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Cattle Rustling in Rural Communities and its Implication on Security in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated cattle rustling in rural communities and its implication on security in Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design. With population comprised of 400 respondents. Clustered random sampling techniques were used to select 150 samples. Data were collected with the help of questionnaires and analyzed using the frequency counts, mean score and standard deviation. It was established that high rate of poverty farmers' herders conflict and accumulation of cows is some of the main causes of cattle rustling in the area. The study further revealed that effects of cattle rustling on the area were effects on the household economy, distrust between communities, loss of lives and insecurity among others. Based on the results, it was recommended that more priority should be given to community policing, government and other agencies working in the area to focus on building peace and development, the use of computer microchips should be employed to determine the location of the animals from the rustlers to enable tracking by the security forces.

Keywords: Cattle rustling, rural areas, insecurity

Introduction

Recent cattle rustlings have become a major crime in Nigeria recent, with the northern and central regions being the hardest hit. In the past few years, rustling activities have resulted in the theft of a huge number of cows, deaths of people and destruction of property. Daily reports across the northern region have confirmed that cattle rustlings have significantly contributed to the increasing security challenges facing the Nigerian state and seem to have become big business involving the herders. However, despite the growing level of cattle rustling and its consequences for society, the situation is yet to receive adequate attention. These conflicts are many, complex and occur at different levels. Uji, (2016) ^[10] viewed castles that households may sell their livestock and use the proceeds to build or extend their dwellings or acquire capital equipment for farming purposes that is purely for economics gains and they can be perceived as capital assets that provide a form of insurance to poor households that, for various reasons, do not have adequate access to formal financial services. Ihyongo, (2018) ^[7] Hence, cattle possession plays multiple social, economic and religious roles in pastoral livelihoods, such as providing a regular source of food in the form of milk, meat and blood for household members, cash income to pay for cereals, education, health care and other services. In pastoral communities, Cattle is also essential for payment of dowry, compensation of injured parties during raids, symbol of prosperity and prestige, store of wealth and security against drought, disease and other calamities

Cattle rustling is the act of stealing cattle it can be referred to as violent activity by pastoral communities stealing livestock from each other. (Bashir, 2017) is the act of forceful raiding of livestock from one community by other using guns and leaving behind the destruction of property and loss of lives. Kwaja, (2014) ^[8] define cattle rustling as an unlawful and forceful seizing of livestock from the herdsman, using any obtainable arm without caring what damage it might cause on the lives and properties of the people.

Interview and focus group discussion conducted by Cinjel, Joseph and Ayeni, (2020) ^[5] have revealed the following types of cattle rustling: Bigol, Social Miscreants, Conflict Entrepreneurs and Ethnic Bigot. Bigol this is a group of young rustlers who are well armed with sophisticated weapons such as guns, machetes, knives, and many other deadly weapons. They specialize in rustling and often unleash havoc like destroying properties and even killing of people in where ever they wanted to carry out their heinous act. In addition, most of them hide their act during the period of conflicts and their activities in a number of instances have triggered many attacks. Social Miscreants: This is the collection of miscreants in society, their membership cut across different ethnic groups, religions and many more most are they are idle, lazy and mostly into drugs, alcohol consumption and many other non-productive ventures. These sets of youth have exploited their energy into the act of cattle rustling to sustain their way of living. Lastly, Conflict Entrepreneurs: These are a group of persons who generate income or earned a lot whenever there is conflict in the society, they instigate acts or spur some groups into those acts that often result in conflict. This kind of people in the area and mostly outside the state buys guns and supplied them to the perpetrators; this is to help them get the cows at a cheaper rate than they would buy directly from the real owners. Shehu, Victor and Binta, (2017) ^[9] these conflicts entrepreneurs have access to a lot of markets and have impacted negatively on the conflicts in the local government area. Ethnic Bigot: This is also one of the groups of cattle rustlers that operate within the state, this group stems from the two main opposing ethnic groups in the area. We have the faction from the Fulani ethnic group and the other faction from the other ethnic group.

A cross-sectional interview with both Fulani herders and herders from another ethnic group in Plateau and Nasarawa States shows that the ethno-religious conflicts and farmer-herders confrontations in the state had an open way to an organized and planned system of cattle rustling in the state Ihyongo, (2018) ^[7]. This continued to be a problem in Nigeria and has created a lot of distrust and hatred among ethnic groups in society. They often argued that it is not all the Fulani speaking people that herd and so also, they are not the only group of people that herds cows in the society.

Some of the major causes of cattle rustling are the high rate of poverty, political interference, migration of the rustlers, farmer's herder's conflict, primitive accumulation of cows and hostility towards an enemy are the major causes of cattle rustling (Ihyongo, 2018) ^[7]. Akowe and Kayode (2014) ^[3] also observed that high rate of poverty, migration of the rustlers, farmers-herders conflict, primitive accumulation of herds cows and hostility towards an enemy as factors that aggravate cattle rustling in Nigeria. Abimaje (2014) ^[1] noted cattle rustling in itself is depicted as a creation of poverty. Poverty is the major cause and for long has continued to remain in itself as one of the dominant consequences of the conflict in the area. The youth among the ethnic divide indulged in the act as a result of poverty and other related factors such as unemployment, idleness, illiteracy and many others.

The effects of cattle rustling can be so glaring as viewed by Adeniyi (2015) ^[2] is always accompanied with violence like crises, distrust between communities, main herders and raped women, creates a sense of insecurity and affects the household economy as the main effects of cattle rustling.

Some of the major of effects of cattle rustling are as observed by Greiner (2013) ^[6] are proliferation of light and small arms by bandits with the mission of killing people and stealing of cows. (Yusuf, 2015) ^[11] opined that the rustlers kill and maim the herders. In some instances, their always distrust between the farmers and the herders. The implication of this development is that it has the capacity of raising cattle rustling to a level where it will have degenerated into terrorist.

The high level of cattle rustling in Plateau state especially Mangu, Riiyom, Barkin - Ladi and Bokkos Local Government Area by rustlers has heightened fears among the populace and the international community and has eaten deep into the economy and as a matter of fact, the hostility has gone beyond religious or political coloration. Cinjel, Joseph, and Ayeni, (2020) ^[5] stated that cattle rustling contributes to proliferation of small arms which have drastically increased the intensity security challenge in Plateau state. It has serious effects on the socio-economic, political, cultural, and psychological spheres of society. Cinjel, Joseph, and Ayeni, (2020) ^[5] from their studied, it was established that there is a strong connection between cattle rustling and the protracted conflicts in Barkin Ladi local Government Area of Plateau state.

At the economic level, it constitutes a major threat to the livelihood of herders and those who depend on cows for survival. At the socio-political level, rustlers' activities have resulted in death, loss, and the destruction of lives and property, thereby disturbing peace and security. Therefore, the Nigerian government is expending major resources to eradicate rustling. At the psychological level, a vast number of people have been disposed of their belongings, and families have been traumatized and there have been reported cases of rape and kidnapping, which has caused psychological trauma.

Cattle rustling has been a veritable threat of public safety and security threat in the Mangu Local Government Area. It has led to a loss of lives, population displacement as well as loss of cattle in their numbers. It creates a sense of insecurity and loss of cattle to rustlers, this act apparently degenerates into terror-brand mass raids where innocent villagers including women and children are victimized and raped. It has negatively affected the socio-economic and political development of the area. The government spends a considerable amount on security and overall budgets trying to bring the problems conflicts into other prone areas. To achieve sustainable development in these areas, conflicts must be conclusively managed. It is in this respect this study investigates the menace of cattle rustling and implication on security in the rural communities of Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau state.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

1. Identify the causes of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau state
2. Examine the nature of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau state
3. Examine the impact of Cattle rustling on socio-economic and political development in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau state

Research Questions

In view of the statements of the research problem, the study

put forward the following questions:

1. What are the causes of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?
2. What are the nature of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?
3. What extend does cattle rustling affects the people of the rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?

Methodology

A descriptive research design was used for the study. This is because it aids the collection of information for the target population. The population comprised of 400 hundred rural dwellers. The area was segmented into six (6) clusters of villages. Kombun, Jipal, Pushit, Chakfem and Mangu - Halle. A cluster Simple random sampling technique was used for the study with ten-person of the population with the sample size of 150. The instrument for data collection was a self-design questionnaire. The questionnaire title: Cattle rustling and insecurity in rural communities in Mangu Local

Government Area of Plateau state, Nigeria. Information from the questionnaire contains twenty questions items on a four Likert scale SA, A, D, SD that will help the researchers to get require information. To validate the instrument, the questionnaire was given to two experts from Social Studies Education and Test and Measurement units at the Federal College of Education Pankshin. In addition, in order to establish the reliability of the items, a test-retest method was adopted. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled respondents. The research questions were answered using frequency counts, mean score and standard deviation. Any mean above 2.50 will be regarded as affirmed, however, any mean below 2.50 will be regarded as disaffirmed.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

1. **Research Questions 1:** What are the nature of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?

Table 1: Responses on the nature of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State

S/N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score	Decision
1	young boys from the same extractions who use sophisticated weapons	150	25	65	40	20	2.63	Affirmed
2	Social miscreant: membership cuts across different ethnic groups and religions	150	76	54	18	2	3.36	Affirmed
3	Conflict entrepreneurs: these are group of people who give guns to the rustlers	150	58	50	30	12	2.97	Affirmed
4	Ethnic bigots: these are groups from different camps i.e. rivals	150	70	55	20	5	3.26	Affirmed

Source: Field study 2021

From table 3 above, the mean of 2.63 indicates that respondents accept that young boys from the same extraction who uses sophisticated firearms. Social miscreant: membership cuts across different ethnic groups and religions with a mean score of 3.36 was accepted. In addition, the mean score of 2.97 indicated the acceptance of conflict entrepreneurs: these are groups of people who give guns to the rustlers. The mean score of 3.26 indicated that ethnic bigots: are groups from different camps or rival groups that

manifest as cattle rustlers. The result showed that respondents agreed with all the statements in the Table 1 that they are all nature of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State.

2. **Research Questions 2:** What are the causes of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?

Table 2: Responses on the causes of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State

S/N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score	Decision
1	High rate of poverty	150	70	55	20	5	3.36	Affirmed
2	Migration of the rustlers	150	65	69	10	6	3.28	Affirmed
3	Farmers herders conflict	150	80	60	8	2	3.48	Affirmed
4	Primitive accumulation of herds cows	150	75	50	17	8	3.11	Affirmed

Source: Field study 2021

Table 2 above, shows a high rate of poverty is the cause of cattle rustling as indicated by the mean score of 3.36. 3.28 indicates that migration of the rustlers fastens the activities of rustlers. The study further revealed that farmer's herder's conflict causes cattle rustling with a mean score of 3.48. It shows that the primitive accumulation of cows is another cause with a mean score of 3.11. From the results presented, it could be inferred that all the statements put in place to elicit

responses from the respondents are the causes of cattle rustling in rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State.

3. **Research Questions 3:** To what extent does cattle rustling affects the people of the rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State?

Table 3: Responses on the extent to which cattle rustling affects the people of the rural areas of Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State

s/n	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score	Decision
1	Cattle rustling is always accompanied by violence	150	80	54	12	4	3.18	Affirmed
2	Distrust between communities	150	71	60	16	3	3.20	Affirmed
3	Creates a sense of insecurity	150	80	50	13	7	3.17	Affirmed
4	Affects the household economy	150	76	54	18	2	3.36	Affirmed

Source: Field study 2021

From table 3 above, the mean score of 3.18 shows that cattle rustling is always accompanied by violence. Distrust between communities with the mean score of 3.20. the mean score of 3.17 agrees that cattle rustling creates a sense of insecurity and lastly, the mean score of 3.36 shows cattle rustling affects household economy. This implies that cattle rustling has serious negative effects on the people of Plateau state, especially the Mangu Local Government Area.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study are in line with the work of Cinjel, Joseph and Ayeni, (2020)^[5] who point out that the nature of rustling to include: have revealed the following types: Bigol, Social Miscreants, Conflict Entrepreneurs and Ethnic Bigot. Bigol this is a group of young rustlers who are well armed with sophisticated weapons such as guns, machetes, knives, and many other deadly weapons. They specialize in rustling and often unleash havoc like destroying properties and even killing of people in where ever they wanted to carry out their heinous act. In addition, most of them hide their act during the period of conflicts and their activities in a number of instances have triggered many attacks. Social Miscreants: This is the collection of miscreants in society, their membership cut across different ethnic groups, religions and many more most are they are idle, lazy and mostly into drugs, alcohol consumption and many other non-productive ventures. These sets of youth have exploited their energy into the act of cattle rustling to sustain their way of living. Lastly, Conflict Entrepreneurs: These are a group of persons who generate income or earned a lot whenever there is conflict in the society, they instigate acts or spur some groups into those acts that often result in conflict. This kind of people in the area and mostly outside the state buys guns and supplied them to the perpetrators; this is to help them get the cows at a cheaper rate than they would buy directly from the real owners.

The findings of the study also revealed that unemployment, idleness, illiteracy and many others. A lot of the youths have come to an agreement with the term as an avenue to a satisfying end meet and some see it as a strategy to weaken and as well deem power their opponent, poverty also breed contempt, jealousy, selfishness, destruction, and ignorance so also is this applicable to the case of poverty as agreed with the work of Abimaje (2014)^[1].

Lasly, Adeniyi (2015)^[2] agreed with the findings that that cattle rustling is always accompanied with violence likes crises, distrust between communities, main herders and raped women, creates a sense of insecurity and affects the household economy as the main effects of cattle rustling. Some of the major of effects of cattle rustling are as observed by Greiner (2013)^[6] also agreed with the findings as proliferation of light and small arms by bandits with the mission of killing people and stealing of cows as some of the effects of cattle rustling.

Conclusion

Cattle rustling has emerged as a major security challenge and has become a major crime with negative consequences on most rural communities in Plateau states most especially Mangu Local Government Area. It is the act of stealing cattle by either individuals or group of individuals. The practice has not only become a major crime but has propelled the grounds for keeping malice, hatred, proliferation of lights and small ammunitions and security challenge.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made that

1. Government should encourage and give more priority to community policing and security personnel always go after the rustlers.
2. There is a need for the government and other agencies working in the area to focus on Building Peace and Development.
3. The government together with other organizations should take a leading role in addressing the challenges affecting unemployment, idleness and illiteracy.
4. There should be creation of cattle ranges and ranches for easy security of herds as well as effective regulation of grazing activities.
5. Butchers and Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria must be involved in the fight because they are in a better position to identify rustled cows when they are brought to the market.
6. The use of computer microchips should be employed to determine the location of the animals from the rustlers to enable tracking by the security forces.

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