

From Chibok Girls to Kankara Boys: An Overview of Parameters Surrounding the Kidnapping of Kankara School Children in Katsina State, Nigeria 1987-2019[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper account for the history of arm conflict between the herdsmen and farmers in southern Katsina Emirate. The kidnapping of Chibok Girls in 2014 was an eye opener to the bandits associated with the kidnapping of school children across the states of Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Kebbi and Niger. Scholars generally associate the present stage of conflict between the farmers and fulani herdsmen as the root caused of the present spede of kidnapping and cattle rustling that affects the the north-western states of Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto states. The paper argues that the banditry in Katsina state especially Kankara areas in particular pre-date the present state of kidnapping in the area. Kidnapping of 344 children of Government Science Secondary School Kankara on the 11th December 2020, marked a landmark in the history of arm conflict affecting the area and other communities bordering the forest of Katsina and Zamfara States. This paper argues that the *Boko Haram* (BH) insurgency, environmental and other social parameters greatly contribute to the spate of kidnapping in the area.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is on the contemporary security challenge affecting the North western states of Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto states. The security challenges of Kidnapping and Cattle rustling permutated by the armed Fulani bandits and other like mind criminals in the forest areas of these states could best be understood from the historical context of the armed conflict that exists in the area. Historically, conflict is a universal phenomenon that evolves in various magnitudes. The interest of conflict actors at all levels is seldom in tandem with one another, even in the presence of interdependency and common goal. Apparently, scarce natural resources create competitive social arrangement which often trigger animosity among people of divergent cultures and even those with common cultural traits. Population out boost in an agrarian society means more demand for agricultural land “which also have alternative and competitive use” (Soomiyol and Fadairo,2020). Ostensibly, this is the case of the conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria as it emanated from conglomeration of incidences ranging from natural to socio – cultural and economic indices. Whenever there is presence of multi-ethnic identities coupling multiple social, cultural and religious affiliations, frequent resource-based violence is usually the offspring. This illuminates the rationale of herders’ farmers clash to be more prevalent in the core North than other part of the country (Mawoliand Adamu,2020). Thus, the clash between herders and farmers in Nigeria is of the same age with agricultural practice in the country.

The Fulani ethnic comprises of a large group of people rearing livestock, internally divided, predominantly

in West and Central Africa with large number of them occupying the Nigerian territory than other part of the region as they constitute the numerous of all the pastoral groups in the country. Categorically, the Fulani can be grouped into two; Pastoralists/Semi – Nomadic transhumant and the settled Fulani. For the former, they are the pastoralist group that raises cattle, sheep, as well as cultivate crops on a subsistence basis and the semi nomadic that itinerates; while the later are normally found in urban areas and villages as traders, farmers, traditional rulers and educated professionals. For the purpose of this study, focus is mainly on the former group.

Notably, an interdependent relationship had long been established between herders and farmers with each group's survivability depending on the other, from which a violent relationship manifested thereby becoming more frequent year in year out. This is not unconnected with population out boost, craving for limited resources, appealing to social differences at the very moment cattle routes and water points are experiencing blockage, grazing farm lands are being encroached by farmers, whom end up with their crops been damaged by the herders. Under these conditions' violence is eminent and inevitable.

The hunch here impels that farmers needed herders to maintain supply of “dairy products” and “manure” in as much herders needed the farmers to make “grazing space” available. To have an economic stability each group depends on the other for the continuous flow of “water, land, fodder and other land use”. This mutual understanding was propelled by pageant disputes which transmogrified into “widespread violence, death and internal displacement of persons” (Akerjiir,2018). By and large, the herder-farmer clashes have been scholarly approached from three basic dimensions as Nwangu and Enyiazu postulated. The first dimensional approach faulted “climate change” and “environmental security” as a linchpin of violent clashes between Farmers and Herders. “Scholars in the field of environmental security see causal links between environmental scarcity and violence”. They remarked that

the roots of the conflict (herder – farmers) lie in climate- induced degradation of pasture and increasing violence in the country's far north, which have forced herders to migrate towards south; the expansion of farms and settlements have also swallowed up grazing reserves and blocked traditional migration routes; and the damage to farmers' crops wrought by herders' indiscriminate grazing (Nwangwu and Enyiazu, 2019).

Second is the Malthusian perspective which tends to focus on “urbanization” and “the explosive growth in population” that is seldom in tandem with available resources to highlight the clashes between herders and farmers. This infer that unchecked population growth rises the demand for more governmental projects and farm products, consequently creating a need for land extension to the extent of engulfing “grazing reserves”, latently inviting violent clashes among groups of different interest (Nwangwu and Enyiazu, 2019).

Third is the group of researchers that tends to link the crisis within the Lake Chad Basin with the unhealthy relationship between herders and farmers. They argued that:

the prevalence of insurgency and cattle rustling in Lake Chad has forced nomadic herders into the savannah belt where high population growth has already heightened pressure on farmland, thereby increasing the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution, and cattle theft (Nwangwu and Enyiazu, 2019)

However, this study focused to North – Western Nigeria, hence this approach is seldom emphasized. In his approach Zubairu in his study on the farmers and pastoralist conflict in Birnin Gwari emirate Kaduna state argues that, the abundance of agricultural resources around the forest areas bordering the Birnin Gwari are root cause of the conflict, that have socio-economic activities in the area. His study found that agricultural

production and other commercial transactions were greatly affected by the conflict (Zubairu,2019).

Succinctly, the protracted conflict between herders and farmers is a clear case of “resource war” which “culture” and conservative traditionalism precipitated, nurtured and normalized, which is “linked to the economic wellbeing” of both the actors. The *dramatis personae* of this conflict have faithfully inculcated “traditionalism” in observing their economic activities exclusively from “global best practices”. “Thus, the two groups (herdsmen and farmers) are at the crossroads of socio-cultural and economic survival”. The average Fulani regards “pastoralism” as soul and blood, far beyond economic gain, hence for the Fulani life is meaningless without herds – which also applies to farmers (Nwozor, & Olanrewaju,2020). Broadly speaking, policies have been enacted to checkmate this belligerence and carnage among and between herders and farmers which include legislative and executive provisions, grazing acts, and what have you. What amazes individuals of concern is how the conflict protracted and keeps escalating despite stakeholder’s actions and inactions.

The kidnapping of school children in Nigeria was first attributed to *Boko Haram* kidnapping of Chibok Girls in the North-Eastern part of the country. Thus, the *Boko Haram* activities from its inception which was only limited to the three North-Eastern Nigerian states greatly undermine the states of rule of law, and the entire Nigerian sovereignty. This is apart from over stretching the Nigerian security set up. The *Boko Haram* crisis is considered as one such crisis that threatens the general security and socio-cultural development of Nigeria. The present turmoil has basis from the 2009 clash between the members of the group and the security forces that ended with extra-judicial killing of their leader and other members by the Nigerian security agencies, kidnapping of Chibok school girls and attacks on public schools(Salihi 2012; Akinpala 2014; Aghedo and Osumah 2014, Kankara 2015).

It is in the light of the foregoing this study evaluates how the *Boko Haram* insurgency influence and change the pattern of conflict between the farmers and pastoralist to full scale arm banditry and kidnappings in schools of North-western regions of Nigeria. To achieved that this paper evaluates, one, the geography and socio-demographic setting of Katsina. Two, the Phases of Farmer Pastoralist Conflicts and *Boko Haram* insurgency and its impact on Katsina before the 2020 Kankara school children kidnaping. Three, the Kidnapping of the School children and the aftermath. Fourth the parameters that influence conflict over years.

GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC SETTING OF KATSINA

Katsina is one the 36 federating states of Nigeria that is located in the extreme Northern part of the country. Katsina State covers an area of 23,938 sq. km, located between latitudes 11°08’N and 13°22’N and longitudes 6°52’E and 9°20’E. The state is bounded by the Republic of Niger to the north, Jigawa and Kano States to the east, Kaduna State to the south and Zamfara State to the west. The population of the state constitutes mainly of Hausa and Fulani ethnics with small number of other ethnic groups such as Igbo, Tiv, Kanuri and Yoruba. There are equally other ethnic groups from different parts of Nigeria and African countries, particularly the Republic of Niger. Katsina state has a population density of 300 people per km², which causes a small size of holdings of nuclear and extended families (2.1 ha on average, for an average family of seven members). According to the 2006 population census Katsina State has a total population of 5,801,584 (2,948,279 males and 2,853,305 females) with an average annual growth rate of 3.3% of total figure annually (FGN, 2006:B33). The population growth in Katsina is a clear manifestation of the impact of both the rise in the birth rate and people’s migration into the state.

Historically, Katsina state represents the origin of Hausa political aristocracy. The area comprises two ancient kingdoms of Katsina and Daura, respectively. With the British consolidation of its powers in 1903,

the former Sokoto caliphate, the former *Jakada* (Representative) system used by the Emirates was abolished. The *Jikada* system allows the various District Heads in the emirate to reside in the district headquarters, and they administer the Districts through their representatives in the various district. All the *Jakadu* (Representatives) were now deployed to their various districts and the British High Commissioner had now taken up powers from the caliph, and he had become the representative of the British crown as the head of the executive (Saulawa, 1996). Thus, the protectorate system came into operation. Under the system, the emirs performed neither executive nor legislative functions without the consent of the colonial officers. Thus, in essence their functions were all entrusted to the High Commissioner.

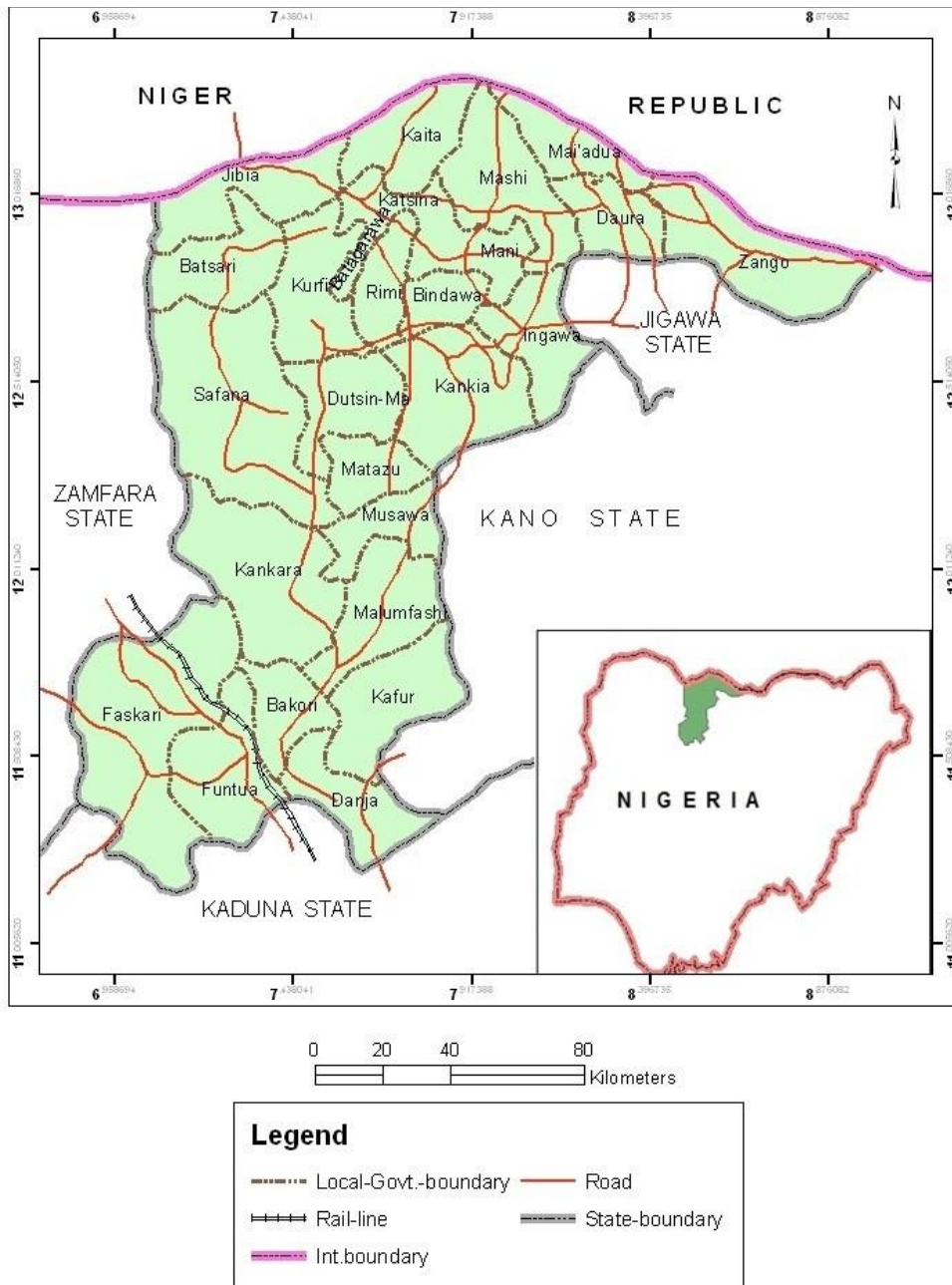
After the British colonial conquest in 1903, the erstwhile Katsina and Daura emirates became Katsina Province of the former Northern region of Nigeria. Later, Katsina and Zaria Provinces together formed the North Central State under the Yakubu Gowon's regime (1966-1975) twelve States Structure. North Central State was left intact in 1976 when the numbers of states were increased to nineteen under the new name of Kaduna state. Katsina state came into existence on the 23rd of September, 1987 covering the same area of the former Katsina Province of the defunct Northern Region. Presently, Katsina State is made up of 34 local government areas (Dansarai, 1997).

The predominant occupation of the inhabitant of Katsina is farming, which has been undoubtedly practiced for centuries. Upland farming of sorghum, millet, cotton, soya beans, cowpea, rice, maize, and groundnut are the primary agricultural activity. However, some women engage in off-farm activities such as processing and trading to generate income. Presently, both rainy and dry/irrigation season farming are practiced by teaming population of farmers. Pastoralism is also another important occupation in Katsina, since livestock serve as a source of food and raw materials (to industries). Livestock provide meat, milk, butter, hides and skin, in addition to being a major source of wealth. Their waste matters serve as manure which aid land fertility. The major livestock kept in the state include small ruminants (sheep and goats), cattle and poultry. The major forms of pastoral activity in the area include rearing of cattle, sheep, goat, camels, rabbitry and poultry (Shehu, 1994). Other important occupational activities of the Katsina people include arts and crafts. These involve cloth making, weaving, blacksmithing, tailoring, etc (KSHCB, 2007:4a).

Interms of Education and Socio-Culture Development for long, Katsina is known for its position as one of the oldest centers of learning in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It has produced famous scholars with Gobarau as one of oldest universities in pre-colonial Africa. Among such scholars were Al-katsinawi, Almughli and Muhammadu Al-shabag. According to current educational indicators as of 2010, Katsina state has primary school enrolment of the 55% of the total enrolment in the North Western region of Nigeria, and 63% for junior secondary school from the total enrolment of 6,496,701 million students of North-Western region of the country. The state also has 22.7% of the total 6,496,701 million students from the North-Western region which constitute 58% of the total illiteracy figure in Northern Nigeria (Tahir, 2013).

Even though from historical account Katsina is one of the oldest centres of learning in Nigeria, the area is considered to be one of the areas that have low access to basic education. Presently, the state has three universities including one private university. There are also, in the state two tertiary colleges of education, one college of legal studies, one polytechnic and four colleges of health science. The area also has 422 secondary schools (KTSGMOE PRS, 2013) and 2207 public primary schools (KTSUBEB PRS, 2013). Below represent map of Katsina state showing the major settlements in the area.

KATSINA STATE SHOWING THE MAJOR SETTLEMENTS



The Phases of Farmer Pastoralist Conflicts and Boko Haram Insurgence in Katsina Before 2020

The farmer-pastoralists conflict in Katsina is an essentially economic conflict, irrespective of the religious, cultural and political colorations (Abbass, 2012:191). The conflict is related to population and growth and environmental degradations. The farmer- pastoralists' in Nigeria generally involves Fulani and Hausa farmers, Fulani vs Tiv Farmer, Fulani vs Jukun Famers, Fulani vs Birom etc. Although, Fulani pastoralist and farmers have long coexisted in symbiotic relationships that have persisted through both peaceful and contentious encounters, reports of violent clashes between these two groups are becoming more frequent in the recent Nigerian History (Oyama,2014). This has been the major source of contention in other states of Adamawa, Plateau, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Kaduna, Benue, Taraba, Katsina and Zamfara States. In Katsina, the conflict is more pronounce in the areas that bordered Zamfara state were the conflict is more pronounce due to the environmental nature and high concentration of Fulani pastoralist. Map below showing the areas

affected by the areas affected by the Fulani herders and farmers Conflict in Katsina.

Map of Katsina State Showing the Areas affected by the Fulani Bandits Conflict



Map of Katsina State Showing LGA's Bordering Zamfara State
 Source:- Geography Department Umyu 2022.

In Katsina to be specific the areas greatly affected by this conflict as indicated above are Local Governments Areas bordering Zamfara state where the conflict has persisted for many years. The Zamfara-Katsina border area is dotted with chain stony hills that allows the Bandits to maneuver and operate easily. According to Rufai and Bawa (2024), the strong border proximity and cultural ties between Zamfara led to the import of banditry into Katsina. The border area of Katsina and Zamfara an area of chain mountain range allows the flow of criminal elements and formation of deadly groups. As observed by Rufai;

Studies have shown that the violence evolved along the Katsina- Zamfara borders, specifically in Zurmi LGA (Dumburum) where the first bandit gang emerged around 2010. Dumburum and Dansadau both in Zamfara are historically populated by people of questionable backgrounds. Unfortunately, it was from these twin centres of misfits that banditry started. Looking at Dumburum for instance, sources around Zurmi and Batsariare in agreement that about 75 % of the people in the village are either bandits or their cohorts (Rufa'I and Bawa, 2024)

Thus, armed conflict between the farmer and herders in Katsina state especially along the border areas with Zamfara can be categorized into three broad phases;

- a. The first phase was between 1979-1999 it covers arm conflict between the herdsmen and farmers during the Harvesting seasons and formation of vigilante groups 1980-1999. The conflict during the period only affects the Fulani herdsmen grazing their cattle's and farmers whose farmlands are trespass by the herdsmen. During this period a district head of Mairuwa in Faskari LGA was killed in the year 1995 by the herdsmen in his attempt to mediate between the herdsmen and farmers in his own domain. Also in a neighboring district of Pauwa, a Police officer was also killed in the same year 1995. Equally the period was characterized by the formation of vigilante groups across the villages neighboring the Rubu, Birnin Gwari and Yar'santa forest reserves (Kankara,2015). Vigilante activities during this period (1986-1999) can be contextualised on the basis of the economic hardship, corruption within state institutions. For example, corruption in Nigeria during the period became almost institutionalised phenomenon across public sectors. While there was the dwindling of the value of Naira, low agricultural output led to the deterioration of economy and rapid retrenchments of workers (in both private and public sectors of the economy) and social insecurity (Galadanchi,2001).
- b. The second phase of the conflict was between 1999-2015, the arm conflicts during this particular period involves conflicts during Harvesting seasons rustling of cows and other domestic animals. Rustling of cattle in the night as well as broad day light arm robbery perpetuated by the Fulani herdsmen. Attack of Fulani settlements and other extra judicial activities by vigilante members and community security volunteer members.
- c. Third phase covers the period 2015 to date. This period was characterized by seasonal conflicts between the Fulani pastoralist and famers, full scale war between the vigilante and herdsmen, kidnapping of commuters and school children incessant attacks on villages. These conflicts are influence by seasonal migrations of Fulani moving south to north during the harvesting season.

As for the *Boko Haram* insurgency since the Nigerian independence, the country has been bedeviled by a number religious crisis that have basis from the politics and other economic reasons. The insurgency of *Jama'atu Ahlul Sunna Lidda'awatuwal Jihad* is popularly known as *Boko Haram* (the name *Boko Haram* represent a Hausa and Arabic terms meaning "Western education is sacrilege" or "a sin") represent one of such conflict that was responsible for more than 15000 killings in Nigeria and displacement of over million people particularly across the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The *Boko Haram* crisis is considered by many people as one such crisis that threatens the general security of the country. The turmoil has basis from the 2009 clash between the members of the group and the security forces that ended with extra-judicial killing of their leader and other members by the Nigerian security agencies, particularly the police and State Security. Since then, its fighters have frequently clashed with Nigeria's central government. Their series of attacks were first targeted on the security personals and much later extended to the media and the general public. From 2010 onwards over dozens of attacks were lunched across different sections of Northern Nigeria and the federal capital Abuja.

Thus, from the beginning of *Boko Haram* insurgency, Katsina state have its own share of the conflict only when in June 20, 2011 members of the sect attack Kankara LGA divisional police station and Bank PHB branch in the area. Seven people including five policemen were killed in gun and bomb attacks. Apart from this attack by the *Boko Haram* insurgents, the impact of the insurgency was generally relative until the

kidnapping of the school children which was believed to be mastermind by the Fulani bandits at the instance of the *Boko Haram* members fleeing from their stronghold area of Sambisa forest and other areas in the North-east due the renewed onslaught by the Nigerian Army and the Multi-National Task force troops.

THE SCHOOL BOYS KIDNAPPING AND AFTERMATH 2020 TO PRESENT

For years, the areas around Kankara and other communities neighboring Zamfara had witness constant raid by the Fulani Bandits. These raids were often accompanied by killings and abduction of women, children and other wealthy individuals for the sake of ransom payment. This development gave the farmers conflict a new outlook signaling the emergence of full-blown banditry in the area. The herdsmen have systematized their attacks by using motorcycles and sophisticated weapons mostly AK47 gun and RPG's, thus moving away from the use of sticks, bow and arrow and other traditional weapons.

The highest of the point of the conflict between the herders and farmers was when on the 11th December, 2020 the Fulani attack and kidnapped 300 school children at boarding school in Kankara . The school, Government Science Secondary Kankara is located in Kankara town. Kankara town is the L.G.A Headquarters of Kankara and Pauwa district under Katsina Emirate. Hundreds of Fulani gunmen riding on motorbikes stormed the boarding school at night and 300 of the school children were taken away. Some school boys jumped over a fence and ran away when they heard gunshots. The 300 were rounded up and herded them into the forest the stony hills of Pauwa and Zango. These children were beaten, threatened and forced to walk through the night for 8 Kilometers before they were loaded on motorbikes. They were dropped at foot of the stony hills that bordered Katsina and Zamfara states. From the border areas of Katsina and Zamfara states, they were herded again for another 50 kilometers into Zamfara forest to a place called Marar Katsinawa. Moreover, it is important to note that the presence of the stony hills have played a significant role in the kidnapping of the school children. The topography had indeed given refuge for many of the bandits operating in the area. The camps set up at the hill top are so close to the school location and are known hiding place for the bandits. Equally, the support and connivance of other indigenous Fulani living around the areas of Dan'Musa, Batsari, and Jibia greatly facilitate easy movement of the school children within a short period of time on the day of the kidnapping.

The kidnapping of the children and the subsequent video display by the Bandits signaled a strong connection and attempt by the *Boko Haram* insurgents to influence the activities of the Bandits in the area. The children were displayed in a video same as the Chibok Girls were displayed by the *Boko Haram* insurgents in 2014. After the kidnapping, the Bandits sent a video clip to the state authorities declaring their allegiance with the *Boko Haram* group. This development was further confirmed by Abubakar Shekau's video clip claiming that they have mastermind the kidnappings. The Image below shows the school Children after being released by their captives after the negotiations.

Fig 3 Kankara School Children Inside Military Vans the Night They were Released

The state responded by dispatching of troops, the military, police and state services to block all routes leading to the area. After series of negotiation, the school children were release four days after they were kidnapped. There were no clear details on the terms of the negotiations before the release of the children by the Fulani Bandits, but many are of the view that money was given for exchange between the government officials and the mediators.

Many experts argued that the ransom paid by the authorities for the release of the children greatly assisted the bandits in acquiring more sophisticated weapons and other related equipment's which really helped the groups in expanding their activities across the region. This was confirmed by the intensity of attacks on farmsteads, villages, schools and government infrastructures. Equally this had open up more kidnappings across the north-western states. This is not surprising considering number of schools that were attacked by

the Bandits in the months that followed the Kankara kidnapping. The attacks on villages and schools in particular became so rampant across the states of Kaduna Zamfara, Kebbi and Niger states.

Table 1. Some Incidences of Attacks on Schools Across North-West After Kankara Incident in April and May to 2021

S/N	VICTIMS	NUMBER ABDUCTED	CASUALTIES	Year /Month	STATE
1	Governments Girls Secondary School Chibok	276		April 2014	Borno
2	Government Girls Science Technical Dapchi	110	1	19 February 2018	Yobe
3	Government Science Secondary School Kankara	300		11 December 2020	Katsina
4	Governments Girls Secondary School Kagara	270	1	17 February 2021	Niger
5	Governments Girls Secondary Jengebe	319	1 Police Officer was killed	26 February 2021	Zamfara
6	Greenfield University, Kaduna	unknown number	1 Security Personnel Killed	21 April 2021	Kaduna
7	Islamiyya School Tegin	200		29 May 2021	Niger

The above table indicates the incidences of schools attacked by the Bandits across the north western states of Nigeria. The kidnappings in these schools followed that of Kankara thus, Kankara kidnapping served as an eye opener to the bandits because of the ransom that was believed to have been paid by the state authorities to the bandits. The kidnapping in all the schools involved similar strategy of using motorcycles and sporadic and indiscriminate shooting by the abductors

THE PARAMETERS OF THE CONFLICT

The Kidnapping of 344 School Children of Government science Secondary School Kankara on the 11 December marked a landmark in the History of armed conflict affecting the communities bordering the forest area between Katsina and Zamfara states. The Kidnapping was a landmark because of number of reasons. First it was the first of its kind in the North- western region of Nigeria in an area far away from area where the *Boko Haram* insurgency led to the kidnapping of Chibok Girls in 2014. Second it was first set of Kidnapping organized by the Fulani armed Bandits at a public school. Third it was for the first time the bandits operating in the North-west region kidnapped high number of children outside the village areas.

Equally the collapse of agricultural infrastructures such as Dams, grazing reserves and farm service centers can be viewed as another major parameter that stimulates the conflict in the area especially during the dry season. Thus, the presences of earth dams were constructed to support the villages’ means of water supply. These earth dams were identified as major source of conflict between the pastoralist and the farmers. The farmers are known of always accusing the pastoralist of trespassing into their farmlands when going to water their cattle’s in the dams during rainy season. While in the dry season the farmers accused the pastoralist of over using the water, and at the same time contaminating their drinking water. These had been the source of conflict in many parts of the district in the areas of Bagoma, Nayadi, Unguwar Sarkin Noma, Yar Santa JekaAreda, Yar’tsamiya, Jandawo etc. The presences of these dams as a factor in the crises in the area represent a social cost of the earth dams.

As argued elsewhere, the rise in the activities of farmer vigilante groups in Southern Katsina emirate was associated to high activities of cattle rustlers and banditry by the Fulani pastoralist. These activities are identified to be of the cases of arm violent conflict associated with farmer and herds' men conflict. As described by Olayoku (2014), about 615 violent deaths have been recorded by the database of Nigerian Watch and there have been about 61,314 fatalities that can be described as violent. For example, in 2008, there were 31 reported cases of cattle conflict while in 2009 the fatalities soared to 83 all occurring most primarily in the northern states of the country. From this is clear that the conflict predated the violent confrontation of Boko Haram insurgents against the Nigerian state which started in 2009.

Many analysts tried to attribute the recurrent conflict of *Boko Haram* insurgency and Fulani cattle rustling/kidnappings to ethno-religious parameters which define the nature of Nigerian state as a multi ethnic and religious state. Thus, the kidnappings and cattle rustling in areas around Katsina and the North-western communities is essentially economic conflict, irrespective of the religious, cultural and political colorations (Abbass, 2012). The conflict is related to population and growth and environmental degradations. The farmer pastoralists' conflict involves Fulani and Hausa famers, Fulani vs Tiv Farmer, Fulani vs Jukun Famers, Fulani vs Birom etc. Although, Fulani herders and farmers have long coexisted in symbiotic relationships that have persisted through both peaceful and contentious encounters, reports of violent clashes between these two groups are becoming more frequent in the recent Nigerian History (Oyama, 2014). This has been the major source of contention in other states of Adamawa, Plateau, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Kaduna, Benue, Taraba, Katsina, Niger, Kebbi and Zamfara States (Oyama,2014).

With rapid population growth in both urban and rural areas in the country, there is increasing demand for food in the country. Similarly, the farmers and pastoral people are increasingly trying to make use of the same land in order to meet the growing demand. The demand of cities for crops and meat induces many producers to maintain large herds and to expand farmland. The availability of road transportation enables delivery of even fragile resources to remote markets and locations that are difficult to reach. It is along this line that conflict erupts between the two interest groups. The farmer in his quest to meeting the growing population demand expands farm hectares into the grazing reserves. While, the quest for greener pastures by herdsmen usually brings them in contact with the sedentary population who are involved in crop production (Oyama 2014). The grazing reserve established since the colonial period were neglected and abandoned by the state authorities. The struggle between these two interest groups, couple with growing breakdown of law and order in the country led to continues clashes between the two.

The last quarter of 20th century and the beginning of 21st century Nigeria witness serious changes. The various significant changes began with 1979 election which was first of its kind in the country, the military intervention in 1984 and the subsequent attempts to transfer power back to the politicians in between 1989-1997. Moreover, the polity was defined by three important parameters that have direct bearing on the rural sites of the country leading to different conflicts in the nation. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) policy that led to decline of purchasing power and massive impoverishment, the ethno-religious conflicts and raise of ethno-religious resentments between the various Nigerian population. All these changes had powerful effect on the urban and rural economy. Rather than accepting these transformations passively, the popular classes sought to carve out their own political space within their given situation. They actively protested the increasingly unfavorable conditions in the countryside. As such, the popular protest was not a homogeneous and harmonious process that came about through predetermined or coordinated efforts. For example, the urban sites of the country witnessed the emergency of violent ethno-religious conflict while the rural sites saw the emergence of ethno-ethnic and farmer harder conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The violent clashes between Farmers and Herders along the border areas of Katsina and Zamfara state as

observed greatly affect the socio-economic and political stability of Katsina. From the preceding analysis, Katsina State is the second most ravaged by banditry after Zamfara state in Nigeria. The kidnapping of Kankara school children marked a turning point in the activities of Bandits across the region. The kidnapping of the school children greatly affect children education in Katsina and other neighboring states in the North-West. However, the kidnapping of the school children indicates a significant shift in the conflict between the herders and Fulani pastoralist in the area. As observed several factors over the years have contributed in heightening the conflict in the area. The state efforts in employing both Kinetic and Non-Kinetic approach to the only succeeded in rescuing the school children. The ransom paid further help in escalating the violence of the bandits against the state populace.

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