



**INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**RURALISATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
THE SECURITY CHALLENGES AND ROADMAP**

Ebebe A. Ukpong & Moses U. Ikoh*
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60787/ijss.vol18nol.269>

Abstract

The UN Sustainable Development Goals present a remarkable blue print for socio-economic development that seeks to end poverty and ensure prosperity for all by year 2030. Many States in Nigeria have adopted this blue print (even with amendments) with focus on rural and agriculture development. Majority of Nigerians live in the rural area engaging in farming and farms related activities. Agricultural development and rural development therefore, create a nexus with a multiplier effect that can enhance national development. This paper assessed the possibility of the realisation of the laudable goals of sustainable development through ruralisation – demographic shift, life style and cultural shifts, and policy and economic focus. Relying on secondary data analysis, the paper revealed competing extremist assaults on Nigeria’s rural areas including incessant violent crises between herders and farmers, banditry, Fulani militias attacks, organised criminal invasions, inter-communal and intra-communal crisis as well as climate change induced crisis, which exert negative effect on ruralisation. Attacks on rural areas have created fears, destroyed communal social bonds, and widespread displacement. The paper concluded therefore, that the challenges posed by insecurity will constrain ruralisation and the realization of rural development in line with UN sustainable development goals. It recommended among others the creation of a multi-faceted security approach that would combine formal and informal security actions to curb insecurity, and free the rural area for infrastructure investment and realization of rural and agricultural development. Ruralisation will create room for economic viability and address challenges like food insecurity and poverty.

Key words: Ruralisation; Security; Sustainability; Sustainable development; Nigeria.

Résumé

Les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) des Nations Unies constituent un plan d'action remarquable pour le développement socio-économique, visant à éradiquer la pauvreté et à garantir la prospérité pour tous d'ici à 2030. De nombreux États du Nigéria ont adopté ce plan (parfois avec des amendements), en mettant l'accent sur le développement rural et agricole. La

* **Address of Corresponding Author:** Prof. Moses U. Ikoh, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Phone: +234 7034372061, Email: mosesikoh@uniuyo.edu.ng

majorité des Nigériens vivent en zone rurale et se consacrent à l'agriculture et aux activités connexes. Le développement agricole et le développement rural forment ainsi un lien étroit, à effet multiplicateur, susceptible de stimuler le développement national. Cet article évalue la possibilité d'atteindre les objectifs louables du développement durable grâce à la ruralisation – en tenant compte des évolutions démographiques, des changements de modes de vie et culturels, ainsi que des orientations politiques et économiques. S'appuyant sur l'analyse de données secondaires, l'article révèle que les zones rurales du Nigéria sont confrontées à diverses attaques extrémistes, notamment des conflits violents incessants entre éleveurs et agriculteurs, le banditisme, les attaques des milices peules, les invasions du crime organisé, les crises intercommunautaires et intracommunautaires, ainsi que les crises induites par le changement climatique, qui ont un impact négatif sur la ruralisation. Ces attaques ont engendré la peur, détruit les liens sociaux et provoqué des déplacements massifs de population. L'article conclut donc que les défis posés par l'insécurité freineront la ruralisation et la réalisation du développement rural, conformément aux objectifs de développement durable des Nations Unies. Il recommande notamment la mise en place d'une approche sécuritaire multidimensionnelle combinant actions formelles et informelles pour endiguer l'insécurité et libérer les zones rurales pour les investissements dans les infrastructures et le développement rural et agricole. La ruralisation permettra d'assurer la viabilité économique et de relever des défis tels que l'insécurité alimentaire et la pauvreté.

Mots-clés: Ruralisation; Sécurité; Durabilité; Développement durable; Nigéria.

Introduction

The decade of the 1980s had popularised rural development as the centre piece of national development. Listening to rural development scholars including Abasiokong (1982b; 1992b), Ebong (Ebong, 1991), Ekpo (Ekpo, 1991) and Mabogunje (1992), it was obvious that national development lies in the rural areas acting as the primary source of food, resources, and labour, which could drive overall economic growth and industrial stability. Neglecting rural development, therefore, could cause urban congestion and food insecurity, whereas investing in rural infrastructure and agriculture could foster balanced national development, reduce poverty and support long term sustainability (Charles & Ikoh, 2009).

In Durkheim's (Pope & Johnson, 1983) analysis, rural area is characterised by mechanical solidarity (where community capital - social, cultural, and religious - thrives) and can foster a strong collective conscience, socio-economic and environmental viability. The movement towards urbanisation (organic solidarity), which characterises urbanism and individuality, was not only going to create culture-shock reminiscent of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (Clinard, 1970) observation of development in the city of Chicago but also socio-economic inequality of multiple dimensions. While the urban area emerged with industries and infrastructural base that promote anonymity, factory jobs, white collar employment, and entertainment, the rural area witnessed the migration of youths and able-bodied men and women desiring to escape rural poverty to the urban centres. It was suggestive then that the rural area would gradually lose its qualitative population (able bodied men and women and the skilfully educated ones to the urban areas); there would be less people engage in farming, and food insecurity and dimensional poverty would occur (Chigbu, 2012). Deliberate policy decision was therefore, needed for balance development not only to checkmate rural -urban migration but also to make live in the rural area worth living (Gana, 1986; Ejue, 1998).

Between the decade of the 1980s and 2020s, many rural areas have been transformed to urban areas. Villages that were chosen as local government headquarters have been transformed into urban centres in Nigeria, with improved infrastructures such as electricity, water supply, and health centres. The transformation of rural and into urbanized area is

reshaping Nigeria's landscape; as urban development accelerates to encroach upon agricultural lands, forests, and other natural habitats. Rural electrification has also penetrated many rural areas, even when the actual supply of light may be rare. But rural development is progressing slowly. Economic opportunities and some degree of incoherence in rural and urban development still remain very wide. Many rural dwellers lack access to credits and programmes that could enhance their resources for farming activities, which is the mainstay of rural economy. Climate change is negatively affecting farming with serious flooding causing land degradation. Beside these, rural Nigeria and its development is also facing a combination of destructive problems. These include insecurity caused by inter and intra communal crises, resource conflict, armed and organised criminality perpetuated by bandits, terrorists, herder-farmer crises, solid mineral as well as oil exploration and exploitation, and Fulani militia invasion and expansionism. Insecurity is not only creating fear for rural dwellers but also distorting the progress of rural development. Insecurity manifesting via incessant conflicts is also forcing families to abandon their homes and livelihoods to seek refuge in urban areas or in internally displaced people (IDP) camps, where they face new hardships and poverty. It is, therefore, no longer the attractiveness of white-collar jobs, relaxation, industries, and infrastructure in the cities that drive rural - urban migration, but insecurity in the rural areas.

Addressing insecurity challenges is becoming an albatross on the neck of government, not only in the rural area of Nigeria, but the entire country. And rural security is becoming very challenging. Socio-economic development plans across Nigerian states are currently characterized by a mix of infrastructure-focused projects, urban renewal, rural development, and proposals seeking re-configurations to foster growth. Many States have designed programmes in line with the UN Sustainable Development Plan with focus on improving the quality of life and economic well-being of their citizens. For instance, the Benue State Economic Development Plan (BSCDP, 2025 – 2034) focuses on transitioning from a consumption-based economy to a production-driven economy. The five key pillars include agricultural modernisation, industrialisation, SME and youth empowerment, infrastructural development, and solid mineral resource exploitation. In Plateau State, the focus is on agriculture and transformation, industrialisation and SMEs, infrastructure and energy, tourism and mining, institutional reforms and partnership, and inclusive growth. The expectations are laudable with respect to agricultural development.

Majority of Nigerians live in the rural area and rely on agriculture as the main stay of their economy. Development aims at diversifying traditional agriculture from purely food crops, fruits, and extraction into niche manufacturing, tourism and services can enhance rural development. Such expectations, encourage the design of strategies that can enhance infrastructure investment, increase access to financial services, education and skills training to foster local entrepreneurship. Such development is expected to create connection between rural and urban economies (Charles & Ikoh, 2009). However, insecurity is not only blocking access to many rural areas for programme implementations (International Crisis Group, 2023) but also depopulating rural areas through forced migration (Okunade & Kohon, 2023; Abubakar, & Amurtiya, 2023).

Some of the States with acute insecurity problem in the country have not included it in their socio-economic development plan. For instance, Kano State Development Agenda focuses on “infrastructure and urban Development, rural and agricultural development, social and economic empowerment, and digitalization and future growth’ (World bank Group, 2025). Only states like Kogi, Kwara, Borno, and Akwa Ibom include security as one of the key pillars that can facilitate the realization of the State socio-economic development goals and sustain them, especially rural development and improved agricultural outputs and food sufficiency.

The recognition of the challenges posed by insecurity to rural development deserves policy and scholarly attention. The Borno State 10-year Strategic Development Plan recognised

security as the foundation for the return of displaced people to their rural communities, agricultural development, and sustainability of rural development (BACSD & HR (2020)). Similar recognition of the role of security in rural development seems to have influenced the design and implementation of the Akwa Ibom State ARISE Agenda.

The ARISE Agenda blue print launched by His Excellency, Governor Umo Bassey Eno in 2023 focused on five related key pillars, viz: Agricultural revolution, Rural development, Infrastructural maintenance and advancement, Security management, and Educational advancement. The five pillars generate the acronym, ARISE. Beside the mere acronym, the literary conceptualisation of the word, ARISE suggests the existence of a problem, and the need to stand up to confront it. It also connotes “to overcome a situation” or “rise from poverty” reminiscent of the peasants protest against feudalism in 1831 (Geaorge & Gkampoura, 2021). In the context of ARISE conceptualisation, rural development is recognised as a panacea for overall development of the state because rural development would increase access to rural area, strengthen community-based cooperatives, and ensure food security. Here then lies the nexus with agricultural revolution, which could help create jobs, end hunger, ensure skills development, and empowerment through development entrepreneurship. In all these, security management seeks to create a safe environment for investing and living.

The inclusion of security components in State’s economic development plan is a recognition of the interdependence that exists between security and development. Security and development are mutually reinforcing. While development reduces conflict driven grievances, security allows development to take roots. It is a secured environment free from violence and volatility that will enables economic investment, social cohesion, and the protection of human potential. The establishment of such nexus between rural development and security would ensure ruralisation, the sustainability of rural development, and also, rural job creation not only in farming, agro-based processing and rural industry but also in building rural infrastructure, such as road, rural electrification, provision of water, and health facilities.

The ARISE Agenda has shown that developing the rural area and development of agriculture must factor in security This is because securing the rural area is essential for development. It impacts directly on food security, reduces poverty, and support agricultural growth. Beyond these, is its impact on return migration (urban – rural migration), transformation of rural economies, enhanced quality of life, and environmental sustainability. It can also enhance value-chain development by encouraging the formation of farmers cooperatives and connecting them to urban lucrative markets. Discussing the components of security as a factor in ruralisation can provide a significant roadmap on how rural areas can be developed sustainably in Nigeria given the burden of insecurity that is facing the country. Ruralisation is often referred to as rural revitalization or the development of rural areas. It involves reversing rural decline by diversifying local economies, improving infrastructure, and leveraging local resources to create vibrant, resilient communities. In this context, ruralisation can help to reduce pressure on urban areas via urban-rural migration; and contributing to environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Aisling, 2020). In the argument of Uchendu (2015), ruralisation is either the process of transforming areas into rural spaces, or the migration of people from urban to rural areas. In this context, rural areas are developed by enhancing livelihood opportunities and amenities. It involves making areas more rural in character, appearance, or function (Laurise, & Lawrence, 2022). It is a strategic approach for fostering rural regeneration, and developing new jobs and farms. Such development encourages urban-rural migration, and creates socio-economic changes in population lifestyle (Aisling, 2019).

Ruralisation, therefore, involves a holistic process of encouraging rural settlement and enhancing socio-economic and environmental well-being of people in rural areas. The objectives extend to alleviation of poverty through policy that encourage rural people

participation in programmes channelled into enhancing their incomes, creating employment opportunities, and improving access to essential services like healthcare and education (Aisling, 2020). While rural development is important for reducing poverty in the rural areas, many rural-urban migrants are becoming jobless, and / or underemployed in the urban areas. In wants of what to do to eke out a living, many have resorted to crime; developing the rural area will therefore, discourage rural-urban migration for none existing jobs in the urban areas (Ikoh, 2022).

Given the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, rural development is facing a crisis of sustainability. It is dismantling agricultural livelihoods, displacing communities, and halting infrastructure development. This crisis directly causes widespread food insecurity, displacement, economic decline, and rural-to-urban migration (Robert, 2015). In the argument of Dasgupta (2007), sustainable rural development is the bedrock for economic, social and environmental development of any country. It significantly drives poverty alleviation. It is therefore necessary, and there is great benefit to gain, by assessing security threats that seems to thwart the realization of sustainable rural development in Nigeria. Such assessment can help to map out strategies that can enhance the realization of sustainable rural development in Nigeria. This work is organised in themes, beginning with this introduction. It is followed by method used to collect data for this study, conceptual explanation and literature on sustainable rural development challenges, suggested roadmap, and conclusion.

Method

This study relied on secondary sources for data collection. It involves reviewing existing document and records including academic papers, journal publications, text books, Police information bulletin, and government publications, to find relevant data and statistics. We also depended on “web scraping”, which involved extracting data from websites, and social media platforms. Additionally, academic databases and libraries provided the sources of information. These included Google Scholar platforms, LinkedIn, Academia.edu website, and ResearchGate.

Conceptual Explanation

Ruralisation

The concept, ruralisation, is not credited to a single author, and has been developed in different contexts. Perhaps, a good starting point is in the thesis of Karl Kautsky whose 1899 work during Europe’s wide agrarian crisis focused on rural issues and the impact of capitalism. Since then, the concept of ruralisation has received several tinkering. Historically, it refers to the process of either becoming more rural or rural development (Mugumbate, Francis & Chamunogwa, 2013). However, ruralisation differs remarkable from rural development in its specific approach. The nexus is that rural development will encourage return migration and hence rural regeneration. It therefore creates room for ruralisation, a process that attract newcomers, and new entrants into rural areas for farming; with a strong emphasis on innovation, access to land, and creating new opportunities to counteract rural decline and aging populations (Uchendu, 2015). In this context, rural development becomes a broader concept that encompasses various social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental initiatives aimed at improving the overall quality of life and economic well-being in rural areas (Abasiokong, 1982a; Ebong, 1991).

While ruralisation involves creating a vibrant, diverse rural community where people live and work locally, fostering generational renewal and innovation in farming and rural society, rural development may include infrastructure improvements, healthcare, education, and economic diversification without necessarily focusing on new entrants or innovation in

farming (Muagbalu, 1992; Gillen, *et al*, 2022). In his analysis of ruralisation and rural transformation Uchendu (2015) listed the drivers of ruralisation to include population and economic decline mitigation, regeneration of rural populations and jobs, access to land for new farmers, and the need to overcome challenges of aging populations, and lack of local food supply. Ruralisation aims to make urban -rural migration more common by creating new socioeconomic diversity and opportunities, especially for younger generations and new rural inhabitants (Aisling, *et al*, 2020). In this context, therefore, Laurise and Lawrence (2022) observed two principal foci of ruralisation, which turned out to be multifaceted. The first focus involves the development of rural characteristics within the urban periphery. The second focuses on full return migration to rural areas (especially be retirees) who desire to return to the farm given their recognition of the importance of rural areas in the economy and the society. In such situation, four factors explained the multifaceted derivations, viz: new opportunities, rural social capital, emerging economic and social change, and urban-rural nexus. While “new opportunities” account for rejuvenation as envisaged in economic and social sustainability in rural areas, “rural social capital” is explained by social solidarity created through the feeling of unity and connection among community members from shared beliefs, values and common goals (Charles & Ikoh, 2010). Emerging economy and social change places emphasis on creation of new generations of jobs in order to revitalize rural communities (Laurise & Lawrence, 2022; Gillen, *et al*, 2022) while “urban-rural nexus” are explained by cities adopting rural like features as seen in urban peripheries, and the interconnectedness of urban and rural areas that confirm socio-spatial dynamics between them rather than being seen as separate entities (Berg, 2020). It is in this context, that bomber farm products from the rural areas also feed the urban mouths.

In an earlier work by Aisling, *et al* (2019), the authors explained ruralisation as fostering generational renewal in farming and rural community, improving access to land, supporting new entrants into farming, and encouraging innovation across technological, social, and cultural dimensions. In this context, the ultimate goal of ruralisation includes the creation of a "new rural frontier" where rural areas become more attractive, economically diverse, and socially vibrant, thereby encouraging local living and working and overcoming challenges like aging populations, isolation, and farm disappearance (Aisling, 2020). It seeks to arrest rural decline as exacerbated in Nigeria by insecurity including banditry, famer-herders' crises, forceful migration and human displacement by terrorists and such other natural disorder like climate change that exert negative impacts on rural development. The facilitation of rural regeneration and generational renewal are key concerns of ruralisation.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development as concept has its foundation in the Latin word, *sustinere*, which literally means “hold up, hold upright or endure” over a long period of time (Onions, 1964; Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019). In contemporary usage, it is operationalised to refer to a state in which the environment, economy, and society will continue to exist over a long period of time (Ikoh & Ukpong, 2017; Mensah, 2019). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017) described sustainability as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world), and sustainable development as the many processes and pathways to achieve sustainability.

The history of sustainable development can be traced to the 18th and 19th centuries (Du & Jacobus, 2006). However, the concept started to attract the attention of scholars after the 1987 Brundtland Commission; and gained major international acceptance at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The creation of Agenda 21 gave it a boost in the evolvement of the Millennium Development Goals of years 2000 - 2015 and subsequently, the adoption of United Nations universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015 - 2030. In this context,

sustainable development is a model of growth that balances present needs with the needs of future generations. It seeks to harmonize economic progress, social equity, and environmental protection (Mensah, 2019).

The 1987 Brundtland Commission Report defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Such definition has endeared many scholars (Dasgupta, 2007; Blewitt, 2014) to sustainable development enquiries such that a number of them have argued that the core value of sustainable development lies in its aspirational perspective, which include the need to balance social, economic, and environmental protection (Williams & Millington, 2004; George & Gkampoura, 2021). In this context, sustainable development is built on three key pillars, viz: economic, social, and environmental. While sustainable social development focuses on creating societies with equal opportunities, social inclusion, and access to fundamental rights, including poverty reduction, gender equality, education, and healthcare (Daly, 1990), economic sustainability seeks to boost local economies by supporting sustainable agriculture, small-scale enterprises, and entrepreneurship that create stable income sources and employment opportunities (Barbier, 1987). In terms of environmental sustainability, focus remains on programmes like protection of biodiversity, afforestation, and adoption of eco-friendly technologies and sustainable land management, among others (Purvis, *et al*, 2019).

In general, sustainability is understood as a form of intergenerational ethics in which the environmental and economic actions taken by present persons must not diminish the opportunities of future persons to enjoy similar levels of wealth, utility, or welfare (Robert, *et al*, 2005). During the MDG era (year 2000 to 2015), the key objective of sustainable development was poverty reduction, which must be achieved through economic growth and participation on the global scale (de Jong & Vijge, 2021). Unlike the Millenium Development Goal (MDG), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopt a much more comprehensive approach to sustainable development. The goals are more people-centered development agenda, such that out of the 17 SDGs, 11 goals contain targets related to equity, equality or inclusion, while 10 goals are solely devoted to addressing inequality within and among countries. Within the context of this study, therefore, scholars have suggested that the most relevant sustainability indicators for rural areas would include value-added food processing, increase farm size and developing local food markets that can enhance food security (Berg, 2020), enhancing new entrants to farms, and increase farmers' incomes (de Jong & Vijge, 2021), and reducing climate change induced disasters like flood and erosion (Blewitt, 2014). Others include availability and accessibility to educational institutions, reflecting opportunities for learning and skills development, availability of health institutions and quality healthcare access for well-being and resilience, reversing rural-urban migration, enhancing family ties, group memberships, and social cohesion and collective security (Finn, 2009). These are laudable goals that cannot be achieve in Nigeria, except the problem of insecurity is effectively solved.

Sustainable Rural Development Challenges in Nigeria

The attainment of sustainability in rural communities seek to enhance not only the advancement of rural Nigeria but also the entire country, economically, socially and environmentally. However, the prerequisites for attainment of sustainable rural development are facing serious challenges. The challenges are observed mostly in escalating climate induced disasters, invasion and succession by Fulani militia, herder-farmer's crises, banditry, terrorism, solid mineral mining exploitation, crude oil exploration and exploitation, inter-ethnic conflict and intra-ethnic conflict and resource control. These challenges and implications for rural development and sustainability are assessed in this section.

Climate induced disasters and sustainable rural development

In Nigeria, climate change induced disaster is considered to be among the five top security threats (Michael & Laura, 2012). In an assessment conducted by Ikoh (2025), climate change *cause-effects* were found to include flooding, drought, deforestation, and desertification. Similarly, Olakunle (2010) and Renee (2017), had earlier argued that the combined effect of increasing drought, flooding and desertification on environmental degradation exerted serious consequences on crop and livestock failures as well as food security.

In a finding that carried the weight of direct observation, Mahmoud, Esther, Bello, *et al* (2022) argued that out of Nigeria's 909, 890 km² of land area, about 580.841 km², which account for 63.83% of the total land is being affected by desertification. The rate is estimated at 0.6 km per annum, and it is engulfing about 351,000 ha of crop land, annually (Oloukoi, Adagbasa, & Dasat, 2018). Many peasant farmers and cattle herders from the northern fringes of Nigeria are being affected. Given the adverse effect on farming, which is the main occupation of rural Nigerians, desertification has serious socio-economic implications. In the last count, more than 200 villages have already disappeared in the northern fringes of Nigeria due to desertification (Olakunle, 2010), The impact on food production, and income is negatively high, and the consequences on crops and livestock are experienced through food scarcity, and high prices in the urban markets.

Farmer-herders crisis

Farmers and herder's crisis have severally been explained in Nigeria as a consequent of resource scarcity due to climate change (Oloukoi, *et al*, 2018; Okunola & Ikuomola, 2010; Olakunle, 2010). The cattle need grasses to feed on. It was for this purpose that grazing routes were designated by government so that cattle herders could move their cattle for grazing. The movement along the grazing routes to the southern part of Nigeria was seasonal. The herders moved to the south when the dry season intensified and would return to their homeland at the onset of the rainy season. However, the encroachment of desert and deforestation due to climate change seem to have permanently distort the human ecosystem. Contemporary cattle herders no longer adhered to the grazing routes, and are moving with secondary motives, albeit ulterior, to settle wherever they found themselves as there is no more conducive home for them and their cattle to return to in the core north. It seems plausible to argue that due to drought, lack of water and grass has resulted to the death of many cattle. But this cannot be enough reason to bear arms against native farmers. As the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2023), observed, the term "farmer-herder clashes" is a cynical doublespeak. It amounts to invasion and weaponizing historical land in the disguise of conflicts mask under jihadist conquest. History confirmed that herders and the farmers had coexisted before now with rare, non-lethal disputes (Nwanze, 2019); and this was what made the grazing route and seasonal migration a thriving business.

The present condition where local communities have been erased with several death can only be truly seen as systematic terror, not grazing conflicts (Ikoh, 2021). In these crises, it is not only the crops and farms that have been destroyed but also displacement of farmers. The consequences include lack of access to farms and farmland, food scarcity and lose of homeland as well as social capital of communal value system. Internal displacement alone, has consequences on health, children education, and economic sustainability of the people.

Invasion and succession: The Miyetti Allah Agenda

Unlike the herder-farmers crises that was originally credited to climate change induce disaster, invasion and succession began to receive concerned attention when the government of Mohammedu Buhari (2015 to 2023) could not implement his policy of "Rugalization" of Nigeria. The Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlement policy was mooted in 2019 with the aim

of creating designated settlements in the country for nomadic herders. In the context of the policy, nomadic herders were defined to include wandering cattle herders; and they are predominantly of Fulani extraction. Fulani cattle herders from Niger, Chad, Cameroun, Guinea and the Sahel regions that suffered intense drought and desertification had started massive movement into Nigeria. However, the policy of RUGA had received significant backlash and condemnation from Nigerians (Okeke, 2014; Benjaminsen & Boubacar, 2019) and had to be suspended indefinitely. The suspension was not favourable received by the leadership of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, The statement credited to Bello Abdullahi Bodejo, the leader of the group, that “the Fulani own Nigeria and will continue to rule” and that “herdsmen do not need any permission to enter any community as they are the owners of the land anywhere across Nigeria” (Okoli, Akinrefon, Nwaiwu, Bello & Wuyo, 2020) had associated RUGA policy with the ulterior motive of Fulanization of Nigeria. It reminded Nigerians of another statement credited to the late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, 12 days after Nigeria independence in 1960, published in the Parrot Magazine, that Nigeria must remain an estate of their great grand father, Othman Dan Fodio, with direct exhortation: “we must use the minorities of the North as willing tools and the South as conquered territories and never allow them to have control of their future” (Nwanze, 2019, p. 90). The failure of RUGA and utterance of the Miyetti Allah may have kick started invasion and succession crusade in the country.

Available evidence suggests that after the failure of RUGA policy, radical jihadist elements, mostly mercenaries from Mali, Libya and the Sahel region were recruited for the Fulanization struggle (El-Rufai, 2025). The invasion by the paid militias forcefully displaced communities, especially those with rich water sources and vegetation for cattle Fulani herders’ settlement. In this context, invasion is neither the inflow of rural population to the urban centre (i.e, rural-urban migration) for the purposes of employments, and education, nor is succession seen as movement of people to the outer zones of urban centres as a result of the arrival of migrants and / or the expansion of urban central district (Mckenzie, 1967). Rather, the invasion and succession in Nigeria is associated with militant nomadic Fulani group coming from West and Central Africa, including countries like Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Cameroun, and Central Africa Republic (Ikoh, 2021). It has a negative connotations and sentiments about the indigenous communities and a self acclaimed right of ownership of the land. The Fulani militant would first establish hidden camps inside large forests that span multiple States in northern Nigeria; and then used the camp as bases to form splinter cells in Nasarawa, Kogi, and Taraba States from where they launch attacks on neighbouring rural villages in the Benue valley and beyond (James & Ekani, 2024). As the invaders got settled, they would invite their kid and kins to join them for effective succession, and they are doing more exploit of killings and displacing indigenous communities; after all, power flow from the barrel of AK 47 guns.

In the observation of Arnold (2025), most of the killings and displacements across Nigeria’s Middle Belt are carried out by the Radical Islamist Fulani Ethnic Militia. The reason for their killing extends beyond traditional grazing disputes, to include forced displacement, and the strategic occupation of conquered lands. For instance, in Riyom LGA of Plateau State, the Birom indigenes of Rankum have been invaded and displaced by Fulani militias and the place renamed *Mahanga* (Watch tower). Since the attack and successful invasion of Rankum on September 11, 2001 took place, the neighbouring villages of Bindi-Jebbu, Rim, Tahoss, Bangai, and Soppas as well as Kwi and Jol communities have been witnessing incessant attacks. This is in addition to villages in Barkin Ladi, Mangu, and Bokkos LGAs that have suffered numerous coordinated attacks on predominantly Christian farming communities. In one Fulani invasion at Dogo Nahawa, community on March 7, 2010, a total of 501 people were killed in one night (Edward, *et al*, 2021).

Benue state, in north central Nigeria is considered as the epicentre of Fulani invasion due to its favourable terrain for cattle herding. Many communities in Gwer West, Guma, Logo and Agatu LGAs have suffered massive displacement, while others have continued to experience frequent and deadly assaults (Ikoh, 2019). The Yelwata massacre of 13th and 14th June, 2025, where more than one hundred and fifty Christians were killed, is the latest in the invasion incident (Chimtom, 2025). In Taraba State, several displacements and abandoned villages have been reported (Garpiya & Abdullahi, 2025). In Kaduna State, several communities have been attacked repeatedly, especially in the southern part, with entire villages reportedly burned down (Abaji, *et al*, 2025). The consequences include economic, environment, and social upheavals. As the displaced natives moved to other communities and nearby urban centres to seek safety and shelter in internally displaced people camps, their villages are taken over by the Fulani. This situation is creating tensions and intermittent reprisal attacks as the displaced villagers mobilised to reclaim their land (Ibrahim, 2019).

Terrorism and rural sustainability in Nigeria

Terrorism in Nigeria started as a home grown one with serious Islamic colouration by the *Jamaat Ahl al-Sunna li al-da'awati wal-Jihad* group. The group is known for seeking to abolish Western education and impose Islamic law. Many of its adherents referred to it as Daular Musuluncin (*Jihadist militant* group). Within the lexicon of terrorist classification, it is recognised as the Boko Haram Terrorist. Its main objective is to Islamised Nigeria (Ola, 2017). It came to limelight in 2009. Later, a splinter of it formed the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Although the groups are mainly based in north-east Nigeria in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. They are also known to have established many cells along with its splinter group, Ansaru (*Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan*), in many parts of Nigeria. They have carried out destructive attacks in Gombe, Niger, Kaduna, Kogi, Bauchi, Ondo, Zamfara, Taraba, Jigawa, Sokoto, Edo and Kano states, and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Due to earlier affiliation with al-Qaeda in the Islami Maghreb (AQIM), these terrorist organizations have exported terrorism to other neighbouring countries in the West African sub region (Ikoh, 2021). A recently emerging terrorist group in the country is the Lakurawa, with a base in the Northwest states of Sokoto and Kebbi.

Terrorism is causing profound threats to rural development in Nigeria by directly disrupting agricultural production, imposition of shariah law on conquered rural communities, displacing community members who have to either run for safety in other communities or seek for safety in the IDP camps. In the observation of Abubakar and Amurtiya (2023), Bokko Haram terrorism has exacerbated food insecurity, unemployment, and poverty. By invading communities, they triggered rural-urban migration as people had to seek refuge in nearby urban centre where Nigerian security forces can be reached for protection. Terrorism, therefore, creates a ripple effect, viz: food insecurity, economic decline, and heightened vulnerability for rural populations.

Displacement has severe consequences for the aged population, including physical and mental health impacts, loss of social and family support, and increased vulnerability to injury and deprivation. Older adults have faced challenges such as limited mobility, finding it hard to travel or access essential services (Chimtom, 2025); where communities had to run in a short notice and / or during invasion at night hours, older people are often left behind or abandoned (International Crisis Group, 2025). Even in the IDP camps, specific needs for chronic disease management, nutritional support, and protection from risks are often unmet in standard humanitarian aid packages. For instance, when Boko Haram terrorists took over Gwoza LGA, in 2009 and declared it their caliphate headquarters, the displaced indigenes had to run to neighbouring Republic of Cameroun to take refuge. That displacement caused several problems for the aged population, including loss of social and family support. The elderly ones

who were either sicked and / or with chronic disease management as well as those who could not walk had to be abandoned. In the absence of medical attention and nutritional support, many died. Unfortunately, as Ndahi, (2025) reported, some of the aged were those who had retired as civil servants, and had left Maiduguri (the headquarters of Borno State) and had wanted to enjoy quiet retirement life at home in Gwoza.

Initially, rural communities in the north eastern part of Nigeria were found to have been the hardest-hit by terrorists. But gradually the problem is engulfing other sections of the country as seen in the North west, North central and South West. From all indications, it is no longer only the Bokko Haram and ISWAP terrorists that are rendering havoc on rural Nigeria, but emerging splinter groups (ISWAP, Lakurawa, etc) and those operating in the name of Bandits as well as those classified by the Press as *Unknown Gun Men* that specialises in kidnapping and cattle rustling. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2016) observed that fear of terrorism and attacks by bandits have caused repeated displacement in rural communities. In this context, rural people have suffered both social and economic livelihood. Beside the direct attacks on community members and infrastructure, terrorism is also undermining institutional trust as it diverts state resources away from development, and worsens underlying issues like poverty and resource competition (Bagaji, 2012; Tafida, *et al*, 2023). The direct impact of terrorism on rural livelihood is first seen in the decline of agriculture, which is the mainstay of rural Nigerians. It causes farmers to flee their land due to incessant attacks and killings, thus leaving their farms, and farmlands uncultivated. The destruction of houses and theft of livestock and crops, kidnapping, and the use of fertilizers for explosives manufacturing by the terrorists, have devastating effect on rural agriculture and food production. Research findings suggest a direct and significant negative correlation between terrorism and sustainability of rural live and by extension affordability of food in the urban areas (UN, 2017).

Solid mineral and Crude oil nexus in rural sustainability

The discovery of minerals, be it solid or crude petroleum often generate significant excitement for the citizens of the country. The reason for such excitements includes economic benefits, job creation, infrastructure development, and increased government revenues. In terms of community development, Ikoh and Ukpong (2019) linked solid mineral mining and crude oil drilling with creation of jobs and the stimulation of local economy. Additionally, oil and mining companies can contribute to local infrastructure and development through corporate social responsibility. It is, however, doubtful how many of such corporate social responsibilities are being faithfully executed in Nigeria. The application of resource curse seems to be the case. Many crude oil and solid mineral producing communities are relatively deprived of the wealth taken from their communities. They are exposed to several social, economic, and environmental hazards caused by crude oil spillage, improper waste disposal, and misuse of mining chemicals. The environmental degradation includes pollution of water bodies, loss of biodiversity, decline in air quality, as well as loss of livelihoods (Awudi, 2002).

Nigeria is not only home to crude oil, but also solid minerals like columbite, tantalite, lithium, gold, and other rare earth minerals. These solid minerals are resources for modern technology including electric cars, smartphones, satellites, drones and weapons. The exploration and exploitation for these resources take place in the rural area, creeks and coastal regions of Nigeria. Mining for solid minerals involves excavations, which means the local residents would have to be displaced. In many communities in Zamfara, Plateau, and Nasarawa States, entire villages have been ejected (some under forced and/ or threat of militants' attacks) for solid minerals to be extracted from their soil. Farms and farmland as well as homes have been destroyed to give way for mining. In the middle Belt Region, Orngu (2025) confirmed the existence of illegal mining fields operated by Chinese-miners through the arrangement of

local collaborators with militia protection rackets. Community members have been forced to leave so that excavation can take place.

The consequences of solid mineral and crude oil exploitation on rural sustainability include the contamination of waterway, streams and creeks, especially when oil spillage occur. Such contaminations have destroyed aquatic lives and render farm land useless for farming. In the Niger Delta Region, for instance, the Ogoni land bear the brunt of several oil spillages. After many years of neglect and international outcries, government effort to clean the land is yet to yield the desired result. Communities have lost access to land and resources essential for agriculture, fishing, and other traditional livelihoods, thus leading to economic hardship and increased poverty. The use of farmland is seriously thwarted by environmental degradation (Ikoh, & Ukpog, 2013). Akwa Ibom communities in Ibeno Local Government, including Inua Eyet Ikot, Mpanak, Iwokpom, Upenikang, Iwoachang, Okorutip, Iwokpom Opolom, Itak Abasi, Okpo Ita, and Okot Itak have several complained of oil spill from ExxonMobil and the devastating effect on fishing and their engine boats (Imbu, 2024).

Similarly, rural communities where mining for solid mineral are taking place are often left with very little livelihood choices. While mining activities lead to deforestation and lose of farm land, the water and streams are polluted by heavy metals, and can no longer be used for drinking. In Zamfara State where gold is being mined in commercial quantity, the influx of cash and foreign miners is transforming the once homogenous traditional communal society into more individualistic people. The recruitment of militias to protect the foreign miners and their operation, have introduced a subculture of violence that encouraged anti-social behaviours; and intra-community conflict over land rights is being encouraged (Nuhu, et al, 2014; Aminu, *et al*, 2022). Elsewhere in Nasarawa State, mining activities at Wamba, Azara, Afu, Obi, Jangerige, Jangwa Shankodi, and Ugya communities have forced several villages to relocate, thus disrupting social networks and leading to unemployment (Galadima & Garba, 2012).

Roadmap and Policy Options

In the midst of security challenges and the negative effect on rural livelihood, ruralisation and its sustainability will involves regeneration, and revitalization. In the argument of Ukpog (2017), rural revitalization policy should be a multidimensional process that seek to transform declining rural areas into vibrant, sustainable communities through improving quality of life, economic opportunities and infrastructure. This can be achieved largely by addressing challenges like depopulation, (the ongoing hollowing out and displacement of Nigerians from their indigenous communities), and poverty through both endogenous (local) and exogenous (external) initiatives, thus shifting from a pure agricultural focus to a broader multifunctional approach. This argument strikes similar chord with what Hernandez-Lopez, *et al* (2026), called *“rurbanomics”* – developing local assets and integrating them into a diversified economic based- thus encouraging a symbiotic rural - urban linkage with benefits ranging from food security to ecosystem services. These are all in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which collectively aim to eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities, protect the environment, and promote peace and prosperity through out the world by 2030. Many States in Nigeria have development plans that target the realization of these goals; particularly, rural development. The findings of this paper revealed that insecurity will constitute a major constraint to the realisation of the SDGs targets as well as the State Governments’ plans. Effective security for rural development will require a multi-faceted approach combining formal and informal security actions, including a police force that can fight against bandits, militants and *unknown gun men* invasion of local communities. It is based on the findings that the following road maps are suggested.

Addressing Internal Threats to Local Security: Security ensures protection from both internal and external threats, and safeguard life and property. In this context, many rural areas are confronted with inter community and intra-community crises. In many instances, the enemies within tend to sabotage peace efforts and thus thwart rural development. Where they do not organise outright vandalization and discourage community participation, they collude with criminal elements to destabilise the community. It is therefore necessary for Government to strengthen local and traditional institutions to get involve, especially in conflict resolution at the local level with a view to solving them in order to build trust and improve community resilience. In terms of inter-community conflicts, Government can intervene through the State Security Management apparatus or set up committees that ensure settlement for peaceful coexistence in the rural areas. Promoting peace will ensure the realization of inclusive rural society.

Addressing External Threat to Local Security: Government and Community leaders should encourage the establishment of vigilante groups (where none exist) and collaboration between local vigilante groups and formal law enforcement institutions (the Police and the Army) to improve intelligence sharing. A good example is the Edo State Security Network, that recruits locally responsible men and women and trained them to be responsive to specific community security needs and effective safety maintenance.

Community Policing and Technology Deployment: Sustainable security in the rural areas can be achieved through community-based approaches that prioritize trust, accountability, and local participation. This is as opposed to reactive, force-driven methods, where security officers would arrive after the criminals have struck and left. In this method, rural security relies on the involvement of local communities, responsible self-help groups, and non-governmental organizations with deployment of security cameras to enhance safety and well-being of the people.

Inter-community and Inter-State Security Network: Collaboration between neighbouring communities and States would guard against infiltration of criminals. When communities and States collaborate on security matters via strategies that emphasize being “one another’s keeper”, it will prevent a situation where neighbouring communities and / or States are used as launching pads to attack another community or State. Such security Network can also help to share information on perceived warning signs and triggers that would help to prevent attacks and invasion.

Legal and Structural Reforms: Nigerian Government needs to fast track the establishment of State Police. It will enable State governments and the local governments to response to security challenges faster and accurately.

Establishment of Cattle Ranching: The National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLSTP) is poised to establish ranching. This is should be encouraged as it would mitigate farmer-herders’ conflicts and introduce modern animal husbandry techniques.

Rural Area Based Disaster Management and Hazard Mitigation Committee: Many rural areas are confronted with desertification, flooding and drought. These are climate change induced disasters. Government-led initiatives via the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), should be complemented with community-based strategies, as well as the integration of indigenous knowledge that enhances resilience. Special committees should be established to organise training workshops for community members on capacity building for natural disaster preparedness. Government should also intensify on building and maintaining

of rural drainage systems, constructing shelters, and dredging of rivers to mitigate impact of flooding.

Strengthen the Nigeria War on Terror (WOT): The war by terrorist groups who dressed in Arabic rope in the name of Muslim should no longer be taken for granted; neither should the release of the so called “repentant terrorists” into the Nigerian society be tolerated any more. Available evidence has shown that in spite of military actions and "super camp" strategies, these terrorists still control several rural areas in Nigeria, and Nigeria military targets have successfully been attacked in recent time. There is therefore, the need to strengthen intelligence-driven law enforcement, ensure strict counter-terrorism laws (like the 2022 Act), enhancing inter-agency coordination through the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), and arresting and punishing those involve in terrorism financing. There is also need for partnership with international Agencies as well as governments that have proficiency in the war against terror.

Conclusion

This study assessed ruralisation and sustainable development in Nigeria. It was motivated by the United Nation’s sustainable goals that placed emphasis on rural development and agriculture development. The sustainable development goals place emphasis on reduction of rural poverty by ensuring access to basic services, technology, and economic resources for the vulnerable; zero hunger with focus on sustainable agriculture, supporting small-scale farmers, increasing productivity, and strengthening resilience against climate-related shocks; and sustainable water management and sanitation access, as well as promoting sustainable development that connects rural areas to urban centres for better resource distribution. These goals, among others, suggest a socio-economic blue print that can transform the world by 2030.

In line with the sustainable development goals, many States in Nigeria have formulated their development plan towards achieving these UN laudable goals. For Nigeria, rural development programmes and poverty alleviation programmes are not new (Ukpong & Ikoh, 2010; Ikoh & Ukpong, 2017). What is perhaps, new, is the competing extremist assaults on Nigeria’s rural communities in the name of herder-farmers crisis, bandits, Fulani militias, and terrorism. Attacks on rural areas are not only destroying communal social bonds but also disrupting social and economic foundations like schools, basic health services, and forcing communities to flee their homes. Beside these, are coordinated invasion communal lands and displacement of Nigerian from their indigenous communities. Widespread inter-community and intra-community violent crises and climate change induced disasters that manifesting in flooding, desertification and drought also affect rural communities. These constitute security challenges that will constrain the realization of rural development and agricultural development.

Sustainable ruralisation in Nigeria involves transforming rural areas into self-sustaining, productive, and habitable places that can curb rural-urban migration, reduce poverty, and boost food security. Sustainability will factor in ability to develop over a long term; and ensuring that the use of resources and the protection of the environment can continue to meet current and future needs. Sustainable development emphasizes the creation of conditions for future generations to be able to continue to develop based on the satisfaction of current needs. The sustainable development of Nigeria, therefore, requires the sustainability of rural areas as a source of supply and resources for urbanized areas. In all these, availability of security becomes a *sin qua non* for both rural and agricultural development. The paper offers the following suggestions, viz: active involvement of rural communities in addressing external and internal security threats; creation of community policing and deployment of technology, creation of inter-state and inter-community security network; creation of State Police, cattle

ranching, hazard mitigation committee, and strengthening the resolves on the war against terror in Nigeria.

References

- Abaji, A. S.; Akoji, S. J; Rintep, F. C.& Gonten, W. M. (2025). Insecurity, rural-urban migration and food security in north central Nigeria: Implications for national security and social stability. *African Journal of Humanities & Contemporary Education Research*, Vol. 20 (1), 305 - 325
- Abasiokong, M. E. (1982a). *Integrated rural development in the third world*, New York: Exposition Press.
- Abasiokong, M. E. (1982b). *Mass participation: An essential element for rural development programme in developing countries*, Uyo: Scholar Press.
- Abubakar, T. A. & Amurtiya, M (2023). Boko-Haram insurgency and rural livelihood dilemma: Implication for sustainable development in North-East Nigeria. *Earth and Environment Sciences*, doi:10.35784/pe.2023.1.23
- Adedeji, A & Bamidele, A. (2000). *People-centred democracy in Nigeria? The search for alternative systems of governance at the grassroots*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) PLC.
- Ajaebgu, H. T. (1976) *Urban and rural development in Nigeria*, London: Heinemann Educational Book Ltd.
- Aisling, M., Maura, F., Marie, M., John, M., Therese, C., Shane, C., & Galway. NUI. (2019). *The ruralization conceptual guidelines: A Guide for Practitioners*. Brussel: Open Science
- Aisling, M., Maura, F., Marie, M., John, M., Natasha, K. Therese. C. & Shane, C. (2020). *Ruralization: The opening of rural areas to renew rural generations, jobs and farms*. Brussel: Open Science.
- Aminu, I. D., Sani, I. & Ali, S. (2022). The impact of gold ore mining on total lead (pb) concentration in some mining and residential communities in Zamfara State, Nigeria. *Dutse Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences (DUJOPAS)*, Vol. 8 No. 2b, 43 – 52.
- Arnold, M. M. (2025, October 14). *Formal statement on widespread violence and displacement in Nigeria*. Speech presented by the founder of Africa Arise International / Africa Arise USA at Abuja Hilton, on Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- Bagaji A.Y.S (2012). Boko Haram and the recurring bomb attacks in Nigeria: Attempt to impose religious ideology through terrorism? *Cross-cultural Communication* Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 33-41.
- Barbier, E. (1987). The concept of sustainable economic development. *Environmental Conservation*. 14 (2), 101-110. doi:10.1017/S0376892900011449.
- Benjaminsen, T, & Boubacar, B (2019). Why do pastoralists in Mali join jihadist groups: A political ecological explanation.. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 46: 1–20. doi:10.1080/03066150..
- Berg, C. (2020). *Sustainable action: Overcoming the barriers*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Borno Agency for the Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response (BACSD & HR (2020, March). *Borno State's 10-year strategy for transformation in consideration of its 25-year development plan*. Maiduguri: Author.
- Blewitt, J. (2014). *Understanding sustainable development*. London: Routledge

- Charles, J. O & Ikoh, M. U. (2009). Rural and Urban Economies: A historical and contemporary discourse, In S. A. Abdullahi, I. Z. Mohammed & C. Casey (Eds.). *Studies in Cultural Sociology* (pp 118 – 154). Ibadan: Foludex.
- Charles, J. O. & Ikoh, M. U. (2010). Migrants and community ties: Implication for community change. In E. M. Abasiokong (Ed.). *The changing faces of rural Nigeria: A study in change and continuity* (pp.: 98 – 155). Uyo: Abaam Publishing Co. Available at: <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/10694268>. ISBN: 978-643-528-9.
- Chigbu, U. E. (2012). Village renewal as an instrument of rural development: Evidence from Weyarn, Germany, *Community Development*, 43(2) pp.209-224.
- Chintom, N. K. (2025, July 16). Prayers for victims of terrible massacre in Nigeria. *The Tablet*. Retrieved 16 July 2025.
- Clinard, N. (1970). *Slums and community development*, New York: Incorporated Press.
- Dasgupta, P. (2007). The idea of sustainable development. *Sustainable Science* 2 (1), 5–11. doi:10.1007/s11625-007-0024-y. S2CID 154597956.
- Daly, H. E. (1990). Toward some operational principles of sustainable development. *Ecological Economics*, 2 (1), 1–15.
- de Jong, E. & Vijge, M. J. (2021). From millennium to sustainable development goals: Evolving discourses and their reflections in policy coherence for development. *Earth System Governance*. 7 100087. doi:10.1016/j.esg.2020.100087.
- Du P. & Jacobus A. (2006). Sustainable development: Historical root of the concept. *Environmental Science*, 3 (2), 83 - 96. doi:10.1080/15693430600688831
- Ebong, M. (1991). *Mobilisation of resources for rural development in Nigeria*, Calabar: Wusen Press Ltd.
- Edward, N., Pegah, H. & Remi, C. (2021). Inter-communal violence, insurgency, and agro pastoral conflict in the Lake Chad Basin region. Doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2023.2248868
- Ejue, F. O. (1998). Transforming rural areas in Nigeria: Appraisal of DFRRI” in Ndunode: *Calabar Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1998.
- Ekong, E. E. (1988). *An Introduction to Rural Sociology*, Ibadan: Jumak Publishers Limited.
- Ekpo, A. H. (1991). *The dialectics of rural development: Theory and evidence; Mobilisation of resources for rural development in Nigeria*, Calabar: Wusen Press Ltd.
- El-Rufai, N (2015, Sept 2). We paid Fulani to stop killing in Kaduna. Premium Times
- Galadima, A. & Garba, Z. N. (2012). Heavy metals pollution in Nigeria: Causes and consequences. *Elixir pollution*, 45(1), 7917-7922.
- Gana, J. (1986). *A Strategy for rural development in Nigeria*. A paper presented at a seminar organized by the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI). Lagos.
- Garpiya, U. & Abdullahi, G. (2025). Incessant conflict and the economic development of Wukari and Takum Local Government Areas of Taraba State. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 3, (3). 408 – 417.
- George, H. & Gkampoura, E. C (2021). Where do we stand on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals? *An overview on progress. Economic Analysis and Policy*, 70, 94 – 122.
- Gillen, J., Bunnell, T. & Rigg, J. (2022). Geographies of ruralization. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 12(2), Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/20438206221075818>.
- Hernandez-Lopez, E., Martinez-Carrasco, L & Brugarolas, M. (2026). Revitalizing rural areas: A review of vivacity indicators and the potential of generative AI in rural development analysis. *Journal of Rural Studies*, Volume 122, 103957. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2025.103957>
- Ibrahim, A. (2019). Investing in peace: Strategies for sustainable development in Taraba State. *Development Policy Review*, 20(3), 189-204.

- Ikoh, M. U. & Ukpong, E. A. (2013). The Niger Delta crisis: Taming violence beyond the amnesty. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(17): 146 – 159. Available at www.ijhssnet.com p-ISSN: 2220 – 8488; e-ISSN:2221-0989
- Ikoh, M. U. & Ukpong, E. A. (2017). Policy root of poverty in Nigeria: Targeting year 2030 with social protection intervention. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 22(11),19–29. e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. www.iosrjournals.org
- Ikoh, M. U. (2019). Intergroup Conflict and national cohesion. In M. I. Kida & G. A. Genyi (Eds.). *Delivering democratic promises in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges* (pp: 299 – 336). Abuja: Gwatex Publishers.
- Ikoh, M. U. (2021). *Sociology of criminal, arc of tension, and harvest of insecurity in Nigeria: Patterns, linkages and implications for national security*. Federal University of Lafia 2nd Inaugural Lecture Series. Lafia: FULafia Book Press.
- Imbu, F. (2024, August 20). Oil spill from ExxonMobil pipe is spilling crude oil across our rivers and farmlands: Nigerian communities' lament. *The Colonist Report Africa*. Also, national Oil Spill detection and Response agency (NOSDRA) @ un-spider.org.
- International Crisis Group (2023). *Herders vs. farmers: Resolving deadly conflict in Nigeria*, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/302-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict>
- Laurise, P. & Lawrence, S. (2022). Geographies of ruralisation or realities? The death and life category. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 12 (1), 204382062211029.. Doi: 10> 1177/20438206221102937.
- Mabogunje, A. (1992). *Integrated rural development: Social transformation for self-reliance: Proceedings of a National Conference*. Directorate for Mobilization (MAMSER). Ibadan: Fountain Publications.
- McKenzie, R. (1967). The ecological approach to the study of the human community. In R. Park & E. Burgees (Eds.). *The City*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences*. 5 (1) 1653531. doi:10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531.
- Muagbalu, L. N. (1992). Rural development in Nigeria. A review of previous initiatives. In M. O. Olisa & J. Obiukwu (Eds). *Rural development in Nigeria: Dynamics and strategies*. Akwa: Mekslink Publishers.
- Mugumbate, J., Francis, M. & Chamunogwa, N. (2013). Ruralisation of urban Areas: Reversing development In Z. J. Mugumbate (Eds.). *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*. Available at: www.Garph.Co.Uk Ijarmss.
- Ndahi, M. (2025, June 20). Troops engage terrorists in fierce gun battle to repel Gwoza invasion. *Vanguard*
- Nuhu, A. A., Sallau, M. S. & Majiya, M. H. (2014). Heavy metal pollution: The environmental impact of artisanal gold mining on Bagega village of Zamfara state, Nigeria. *Res J Pharm BiolChemSci*, 5(6), 306-313.
- Nwanze, G. (2019). *A political history of modern Nigeria: Words and thoughts of Mbazulike Amechi, Vol. 1*. Enugu: Mbazulike Amechi (Self published). Available at: <https://www.marymartin.com>.
- Okeke, O. E. (25 April 2014). Conflicts between Fulani Herders and Farmers in Central and Southern Nigeria: Discourse on Proposed Establishment of Grazing Routes and Reserves. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 3: 66–84.
- Okoli, A., Akinrefon, D., Nwaiwu, C., Bello, B., & Wuyo, I (2020, June 6). Outrage greets Miyette Allah's 'Nigeria belongs to Fulani comment. *Vanguard Newspaper*. Available at: www.Vanguardngr.com.

- Okunade, S. K. & Kohon, H.S. (2023). Climate change and emerging conflict between herders and farmers in Nasarawa and Plateau States, Nigeria. *Contemporary Issues on Governance, Conflict and Security in Africa*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:10.1007/978-3-031-29635-23.
- Okunola, R. A. & Ikuomola, A. D. (2010). The socio-economic implication of climatic change, desert encroachment and communal conflicts in Northern Nigeria. *American Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 1(2), 88-101. Doi:2010.10.5251/ajsms.2010.1.2.88.101
- Ola, T. P. (2017) Defective federalism and the emergence of domestic terrorism in Nigeria. *International Journal of African Development: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 8*. Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/ijad/vol4/iss2/8>
- Olakunle, M. F. (2010). *Climate change and inter-ethnic conflict between Fulani herders and host communities in Nigeria*. Paper presented at Conference on Climate Change and Security, organised by the Norwegian Academic of Sciences and Letters, 2010).
- Oloukoi J., Adagbasa, E. G., & Dasat, G. L. (2018). Desertification risk analysis and assessment in Northern Nigeria. *Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment*, 11, 70-82.
- Onions, C. T. (Ed)(1964). *The shorter oxford English dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 2095.
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origin. *Sustainability Science*, 14 (3), 681–695.
- Robert, K. W.; Parris, T. M.; Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005). What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values, and practice. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*. 47 (3), 8–21.]
- Uchendu, E. C. (2015). Ruralisation: A tool for rural transformation. *Development in Practice*, Vol 25 (7), 1067-1073. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24565883>.
- Ukpong, E. A. (2017). Innovation, social policy and improvement of the quality of life of citizens in Nigeria. **International Journal of Humanities and Social Invention**, 6, (11), 82 - 93
- Pope, W. & Johnson, B. (1983). Inside organic solidarity. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 681–691. Accessed: 10th January, 2026 from EBSCO online database, Academic Search Premier <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=14846969&site=ehost-live>
- United Nations (2017), January – July). *Nigerian Humanitarian dashboard*. Author: New York.
- UNESCO (2017). *UNESCO moving forward the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development*. Bokova, I.G: Author.
- World bank Group (2025). *Kano State Government Public Private Partnership Support*. Kano: Author.
- Williams, C. C. & Millington, A. C (2004). The diverse and contested meanings of sustainable development. *The Geographical Journal*, 170 (2), 99–104.
- Ukpong E. A. & Ikoh, M. U. (2010). Governance and poverty alleviation in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *The Public Service Manager* 2 (4): 1 –18. ISSN: 1126 -7651