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PROSPECT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN FARMERS AND NOMADIC FULANIS IN KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

The study analysed the activities of Nomadic Fulanis in four villages; Bambafu, Mazakuka, Faje and Kere located within the buffer zone of the Kainji Lake National Park. The data was obtained by the administration of questionnaires and personal interviews with farmers, nomadic Fulanis and Park guards. The study clearly identified the routes of nomadic herdsmen from Kebbi to Oyo States and the need for a pasture corridor in order to ensure harmony between all the stakeholders. The nature of the property-rights regime under which the pasture was held was also found to provide sufficient basis for drawing valid conclusions concerning users behaviour, as well as, the consequence of such uses.

INTRODUCTION

Ecological systems and the organisms which comprise them have evolved with and are a product of various stresses, perturbations, and disturbance regimes. However, in human-influenced systems, new disturbances and stresses may be introduced and the frequency, intensity and spatial extent of natural disturbances are often greatly altered.

Despite the efforts of the Nigerian government to ensure increased productivity in the livestock sector by providing incentives for the settlement of the nomadic herdsmen, it has not been possible to ensure sustainable use of the available environmental resources such as rangelands and grazing resources in the savanna areas of the country (Erdmana, 1993). This raises the question of whether the available resources are being carefully managed to ensure renewability and sustainability. The issue is crucial because, notwithstanding the plausibility of a sedentarization (conversion from nomadic to settlement living) policy, achieving the desired results in Northern Nigeria is unlikely unless the sustainability of resource-use is guaranteed. The situation is compounded by the fact that the livestock population appears divorced from the soil while the nomads herd their cattle freely from one part of the country to another with the risk of spreading livestock and human diseases. Furthermore, the nomads

operate selective grazing methods which degrade the range; soils, the environment and even current year's farmlands as well as water supply sources of rural settlements. No matter how aesthetically attractive the nomads may be, or how deep their roots in history, they and their cattle must become settled if the larger issues in Nigeria are to be solved in the interest of the Nigerian people.

Efforts aimed at maintaining sustainability would benefit from reliable information about the nature of existing property-rights regime under which grazing resources are held and the effectiveness of management practices in the face of growing population. With respect to grazing resources, arguments arising from studies in East Africa suggest that the carrying capacity of rangelands under any management has been exceeded (Talbot, 1986). Other studies indicate that population is not the only culprit but merely one of many interrelated social and economic problems (Jodha, 1985; Peters, 1985). The foregoing is an indication that a great lacuna remains to be filled in the analytical approaches to the study and understanding of resource management practice under conditions of shifting populations.

It is important to seek answers to some key questions. For instance, how does the pattern of access of migrants to land and grazing resources affect resource management options and incentives? What socio-economic and demographic factors affect the adoption of existing land use patterns?

METHODOLOGY

The study covered four villages namely, Kere, Bambafu, Faje and Mazakuka located within the buffer zone of Kainji Lake National Park (Fig. 1). Personal observation and administration of questionnaires (50) were used for data collection in each village. The questionnaires were served on 3 categories of people

- (1) Farmers/inhabitants of the villages.
- (2) Park guards of Kainji Lake National Park
- (3) Nomadic herdsmen.

However, as many herdsmen that were willing to respond were selected and interviewed, because of aggressive and hostile attitude of many of the herdsmen. A combination of qualitative and quantitative tools was used, but more emphasis was placed upon the use of the qualitative methods including Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) and in-depth interviews with key informants (IDIs).

Percentile was used in analyzing the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic ratings in Table 1 show that the male (98.5%) responded better than the female (1.5%) and very low literacy level (5%) was recorded among the villagers.

Table 1: Demographic rating of Respondents (N = 50)

Factors	Study Sites				x	%
	Kere	Bambafu	Faje	Mazakuka		
Gender						
Male	48	50	50	49	197	98.5
Female	2	0	0	1	3	1.5
			Total		200	100
Education						
Illiterate	45	49	49	47	190	95
Literate	5	1	1	3	10	5
			Total		200	100

The estimated number of respondents that encountered the cattle Fulanis on their farms is shown in Table 2 where more than 20 (72.5%) respondents claimed to have seen Fulani herdsman on their farms. However, it is pertinent to note that all the respondents had encountered the nomadic herdsman on their respective farms.

Table 2: Estimated number of Respondents that encountered cattle Fulani herdsmen on their farms and the rate of Occurrence (N = 50)

Rate of Occurrence	Study Sites				x	%
	Kere	Banbafu	Faje	Mazakuka		
None	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 – 10	4	1	6	4	15	7.5
11 – 20	7	6	12	15	40	20
20 and above	39	43	32	31	145	72.5
Total					200	100

With 95% of the Park (Table 1) claiming to have seen the cattle herdsmen around and in the Park shows a very high prevalence status while the remaining 5% have only met them on few occasions.

Table 3: Estimated number of Park guards that met herdsmen in the Park

Number of Park guards	Frequency	%
None	-	-
1 – 10	-	-
11 – 20	1	5
20 and above	19	95
Total	20	100

In Table 4, 65% of the nomadic herdsmen confessed that their herd had intruded into farms and Park area at one time or the other while 35% claimed to be innocent.

Table 4: Estimated Number of Respondents whose herd intruded farm or Park areas

Respondent	Frequency	%
Victims	26	65
Non-Victims	14	35
Total	40	100

However, an estimated 45% of nomadic herdsman lost between 1 and 2 cattle due to clashes between them and farmers on land use (Table 5). Ten percent of them lost from 3 to 6 cattle while 2.5% have lost more than 6 cattle during such encounters.

Table 5: Estimated Number of lost cattle due to Conflict between herdsman and farmers

Number of cattle	Frequency	%
Nil	17	42.5
1 - 2	18	45
3 - 6	4	10
7 and above	1	2.5

CONCLUSION

The grazing reserve upon which the nomads depend for their livelihood can be regarded as a common - property or common – pool resource. This further explains the reason why the nomadic herdsman have taken the Park guards as rivals or enemies due to varied interests in the utilization of the resources in the Park, and as a result many of the accused (herdsman) are arrested and punished accordingly, yet this has not solved the problem of unregulated and degrading resource-use by the herdsman.

However, since it is the culture of the Fulanis to migrate with their cattle to graze on rangelands and farmlands hence the need for pasture corridor which:

- (i) Should extend from the North to the Southern parts of Nigeria.
- (ii) Should be planted-up with "evergreen" grasses and multipurpose trees (MPTs)
- (iii) Should be subjected to intensive and proper management procedures.
- (iv) Should be provided with basic amenities such as water and resting camps, and
- (v) Should be integrated with effective and well coordinated extension programmes on wildlife resources conservation, especially at the various resting camps.

This will

- (i) Control the invasion of migratory cattle in National Parks
- (ii) Check the clashes between nomadic herdsmen and National Park guards as well as farmers, and
- (iii) Ensure availability of fodder for grazing cattle, from time to time.

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