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**EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF CATTLE RUSTLING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA AND ITS
IMPACT ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN BAUCHI AND PLATEAU STATES**

Danliti Halliru Haruna

Department of Sociology, Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi State

Abstract

Cattle rustling has emerged as a significant security threat in northern Nigeria in recent years. This phenomenon has severely impacted peace and security in the region by fostering distrust among communities, displacing populations, and exacerbating socio-economic instability. This study examines the phenomenon of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria, with a specific focus on Bauchi and Plateau States. Grounded in Robert Merton's strain theory, the study employs a cross-sectional survey research design and utilizes a qualitative approach to data collection. The target population includes Fulani herders, local Fulani chiefs, leaders and officials of the cattle breeders' association, cattle dealers, and security personnel. Purposive (judgmental) non-probability sampling was used to select participants, and data were analyzed thematically. Findings indicate that cattle rustling poses a severe security challenge, leading to the loss of livestock and human lives, destruction of property, and heightened insecurity in affected communities. The study concludes that cattle rustling significantly undermines livestock rearing and contributes to rural impoverishment. Its far-reaching consequences on livelihoods, peaceful coexistence, and intergroup relations present serious challenges to regional stability. To mitigate cattle rustling, security agencies must conduct thorough investigations to dismantle cattle rustling networks, and the use of modern technology such as animal tracking systems to link each cow to its rightful owner; victims of cattle rustling should be assisted in order to cushion the debilitating impacts of cattle rustling on them.

Keywords: Cattle Rustling, Banditry, Conflict, Insecurity, Peace, Security.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of cattle rustling, which refers to large-scale stealing of cattle has since 2011 emerged as one of the major problems that bedevilled northern Nigeria resulting in thousands of deaths, loss of livelihoods, widespread destruction and displacement of people (Madueke, 2023). Indeed, cattle rustling has constituted a serious security threat in northern Nigeria, causing instability in the region. The increase in cattle rustling has had adverse implications for peace and security in the north. It has promoted community distrust and provoked misplaced aggression, as aggrieved cattle owners reportedly mobilized to unleash havoc on suspected cattle thieves (Haruna, 2021).

Cattle rustling is not only confined to northern Nigeria but is a global phenomenon with varying prevalence and impacts across different regions and becoming increasingly violent and transnational (Aucoin & Mahmood, 2017). In Australia, cattle rustling known as duffing remains a sporadic issue in remote areas where the rustlers capitalize on logistical difficulties of policing rural areas (Davis, 2017); and in the United States, cattle rustling is a significant issue in rural states of Texas and Oklahoma (Smith, 2018). Moreover, in Mexico, cattle rustling is a growing concern and is often tied to organized crime and illicit beef trade as criminal groups exploit weak enforcement and cross-border smuggling routes to sustain their operations (Ramirez, 2021).

Moreover, cattle rustling in Spain and Eastern Europe occasionally surfaces, driven by economic factors and a lack of stringent security measures (Blasco-Martin et al., 2019). In India, cattle rustling is particularly prominent in the states of Assam and Uttar Pradesh which is tied to religious and economic tension due to differing religious practices regarding cattle (Gupta & Singh, 2020). Likewise, in Pakistan and Afghanistan cattle rustling is linked to tribal conflicts and economic desperation, often intensified by political instability and weak state control (Roe, 2016).

In Africa, cattle rustling has deep historical roots but has transformed into a deadly organized crime (Gumba, 2020). In East Africa, especially among the Turkana and Karamajong pastoralist communities of Kenya and Uganda, cattle rustling is deeply rooted in cultural practices such as dowry payment but has now become increasingly violent as a result of the proliferation of firearms (Mkutu, 2019). The situation in South Sudan is made worse by political instability and intercommunal violence, with cattle rustling contributing to the cycle of revenge killings and displacements (Schomerus & Allen, 2018). Cattle rustling in Nigeria is driven by various factors such as ethnic tensions, weak security systems, and the proliferation of arms (Rabi'u & Muhammad, 2022).

Cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria involves highly organized criminal groups equipped with sophisticated weaponry and operate across state and national borders, exploiting weak security infrastructure and often linked to other forms of criminality such as banditry, kidnapping, arms smuggling, and terrorism, especially in areas where Boko Haram and other insurgent groups are active (Adamu & Umar, 2020).

The patterns of cattle rustling vary in different parts of Nigeria. In the North-central geopolitical zone, especially in Plateau, Nassarawa, and Benue states, the problem is framed around wider identity issues, including ethnic differences ethnicity (minority/majority divide), religious differences, and the indigene/settler splits, which are linked to struggles over land and water

resources. Rustling is capable of impacting these identity issues as they are played out at regional and national levels. Furthermore, tension and conflict are sharpened by clear-cut occupational and ethno-cultural differentiations between farmers and grazers (Egwu, 2015).

The activities of cattle rustlers have strained the capacity of state security forces and undermined public trust in governance (Okoli, 2020). This has serious implication on peace and security in the region. Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of cattle rustling in northern Nigeria and its impacts on peace and security, with particular reference to Bauchi and Plateau states.

Statement of the Problem

Cattle rustling has emerged as a significant security challenge in northern Nigeria. The problems are most prevalent in the northwestern and North-central parts of Nigeria, especially in the Northern Plateau and Southern Kaduna where cattle rustling has fed into longstanding conflicts between farmers and herders, fueling violence and deepening polarization in the region (Madueke, 2023). This has contributed to growing instability by increasing the levels of violent crime in the area. The persistent attacks by rustlers have forced many herders to abandon their traditional grazing lands, exacerbating land-use conflicts between farmers and herders which has further deepened ethnoreligious tensions, fueling cycles of reprisal attacks and worsening insecurity in the region (Higazi & Aliyu, 2018).

The phenomenon of cattle rustling has impacted immensely on the society. It is causing great havoc in terms of loss of human lives, destruction of properties, stealing of livestock and dislocation of population. In parts of Plateau and Bauchi States where agro-pastoralism is a dominant livelihood, cattle rustling has resulted in severe economic distress. The theft of livestock deprives farmers and herders of their primary source of income leading to increased poverty and food insecurity (Aliyu, 2015). Cattle rustling threatens the very survival of pastoralist communities as nomads are completely stripped of their cattle as a result of rustling

activities. There have also been troubling reports of nomads suffering from hypertension, insanity, and untimely deaths as a result of livestock rustling (Haruna, 2021)

The human cost of raids is immense, as hundreds are killed every year and thousands forcibly displaced. Also, the intensity and frequency of cattle rustling greatly affect the herd size of the pastoralists, as it often leads to the loss of livestock. Moreover, the practice of cattle rustling destabilises communities, such that they are not able to pursue their normal livelihood strategies and thus may be contributing to increased poverty (Kaimba, et. al. 2011). Moreover, cattle rustling posed a serious threat to peaceful co-existence and community relations between the Fulani herdsman and their host communities.

Efforts to curtail cattle rustling which include military operations, the deployment of joint security task forces, and legislative measures such as anti-rustling laws have been largely ineffective, due to corruption, poor intelligence gathering and the vast difficult-to-police terrain of Northern Nigeria (Eke, 2020). Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of cattle rustling and its impact on peace and security in Plateau and Bauchi States. The study seeks to inform policy measures aimed at mitigating cattle rustling and fostering sustainable peace in the affected communities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

Cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria has garnered significant academic attention due to its implications for peace, security, economic stability, and inter-communal relations. This review examines existing scholarly contributions on the phenomenon of cattle rustling and its impacts on peace and security.

Cattle Rustling Phenomenon in Northern Nigeria

Cattle rustling, as defined by Okoli and Okpaleke (2018) refers to unauthorized taking or theft of livestock, particularly cattle through violent or non-violent means. According to Adamu and Umar (2020) cattle rustling is

not only criminal act but also a socio-political issue, as it often exacerbates existing ethnic, religious and communal conflicts. Traditionally, in many African societies cattle rustling were often culturally sanctioned as a rite of passage or as a way of settling disputes between communities (Mkutu, 2019).

However, contemporary cattle rustling has transformed into a criminal activity. According to Aliyu (2015) modern cattle rustling involves sophisticated criminal network that use violence, intimidation and illegal arms to steal large herds of cattle and transport them across state and national borders. Moreover, Haruna (2022) notes that cattle rustling has become intertwined with other criminal activities such as kidnapping, with the perpetrators demanding substantial ransom. This evolution reflects a broader trend of organized crime in region, contributing to heightened insecurity and economic instability.

Several studies have identified different patterns in cattle rustling across Northern Nigeria. Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) categorize rustling into three main types: opportunistic, retaliatory, and commercialized. Opportunistic rustling occurs when individuals steal cattle for personal consumption or quick financial gain. Retaliatory rustling is often linked to inter-group conflicts, particularly between farmers and herders. The commercialized form, which has become increasingly prevalent, involves organized criminal groups who steal cattle on a large scale for sale in urban markets or across international borders (Odo, 2018).

The increasing sophistication of cattle rustling operations includes the use of motorcycles for mobility, modern firearms for intimidation, and networks of buyers who facilitate the illegal trade of stolen livestock (Shehu, 2020). Studies indicate that cattle rustlers often operate across multiple states, exploiting weak law enforcement and porous borders (Bawa, 2021).

Impacts of Cattle Rustling

The impact of cattle rustling is quite immense, It has far-reaching devastating consequences on human lives

resulting in loss of lives, economic hardships, displacement, and food insecurity (Mkutu, 2018). According to Adamu and Ben (2020) over 3,000 people were killed in Nigeria due to cattle-related conflicts between 2016 and 2021. This is because cattle rustlers use sophisticated firearms, resulting in high death rates. The violence extends beyond direct attacks, as rustling most times triggers retaliatory raids between communities. The cycle of violence exacerbates insecurity, making it difficult for law enforcement to restore peace (Rutto, 2022).

Also, cattle rustling significantly affects the economic stability of rural communities. Livestock is a major economic asset for pastoralists, serving as a source of wealth, livelihood, and social status. As stated by Wachira (2019) the loss of cattle disrupts household income and increases poverty levels. According to Nkonya (2021) households affected by cattle rustling experience a decline in income by up to 60% in Kenya. Moreover, cattle rustling forces many pastoralists to abandon livestock keeping, leading to unemployment and economic migration. The ripple effect extends to local economies, where markets and trade networks collapse due to insecurity (Omondi et al., 2020).

Cattle rustling also leads to mass displacement, forcing families to flee their homes. A study by Wepundi (2021) in Uganda revealed that approximately 45% of displaced persons in rustling-prone areas cite insecurity as their main reason for migration. Displaced populations face challenges such as lack of shelter, food, and access to basic services like healthcare and education. Moreso, cattle rustling disrupts traditional pastoral routes, leading to conflicts over grazing lands and water sources. This exacerbates competition for scarce resources, further fueling displacement and regional instability (Bashir, 2020).

Furthermore, the psychological toll of cattle rustling is profound, particularly among victims who witness killings and experience displacement. A study by Wachira (2019) indicates a high level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among survivors of rustling-

related violence. Socially, cattle rustling erodes trust within and between communities. Traditional institutions that once mediated conflicts are weakened, as rustlers often act independently or with external support (Mkutu, 2018). The breakdown of social cohesion affects communal relations, hindering reconciliation efforts.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The role of social theory as a guide in research cannot be disputed. The study adopted the 'Strain Theory in analysing the trends and patterns of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria.

The Strain Theory

The strain theory was developed by Robert Merton as an extension of the functionalist perspective on deviance, and connected to Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie (Crossman, 2016). The cornerstone of the strain theory is that crime breeds in the gap, imbalance, or disjunction between culturally induced aspirations for economic success and structurally distributed possibilities of achievement (O'Connor, 2013). According to Merton, every society has culturally defined goals and socially approved means of achieving such goals. However, there is some inequality in opportunity and these inequalities in access may result in deviance and criminality. That is, as those disadvantaged seek similar goals, there might be a predisposition to cut corners and use means that are not socially approved (Alubo, 2014).

Sutherland (1973) suggests that factors such as deprivation, limited access to legitimate alternatives and exposure to innovative success models create susceptibility to criminal behaviour (Lyman and Potter, 2007). This is summarized by Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) argument based on 'differential opportunity theory' which states that many lower-class male adolescents experience a sense of desperation surrounding the belief that their position in the economic structure is relatively fixed and immutable. As a result of failing to meet cultural expectations of achieving upward mobility, conditions become ideal for socialization

functions such as recruitment, screening and training for organized crime.

Furthermore, Taylor, Walton and Young (1973:97) argue that when opportunities to succeed are distributed unequally, consequential results include the adoption of illegitimate means of obtaining success. Merton (1938:678) supports this argument: "The use of conventionally prescribed but frequently effective means of attaining at least the simulacrum of culturally defined success" applies when people select success routes outside normatively prescribed channels. Accordingly, considerable precedent for using illegitimate goals to achieve success exists in locations noted for the presence of organized crime (Lyman and Potter, 2007:69). According to the Strain Theory, individuals who experience strain may adopt deviant adaptations to achieve their goals. Merton identified five modes of adaptation:

- i. Conformity: Accepting cultural goals and legitimate means.
- ii. Innovation: Accepting cultural goals but using illegitimate means to achieve them.
- iii. Ritualism: Rejecting cultural goals but adhering to legitimate means.
- iv. Retreatism: Rejecting both cultural goals and legitimate means.
- v. Rebellion: Rejecting and replacing cultural goals and means.

Relevance of Strain Theory to Understanding of Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria

Cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria can be understood through the lens of Strain Theory. Economic, social, and environmental factors create strain, leading individuals to adopt deviant adaptations, such as cattle rustling to achieve their goals. Many young men in Northern Nigeria face economic hardship, unemployment, and poverty. Cattle rustling therefore, provides an alternative means of achieving economic stability and status.

Also, the traditional nomadic lifestyle of Fulani herdsmen is under threat due to urbanization, modernization, and conflict over resources. Cattle rustling can be seen as a way for these individuals to assert their cultural identity and resist the changes imposed upon them. Moreover, climate change, desertification, and land degradation have reduced grazing land and water resources, leading to increased competition and conflict over these resources. Cattle rustling can be seen as a way for individuals to adapt to these environmental challenges.

Furthermore, according to the Strain Theory, individuals who experience strain may adopt deviant adaptations to achieve their goals. In the case of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria, these deviant adaptations include:

- i. Innovation: Cattle rustling as a means of achieving economic stability and status.
- ii. Ritualism: Cattle rustling as a way to maintain cultural identity and tradition.
- iii. Retreatism: Cattle rustling as a means of escaping the difficulties of modern life.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. This design involves investigating the state of affairs in a population at a certain point in time, allowing conclusions about phenomena across a wide population to be drawn (Bethlehem, cited in Zheng, 2015; Shuttleworth, 2010). The target population consisted of Fulani herders, local Fulani chiefs, leadership and officials of the cattle breeders' association, cattle dealers and security agents. Accordingly, all the respondents of the study were selected based on their knowledge and expertise on issues relating to cattle and cattle rustling in Nigeria.

The sampling technique adopted for the study was purposive or judgmental non-probability sampling. According to this method, sample members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman et. al., 2007). The purposive sampling technique was chosen

because it ensures that only people with the necessary knowledge and expertise were selected as sample members.

The study adopted the qualitative approach to data collection. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were the methods used by the researcher to gather data for the study. A key element of both KIIs and FGD is the interaction between participants and the interviewer or facilitator (Taylor and Blake, 2015). The focus group discussion technique is primarily a qualitative data collection method involving the administration of open-ended questions to a carefully selected target group or focus groups, which optimally consists of 5 – 7 persons and at most 10 – 12 persons (Alemika, 2002). Focus group discussion is designed to elicit group attitudes and responses. The discussion usually lasts between one and two hours and provides the opportunity for all the respondents to participate and to give their opinions.

The study utilized the interview guide as the instrument of data collection. This was used as a guide for the key informant interviews, as well as for the focus group discussions. A uniform set of open-ended questions were prepared, to guide the interviews and the focus group discussions towards answering the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study. The study adopted a thematic method of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data. It minimally organizes and describes data sets in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis suits questions related to people's views, experiences and perceptions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section is a presentation and analysis of the respondent demographic data.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

PARTICIPANTS	OCCUPATION	POSITION/RANK
Nomads	Pastoralists	Herders
Miyetti-Allah	Socio-cultural association	Chairman/officials
Nigerian Police Force	Policing	PPRO, DPO
Operation Safe Haven	Peacekeeping	Officials
Cattle dealers/butchers	Cattle/meat business	Chairman/Secretary
Vigilante group	Community policing	Chairman/members
Danga security	Private security firm	Chairman/Secretary
Community leaders	Local chiefs	Ardo (Fulani chiefs)

Table 1 reveals the demographic characteristics of participants. The table shows that the participants are nomads, Miyetti-Allah officials, the Police, operation Save Haven officials, cattle dealers/butchers, vigilante groups, Danga Security officials, and community

leaders. This implies that the participants are people who are knowledgeable about the trends and patterns of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria.

4.2 Patterns of Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria

With regards to the patterns of cattle rustling in Northern, the participants were of the view that rustling mostly occur at night. They also agreed that cattle rustling can take place in the day time while grazing is taking place 'lokacin kiwo.' As stated by MACBAN official in Bauchi, during FGD:

There are two patterns in which cattle rustling occurs, they attack Fulani 'ruga' (settlements) at night, shooting guns from all directions, then whisk away with their cattle. Secondly, they lay ambush on herders while on grazing during the daytime, chase them away or even kill them and run away with their cattle.

Another participant, a police officer observed as follows:

There are different patterns depending on the state and region. In Plateau state, rustlers do attack the herders kill or maim them and rustle the cows. The operation is always in the night time, and time is always a factor. The rustlers wouldn't want to be identified, as such night has always been the time for their operation.

During FGD with STF, Operation Safe Haven at sector 1 Jos, the participants identified the modus operandi of the rustlers as follow:

The rustlers usually storm Fulani settlement with assorted weapons, including AK 47, pistols, machetes and locally made guns. They shoot in the air sporadically before taking the cattle away. They operate mostly at night; they use charms and pretend to be cattle rearers. They use automatic weapons and sometimes they use cutlasses to subdue their victims.

One of the participant also said, "the rustlers are part of the community, there was a case in Miango where a Fulani man rustled cattle belonging to his father transported them to Bauchi where he sold them out."

More so, the secretary-general of the vigilante group in Tama ward, one of the area most affected by cattle rustling in Bauchi state stated that, "the rustlers have informants within the communities they operate. They

usually survey the areas in the day time and wage attack at night when the place is very dark." An official of Danga Security confirmed the involvements of family members and neighbours in the act of cattle rustling. He said, "cattle rustling involves a lot of conspiracy, sometimes family members and neighbours conspired with the rustlers to rustled cattle belonging to their family or neighbours." An official of MACBAN in Bauchi puts it this way, 'da dan gari akan ci gari' (It is through the aid of an insider that a city is conquered by its enemy).

Furthermore, a police officer with Bauchi state command described some of the modus operandi of the rustlers as follows:

The rustlers sometimes move around with cattle like typical herders. While on grazing, they target herders particularly those on transhumance movement southwards; they mixed up the cattle and forcefully disappear with them.

At times they just move about hunting for cattle. According to one participant, a Fulani chief, "from the reports we are getting, especially in places like Zamfara, the rustlers usually launched attack at night, they shoot from all angles, then drive the cattle away to their camps in the thick forest."

4.3 Impacts of Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria

Cattle rustling adversely affects pastoralists and the society at large. During interviews with key informants and focus group discussions, participants expressed the opinions that cattle rustling leads to the loss of herds of cattle, human lives, valuable assets, rape of women, social dislocation, and enduring hardship and suffering.

On the socio-economic impacts, one participant, a Fulani chief stated that "as a result of cattle rustling many of our people have been killed and many others have lost their entire herds to rustlers. Our women have also been raped and our girls kidnapped by these rustlers" Another participant, an official of the Miyetti Allah group pointed out that "cattle rustling has impoverished our people. A

lot of herders who have had their cattle stolen by the rustlers have become very poor.” Participants also revealed that cattle rustling creates a livelihood crisis for the herders because they depend entirely on their cattle as means of sustenance.

Furthermore, regarding the impact on security, it was revealed by the participants that cattle rustling leads to the loss of many lives, the destruction of properties, and a general atmosphere of insecurity in the affected areas. With regards to the situation in the Tama ward of Toro local government where most cases of rustling occur, the leader of the vigilante group in the area said “These rustlers are heartless, just yesterday they killed three people in Burku village, right now as I am talking to you our boys are in the bush on the hunt for these rustlers.” However, the leader of the pastoralists in the Lame district complained about the killing of their members in the Tama area. He said “I do not doubt that some Fulani are into rustling, but the herders do not own abattoir or cattle market. Why are the vigilantes not killing the buyers of the rustled cows.” When the researcher confronted the leader of the vigilante about the allegation by herders, he said, “No matter what, the arrested rustlers will never disclose the identity of the buyers to us. We know the suspected buyers, but we can’t go about arresting them without concrete evidence, that is why we needed the arrested rustlers to point to the buyers of the rustled cattle and we would go ahead and arrest them but they never did”

On the impact of cattle rustling on communal living, participants revealed that it creates conflict, suspicion,

tension, fear, anxiety, mistrust, and disharmony in the affected communities. Population displacement was another impact mentioned by key informants, as herders were forced to flee to safer areas. As it relates to the situation in Toro local government of Bauchi state, one leader of Fulani herder stated:

Activities of rustlers are threatening our relationships with the Hausa communities, especially in the Tama ward, the vigilantes there have been arresting and killing our people, accusing us of rustling, kidnapping, and motorcycle theft but we are also victims. In Gumau town, they denied us access to the dam for our animal to drink water. We are thinking of relocating from the area.

With regards to the situation in Plateau state, key informants and focus group discussants revealed that cattle rustling have created strained intergroup relations between the herders and the host communities. Whenever Fulani cattle are rustled, the Fulani point accusing fingers at the host communities. This usually created suspicion, tension, and disharmony. During a focus group discussion with the special task force, sector 1, one participant narrated an incident that occurred in the Riyom local government area, where one Fulani family cattle was rustled. This created tension in the area, with accusing fingers pointing at their Berom neighbours. However, it was later discovered that was a family feud involving two Fulani families. The suspects told the STF personnel that it was their father who at the point of death told them to avenge a cattle rustling incident carried by the other family against them a long time ago.

Table 2: Impacts of Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria

IMPACTS	IMPLICATIONS
Socio-economic	Rural impoverishment, livelihood crisis
Security	Increased crime, general insecurity, herder/farmers conflict
Communal living	Distrust, disharmony, volatile intergroup relations

The table 2 reveals the impacts of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria. The table shows the impacts of cattle

rustling on socio-economic activities, security and communal living. As presented in the table, the socio-

economic impacts include rural impoverishment and livelihood crisis; the impacts on security includes increased crime, general insecurity and herders/farmers conflict and the impacts on communal living includes distrust, disharmony and volatile intergroup relations.

This implies that cattle rustling has devastating effects on society. Cattle rustling have impacted negatively on the society, leading to loss of livelihood, loss of life, destruction of property, population displacement, poverty and a vicious web of instability and insecurity.

The findings of the research linked cattle rustling to factors such as unemployment, poverty, desires to get rich quick syndrome, communal conflicts, illiteracy, moral decadence, greed and poor parenting. As revealed by the study, the impacts of cattle rustling was quite devastating that include loss of life, destruction of properties, loss of livelihood, population displacement, impoverishment, fear, general atmosphere of insecurity, strained inter-group relations and enduring hardship and suffering.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Cattle rustling constitute a serious threat to livestock rearing and contribute to impoverishment of rural population. The dire impacts of cattle rustling on human life and property, livelihood, peaceful co-existence and harmonious intergroup relations have serious implications for peace and security across Northern Nigeria. Nigerians will no doubt heave a sigh of relief when cattle rustling and other related crimes are brought to a halt. Therefore, proper implementation of the recommendations of this study would go a long way in addressing the menace of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria.

To curtail the menace of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria, the following measures are recommended:.

1. The government should deploy security forces to the thick forest reserves that serve as bases and hideouts of cattle rustlers and also equip them with modern surveillance equipment such as drones to detect and wage a surprise attack on rustlers and their facilities.
2. There is the need to use technology in the form of animal trackers which should link every cow to its owner. Each cow should carry a microchip which will determine the location of the cattle and enable tracking by the security agencies in the case of rustling.
3. There should be an effective collaboration between security agencies, herders' associations, butchers, cattle dealers, and community leaders in the fight against cattle rustling.
4. There is the need for victims of cattle rustling to be assisted in order to cushion the debilitating impacts of cattle rustling on them.
5. Our borders need to be well secured to prevent a transnational network of cattle rustlers from entering the country and also to stop the inflow of small arms and light weapons into the country.

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