supposed to be of good reckoning. The fact that the crisis worsened under the present national political leadership is a pointer to this fact. Many troubled Nigerians too have rightly observed that the perceived nonchalance of the Buhari administration to hit hard at the menacing herders (his kin both in tribe and trade) is the reason why the crisis has worsened presently.

Effort must, therefore, be made by all stakeholders, religious and political especially, to help restore the lost values that went amiss in the manner herders and farmers view each other. Religious leaders should help re-inculcate the spirit of equality among their folks by constantly reminding all that despite, tribe, race, ethnicity, political party or religion, all human persons are the same because they are all composed of the same components-body and soul. The elderly among the farmers and herders and village heads or heads of nomadic communities must employ every means possibly to register this core human value on the younger ones.

The government too must be seen to be doing everything possible to engender equality and tolerance between the two groups via policy-making, manners of speech, imbursement of aides, etc. Government at all levels must avoid every tendency, no matter how minute, to make or promote policies that will make one group suspect being favoured more than the other or being neglected compared to the other. Government at all levels too must show practically the willingness to use the necessary State might against bad influences and criminal elements among herders and farmers who may be fuelling the crisis no matter their political or religious ranking. These will help close the gap and remove the feeling of superiority one party may be nursing over the other due to a perceived advantages being enjoyed.

More so, the farmers and herders must be treated like other normal civil servants or businessmen out there. Effort must be made by all stakeholders involved in tackling the crisis, especially the government, not to prioritize one of the two trades over the other. Both businesses are owned by individuals. Therefore, excessive and unnecessary considerations should not be made by government in favour of one as if a particular trade is the soul of the country. The emphasis here is transparency and fairness in government policies concerning herding and farming. This is necessary because the government and some powerful individuals and groups in Nigeria have inadvertently promoted this crisis through policymaking, speeches, and even silent gestures made which were perceived to be in support of one party. Such moves embolden one group over the other and serve them the impetus to claim a greater humanity over others and hence inflict whatever manner of harm they desire on others while in pursuit of their interests.

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