# MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF CATTLE RUSTLING IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

## BY

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## ABSTRACT

Cattle rustling has grown in dimension and viciousness particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria which Zamfara state is categorized as one of the flash points. The devastating effects of the phenomenon of cattle rustling call for strategies towards addressing it. This study examined the management strategies towards addressing the challenges of cattle rustling in Zamfara state, Nigeria. A total of 390 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents using multi-stage sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages and mean scores. The study reveals that cattle rustling occurred on a monthly basis (55.7%), rustling occurs mostly at the midnight and usually lasts for more than two hours (37.5%). It was found that about 57% of the respondents reported that farming activities are affected by cattle rustling followed by 24% who reported that cattle rearing were affected. The most adopted cattle rustling management strategies are reporting of suspected cattle rustlers to the village head and people running to safer places for refuge during cattle rustling attacks with mean scores of 4.10 and 3.90 respectively. The study recommended that security agencies in collaboration with local vigilantes should be drafted effectively to the cattle rustling affected communities particularly at night hours and that the Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Company (NAIC) and other similar institutions should provide enabling platforms for the people to insure their cattle against possible theft and loss of income.
**Key words:** Cattle rustling, Management strategies, Pastoralism

## INTRODUCTION

Security concerns have become one of the disturbing issues in Nigeria, as people and their livelihood have become exposed to violence and other forms of insecurity. In many cases, threats to peace and incessant conflict, subject rural livelihoods to shocks which increase vulnerability. Indeed, armed banditry and cattle rustling particularly in Nigeria, have become a key internal security concern in the country (Virginie and Lara, 2014). Their transformation into a huge socioeconomic and security threat has been unprecedented, and northern Nigeria is the epicenter of the menace (Abdulrashid, Saifullahi and Amir, 2018). The customary mix of crop and livestock production was completely disrupted and left households with no option rather than to explore other alternative means of livelihoods (Ibrahim, Ozdeser and Cavusoglu, 2018), which often negatively affect their wellbeing. Cattle rustling are an insecurity menace that has plagued Zamfara state in recent times.

Cattle rustling is a planned and organized crime involving the stealing of livestock forcefully from another person or from the grazing field by a group of individuals, and for the purpose of commercial gain (Behnke, 2008). Isabel (2014), viewed cattle rustling as involving the use of arms to steal households' entire livestock possession. The involvement of actors such as Boko Haram and the movement of cattle across national boundaries, in the view of Okoli and

Okpaleke (2014) has made cattle rustling to be recognized as a form of transnational organized crime. Contemporary cattle rustlers operate with modern weaponry and their operations are marked by trans-locational and trans-national syndication.

The incidence of cattle rusting is most pronounced in villages lying between the four Northern states of Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, and Niger, where it has led to loss of many lives, human injury and population displacements, as well as loss of cattle in their numbers and farm outputs (Yusuf, 2015). Murtala (2018) documented that between October 2013 and March 2014 approximately 7,000 cattle were rustled from commercial livestock farms and traditional herders in Northern Nigeria. This situation goes with repercussions that do not portend well for the collective wellbeing of the herding communities. It creates a sense of insecurity which has the capacity to hamper the productivity of the herding enterprise as well as farming activities (Vincent, 2015). Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) worried that the loss of cattle to rustlers means depletion of household income and communal resources. The implications of this for sustainable productivity of the herding venture are easy to decipher. This could ultimately lead to not only a drop in the aggregate supply of organic protein and dairy but also agricultural products.

In Zamfara state, pastoral communities have been involved in conflicts. As pastoralism revolves around livestock, the conflicts are predominantly about cattle and its related productive assets - water, land and pasture (Anas, 2017). These previous resource-based conflicts have been taken to criminal dimensions by individuals who attack rural dwellers to rustle livestock and perpetrate heinous crimes. Cattle rustling has evolved over time from being an accepted traditional practice sanctioned by the village elders into being a commercialized and criminal venture. However, currently, the phenomenon of cattle rustling in Zamfara state is causing great concern. According to Kehinde, Uchechukwu, and Mamuh (2015) cattle rustling activities have destroyed people and villages, turning villagers into Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). There is thus, the need for strategies towards curbing the menace of cattle rustling. This scenario made it appropriate to undertake the study on the management strategies towards addressing the challenges of cattle rustling in Zamfara state

**THE STUDY AREA**

Zamfara state is located between Latitudes 10° 49'.37"N - 13° 8' 39" N of the Equator and Longitudes 4° 56' 54"E - 7° 16' 11"E of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bounded to the north by Sokoto State, to the north-east by Niger Republic, Kebbi, and Niger states, to the south-west by Katsina and Kaduna states to the east and south respectively (Figure 1). The state covers an area of 38,418 Square Kilometers. The climate condition of Zamfara is tropically warm with temperature rising up to 38°C and above between March to May. Daily temperature in Zamfara is high ranging between 24°C and 27°C with the highest temperature in April and lowest in January (Murtala, 2018). Two persistent seasons of dry and wet are established. The former last for seven months (October-April), while the latter has duration of five month (May-September). Average annual total rainfall ranges between 600mm in the South part to 400mm in the West and 250mm in the North and East respectively. The rainy season starts in late May to September while the cold season known as Harmattan lasts from December to February (Hof and Rischkowsky, 2018).

Ferruginous tropical soils and lithosols are the two major soil types in Zamfara state. The ferruginous tropical soil can be found in the northern and central parts of the state, particularly around Gumi, Bukuyyum, Anka (which include Bagega) and Bakura. The soils are characterized by a sandy surface horizon, with clayey subsoil, both of which are fertile for

agricultural production. The study area traverses two ecological zones: the Sudan Savanna to the North and North-East and Northern Guinea Savanna to the South. The latter is fairly dense with spacetrees, shrubs and herbs. The Zamfara and Runka forests form the larger part of an ecosystem extending into the Maradi of the Republic of Niger (Anas, 2017).
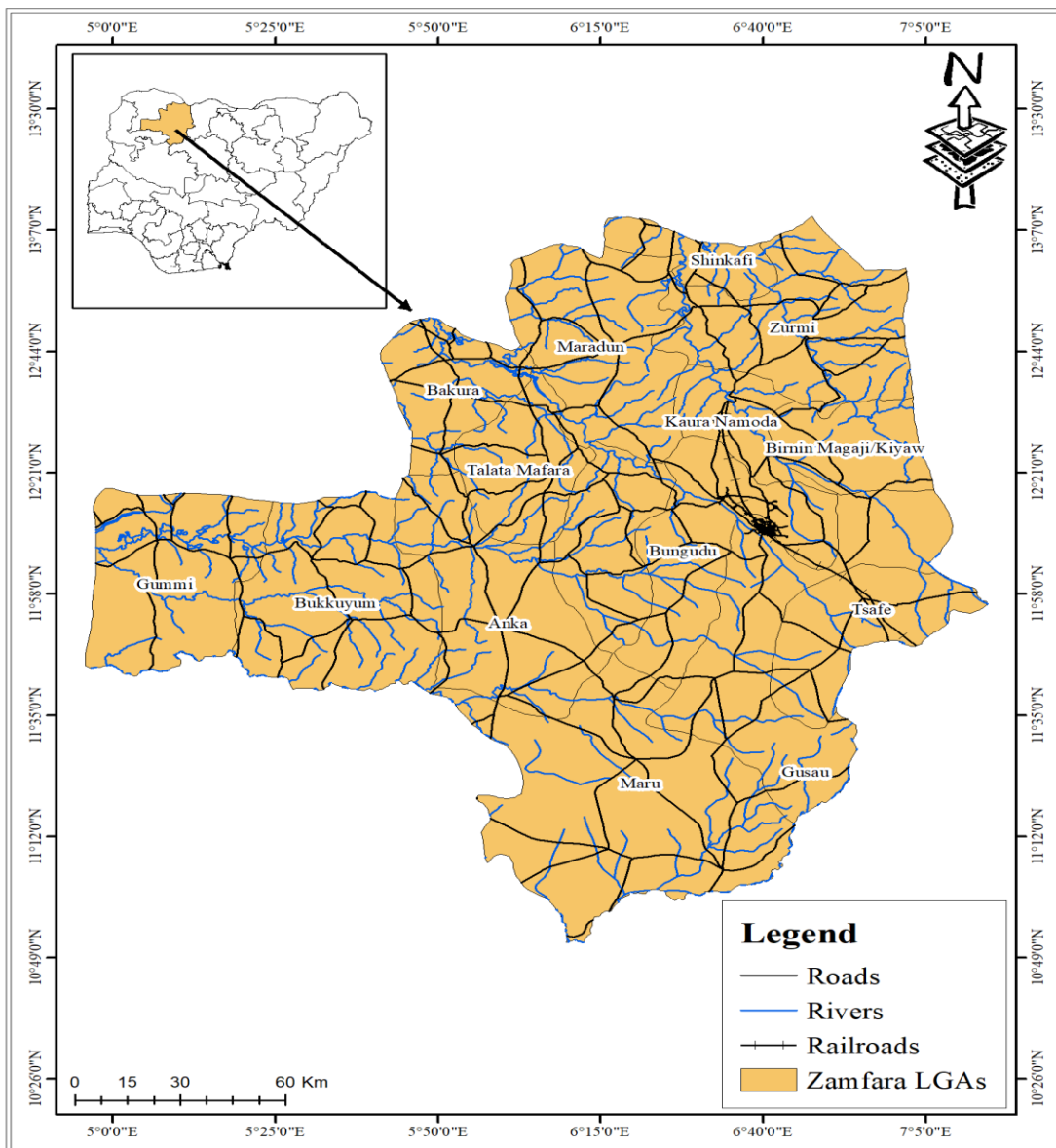


**Figure 1: The Study Area**
Source: Adapted and Modified from the Administrative Map of Zamfara State

The population of the study area according to 2006 census stands at 3,278,873 with a population density of 93.2 persons per square kilometer (National Population Commission [NPC], 2009). Zamfara state population was projected to 2020 using the exponential method with 3.20% inter-census growth, and it stood at 5,132,022. The study area is mainly populated by Hausa and Fulani people, with some members of Gwari, Kamuku, Kambari, Dukawa, Bussawa and Zabarma ethnic communities. Others include the Igbo, Yoruba, Kanuri, Nupe and Tiv. The economy of Zamfara state is very much dependent on agriculture for both food and raw materials provision with nearly 90% of the population engaged in agriculture.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. Due to unavailability of record on the targeted population (herdsmen and victims of cattle rustling), the 1991 population census of the wards in each LGA was projected to year 2020 and the three (3) selected LGAs stood at 469,535. This was considered as the study population. Yamane (1967) formula was used to calculate a sample size of 390 respondents.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used in this study. First stage involved the purposive selection of three (3) LGAs affected most with cattle rustling in the study area with relative low security threat based on the researcher knowledge from the key informant during the reconnaissance survey. The selected LGAs are Maradun, Shinkafi and Tsafe. The next stage was the purposive sampling of the political wards in each of the selected LGA where there was frequent incident of cattle rustling as identified by the key informant. This resulted into the selection of fifteen (15) political wards. The third stage was the used of snowball sampling technique to administer questionnaire to the respondents (herdsmen and victims of cattle rustling) in each of the selected political ward in the study area. This was done until the required sample size was obtained.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean scores were employed to analyze the data. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 SPSS was used to carry out the analysis of data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows that about 63% of the respondents were males while 37% were females. This is an indication both men and women are affected by livestock rustling. However, cultural and religious restriction which made more males available during the survey explains the sex distribution of those affected by cattle rustling. Regarding the age distribution, 43% of the respondents were aged between 25 - 34 years, followed 23.4% accounting for those 35 - 44 years. This is clearly depicting the involvement of the youthful population in cattle rearing activities. This finding is consistent with Kaprom (2013) that youths between 31 – 40 years were familiar with cattle rustling and its effect on the income of victims. Generally, it is believed that this specified age bracket are breadwinners of most families in the society as such any negative effect on their disposable income can affect the larger society negatively. The result revealed that 53.2% of the respondents are married with 31.7% being single.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 245 | 62.7 |
| Female | 145 | 37.3 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |
| Age | Frequency | Percent |
| 15-24 | 59 | 15.3 |
| 25-34 | 166 | 43 |
| 35-44 | 90 | 23.4 |
| 45-54 | 36 | 9.4 |
| 55 and above | 39 | 10.1 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |
| Marital Status | Frequency | Percent |
| Single | 124 | 31.7 |
| Married | 208 | 53.2 |
| Divorced | 33 | 8.4 |
| Widowed | 26 | 6.6 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey (2020).

**Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents**

It was found that most of the respondents had at least one form of formal education with tertiary level (32.2%) accounting for the highest (Table 2). This suggests a high literacy level among the respondents and could understand the effects of cattle rustling. More so, given the assertion of Kimani (2020) on education, this is expected to play an important role in reducing cattle rustling practice in the study area. This result disagrees with the findings of Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, Fasanya, Kareem & Dolapo (2019) that 62.0% of the pastoralists had Quranic education and 39.0% had no formal education in Niger state. A quite number of the respondents did not have any formal education representing 38.2%. Table 2 revealed that farming (22.5%) and trading (21.5%) are the predominant occupation types among the respondents in the study area. The monthly earning of respondents varies as only 27.4% had a monthly income of less than ₦10,000, followed by 23.3% that earn ₦26,000 and above. The variation in income is no doubt unconnected with the unstable nature of income associated with the informal income-generating activities such as farming and trading which was predominantly engaged among the respondents.

**Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

| Educational level | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | 114 | 29.2 |
| Secondary | 98 | 25.1 |
| Tertiary | 126 | 32.2 |
| No formal education | 148 | 38.2 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |
| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
| Farming | 88 | 22.5 |
| Livestock rearing | 22 | 5.6 |
| Artisanal mining | 52 | 13.3 |
| Fishing | 16 | 4.1 |
| Trading | 84 | 21.5 |
| Transportation | 5 | 1.3 |
| Retail | 15 | 3.8 |
| Civil service | 41 | 10.7 |
| Unemployed | 67 | 17.1 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |
| Monthly Income | Frequency | Percent |
| Less than ₦10,000 | 89 | 27.5 |
| ₦11,000 - ₦15,000 | 46 | 14.2 |
| ₦16,000 - ₦20,000 | 51 | 15.8 |
| ₦21,000 - ₦25,000 | 62 | 19.2 |
| ₦26,000 and above | 75 | 23.3 |
| Total | 323 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 2020

**Regularity of Cattle Rustling Attack**

Figure 2 indicated that 57% of the respondents agreed that cattle rustling attack occurs monthly while 43% agreed that cattle rustling are carried out regularly on weekly basis. The findings agree well with that of the New Humanitarian newspaper (2018), which says cattle rustling are carried out monthly in Zamfara state. When cattle rustling occurs on monthly basis, it indicates an average time the rustlers expected the people to have accumulate sufficient stocks to raid them.
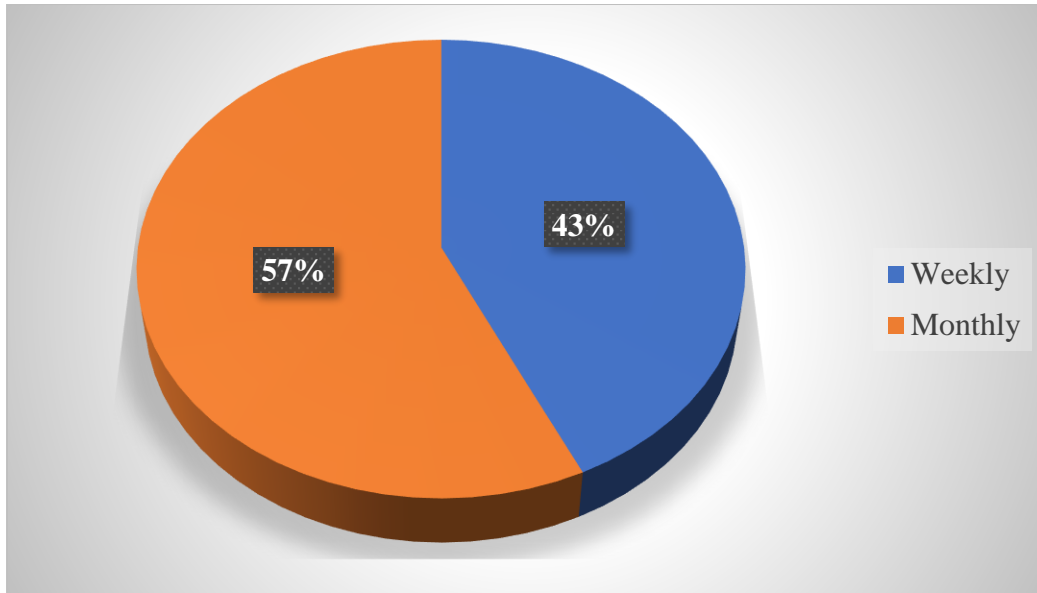
**Figure 2: Regularity of Cattle Rustling Attack**
Source: Author's survey, 2020.

## Livelihood Activity Affected by Cattle Rustling

Figure 3 reveals that about 57% of the respondents identified farming as the most affected livelihood option, followed by cattle rearing with 16.9%. Trading was observed to be the least livelihood option affected by cattle rustling in the study area. This is an indication that cattle rustling has become a major and rising threat to the sustainable livelihood activities of the people in the study area. The implication is that such would cause untold hardship and affect the income and wellbeing of the people and their family members negatively. This finding partly corroborates the assertion of Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) that cattle rustling constitutes a major threat to the livelihood of herders and those who depend on cows for survival.
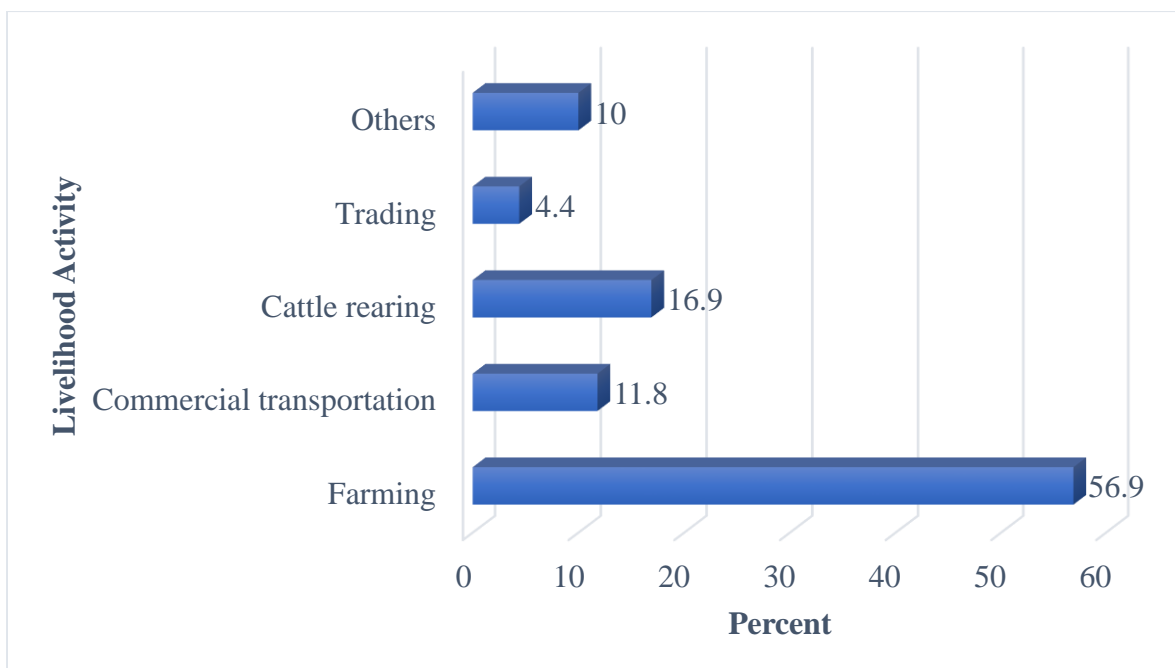


**Figure 3: Effect of Cattle Rustling on Livelihood Options**
Source: Author survey, 2020

**Strategies Adopted in Managing the Effects of Cattle Rustling**

Table 3 show that reporting of suspected of cattle rustler is to the village head and people run to safer places for refuge during cattle rustling attack were the most adopted strategies in managing the effects of cattle rustling with mean scores of 4.10 and 3.90 respectively. Closely followed were trading one's money and personal belongings with rustlers for safety and victims being helped by the community and friends. This disagrees with Victor (2020) findings, which revealed that clear demarcation between farming sites and grazing routes, promotion of religious tolerance among farmers and cattle rustlers, establishment of mechanism for settling dispute between farmers and cattle rustlers, and deployment of security forces to deals with cattle rustlers as among the strategies employed to prevent cattle rustling in Yobe state. Government compensating victims of cattle rustling was the least management strategy adopted by the respondents as it accounts for 2.80 mean score and ranked eleven.

**Table 3: Strategies Adopted in Managing the Effects of Cattle Rustling**

| Strategy | Mean Score | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Reporting of suspected cattle rustler to the village head | 4.10 | 1 |
| People run to safer places for refuge during cattle rustling attack | 3.90 | 2 |
| Trading one's money and personal belongings with rustlers for safety | 3.80 | 3 |
| Victims of cattle rustling are helped by the community and friends | 3.70 | 4 |
| Suspected incidences are reported directly to security personnel | 3.60 | 5 |
| Forced migration of herdsmen | 3.60 | 6 |
| Herdsmen abandoning cattle rearing for another livelihood option | 3.50 | 7 |
| Counter attacks are coordinated and made by the community | 3.30 | 8 |
| Security personnel counter attacks at any attack of cattle rustling | 3.20 | 9 |
| Victims are usually being taken care of by the government | 3.00 | 10 |
| Those whose cattle are rustled are compensated by the government | 2.80 | 11 |

Source: Author's survey, 2020

**CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that cattle rustling has become a major threat to the livelihood of the people as farming and cattle rearing were the most affected livelihood activities. It was shown that the youths are the most affected by cattle rustling. Reporting suspected cattle rustlers and running to safer places for refuge were the strategies adopted by the people to address the effects of cattle rustling. The study recommended that security agencies in collaboration with local vigilantes should be drafted effectively to the cattle rustling affected communities particularly at night hours, regular surveillance of the affected communities to enable tracking of the location of the rustlers and that the Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Company (NAIC) and other similar institutions should provide enabling platforms for the people to insure their cattle against possible theft and loss of income.

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