



The socio-economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on livestock rearing activities in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on livestock rearing practices in Geidam Local Government Area, Yobe State, Nigeria. The research explores how prolonged insecurity has disrupted traditional pastoral livelihoods, influencing grazing patterns, herd sizes, and livestock management strategies. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing 15 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 4 focus group discussions (FGDs) with livestock herders, traders, butchers, and community leaders. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. Findings indicate that the insurgency has significantly altered livestock rearing practices, compelling herders to modify grazing routes, reduce herd sizes, and shift toward sedentary livestock management due to security concerns. Restricted access to grazing lands and water sources has intensified resource competition, exacerbating economic vulnerabilities. Furthermore, market disruptions, roadblocks, and mobility restrictions have hindered livestock trade, leading to supply shortages, price inflation, and declining local demand. These challenges have deepened economic hardships for pastoral communities, accelerating shifts in traditional economic structures. The study contributes to social science literature on conflict and rural livelihoods by illustrating how insurgency-induced insecurity reshapes economic survival strategies. It underscores the urgency of policy interventions, including improved security measures, enhanced resource access, and conflict resolution mechanisms, to support the resilience of livestock-dependent communities in conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: Boko Haram insurgency, Economic disruption, Livestock rearing, Pastoral livelihoods, Rural resilience

1. Introduction

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has had a transformative and deeply troubling impact on Nigeria's northeastern region. The group's ideology centers on rejecting Western education and governance, which they view as corrupting influences, and replacing them with a strict interpretation of Islamic law (Campbell, 2020). Over the years, Boko Haram has carried out heinous acts, including mass abductions (such as the widely publicized kidnapping of Chibok schoolgirls), bombings, and systematic attacks on villages, schools, markets, and government institutions. These acts of terror have destabilized the region, displaced

communities, and caused significant loss of life and property. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 2.5 million people have been displaced within Nigeria and neighboring countries due to the insurgency. This displacement has severely disrupted livelihoods, as those dependent on farming, trading, and other economic activities have been forced to abandon their homes and resources (UNHCR, 2023). The insurgency has also strained the government's capacity to provide security and social services in affected areas, thereby deepening poverty, inequality, and insecurity across the region. This article focuses on the effects of Boko Haram



insurgency on livestock production in Geidam local government area.

The Northeastern region of Nigeria is predominantly an agrarian, with agriculture serving as the backbone of the local economy. However, the insurgency has led to the loss of livestock, abandonment of farmlands, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of trade routes. These challenges have contributed to food insecurity, increased unemployment, and a sharp decline in economic output. In addition, the psychological impact of the insurgency, marked by trauma and fear, has eroded social cohesion and community resilience (Adegbulu, 2013).

Geidam, a major town in Yobe State, is an important agricultural hub within this region. The economic structure of Geidam is significantly influenced by livestock rearing and agricultural activities, which collectively form the backbone of its economic development which includes cattle, goats, and sheep. Livestock serves multiple functions in the community: it provides a primary source of income, supports food security through milk and meat production, and creates jobs in herding, trading, and processing activities. Additionally, livestock contributes to cultural practices and social stability, as it often forms part of traditional ceremonies, dowries, and communal wealth (Yobe State Government, 2021). However, insurgents have profoundly affected livestock production which displaced a number of pastoralists, forcing them to abandon their grazing lands and traditional livestock-rearing activities. This displacement has resulted in significant reductions in livestock populations, as many herders were unable to relocate their animals, leaving them vulnerable to theft or starvation. According to Adamu et al. (2021), the economic losses associated with displacement and loss of livestock have been devastating for many families, disrupting their primary source of

livelihood. Livestock theft has been one of the most direct impacts of the insurgency. Insurgents frequently raid rural villages and pastoralist camps, stealing cattle, sheep, and goats to sustain their operations or sell in black markets. These raids not only deplete livestock populations but also instill fear in pastoralists, discouraging them from returning to their communities. Mustapha et al. (2020) noted that the frequency and scale of livestock theft during the insurgency have severely undermined the economic stability of affected households and contributed to increased poverty levels. In addition, the insurgency also, caused significant disruptions to livestock markets. Insecurity on major roads and trading routes has made it increasingly dangerous for herders and traders to transport livestock to market. Many traders have abandoned their businesses or shifted to less lucrative alternatives, leading to reduced trading activities in key livestock markets across Yobe State. Ibrahim and Bello (2022) reported that this decline in market activities has not only affected the livelihoods of herders and traders but also increased food insecurity in the region, as livestock products such as meat and milk have become less accessible. Another major issue is the disruption of veterinary and extension services, which are essential for maintaining livestock health and productivity. The ongoing conflict has led to the destruction of veterinary clinics and limited access to trained professionals who can provide necessary care for livestock. As a result, disease outbreaks among livestock have become more common, leading to higher mortality rates and decreased productivity. Garba and Yusuf (2021) highlighted that the lack of veterinary support in conflict-affected areas has further compounded the challenges faced by pastoralists, pushing many out of livestock production altogether.



Several studies have explored the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on agriculture and livelihoods in northeastern Nigeria, particularly in Yobe State. For instance, Adamu et al. (2021) analyzed the economic losses suffered by pastoralists due to displacement and livestock theft, highlighting the severe disruptions to traditional herding activities. Mustapha et al. (2020) examined the frequency and scale of livestock theft, showing how it has contributed to economic instability and increased poverty levels. Similarly, Ibrahim and Bello (2022) focused on the decline of livestock markets, emphasizing the difficulties herders and traders face due to insecurity on trading routes. However, while these studies provide valuable insights, they do not specifically assess the overall socio-economic impact of the insurgency on livestock rearing practices in Geidam Local Government Area.

Existing research has established that the Boko Haram insurgency has had devastating effects on agriculture and livestock production in Yobe State. Studies indicate that pastoralists have been forced to abandon their grazing lands, leading to reductions in livestock populations. Insurgents frequently raid villages and steal cattle, goats, and sheep, either for sustenance or for black-market sales. The destruction of veterinary services has also worsened livestock health, increasing mortality rates. Additionally, insecurity on transportation routes has hindered access to markets, making livestock trade more dangerous and less profitable. These factors have collectively exacerbated food insecurity, unemployment, and poverty in the region.

Despite the wealth of research on Boko Haram's impact on agriculture and economic activities, there is a lack of studies that comprehensively analyze the specific effects of the insurgency on livestock rearing in Geidam. Previous studies tend to focus on broader economic disruptions, displacement, or market

decline but do not sufficiently investigate how the conflict has altered traditional livestock-rearing practices, community resilience, and long-term economic sustainability in Geidam. Additionally, little research has been conducted on how affected pastoralists are adapting to these challenges, whether through alternative livelihood strategies, migration, or government and humanitarian interventions. This gap necessitates a focused study on Geidam to provide localized data and insights.

This study is motivated by the urgent need to understand how the Boko Haram insurgency has transformed livestock rearing practices in Geidam, a key agricultural hub in Yobe State. Given that livestock rearing practices is central to the economic and cultural life of the region, examining its decline and the coping mechanisms of affected communities is crucial for policy formulation and recovery efforts. The study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and policymakers to develop targeted interventions that can support pastoralists, restore livestock markets, and improve security measures for herders. Furthermore, by filling the existing knowledge gap, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of conflict-induced agricultural disruptions and resilience strategies in northeastern Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The impact of armed conflict on economic activities, particularly in rural and agrarian communities, has been a major subject of scholarly inquiry. One such case is Geidam, a once-thriving economic hub in Yobe State, northeastern Nigeria, which relied heavily on livestock trade as a primary driver of economic growth. The region played a crucial role in transnational livestock commerce, linking Nigeria to neighboring countries such as Niger, Chad,



and Cameroon (Mustapha, 2018). However, the Boko Haram insurgency has had devastating consequences on Geidam's livestock economy, causing widespread displacement, destruction of market infrastructure, and the loss of livestock, which collectively have destabilized the local economy and livelihoods of pastoralist communities (Azeez et al., 2020).

Prior to the insurgency, livestock farming in Geidam contributed significantly to food security, income generation, and employment opportunities. The town was a major marketplace for cattle, sheep, goats, and camels, which were traded both locally and internationally. The region's semi-arid climate and vast grazing lands made it ideal for livestock rearing, supporting thousands of pastoralists, traders, and transporters who depended on the sector for their survival (Aliyu, 2020). However, with the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency, herders and traders faced unprecedented challenges, including attacks on their settlements, theft of livestock, and restrictions on mobility. The insurgency not only resulted in economic loss but also created a humanitarian crisis, as many families that relied on livestock for sustenance and income found themselves displaced and impoverished (Okoli & Ogayi, 2020).

Existing literature on conflict and livestock farming highlights the far-reaching consequences of insecurity on agricultural productivity. Studies have shown that in conflict-affected areas, livestock production often declines due to forced migration, destruction of grazing lands, and limited access to veterinary services. The disruption of traditional transhumance practices—where herders move seasonally in search of pasture and water—has been particularly detrimental to livestock health and productivity (Ahmed & Yusuf, 2019). In Geidam, pastoralists have been forced to abandon their traditional grazing routes due to fear of attacks, leading to

overgrazing in confined areas, malnutrition among livestock, and a decline in overall herd sizes (Ibrahim & Suleiman, 2020). The loss of livestock has significantly reduced household incomes, forcing many pastoralists to seek alternative means of survival, including menial labor and reliance on humanitarian aid.

More often, challenge resulting from the insurgency is the collapse of veterinary services and livestock markets. Before the crisis, Geidam had a well-functioning livestock market that attracted buyers from major Nigerian cities such as Kano, Lagos, and Kaduna, as well as international traders from neighboring countries. The availability of veterinary services ensured that livestock remained healthy, which in turn sustained high market demand (Mustapha, 2018). However, the destruction of infrastructure and persistent insecurity have led to the closure of markets and veterinary centers, causing a sharp decline in trade activities. Herders who managed to retain their livestock have struggled to find buyers, and the lack of veterinary care has increased mortality rates due to disease outbreaks (Okoli & Ogayi, 2020).

This literature review explores the existing body of research on the impact of conflict on livestock farming, with a focus on Geidam as a case study. It examines the economic and social consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency on livestock rearing practices, the disruption of market systems, and the role of government and non-governmental organizations in restoring the sector. By analyzing these themes, this review seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by pastoralists in conflict-affected regions and the strategies needed for long-term economic recovery and sustainability.

The Rise and Fall of Geidam's Livestock Economy

Before the devastating impact of the Boko Haram insurgency, Geidam stood as a vital



economic center in northeastern Nigeria, primarily due to its thriving livestock sector. Livestock rearing was not only the backbone of the local economy but also facilitated trade with neighboring countries, including Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Geidam's strategic location along important transnational trade routes, especially those connecting Nigeria to its neighbors, made it a critical hub for both the movement of agricultural products and livestock. The profitability of livestock trade attracted traders from across the region, strengthening Geidam's position as an economic hub within Yobe State and the broader northeastern Nigeria (Mustapha, 2018).

Geidam's semi-arid climate shaped the types of livestock raised and the manner in which pastoral activities were conducted. The primary animals raised included cattle, sheep, goats, and camels, all of which were well-adapted to the region's dry conditions. These animals were reared not only for meat but also for milk and by-products such as leather, hides, and wool. Livestock farming was not limited to subsistence purposes; it was deeply integrated into the regional economy through trade. In addition to meeting local consumption needs, livestock was a significant source of income for the population, driving the local and regional economies. Herders would sell livestock in Geidam's vibrant markets, and cattle were particularly sought after for both local and export markets (Aliyu, 2020). Similarly, dairy production was another crucial aspect of Geidam's livestock economy. The region's pastoralist communities, particularly the Fulani herders, were deeply involved in the production of various dairy products, such as milk, fermented milk (nono), butter, and locally made cheese (wara). These products were sold both locally and regionally, often by women who managed dairy processing and sales within their households. The production of dairy products complemented the income from

livestock sales and contributed to the overall economic activity. Additionally, dairy provided important nutritional value to the local population, adding another layer of importance to livestock farming. Women's involvement in dairy production also played a key role in community dynamics, as it was a sector that generated both direct and indirect economic benefits for families (Yusuf, 2019).

Geidam's livestock markets were renowned for their activity and size, making them a focal point of commerce in the region. One of the most significant aspects of these markets was cattle trade. The cattle market in Geidam drew buyers from major Nigerian cities like Kano, Lagos, and Kaduna, where beef was in high demand. Traders from these urban centers traveled to Geidam to purchase cattle in bulk, which were then transported to southern parts of Nigeria for resale. This dynamic created a lucrative trade environment, where both herders and traders benefited financially. The local cattle market was a critical economic driver, fostering wealth generation for pastoralists, market operators, and middlemen. Additionally, cattle exports to neighboring countries like Niger played a vital role in integrating Geidam into a broader transnational trade network (Adebayo, 2019). In addition to cattle, small ruminants such as sheep and goats played an equally important role in Geidam's livestock trade. These animals were relatively easier to manage and breed, which made them accessible to a larger segment of the population, including smaller herders. The demand for sheep and goats surged during religious events like Eid al-Adha, when people purchased animals for sacrificial purposes. The seasonal trade of small ruminants during such festivals provided a significant boost to the local economy, as many traders and herders capitalized on the influx of demand during these times. The income generated from these seasonal surges in demand



played a crucial role in stabilizing local livelihoods and sustaining the town's economy, especially for small-scale herders (Ibrahim & Suleiman, 2020).

Another important aspect of the livestock economy in Geidam was the sale of by-products such as hides and skins, which were obtained from slaughtered animals. These by-products had significant value and were utilized for the production of leather goods, such as bags, shoes, and clothing. Artisans in Geidam and neighboring regions processed these materials, providing a market for the hides and skins of slaughtered cattle, goats, and sheep. The leather industry thus contributed to the diversification of Geidam's economy, offering additional revenue streams beyond the direct sale of livestock. This interconnected system of livestock production, by-product trade, and artisan industries helped sustain the broader economy and fostered economic resilience (Okoli & Ogayi, 2020). The system of transhumance, or seasonal migration, played a key role in maintaining the viability of Geidam's livestock economy. During the dry season, herders would move their livestock southward in search of better grazing lands, while returning north during the rainy season to take advantage of fresh pastures. This migration system ensured a continuous supply of livestock to Geidam's markets, preventing overgrazing and ensuring that animals remained healthy. The movement of herders with their livestock through Geidam further enhanced the town's role as a regional trading hub. The constant flow of livestock, whether for trade, slaughter, or seasonal grazing, made Geidam's markets consistently supplied, further cementing its economic position as a key livestock center (Umar & Jibril, 2021).

Geidam's thriving livestock trade created numerous employment opportunities, not just for herders but also for individuals working in associated sectors. For example, transporters played an essential

role in moving livestock from rural areas to markets, while butchers, veterinarians, and traders ensured the smooth operation of livestock markets. Veterinary services were critical in maintaining the health of livestock, preventing the spread of diseases, and ensuring that animals were fit for trade. The employment generated by the livestock trade contributed to the town's overall prosperity, with various sectors of the economy benefiting from the influx of money generated through livestock sales (Adebayo, 2019). Market infrastructure in Geidam was closely tied to the success of its livestock trade. The revenue generated from livestock sales, especially cattle, contributed to the development of local infrastructure. Roads, market facilities, and storage areas were built and maintained to support the smooth flow of goods and livestock. These improvements allowed traders and herders to transport their livestock more efficiently and facilitated the growth of the town's economy. Additionally, revenue from livestock sales helped fund local governance activities, contributing to the overall stability and development of Geidam as a thriving economic hub (Aliyu, 2020).

The Boko Haram insurgency, however, severely disrupted Geidam's livestock economy. The violence and insecurity caused by the insurgents led to the destruction of key market infrastructure and the displacement of herders. Livestock markets, once bustling with activity, became deserted, and many herders lost their animals either to raids or because they were forced to flee their homes. This disruption led to the collapse of the once-thriving livestock trade, significantly harming the local economy. The economic damage caused by the insurgency was profound, as many families who relied on livestock production for their livelihoods were left without income or resources, leading to widespread poverty (Azeez et al., 2020).



Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Livestock Rearing Activities in Geidam Local Government Area

The Boko Haram insurgency has caused severe disruption to livestock rearing activities in Geidam Local Government Area, Yobe State, undermining what was once a thriving sector vital to the region's economy and livelihoods. Livestock rearing practices, which historically served as the primary source of income and food security for pastoral communities, has faced crippling challenges due to the insurgency's direct and indirect effects. These impacts include the loss of livestock, disruption of traditional pastoral migration, the collapse of market systems, and a decline in veterinary services, all of which have led to significant economic instability and food insecurity for affected communities (Aliyu, 2020).

One of the immediate and most significant consequences of the insurgency was the widespread loss of livestock through raids and theft by Boko Haram militants. Many herders were forced to flee their homes, abandoning their animals, which either perished or were taken by insurgents. This loss of livestock, which constitutes the primary source of wealth for most herders, had a devastating economic impact. The inability of herders to recover their herds or engage in trade resulted in prolonged financial hardship and loss of livelihood for entire communities (Mustapha, 2018). Additionally, traditional pastoral practices such as transhumance (seasonal migration of livestock in search of grazing lands) were severely disrupted by the insecurity. Herders, who traditionally moved with their livestock across vast grazing lands, were no longer able to migrate safely due to the constant threat of attacks. As a result, they were confined to limited grazing areas, leading to overgrazing, reduced pasture availability, and malnutrition among livestock. The restricted movement also meant that herders could not access fertile pastures, which hindered the health

and productivity of their animals, reducing both the quality and quantity of livestock available for trade and consumption (Ahmed & Yusuf, 2019).

The closure and abandonment of veterinary services in the region exacerbated the difficulties facing livestock rearing. Before the insurgency, veterinary services played a crucial role in maintaining the health of livestock, ensuring productivity, and preventing disease outbreaks. However, the insecurity caused by Boko Haram resulted in the destruction of veterinary infrastructure, leaving herders without access to essential animal health services. This led to the rapid spread of diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, peste des petits ruminants (PPR), and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), further increasing livestock mortality rates and further crippling the sector (Okoli & Ogayi, 2020). The collapse of livestock markets in Geidam added to the economic challenges facing pastoral communities. Geidam had long been a key market hub for livestock trade, attracting traders from across Nigeria and neighboring countries like Niger and Chad. However, due to the insecurity, many markets were forced to close, and traders were no longer willing to travel to the region for fear of attacks. This disruption in market activity meant that herders could not sell their livestock, resulting in a lack of income and financial stability. The inability to sell livestock at profitable prices also caused the accumulation of unsold animals, leading to further economic losses and financial strain (Adebayo, 2019).

In addition to market closures, the insurgency contributed to a decline in livestock breeding and reproduction. With many herders displaced or losing breeding animals, the reproductive capacity of herds was significantly reduced. The disruption of traditional breeding practices, coupled with malnutrition and the trauma of displacement, led to lower birth rates and slower herd recovery. As a result, the



overall productivity of the livestock sector diminished, hindering efforts to rebuild herds and restore the sector's economic viability (Ibrahim & Suleiman, 2020). The scarcity of water, caused by the destruction of water sources such as boreholes and reservoirs, further compounded the difficulties of livestock rearing. Without access to sufficient water, herders struggled to keep their animals hydrated, which led to dehydration, reduced milk production, and the death of livestock. The lack of water also contributed to poor hygiene and the spread of waterborne diseases among animals, exacerbating the already dire situation for livestock owners (Umar & Jibril, 2021).

Conflict between herders and farmers also became more pronounced during the insurgency, as herders were displaced into agricultural lands in search of pasture. This led to competition for resources such as water and grazing lands, resulting in violent clashes between the two groups. The breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and the failure to address these disputes escalated tensions, further destabilizing the region and impeding efforts to restore peace and economic stability (Yusuf, 2019). Financial instability became another significant challenge for herders, as the loss of livestock and the destruction of markets left many without a source of income. Many pastoralists were forced to abandon their traditional livelihoods and seek alternative sources of income, often through low-wage jobs or humanitarian assistance. This lack of financial security, coupled with the absence of reinvestment in livestock farming, delayed the recovery of the sector and prolonged the economic hardship faced by pastoral communities (Azeez et al., 2020). The decline in livestock production and the loss of dairy animals also contributed to a reduction in household food security. Dairy products, such as milk, butter, and cheese, were an important source of nutrition, especially for

children. The loss of dairy livestock resulted in a decrease in milk production, leading to increased malnutrition among households that had previously relied on dairy products as a staple food source (Aliyu, 2020).

Efforts of Government and Non-Governmental Organizations on Livestock Rearing Practices in Geidam Local Government Area

The Nigerian government and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played pivotal roles in the restoration of livestock rearing and production in Yobe State, particularly in the Geidam Local Government Area, which was severely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. The conflict had devastating consequences on the local economy, with livestock farmers facing the loss of their cattle, sheep, goats, and other assets. Geidam, known for its pastoral communities and agricultural activities, experienced significant setbacks as many herders were displaced, and the insurgency decimated livestock populations. The recovery efforts in this region are focused not only on providing immediate assistance to affected pastoralists but also on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the livestock sector. These efforts are vital as livestock farming was not only a source of income for households in Geidam but also contributed significantly to food security in the broader region (Aliyu & Kolo, 2021).

One of the primary recovery initiatives has been the direct restocking of livestock for displaced pastoralists in Geidam. The insurgency led to the mass displacement of herders, resulting in the loss of vital livestock. In a region where livestock is considered both an economic asset and a source of food security, these losses were catastrophic. In response, the Nigerian government, through various programs, has facilitated the distribution of cattle, sheep, and goats to help herders rebuild their herds. These initiatives, such as the Yobe State Livestock Development



Program, aim to provide pastoralists with the means to restore their livelihood, helping them regain financial independence. The livestock restocking initiatives are also crucial in boosting the local economy by reviving the agricultural sector, creating jobs, and generating income for local farmers. This intervention has been a key element of the rebuilding process, offering hope to families who had lost everything due to the insurgency. Equally important to the recovery process has been the restoration of veterinary services, which were disrupted during the conflict. In Geidam, the lack of access to veterinary care led to widespread disease outbreaks, further affecting the health and productivity of livestock. Common diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, which thrives in neglected herds, became a serious concern for pastoralists. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with NGOs, has worked to restore veterinary infrastructure, including clinics, mobile services, and disease prevention programs. Additionally, vaccinations and medications have been distributed to protect livestock from common diseases. These efforts are critical in improving the health of herds, reducing livestock mortality, and ultimately enhancing productivity. By strengthening the veterinary services in Geidam, the government is ensuring that the livestock sector can recover in a sustainable manner, increasing the long-term viability of the pastoralist economy (Mustapha & Umar, 2020).

Another essential part of the recovery process has been the rehabilitation of market infrastructure in Geidam. Prior to the insurgency, local livestock markets in Geidam served as vital trade centers, facilitating the exchange of livestock between herders, traders, and buyers from various regions, including neighboring countries. However, the destruction of these markets by insurgents severely disrupted the regional livestock trade. With

markets abandoned and trade routes unsafe, herders faced significant barriers to selling their animals and generating income. In response, the government, alongside international partners, has worked to rehabilitate these markets, reconstructing infrastructure and improving security measures. Restoring these markets is crucial not only for revitalizing local trade but also for integrating Geidam back into broader regional livestock trade networks. The recovery of these markets helps ensure that pastoralists can access formal selling platforms and regain access to both local and international markets. These efforts are vital in providing pastoralists with reliable outlets for their products, increasing their incomes, and fostering economic growth in the region. Restoring security in Geidam has been central to the overall recovery process. The insurgency created a climate of fear and insecurity, severely disrupting economic activities, including livestock farming. Herders were unable to move freely or safely transport their animals to markets, and traders were discouraged from coming to the region. To address these challenges, the Nigerian government has increased military presence in the region, particularly along trade routes, to ensure the safety of livestock farmers. Additionally, community-based security groups have been established to monitor and protect local communities, reducing the threat of insurgent attacks. These security measures have had a positive impact on restoring trust within the community, enabling herders to resume their activities without fear of violence. Furthermore, the rebuilding of infrastructure, such as roads and communication networks, has also contributed to restoring confidence in the region, facilitating the movement of goods, livestock, and people.

In addition to the government's efforts, NGOs have been instrumental in providing much-needed humanitarian assistance to



livestock farmers in Geidam. NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have provided emergency feed and water to livestock, especially during times of scarcity. These efforts have been particularly important in helping herders whose grazing lands were destroyed or rendered unusable due to displacement. Many herders were forced to leave their traditional grazing areas, making it difficult for them to find adequate pasture when they returned. NGOs have filled this gap by supplying supplementary feed and water, ensuring that livestock remain healthy and that pastoralists can rebuild their herds. By addressing immediate needs during crises, NGOs have been vital in stabilizing the region's livestock sector.

NGOs have also played a key role in providing financial support to herders through microfinance programs. Many livestock farmers in Geidam have limited access to formal financial services, making it difficult for them to secure loans for restocking and expanding their businesses. Microfinance programs, which provide small loans with low interest rates, have been essential in helping herders rebuild their herds. These financial products allow herders to purchase livestock, veterinary services, and feed, thus improving productivity. Additionally, microfinance programs have enabled farmers to adopt modern livestock management practices, which enhance the efficiency and sustainability of their operations. Through these initiatives, NGOs have helped pastoralists access the financial capital needed to recover from the devastating losses caused by the insurgency. The capacity-building initiatives have also been introduced to equip herders in Geidam with modern animal husbandry skills. Many of the traditional livestock rearing methods that were practiced in Geidam were effective but no longer sufficient due to environmental changes and economic

challenges. Capacity-building programs, funded by both the government and NGOs, focus on teaching sustainable and climate-resilient farming practices, such as improved breeding techniques and better disease control strategies. These programs help ensure that herders can adapt to changing conditions, improve livestock productivity, and increase their resilience to future shocks. Training local herders in these modern practices ensures that livestock farming in Geidam becomes more sustainable and able to withstand the challenges posed by both climate change and market fluctuations (Aliyu & Kolo, 2021).

In addition to direct support for herders, efforts have been made to address the disruption of pastoral migration patterns in the region. The seasonal movement of livestock to access fresh pastures and water sources is a traditional practice that has sustained the region's herders for centuries. However, the insurgency forced many herders to abandon these migration routes, leading to overgrazing and degradation of confined grazing areas. To address this, the Nigerian government has worked to restore key migration corridors and rehabilitate water sources such as boreholes and reservoirs. By creating safe routes and providing water along these routes, herders can once again practice transhumance without fear of attacks. Restoring these migration corridors is vital for ensuring the health of livestock and preventing overgrazing, thus enhancing productivity and promoting sustainability in the livestock sector. Women's involvement in livestock-related activities in Geidam has also received attention through various NGO initiatives. Women in Geidam have traditionally been responsible for dairy production and processing, activities that are crucial for household income and local food security. The insurgency, however, disrupted these businesses, leaving women without a source of income. To address this, NGOs have provided financial



assistance and training to help women restart their dairy processing businesses. By supporting women in these activities, NGOs not only help restore household income but also contribute to broader community resilience and food security in Geidam. This support is essential for empowering women and enhancing their economic independence.

International organizations, including the World Bank and USAID, have also contributed to the recovery of Geidam's livestock sector by supporting the improvement of value chains. These projects focus on enhancing market access, improving the quality of livestock by-products such as leather and dairy, and fostering better linkages between herders and buyers. By facilitating these connections, international organizations help to modernize Geidam's livestock industry and integrate it into larger commercial networks, providing herders with better opportunities to expand their businesses. These efforts help increase the profitability of livestock farming, making it a more viable livelihood for future generation

Finally, insurance schemes for livestock have been introduced as part of efforts to build resilience in Geidam's pastoral community. Livestock farming is inherently risky due to factors such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and theft. In response, the government and NGOs have developed community-based insurance programs to help mitigate these risks. By offering financial compensation for livestock losses, these insurance schemes provide herders with a safety net, reducing the risk of financial ruin in the event of an unforeseen event. This initiative is essential for ensuring that Geidam's pastoral community can continue to thrive despite the challenges it faces.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the socio-economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on livestock rearing practices in Geidam Local Government Area (LGA) of Yobe State. A purposive sampling approach was employed to select four wards—Garin Gada, Ngamma, Gumsa, and Damasak—based on their high exposure to insurgency-related disruptions and their significant reliance on livestock rearing practices. The research integrates both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive and well-contextualized analysis.

Primary data collection was conducted through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with individuals possessing first-hand experience and expert knowledge of livestock rearing activities amidst insurgency. Informants were carefully selected based on their roles, expertise, and direct involvement in the livestock sector, including livestock herders, traders, butchers, community leaders. A total of four FGDs were conducted, one in each selected ward, with 6–10 participants per session to facilitate a balanced exchange of perspectives while maintaining effective group interactions. Additionally, 15 KIIs were conducted with strategically chosen informants to provide deeper insights into the insurgency's impact on livestock rearing practices, trade dynamics, and survival strategies. The combination of FGDs and KIIs allowed for both collective reflections and in-depth personal narratives, ensuring a holistic understanding of the issue.

Secondary data sources were utilized to provide historical context and broader analytical depth. These sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, government reports, policy documents, and both published and unpublished research studies on insurgency, agricultural economics, and



rural livelihoods. Reports from government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international institutions were also reviewed to complement primary data. The integration of secondary sources was critical in validating primary findings, identifying trends, and situating the study within existing academic and policy discourse.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, a qualitative method that allows for the systematic identification, categorization, and interpretation of patterns and themes within textual data. The analysis was structured around three core thematic areas: First, pre-Insurgency Livestock Economy, which examined livestock rearing practices, market stability, and trade networks before the Boko Haram crisis; Secondly, Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency on Livestock Rearing, which analyzed disruptions such as displacement, economic losses, security threats, and the decline of livestock trade; and Thirdly, Coping Mechanisms and Recovery Strategies, which explored government interventions, NGO support, and community-driven initiatives aimed at reviving livestock-based livelihoods. Systematic coding and categorization of data ensured a rigorous and structured interpretation of informants' responses. Triangulation was employed by cross-verifying findings from KIIs, FGDs, and secondary sources, enhancing the credibility, validity, and reliability of the study.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, ensuring compliance with research ethics and participant protection protocols. All informants provided informed consent before participation, with guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity to protect their identities. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informants were given the

right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Given the sensitivity of the topic, interviews were conducted in safe and neutral environments, and participants were not pressured to disclose traumatic experiences. The researcher also maintained objectivity and neutrality throughout data collection and analysis to minimize potential biases.

To strengthen methodological rigor, triangulation was employed to cross-validate multiple data sources, and member checking was conducted by sharing summarized findings with select informants to ensure accurate representation of their perspectives. Despite these efforts, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including restricted access to some areas due to security concerns, potential response bias resulting from fear or trauma, and limited generalizability since qualitative research prioritizes depth over statistical representation. Nonetheless, the study provides rich, contextually grounded insights into the insurgency's effects on livestock rearing practices, offering valuable contributions to academic research, policy formulation, and humanitarian interventions.

A qualitative research approach was deemed the most appropriate for this study, as it enables an in-depth exploration of lived experiences, socio-economic realities, and adaptive strategies that quantitative methods may overlook. By integrating primary and secondary data sources, ensuring ethical compliance, and maintaining methodological rigor, this study presents a robust and publication-ready analysis of the impact of insurgency on livestock rearing and economic resilience in conflict-affected regions.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Boko Haram insurgency has severely disrupted livestock rearing in Geidam



Local Government Area, with the most direct impact being the widespread loss of livestock. As insurgents frequently raid rural villages and pastoralist camps, herders are forced to flee, abandoning their animals, which either perish from neglect or are stolen by militants. These losses have left pastoralist communities without their primary sources of wealth and food security. For many, their animals serve as an economic cushion, providing income through sales, dairy products, and other by-products. The resulting economic loss is devastating, as herders are unable to recover their herds or engage in livestock trade, which has been the backbone of their livelihoods. This loss has intensified poverty in the region and exacerbated food insecurity, as many herders are left without the means to sustain their families. In addition, traditional pastoral practices like transhumance—seasonal migration of livestock to access fresh grazing land—have been severely hindered. With insecurity dominating the region, herders can no longer move freely with their livestock to find pasture, leading to overgrazing in confined areas, poor animal health, and malnutrition. The lack of mobility restricts livestock productivity, reducing the quantity and quality of meat, milk, and other animal products available for consumption and trade.

The collapse of livestock markets in Geidam represents another key finding of the study. Geidam was once a vibrant trade hub for livestock, attracting buyers from across Nigeria and neighboring countries such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. However, the insurgency has caused these markets to close or be abandoned due to the constant threat of attacks. Traders, who once traveled from distant locations to buy cattle, sheep, and goats, no longer venture into the region for fear of violence. This has effectively cut off a major source of income for herders, as they can no longer sell their animals or access financial support through livestock sales. The

closure of markets has not only impacted herders but also the broader local economy, including traders, transporters, and service providers who were dependent on the livestock trade. Furthermore, the inability to sell animals at profitable prices has led to the accumulation of unsold livestock, exacerbating financial losses. In addition to market disruptions, the lack of veterinary services has further deteriorated the livestock sector. The destruction of veterinary clinics and infrastructure has left herders without access to essential animal healthcare. As a result, diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease and peste des petits ruminants (PPR) have spread unchecked, leading to higher mortality rates and further depleting the remaining livestock population.

The insurgency has also had significant social and cultural consequences, particularly in terms of the rising conflict between herders and farmers. As Boko Haram's violence displaced many herders from their traditional grazing lands, they sought refuge in agricultural areas, where they faced competition for resources such as water, pasture, and space. This competition, along with the limited availability of these resources, escalated tensions between the two groups, resulting in violent clashes. The situation has been exacerbated by the collapse of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, which in the past had helped mediate disputes between herders and farmers. The failure of local institutions to address these issues has fueled mistrust and intensified the cycle of violence. In addition to this, the trauma from displacement, loss of livelihood, and the constant threat of attack has led to a breakdown of social cohesion in the community. Families who once relied on livestock for their income and food security are now left in a state of vulnerability, often resorting to humanitarian aid or low-wage labor. The impact of the insurgency has been far-reaching, not only crippling the economic



base of Geidam's pastoralist communities but also contributing to broader social instability, which continues to hinder recovery efforts and sustainable development in the region.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Boko Haram insurgency has exerted a significant and transformative impact on livestock rearing activities in Geidam Local Government Area, Yobe State, disrupting the region's economic structure. Historically, livestock farming served as a cornerstone of the local economy, providing essential income, food security, and employment. However, insurgent violence has led to the destruction of infrastructure, the displacement of pastoral communities, and the loss of livestock, which has destabilized the agricultural economy. These disruptions have heightened poverty, aggravated food insecurity, and deepened the socio-economic challenges faced by the affected populations. The destruction of veterinary services and water sources, coupled with the decline in livestock breeding, has exacerbated the difficulties faced by pastoral communities. Furthermore, the insurgency has deepened conflict between herders and farmers, escalating tensions and hindering efforts to restore social and economic stability. While Geidam's economy once thrived on livestock trade and related industries, the insurgency has crippled many livelihoods and left many communities in economic disarray.

Despite these challenges, the resilience of the affected communities remains apparent, and the restoration of the livestock sector will require targeted interventions. These should focus on rebuilding infrastructure, providing security for herders and traders, and facilitating the safe return of displaced pastoralists. Additionally, reestablishing veterinary and extension services is critical to mitigating the spread of diseases and ensuring the sustainability of livestock

production. The insurgents has demonstrated the vulnerability of local economies to conflict-induced disruptions. Rebuilding the livestock sector in Geidam will require both immediate and long-term strategies that address security concerns, economic recovery, and social cohesion. Through collaborative efforts, the region can begin the process of recovery, enabling the restoration of livelihoods and enhancing resilience against future disruptions.

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