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Assessment of Socio-Economic Effects of Boko Haram Insurgency on Pastoralists in Yobe State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on the socio-economic lives of the pastoralists in Yobe State. A three multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 300 pastoralists. Primary data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean while regression was used in testing the study's hypothesis. The results show that 93% of the pastoralists were male and (59%) of the pastoralist were married with an age range of 30-39 years (38%). Also, the pastoralists had an annual income of above N500,000 in the study area. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that the terrorizing effect of the fundamentalist sects of Boko Haram insurgency on the socio-economic characteristics of pastoralists in Yobe state of Nigeria has become devastating livestock activities and livestock industry in the study area the results indicated that low level of education, abject poverty and absent of good government were the major causes of Boko Haram insurgency. The results further showed loss human lives and loss of livestock were the major effects of Boko Haram insurgency and the pastoralists employed crop cultivation. The study further recommends dialogue as a mean of solving insurgency in the study area and multi-dimensional security operatives should be used to curtail insurgency and restore peace and harmony experienced in the area for decades.

INTRODUCTION

Despite being a leading African nation with a vast tropical landmass of 923,768 km² on the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria's agricultural sector fails to reach its full potential (FAO, 2022). The country's diverse agro-ecology supports a wide range of crops, cementing the sector's critical role in employment, GDP, and export earnings. However, growth remains stunted as less than half of the country's arable land is under cultivation, and much of this is farmed by smallholders using basic techniques that yield poor outputs (NBS & World Bank, 2021). These farmers operate under severe constraints, including limited access to modern inputs, credit, functional infrastructure, and markets. These chronic issues are compounded by more recent crises of land degradation and the devastating impact of rural insurgency and community conflicts (Micheal et al., 2023; World Bank, 2022).

Nigeria's national challenges are deeply interconnected, stemming from complex political, economic, social, and religious issues (Shuaibu, Salleh, & Shehu, 2015). Since gaining independence, the country has been plagued by recurring ethnic and religious conflicts of varying intensity. A primary example is the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. What began as a sectarian conflict has evolved into a sophisticated terrorist campaign with international affiliations, presenting a persistent and complex security challenge for the Nigerian state (Campbell, 2021). This prolonged instability has severely

undermined peace and security, forcing many Nigerians in the affected regions to flee their homes as internally displaced persons (IDPs) to ensure their safety (IDMC, 2022). The group has employed various brutal tactics to instill terror, with states like Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, and others bearing the brunt of their attacks.

The livestock production sector in northern Nigeria has suffered catastrophic losses due to this insurgency. The climate of fear and direct violence has compelled pastoralists to abandon their herds, leading to massive livestock mortality. Animals have been killed outright by militants, have starved to death from neglect, or have been lost in the chaos of displacement (Okeke & Uchendu, 2023). Recent assessments confirm that states like Borno and Yobe continue to experience severe losses, crippling a critical component of the regional economy and threatening food security (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2023). It is against this backdrop of enduring socio-economic devastation that this study seeks to assess the specific effects of the Boko Haram insurgency on pastoralists in Yobe State, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Yobe State is located in the North eastern region of Nigeria with Damaturu as its capital. The state was created out of Borno State on August 27, 1991.The State has a vast and extensive land area of about 1,480km^2 with a projected population of the state as at 2016 stood at 3,966,367(UNPFA, 2014) .The State lies between longitudes 130 to 150N and latitudes 110 to 150E, with about 25% of the land occupied by moving sand dunes, 35% by basins (Oasis) and woodland, and the remaining 40% by sand dunes. The inhabitants comprise of Manga (a Kanuri dialect), Kanuri, Fulani, Badawa, Karekare Gizm, Bolawa and Hausa). Other Nigerian tribes and other nationalities are also found.

Yobe State has seventeen (17) Local Government Areas (LGAs). The State is bordered with Niger Republic to the north, Borno State to the west, Gombe, Bauchi and Jigawa states to the south. The annual mean temperature is about 25°Cbut the mean monthly temperature values range between 21°Cin the coolest month and 31°C in the hottest month. The wet season is roughly four months (June to September) and dry season is seven to eight months (October to May). The rainy season sometimes starts in May, but the bulk of the rainfall comes in June through September violent storms, followed by tornado and lightening. The mean annual rainfall is less than 400 mm, maximum annual rainfall is 780 mm and minimum rainfall is 600 mm respectively (Mortimore, 2009).

The sample frame for the study consisted 2,082 pastoralists in the study area. For this study, emphasis was given to Local Government Areas and districts that are predominant in livestock production. According to the records from the Yobe State Ministry of Agriculture, these Local Government Areas (LGAs) are Geidam, Bursari, Fune, Damaturu, Tarmuwa and Potiskum. Sampling of pastoralists for the study was therefore focused on these LGAs. A multi-stage sampling technique is used in the study. The first stage involved purposive selection of two districts from each of the selected LGAs. From each selected district, communities were then selected in the second stage of sampling. In the third stage, a proportionate sampling technique was used to select 15% of the pastoralists in each selected community. This gave a total sample size of 300 pastoralists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency in Yobe State

The major causes of Boko Haram insurgency for this study as shown in Table 1 includes attitude of revenge as a cause, urge of retaliation as a cause, proliferation of small arms as a cause, incitement from politicians, worsening livelihood condition, promotion of cattle rustling business as a cause, loss of herds by nomads as a cause, large scale of unemployment, low level of education as a cause, abject poverty as a cause, absent of good governance as a cause, growing waved of radical Jihadists as a cause, religious misconception as a cause and illiteracy as a cause.

Similarly in Nigeria, the spate of cattle rustling in the northern part of the country in recent years has sometimes been associated with the activities of Boko Haram Islamic sect (Okoli, 2014). The argument in this regards is that rebel or terrorist groups resort to cattle resulting as a means of raising fund in support of the their group agenda (Okoli and Lortyer, 2014).

Table 1: Distribution of pastoralists based on the causes of Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe State.

S/N	Causes	VLE	LE	ME	SE	VSE	Mean	S.D
1	Revenge among pastoralists whose herds were earlier stolen by Boko Haram insurgents.	126(42.0)	45(15.0)	28(9.3)	78(26.0)	23(7.7)	3.58	1.43
2	Retaliation on settled communities by herders for previous confrontation with community vigilante groups or collective resistance by community dwellers.	51(17.0)	94(31.3)	47(15.7)	43(14.3)	65(21.7)	3.08	1.42
3	Proliferation of small arms and ammunition in Nigeria that has placed enormous weaponry in the: hands of Criminal elements some of whom perpetuate Boko Haram insurgency.	187(62.3)	34(11.3)	67(22.3)	5(1.7)	17(5.7)	4.33	1.02
4	Incitement from Politicians.	45(15.0)	94(31.3)	70(23.3)	58(19.3)	33(11.0)	3.2	1.23
5	Worsening livelihood conditions of herders arising from the repercussions of climate change and the related insurgents that tend to compel criminal tendencies among the pastoralists.	85(28.3)	124(41.3)	57(19.0)	32(10.7)	2(0.7)	3.86	0.97
6	Terrorism (Boko Haram insurgency) which promotes cattle rustling as a business dedicated to funding the struggle.	77(25.7)	56(18.7)	32(10.7)	106(35.3)	29(9.7)	3.15	1.39
7	Loss of herds by nomads due to calamities.	8(2.7)	46(15.3)	81(27.0)	77(25.7)	88(29.3)	2.36	1.14

8	Boko Haram insurgency is aided by large scale of unemployment.	143(47.4)	86(28.7)	11(3.7)	24(8.0)	36(12.0)	3.92	1.38
9	Low level of education.	203(67.7)	25(8.3)	66(22.0)	1(0.3)	5(1.7)	4.4	0.86
10	Abject poverty.	166(55.3)	57(19.0)	56(18.7)	13(4.3)	8(2.7)	4.2	1.06
11	Absence of good governance.	79(26.3)	67(22.3)	71(23.7)	67(22.3)	16(5.3)	3.42	1.24
12	Growing wave of radical jihadists in the world.	87(29.0)	85(28.3)	34(11.3)	49(16.3)	45(15.0)	3.4	1.43
13	Religious misconception.	67(22.3)	57(19.0)	88(29.3)	39(13.0)	49(16.3)	3.18	1.36
14	Illiteracy.	67(22.0)	59(19.7)	82(27.3)	53(17.7)	39(13.0)	3.21	1.32

Source: Field survey, 2017. Note: Data presented in this table derives from the author's work conducted 2017. This data serves as a vital baseline and record of the socio-economic conditions of pastoralists at the peak of the Boko Haram insurgency. Subsequent studies and reports (FAO, 2023; Okeke and Uchendu, 2023) have confirmed that the fundamental challenges identified in this 2017 data such as asset loss, displacement, and market collapse have continued to define the pastoralist experience in the region, underscoring the lasting relevance of these findings.

Key: VLE – Very Large Extent, LE - Large Extent, ME – Moderate Extent, SE - Small Extent, VSE - Very Small Extent

Effects of Boko Harm Insurgency

The effects of Boko Haram insurgency for this study as shown in Table 2 includes suffering the loss of relations, bodily injuries, loss of livestock and other animals, loss of hard earned money, waste of time in search of stolen livestock, discouragement of investment, psychological stress, internal and trans-boarder displacement, general sense of insecurity, victimization/abduction/rape, disruption of farming and economic activities, enforcement into Boko Haram insurgency.

Table 2: pastoralists' View on the effects of Boko Haram insurgency

S/N	Effects	VLE	LE	ME	SE	VSE	Mean	SD
1	Loss of human lives.	146(48.7)	134(44.7)	20(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.42	1.43
2	Human injury.	99(33.0)	134(44.7)	33(11.0)	14(4.7)	20(6.7)	3.93	1.42
3	Loss of live stock/ other animals.	94(31.3)	82(27.3)	18(6.0)	87(29.0)	19(6.3)	3.48	1.02
4	Loss of hard- earned money.	89(29.7)	34(11.3)	73(24.3)	69(23.0)	35(11.7)	3.24	1.23
5	Reduction in herd size.	79(26.3)	88(29.3)	56(18.7)	44(14.7)	33(11.0)	3.45	0.97
6	Time wasted in search of stolen livestock.	88(29.3)	67(22.3)	89(20.7)	23(7.7)	33(11.0)	3.51	1.39
7	Increase in poverty level.	99(33.0)	125(41.7)	34(11.3)	15(5.0)	27(9.0)	3.85	1.14
8	Discourages investment in the livestock industry	22(7.3)	44(14.7)	79(26.3)	99(33.0)	56(18.7)	2.59	1.38
9	Illness (Hypertension) and Psychological trauma	87(29.0)	94(31.3)	34(11.3)	45(15.0)	40(13.3)	3.48	0.86

10	Population displacement/forced migration of people.	144(48.0)	102(34.0)	12(4.0)	11(3.7)	31(10.3)	4.06	1.06
11	Fear/ general sense of insecurity.	138(46.0)	106(35.3)	15(5.0)	9(3.0)	32(10.7)	4.03	1.43
12	Victimization abduction/rape of women and children.	176(58.7)	56(18.7)	45(15.0)	10(3.3)	13(4.3)	4.24	1.42
13	Disruption of farming and other economic activities;	99(33.0)	56(18.7)	56(18.7)	37(12.3)	52(17.3)	3.38	1.24
14	Depletion of household income/livelihood.	78(26.0)	100(33.3)	43(14.3)	56(18.7)	23(7.7)	3.51	1.43
15	Financing terrorism through Boko Haram insurgents	91(30.3)	88(29.3)	33(11.0)	45(15.0)	43(14.3)	3.46	1.36
16	Destruction of housing and other properties.	125(41.7)	102(34.0)	47(15.7)	13(4.3)	3(1.0)	4.01	1.32
17	Inability of children to attend schools due to insecurity.	135(45.0)	96(32.0)	56(18.7)	9(3.0)	4(1.3)	4.16	1.17
18	Abduction of young men and forcing them to become insurgents.	67(22.3)	106(35.3)	44(14.7)	76(25.3)	7(2.3)	3.5	1.2
19	Capture of villages by insurgents.	45(15.0)	34(11.3)	67(22.3)	125(41.7)	29(9.7)	2.8	1.44

Source: field survey, 2017

Recommendations

Findings of the study showed that low level of education, abject poverty and absence of good governance were perceived to be the major causes of Boko Haram insurgency by the pastoralists. In line with this, the study recommended that the present security challenges ravaging Nigeria is a multi-faceted problem. Its solution can only be achieved through a multi-dimensional approach. The government should develop the political will to expose and prosecute the high caliber individuals both within and outside the government who have been linked with the Boko Haram militant group. This will cut the support of the terrorist group and serve as a deterrent to other negative-minded individuals who might be nursing similar ambition in the future.

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