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# From Counter-Terrorism to Livelihood Destruction: *Factors Causing Systemic and Continuing Destruction of Livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin*

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## **Abstract**

Since 2009, Boko Haram has led to massive displacements of the local population, destruction of livelihood capitals, the decimation of the local economy, and the plummeting of food productions in the Lake Chad region. Likewise, aggressive military campaigns and security restrictions have also negatively impacted the stability of the region. This paper describes the factors causing systemic and continuing destruction of livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin. Based on the literature and field research in Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, the study found that Boko Haram has a direct impact on households causing fatalities, destruction of livelihood assets and forced displacements, and indirectly affecting agricultural production, household income, food prices, markets, and transport services. Systemic destruction of livelihood has continued due to factors such as previous socio-economic tensions, environmental variabilities, insecurity, and the nature of counter-insurgency campaigns. These factors aggravate food insecurity and limit return and recovery in areas affected by militant activities in the Lake Chad region.

**Key Words:** Boko Haram, Counter-Terrorism, Livelihood, Agriculture, Lake Chad Basin

## **1.0 Introduction**

Boko Haram's insurgency has led to fatalities, massive displacements of the rural population, the destruction of livelihood capitals, the decimation of the local economy, and the plummeting of food productions in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB).

Likewise, aggressive military campaigns and security restrictions have limited access to livelihood assets, stifled food productions, and prolonged violence and instability in the region. According to the World Bank, the risk factors for conflict were prevalent in the Lake Chad region before the onset of militant activities; these factors included underserved region, an undiversified economy, governance challenges, environmental vulnerability, demographic growth and youth bulge, high integration and migration, and insecurity and illegality [1]. Boko Haram exacerbated the challenges already faced by rural communities to create conditions for violence and instability.

Mohammed [2] identified three distinct and yet overlapping phases of Boko Haram—the Kanama, the dawah, and the violent phases. Ogbozor [3], further subdivided the violent period into moderate or low violence, very violent, and decline in violence phases. Kanama represents the period of the first open challenge to the Nigerian authorities by the “Nigerian Taleban” (presently known as Boko Haram), whereas the dawah represents the period of the gradual build-up to the first major attack of the sect in 2009. The violent phase is the most intense period of militant activities—with a severe impact on civilians, livelihoods, and the neighboring countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Since mid-2015, there has been a decline in violence from militant groups due to the 2015 pre-election mop-up operation and the offensive military counter-insurgency campaign of President Buhari’s administration [4]. However, violence has continued in the region due to food insecurity, massive population displacement, and a decimated local economy [5]. The Food and Agriculture Organization [6] attributes the continuing violence and instability to factors such as previous social and economic tensions, unsustainable agricultural practices, erratic rainfall, and environmental factors. Equally, the war economy, government policies, and the negative impact of counter-insurgency operations have contributed to violence and food insecurity in the region. In mid-2018, splinter factions of Boko Haram, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) and the *Jama’u Ablis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad* (JAS) renewed attacks on military bases and soft targets. Whereas ISWAP focuses on taking out military targets, JAS intensified attacks on civilians and their livelihoods.

This paper explains the impact of Boko Haram and factors aggravating livelihood crisis in the Lake Chad region. The study is based on the literature and interview of 125 households in five communities: Dalori, Mubi, Pompomari (Nigeria); Bourrha

(Cameroon) and Gagamari (Niger). According to USAID [7], “In situations where insecurity blocks access to the affected area, it is possible to estimate the impact of shocks with secondary data such as historical evidence from baseline and previous shock periods, interviews with displaced persons or hosts, collection and analysis of local and national-level market and production data.” The paper begins with a review of the livelihood system of the Lake Chad Basin; the direct and indirect impact of Boko Haram; the factors causing continuing and systemic destruction of livelihoods, and the conclusion.

## **2.0 The Livelihood System of the Lake Chad Basin**

Before the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency, subsistence agriculture was the dominant livelihood activities in Dalori, Pompomari, Mubi, Bourrha and Gagamari communities of the Lake Chad Basin. The crops grown were millet, maize, beans, groundnut, sorghum, and guinea corn, whereas the livestock reared included cow, goat, sheep, and poultry. However, the study found that the livelihood strategies of the communities since the beginning of militant activities consisted of mostly non-farm or off-farm activities. The changes in livelihood patterns have been largely attributed to militant activities and counter-insurgency campaigns that restricted access to farm production capitals and resources.

Majority of the households interviewed reported farming as a primary livelihood; Dalori, 60 per cent; Bourrha, 52 per cent; Pompomari, 48 per cent; Gagamari, 40 per cent; and Mubi 36 per cent. Subsistence agriculture accounts for 66 per cent (Farming 47.2 per cent, herding 15.2 per cent, and fishing 4 per cent) of the livelihood activities of the communities, whereas 34 per cent of households were engaged in other activities such as driving, bicycle repair, tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying, teaching, services, and other skilled/non-skilled industrial activities. Secondary data support these viewpoints and according to Oni and Fashogbon [8], agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in most rural communities. Odada et al [9], stated that agriculture is the main economic activity with an estimated 80 per cent of the rural population engaged in farming, livestock rearing, and fishing in the Lake Chad region. The Food and Agriculture Organization concluded that 80-90 per cent of communities in the Lake Chad basin depend on agriculture [6].

However, most of the respondents reported a decline in agriculturally based livelihood activities following the Boko Haram insurgency, while the non-

agro based activities such as trading, and other off-farm activities were on the increase. The majority of the respondents maintained that their primary livelihood activities; farming, fishing, and herding had been impacted by insecurity in their communities. For example, some respondents in Dalori and Pompomari said that they currently live in internally displaced camps and have no source of livelihood except the handout they received from aid agencies. Respondents from Bourrha, Gagamari, and Mubi said that insecurity has limited access to farmland and agricultural activities and almost all the respondents reported changes in livelihood strategies.

A comparison of pre-Boko Haram livelihood activities and the events during the insurgency phase show that the pre-Boko Haram livelihood activities consisted of predominantly farming, herding, fishing, and trading, whereas the current livelihood strategies of most of the respondent included non-farm activities. The findings suggest a variation in livelihood strategies before the resumption of militant activities and the insurgency period. Insecurity prevented many farming households from cultivating the field, grazing animals, fishing or trading in agricultural products. Restriction on movements due to the presence of the armed group has severely constrained agrarian activities [6]. Boko Haram sacked rural farmers and disrupted farming activities while they occupied several local government areas in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states. A study by the UNHCR [10] at the Minawao refugee camp, Cameroon, shows that most of the refugees were Nigerians engaged in farming (71 per cent), trading (22 per cent) and cattle herding (8 per cent). These alluded to the drop in agricultural production, a primary livelihood activity in the basin areas.

Aside from the changes in subsistence activities, a comparison of the household income before and during the insurgency shows disparities in household's income before the resumption of militant activities and a drastic decline in household income during the insurgency phase. During the pre-Boko Haram period, Bourrha reported the highest average monthly income of 75 USD, whereas Gagamari has the least 55.9 USD equivalent (Field survey 2016). The average monthly income of Mubi, Pompomari, and Dalori are 70.2, 65.8, and 60.43 USD, respectively (Ibid). As earlier observed, most of the households stated that their source of revenue is from subsistence agriculture and off-farm activities such as trading. On the reasons for the disparity in the income level among the households, Bourrha and Mubi reported engaging in trading and off-farm activities that give higher returns than subsistence agriculture. The proximity of Bourrha (Cameroon) and Mubi (Nigeria) enhanced

trading activities between the border communities. A respondent from Bourrha said that it took just one to two hours to travel from Bourrha to Mubi but several hours to go to Maruoacity in the Far North region of Cameroon.

Most respondents from Gagamari attributed low household income to primary agricultural production activities such as farming and artisanal fishing. According to the FAO “people involved in artisanal fishery activities and their families continued, with few exceptions, live at the margin of subsistence and human dignity” [11] (p.142), “fishermen are the poorest of the poor.” Townsley [12] further notes that “fishery is the activity of last resort.” These explain why Gagamari has the lowest household income among the respondents. Households in Bourrha and Gagamari experienced a decline in revenue but not as much as Dalori, Mubi, and Pompomari. Bourrha and Gagamari were mainly refugees transit communities for people displaced from Northeast Nigeria, whereas the latter are the hot spots of the Boko Haram violence.

### **3.0 Direct and Indirect Impact of Boko Haram**

Boko Haram had a direct impact on households causing fatalities, destruction of livelihood assets, forced displacements, and indirectly affecting household income, agricultural activities, food prices, markets, and transportation. Also, systemic destruction of livelihood results from processes, institutions, and policies of the government and the failures of the national, regional, and international response to the conflict [13]. The direct and indirect impacts of Boko Haram and the factors fueling continuing violence are discussed below.

#### **3.1 Fatalities**

Boko Haram targets and strips household of their assets. Farmers from Dalori, Mubi, and Pompomari reported direct attacks from the group, causing deaths and injuries. The attacks, according to some of the respondents, led to changes in household compositions with some of them losing key family members. However, respondents from Bourrha and Gagamari reported not directly targeted by the militants but indirectly impacted through serving as host communities for refugees fleeing northeast Nigeria.

A survivor of Dalori village attack on January 30th, 2016 described how coordinated attacks by the militants led to multiple fatalities.

The survivor said, “Boko Haram killed over 80 people in one major attack in Dalori village. While people were fleeing to a neighboring village of GomariKerkeri, the military intercepted three female suicide bombers who attempted to detonate bombs. The security officials also stopped the militants from penetrating the Dalori IDP camp. The number of deaths would have been higher if the attacks were not foiled” (Female respondent, Dalori survivor). Another female respondent said, “I have a husband before that take care of us, but Boko Haram killed him, we are dependent on relatives and friends” (Female respondent, displaced widow, Dalori).

These stories illustrate a pattern of militant attack in many agrarian communities in the basin areas. Similarly, Mubi witnessed multiple attacks by Boko Haram since 2011, leading to several fatalities. On January 6, 2012, during a funeral of a victim of Boko Haram on December 28, 2011, Boko Haram members resurfaced again and gunned down 17 friends and relatives of the deceased during the funeral service. On June 1, 2014, during a football competition in Mubi, Boko Haram detonated a bomb that killed 40 people on the football field. An unknown number of persons were killed following the capture of Mubi by Boko Haram on October 29, 2014, as one of the Boko Haram’s defunct Caliphates. Boko Haram routinely took out anyone perceived as a threat or disloyal during its occupation of Mubi. Though Pompomari is located close to a military base, the community witnessed several confrontations between Boko Haram militants and the military. On December 22, 2011, about 100 people were killed in Pompomari following multiple bomb explosions and shooting between Boko Haram and the army officers.

Dalori, Mubi, and Pompomari experienced direct attacks by Boko Haram, Gagamari, and Bourrha were not directly targeted by the militant but were indirectly impacted by serving as host communities for refugees from Nigeria.

### **3.2 Destruction of livelihood assets**

Another significant impact of Boko Haram is direct attacks and destruction of livelihood capitals. Insecurity limits access to essential livelihood assets such as farmlands, schools, and social events. Dalori, Pompomari, and Mubi reported different accounts of the effects of Boko Haram on livelihood assets. A survivor of the Dalori massacre narrated how households were stripped of livelihood capitals during an attack on their village:



“A group of Boko Haram militants dressed in military uniforms stormed our village with vans and motorcycles. We thought that they had come to protect us, but they attacked us; several people were shut or machete, and they also looted and carted away our foodstuff and livestock. As if that was not enough, they set fire on the entire village...we watched our houses, food storage and livestock burnt to ashes. Added to the sad situation, we could not identify the bodies of our dead relatives to give them befitting burial because they were burnt beyond recognition” (Respondent, survivor of Dalori attack).

Another survivor confirmed that the only asset left in the community after the attack was bare land and the remnant of burnt properties. The survivor added: “Surviving without assets to live on is worse than death....I used to sell firewood but lost everything – no farming or sale of firewood, our market was also destroyed. I am presently living in Dalori IDP camp, and supported by gift and donations (Male IDP respondent, Dalori).” The survivors of the Dalorimassacre were left with little or no assets as the entire village was razed down; most of the survivors now live in internally displaced camps or with host families. A farmer sums up the patterns of Boko Haram attack, “Boko Haram often aim to kill everyone or strip them of their asset so that survivors would not have anything to live on” (Respondent, male farmer, Dalori).

In Mubi, private and public infrastructures were destroyed or looted after Boko Haram captured the town and renamed it ‘Madinatul Islam,’ or city of Islam on October 28, 2014. Gwoza was earlier captured and renamed ‘DarulHikma’ or House of Wisdom on July 2014. Although the duration of the insurgent occupation of Mubi was short, the level of damage was enormous. As the Nigerian security forces retook the town in mid-November 2014, a Mubi returnee gave an account of the level of destructions, said, “Mubi has eight banks, but they were all destroyed by Boko Haram, since we return to our home, we usually travel for two hours to Yola for our banking services” (Male respondent, Mubi). After briefly taking control of Mubi in late 2014, Boko Haram militants stole more than one hundred million Naira (300,000 USD) from a Diamond Bank branch in Mubi.

Unlike Mubi, Pompomari witnessed restrictions to its access to lands for farming and grazing animals due to insecurity and military restrictions. A respondent said, “the government has stopped access to farmland due to the security situation, people

have been prevented from cultivating what they will eat, sell and feed animals (Male respondent, Pompomari). The state of emergency (SoE) imposed in Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa states prevented households from cultivating land and herding livestock.

Boko Haram destroyed infrastructures such as homes, health facilities, schools, bridges, communication, and community infrastructures. The direct attacks on education by the militants resulted in some schools closing or becoming occupied by internally displaced persons. Majority of respondents from Dalori, Pompomari, and Mubi stated that schools in their communities were shut down due to insecurity. Bourrha and Gagamari reported that Nigeria refugees stayed in schools as shelters due to the unavailability of a refugees camp.

### 3.4 Displacement of households

Boko Haram sacked communities, causing the displacement of people and livestock. An analysis of the International Office for Migration (IOM) data shows that as at November 2016, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the Dalori (FTC) and Dalori (KOFA) were the highest in Maiduguri Metropolitan areas. The two camps account for about 30 per cent of the total IDPs in Maiduguri [14]. Likewise, Pompomari IDPs camp has the second-largest concentration of IDPs in Yobe state, approximately 14.66 per cent of the total IDPs in Yobe State; the Kukareta camp is the highest with about 67 per cent of total IDPs [15]. Dalori, Mubi, and Pompomari reported cases of forced displacement, whereas Bourrha and Gagamari reported hosting Nigerian refugees.

A respondent from Bourrha said: “Refugees started arriving Bourrha after Mubi was attacked and captured by Boko Haram. Since then, our business and religious activities have been curtailed. This has led to an increase in the prices of goods and services and a reduction in the volume of agricultural activities and trade with Nigeria.” (Male respondent, Bourrha). Another respondent from Bourrha said: “Before now, we allow anyone from outside to come and stay in our community, but this has changed. First, we must know where he’s coming from, what he does for a living and who he is looking for in our community” (Female respondent, Bourrha).

Bourrha and Gagamari were transit camps for refugees fleeing northeast Nigeria to Cameroon and Niger. A refugee and a host family complained of harsh living condition in Gagamari. The refugee said, “It is tough to have something doing because

the community we are staying is impoverished. We are dependent on international organizations for support” (Male refugee, Gagamari). Another respondent said: “I am a farmer, I depend on farming activities for survival, though whenever drought occurs, my production is low” (Male respondent, Refugee Host Family, Gagamari). These highlights some difficulties faced by refugees and host families.

### **3.5 Impact on market, transport and food prices**

Boko Haram has impact on markets and transport, affecting trade, food prices, and coping capacities. A respondent said, “Our market has become a place for business and sorrow... I lost my elder brother in a suicide bomb attack” (Male respondent, Dalori). Another respondent said, “Markets in our community were shut down following increased bomb attacks, we often go to a nearby market for buying and selling” (Male respondent, Pompomari). The majority of the interviewees in Dalori, Pompomari and Mubi reported that their markets were burnt or shut down due to insecurity or rampant cases of suicide attacks. Farmers experienced post-harvest losses as they could not find markets to dispose of their products.

In cities, functional markets recorded low sales and patronages due to general insecurity. Estimates from the World Food Program show that activities in Maiduguri market reduced by 40 per cent because many traders avoided the city regarded as the epicenter of the Boko Haram’s violence [15]. In Yobe State, two important markets (Damaturu and Potiskum markets) known for livestock trading recorded lower activities due to security concerns (Ibid). The Borno state government also had to shut down four major cattle markets, including Gamboru in an attempt to choke the cash flow to the Boko Haram militants [16]. Boko Haram was allegedly using intermediaries to sell stolen cattle in Gamboru market (Ibid). The restriction or outright closure of some markets in northeast Nigeria hurt livelihoods and increases food insecurity.

According to the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Niger is mainly living from pastoralism, but insecurity and closure of the border with Nigeria affected livestock production and trade in the country [17]. There was a massive return of livestock from northern Nigeria, putting cattle at risk in Niger as there were no access to Nigeria pasturage and markets in places such as Maiduguri, Baga, Malam Fatori, and Gaidam (Ibid). Apart from livestock marketing, Niger depends on the import of grains from Nigeria. World Food Program [16] shows that Niger relies on the import of grains from Nigeria. The closure of Damsak

market to minimize the risk of Boko Haram's attacks led to the increase in the cost of commodities in Niger's border town of Diffa (Ibid). In Cameroon, the closure of the borders with Nigeria led to the reduction in the number of traders coming from Nigeria to buy food products and livestock from the Far North region of Cameroon. This resulted in surplus commodities in the local market, poor sales, and a decrease in prices of cereals and animals.

Most of the respondents reported disruptions in transport services due to road closures and insecurity. Others preferred using alternative routes to avoid the risk of attacks by militants. In Borno state, major roads such as Maiduguri-Dikwa-Gamboru Road, Maiduguri-Gubio-Damasak and Maiduguri-Mungono-Baga were closed for up to three years due to security concerns. In Niger, the closing of the Niger-Nigeria border due to militant activities was a primary issue to marketers and transporters. The changes in supply routes and closure of border points for all trucks to minimize the risk of Boko Haram's attacks increased the cost of transportation and prices of commodities. In Cameroon, the closure of Kousseri boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria paved the way for an alternative route through Fianga. It led to an increase in prices of products coming from Nigeria, and increases in transportation cost for commuter vehicles going to Nigeria from Cameroon. There were also complaints about harassment and the demands for bribes at a formal and informal checkpoint by security officials.

The impact of the insurgency on staple food prices in Dalori, Pompomari, and Mubi were estimated using the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Food Security Technical Working Group (FSTWG) [18] data for Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. The prices of rice, millet, sorghum, and beans between December 2015 and April 2016 were used to illustrate changes in rates. The study found that there were marginal increases in the food prices for staples in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states within five months from December 2015 to April 2016. Nevertheless, if one compares the price increases since the beginning of the insurgency, it is much higher. According to the Farmers Early Warning System Network [19], the prices of staple foods in most markets have risen in comparison with the previous five-year average. For example, by 50–150 per cent for maize and by about 76–204 per cent for sorghum. FEWSNET predicted a further increase in some areas due to lack of farming in some conflict-hit areas for about three years.

The other factors that have contributed to the soaring food prices include the announcement of the state of emergencies in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa in May 2013. The restriction of movements of people and goods led to increases in food items in the area as demand was more than supply. The devaluation of the Nigerian Naira following the drop-in oil price also affected purchasing power. The ban on rice importation and some essential commodities into Nigeria and the restriction of foreign transactions also put pressures on commodities. In some areas affected by the conflict in northeast Nigeria, there has been no farming for up to three years. An assessment by Christian Aid [20] found that only 2.7 per cent of the population in rural Borno cultivated crops, food production was well over 90 per cent below average in 2016. These shows the precarious food insecurity situation in areas impacted militant activities.

#### **4.0 Factors Causing Systemic and Continuing Destruction of Livelihoods**

According to FAO [6], violence and instability have continued in Northeast Nigeria due to previous social and economic tensions, unsustainable agricultural practices, erratic rainfall, and environmental factors. FAO maintains that the risk factors for conflict are still prevalent and has continued to pose threats to return and recovery in the region. Ongoing instability and livelihood destruction have been attributed mainly to factors such as insecurity restricting mobility and access to livelihood capital, destruction of rural assets and infrastructures, occupation of territories, farms and grazing lands, erosion of local governance, poor governance and corruption.

##### **4.1 Insecurity Restricting Mobility and Access to Livelihood Capital**

Insecurity is a major concern in northeast Nigeria; the threats of being kidnaped or killed have prevented many farming households from cultivating the field, grazing animals, fishing or trading in agricultural products [1]. Security restrictions also limit movements, access to livelihoods assets, and hurt agricultural production. Farming and grazing animals were suspended in areas affected by landmines and improvised explosives devices (IEDs). The use of fertilizer for farming was discontinued because some fertilizers contained ammonia used by Boko Haram to manufacture bombs. Similarly, fishing and trading in towns near Lake Chad were proscribed because Boko Haram levied cross-border fish traders in the Nigeria-Niger border. The prolonged enforcement of these bans prevented people from engaging in their livelihood, thus aggravating violence and food insecurity [5].

World Food Program [16] corroborated that most households restricted agricultural production to a few kilometers of their settlements due to insecurity, resulting in the plummeting of local food production and production deficit. There were also security restrictions on the cultivation of ‘tall’ crops such as sorghum because it decreases visibility and acts as a shield for the insurgents. However, farmers could cultivate mainly groundnut and cowpea that does not affect visibility [16]. These restrictions hurt food security; the rights to grow crops of choice were taken away from the farmers.

#### **4.2 Destruction of Production Assets and Rural Infrastructures**

Boko Haram destroyed farming infrastructure, looted harvests and livestock, and disrupted services available to local farmers, all of which has contributed to the decrease in agricultural production [1]. In many rural communities, there has been a loss of production assets and public infrastructure, because of looting and destruction of farms, grains storage facilities, health centers, schools, and water supplies. In Mubi, private and public infrastructures were destroyed or stolen after Boko Haram captured the towns. Livelihood assets such as houses, food storages, livestock, and equipment were targeted, burnt, destroyed, or looted by the militants. The destruction of rural infrastructures and the disruption of essential services contributed to assets stripping and a decrease in agricultural production in the region [6]. As a consequence of the destruction of these facilities, the availability of essential services has been limited in northeast Nigeria. The displacement of farmers, teachers, civil servants, and health workers has led to relocation of people from the affected region, causing losses in human resources. The lack of human resources perhaps represents one of the biggest challenges in establishing processes of recovery and resettlement.

#### **4.3 Occupation of Territories, Farms, and Grazing Lands**

Boko Haram sacked rural farmers, disrupted agricultural activities while they occupied several local government areas in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states. The occupation of agrarian territories and land by the insurgents’ limited food production. The use of farmlands as shelters by displaced persons caused fragmentation of farmlands [1]. The Food and Agricultural Organization underlined that population displacement, due to the conflict, has increased pressure on limited resources such as water and land, reducing their availability while heightening the risk of social tensions [6]. Displaced households have increased pressure on host families and communities, due to limited resources such as water and land. According to the International Office

of Migration [21] many internally displaced persons in northeast Nigeria live with host families; in Borno state, 93 per cent of IDPs live in host communities, whereas 7 per cent lives in conventional camps. Communities struggling to meet basic needs now face additional challenges of hosting IDPs and refugees fleeing violent areas. These scenarios are common in northeast Nigeria, where insurgents have harnessed territories and forced rural farmers out of their lands or where social tension exists between IDPs/refugees and their host communities due to limited resources.

#### **4.4 Closure or Restriction of Markets, Roads, and Border Crosses**

According to FAO [6], insecurity and military restrictions have limited market functionality and trading, affecting food prices and households coping capacities. Access to markets for buyers and traders has been constrained as a result of insecurity and limited mobility. Additional restrictions are associated with border closures, unwarranted checkpoints, high taxation on essential commodities, and protection related payments. All of these have resulted in a reduction in cross-border trading, and more local trading between primary and secondary markets [1]. At the peak of the insurgency, some markets, roads and border points were closed preventing movement and trading in the affected areas such as northeast Nigeria, Far North region of Cameroon and Diffa region of Niger. The measures affected communities that have adapted to trading and migration as a strategy for coping with changing livelihood patterns.

The treaty of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) statute recognized and facilitated interstate migration of citizens within the sub-region [22]. These treaties made migration and cross-border trading activities among the Lake Chad riparian countries possible. Nevertheless, these trading channels have also been negatively utilized by Boko Haram to carry out cross-border attacks without restriction. In some area's markets, roads, border points, and checkpoints have re-opened, there are still restrictions.

#### **4.5 Erosion of Local Governance Structure**

Another factor causing continuing instability is the erosion of local leadership. Some traditional rulers have been killed or forced to flee from their communities resulting in a leadership gap in some rural communities. On May 30, 2014, Boko Haram ambushed and killed the Emir of Gwoza, Alhaji Idrisa Timta. The traditional leader

was targeted along with his colleagues while traveling to Gombe for the burial of Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Shehu Usman Abubakar [23]. The incident shows the deadly attacks on traditional rulers by Boko Haram who target and takes out unfriendly traditional leaders believed to be working with the government security forces. Many villages and community leaders have been systematically killed or forced to flee from their communities by the militants. The erosion of governance and local authorities are tactics of Boko Haram to control and dominate many agrarian communities. The absence or total eradication of traditional leadership authority have exposed some of the conflict affected districts to leadership deficit.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This paper describes the impact of Boko Haram and factors causing systemic and continuing destruction of livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin. 125 households from five communities Dalori, Pompomari, Mubi, Bourrha, and Gagamari were interviewed for the study. The research indicated that Boko Haram had an impact on communities causing fatalities, assets stripping, displacements, and the plummeting of food production. Systemic destruction of livelihood has persisted due to factors such as insecurity restricting mobility and access to livelihoods, military blockages, destruction of rural infrastructures, land occupation by IDPs, market restriction and the war economy.

These findings corroborate Justino [13], conflict and violence impacts on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, households, and communities directly and indirectly. Direct effects include changes in household composition, and economic status; whereas indirect channels include changes in local and national markets as well as social relations (Ibid). The results also support Young and Osman [24] assertion on continued and systemic destruction of all types of livelihood strategies due to ongoing processes, institutions, and policies. Arguably, counter-insurgency operations, military restrictions, and insecurity have contributed to prolonged instability and livelihood crises in the areas affected by Boko Haram. These factors aggravate food insecurity and limit return and recovery in the Lake Chad region. Thus, explains the continuing humanitarian and livelihood crisis despite the perceived technical defeat of Boko Haram by the Nigerian government.



## 6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered as away forward:

1. Insecurity should be addressed head-on, especially in communities directly and indirectly impacted by militant activities. The measure is necessary to consolidate the ongoing recovery and stabilization efforts in communities affected by insurgency in the Lake Chad region.
2. There is a need for a relaxation of security restrictions and military blockage that limits access to livelihood assets to ensure unlimited access to farm production capitals.
3. Relief and emergency intervention to IDPs, host communities, and returnees should continue until activities are normalized. The government and donors' agencies should provide food aid to address precarious food security and nutrition situation in the Lake Chad region.
4. There is a need for livelihood intervention through the provision of cash, inputs, and tools to farmers, to ensure the prompt return of farmers to primary livelihood activities.
5. Broad-based rural development plan that prioritizes agricultural development should be established as a strategy for the long-term stability of the Lake Chad Basin.

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