



## ASSESSMENT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NOMADS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SELECTED LGA IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: COMMUNICATING THE SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE

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### ABSTRACT

Nomads' activities have been a great challenge to most communities in Cross River State, Nigeria due to their negative impact on lives and properties especially during the period of crises between communities and the nomads. The study was concerned with the assessment of the activities of nomads in rural communities in selected local government areas in Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 1,241 respondents drawn from 12 communities in Cross River State and a sample of 124 was used for data collection. The study adopted purposive sampling to draw the respondents across the country particularly those who reside in selected communities in Cross River state, Nigeria. A researcher developed an instrument titled the Activities of Nomads Questionnaire (ANQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the study area and the reliability ranged from .76 to .83 implying how valid the instrument is for data collection. The data was analysed with descriptive statistics (simple percentages and bar charts) and the findings revealed among others that the variables (items) considered in this study such as nomads' lack of a settled home and nomads moving from place to place for food constitute some of the major activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State. Also, it was found that nomadic people prefer living in small groups, Men used to trail large animals for days to hunt constitutes some of the major lifestyles of nomadic people. The study recommends among others the need for government to enact ranches across the geo-political zones of the country. This will in no small way encourage improved varieties, reduction in the destruction of farmer products and minimizing the cost of livestock production.

**Key: Assessment, Activities, Nomads, and Rural Communities**

### INTRODUCTION

Nomadic activities have been a common practice across the country in recent times, especially in most parts of south-south Nigeria with particular emphasis on Cross River State. The Oxford English Dictionary (11th edition) posit that the terms "nomad", "nomadic" and "nomadism" as relating to individuals who wandered from one place to another in search of green pastures for their animals and have no permanent home. Nomads are exclusive livestock producers, who grow no crops and depend solely on the sale or exchange of animals and their products to obtain foodstuffs. Their activities are due to the high sale of livestock products. Nomads solely depend on the sale of livestock products for income generation which has contributed immensely to national development, especially in terms of export of products for meat consumption. Today, the cost of a cow is equivalent to #400,000 to #500,000 thousand naira, while a sizable sheep/goat may cost between #35,000 to #50,000 thousand naira. Blench,



(2001) rightly put that nomads' movements are opportunistic as the concern is on following pasture and water resources in a pattern that varies from year to year. African Union (2010) observes that nomads' movement across different communities may pose some common challenges to individuals in the communities where these activities are common such as communal clashes, destruction of farmland, loss of lives and properties, death and displacement of individuals in the community.

Mohamoud (1993) reported that nomads are certainly awkward customers for the services and structures of the modern infrastructural system. They are seen as dispersed and somehow aimless, obstinate and an inferior sort of person. The author also reported that it is very difficult to provide them with classes or clinics or take any of the advantages of social services. This outlook seems to be in line with 'blaming the victim'. Nomads are always blamed for causing their problems

In the early 70ths, nomad activities were made seasonal from the North to the South but this movement has become an all-season affair. Making the southern part of the country to be the sole place for livestock survival thereby making. According to Ofem and Inyang (2014), the nomad and the host communities use to have a symbiotic relationship existed between the nomads and the farmers in every new community they stopped over to take a rest. The host communities were usually peopled by farmers who derived organic manure from cow dung and protein from the beef and dairy products while the nomads relied on the farm produce for food. The language among today's nomads has deteriorated drastically, the communities now see the nomads as strangers, who have come to threaten their farmland due to the velocity with which they shepherd their flocks to graze on every available vegetation on their route has often attracted protests from communities. This scenario has given rise to an unhealthy rivalry between farmers and herdsman leading to violence, and loss of lives and property. In some cases, a whole community is wiped out and those fortunate to escape have become refugees in other places.

A study by Aruwayo, Adeola and Ibrahim (2021) assessed the challenges of nomadic activities in selected four Local Government Areas (LGA) comprising Daura, Sandamu, Dutsi and Mai'adua in Daura Agricultural Zone of Katsina State, Nigeria. A Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the selection of 60 nomads in the study area. Using a well-structured questionnaire, information was gathered from the selected respondents with the help of trained enumerators. The information collected includes the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, the types of animals kept by them as well as the challenges they faced in the process of carrying out nomadic activities. The information obtained from them was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the major age group is 61- 70 years and about 37% of the respondents have no form of formal education. Most of the nomads keep more cattle (63% having more than 200 heads) and fewer camels and goats (77% and 88% having less than 50 camels and goats respectively). The major challenges they face are disease and pest attacks (90%), insecurity (60%) and inadequate water (83%). A request for accessible veterinary services, adequate security, and a model school designed to meet the peculiarity of the nomads was made. The study concludes that the establishment of ranches will improve output and better living standards among the nomads. The study recommends from the response in the research that training in modern animal-rearing systems and ranching should be vigorously pursued.

Finally, Keswet, Bash, and Kabang (2015) study was a descriptive survey designed to assess the types of activity of young Nomads towards incorporating modern skills in public Nomadic primary schools in Mangu Local Government Area. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 189. One hundred and twenty (120) pupils were selected without gender bias using a simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect information on the skills of young nomads. The reliability of the questionnaire was established as 0.82 using Cronbach Alpha



at 0.05 level of significance. The data collated were analyzed using simple percentages for the research questions and chi-square for the two hypotheses. The findings showed available activities in the LGA but with less participation by the young nomads. The two null hypotheses were both rejected, which revealed that there is a significant difference in the participation of the youths of the Local Government. Similarly, the ways of enhancing modern activities due to gender were rejected. It was recommended that scholarships and grazing places among others be provided to the young nomads as incentives to make them participate fully in the programme. It is on this background that the study carries out an assessment of the characteristics of nomads in rural communities in selected LGA in Cross River State, Nigeria: Communicating the sociological Experience.

### **Statement of the problem**

Cross River State is an agricultural state whose economy partially relies on crops, such as cocoyam, rubber, oil palm, yam, cocoa, cashews, and plantain crops, along with fishing. These products are highly affected by nomadic activities across the country. The persistent destruction of farmland has generated mixed reactions from the communities and other agencies who have poured their anger on the nomads who most times allow their cattle to cause detraction on plants. This has made most communities inflict physical injuries on the cattle by using cutlasses, spears, or guns or by poisoning the cattle (Ngoufo, 1992). In the event of a conflict, properties and lives are destroyed leading to misery and hardship. The socio-economic consequences of agro-pastoral conflicts are felt at three levels. At the social level, misunderstanding between the crop farmers and nomadic farmers or grazers creates some mistrust, tension and open confrontations between the opposing groups. To reduce this issue of farmland destruction, the nomadic farmers in Nigeria and even the study area practice transhumance to avoid overgrazing the available limited land or reducing the herd size during the dry season when pasture and water are scarce on the highlands (Aderinoye, 2014). The animals are taken to the low lands and farmer-grazer conflicts become intensified during this period because the farmers cultivate vegetables in the river valleys with little or no land for grazing. Therefore, farmer-grazer conflicts pose a serious problem to the people and affect rural development negatively as the project is executed during chaos or conflict. However, efforts by the National Association of Seadogs (NAS), Cross River State Chapter has donated a water project to Government Nomadic Primary School, Nassarawa community in Calabar municipality. The project is expected to benefit about 1000 pupils. Head Teacher of the school, Umaru Musa, commended the leadership of NAS stressing, "We have been crying for water for our pupils for a long. This scheme will serve more than 1000 of our pupils thereby facilitating learning." This effort has not solved the problem of nomadic activities in society. The problem of this study is thus; what are the characteristics of nomads in rural communities in selected LGA in Cross River State, Nigeria

### **Aims and objective of the study**

The main aim of this study was to carry out an assessment of the characteristics of nomads in rural communities in selected LGA in Cross River State, Nigeria: Communicating the sociological Experience. Specific objectives are outlined as follows:

1. Examine the main activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State.
2. Assess the likely lifestyle of nomadic people
3. Ascertain the basic elements of nomadic people

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study



1. What are the main activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State?
2. What are the likely lifestyle of nomadic people?
3. What are the four elements of nomadic people?

**METHODS**

The study focused on the assessment of the activities of nomads in rural communities in selected local government areas in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study population comprised of 1,241 respondents drawn from 12 communities in Cross River State. The study adopted purposive sampling techniques and a sample of 124 was used for data collection. The instrument for data collection was developed instrument entitled “Activities of Nomads Questionnaire (ANQ)”. The face was validated by subject specialists in the field of study and the reliability ranged from .76 to .83 implying how valid the instrument is. The data were analysed with descriptive statistics (simple percentages) and bar charts.

**PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

The results of this study were presented based on the stated hypotheses in the study. The simple percentages and bar charts were used to answer the research questions as shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Research question one: What are the main activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State? To answer this research question, simple percentages and bar charts were deployed as shown in Table 1.

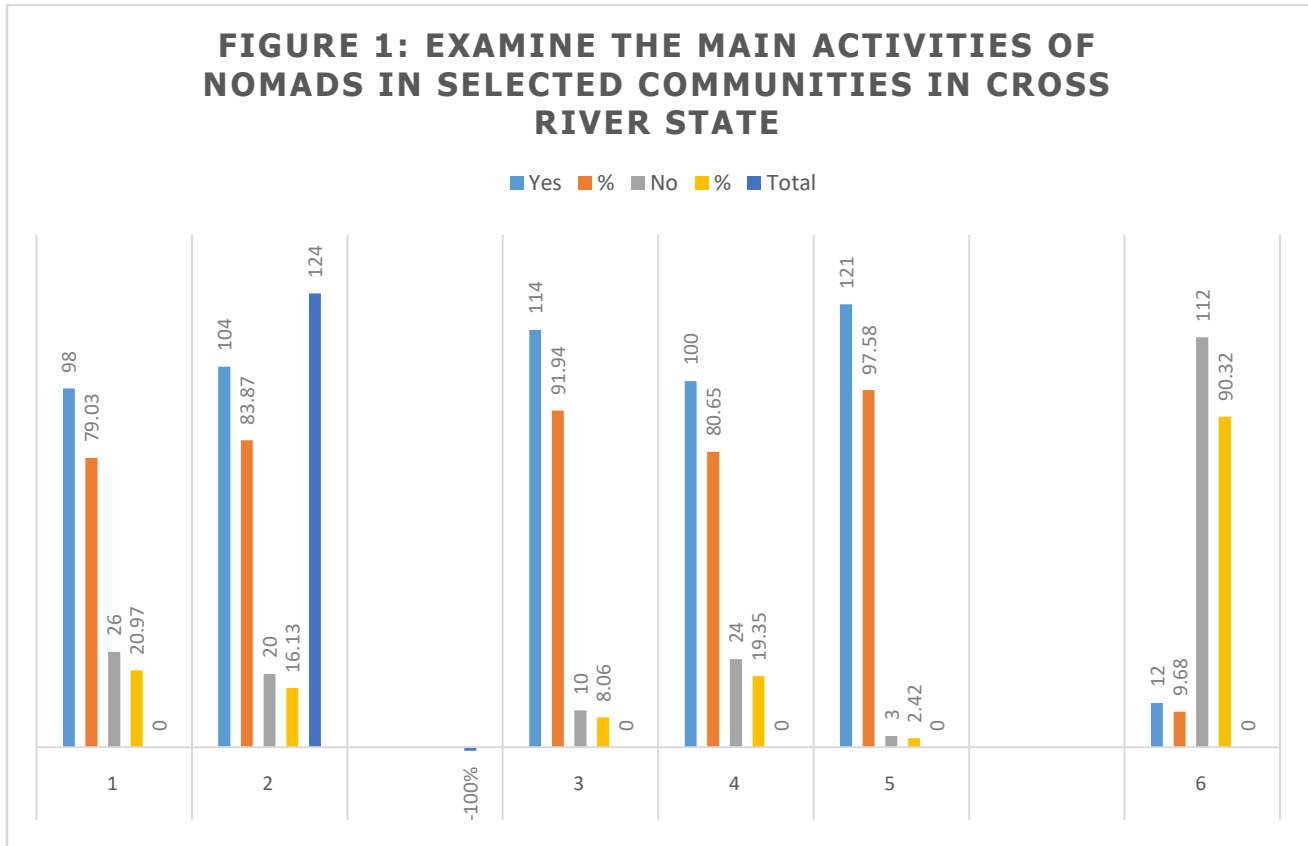
Table 1: Main activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State?

s/n	Activities of the nomads	Yes	%	No	%	Total
1	They lack a settled home	98	79.03	26	20.97	124 (100%)
2	They move from place to place for food	104	83.87	20	16.13	124 (100%)
3	finding pasture for livestock	114	91.94	10	8.06	124 (100%)
4	Nomadic people traditionally travel a long way by foot by animal	100	80.65	24	19.35	124 (100%)
5	Most nomadic groups follow a fixed annual or seasonal pattern of movements and settlements.	121	97.58	3	2.42	124 (100%)
6	Have high respect for humans who attack their animals	12	9.68	112	90.32	124 (100%)

Table 1 of what are the main activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State, revealed that most of the respondents think that nomads lack a settled home, they move from



place to place for food and finding pasture for livestock among others are the major activities of nomads in the study area. This is also shown in Figure 1.



**Research question two:**

What is the likely lifestyle of nomadic people? To answer this research question, simple percentages and bar charts were deployed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Likely lifestyle of nomadic people

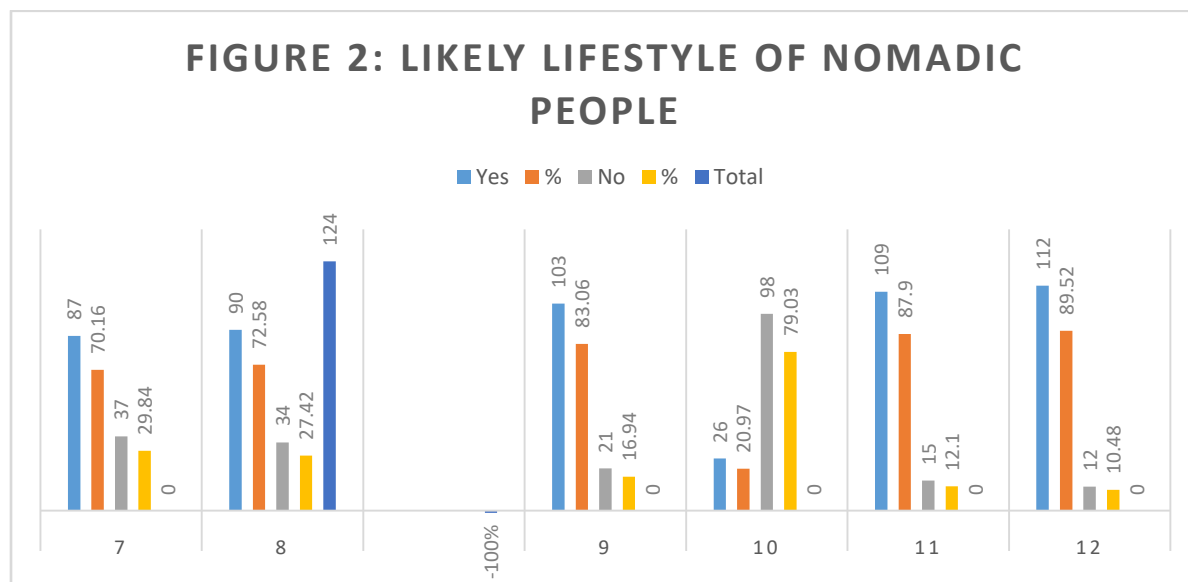
s/n	The lifestyle of the nomad people	Yes	%	No	%	Total
7	Nomadic people prefer living in small groups	87	70.16	37	29.84	124 (100%)
8	Men used to trail large animals for days to hunt	90	72.58	34	27.42	124 (100%)
9	women and children used to hunt small animals	103	83.06	21	16.94	124 (100%)
10	Men gather food items for the entire household	26	20.97	98	79.03	124 (100%)
11	They only travel in the dry season	109	87.90	15	12.10	124 (100%)
12	Men and women both	112	89.52	12	10.48	124



used to participate in hunting

(100%)

Table 2 revealed that the majority of the respondents are of the view that the lifestyle of nomad people is that they prefer living in small groups, men used to trail large animals for days to hunt, women and children used to hunt small animals, men gather food items for the entire household, They only travel in the dry season and men and women both used to participate in hunting



### Research question three

What are the common elements of nomadic people? To answer this research question, simple percentages and bar charts were deployed as shown in Table 3.

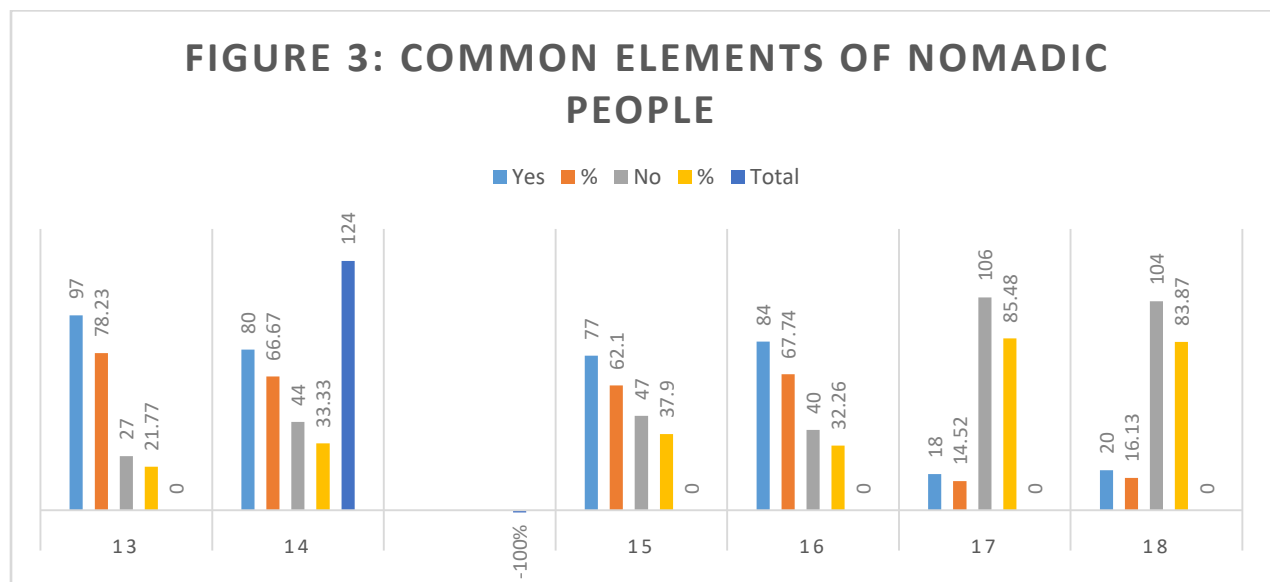
Table 3: Common Elements of nomadic people

s/n	The common elements of nomadic people	Yes	%	No	%	Total
13	Predominant economic dependence on the herds	97	78.23	27	21.77	124 (100%)
14	Dependence on domesticated animal husbandry	80	66.67	44	33.33	124 (100%)
15	Migration along established routes between focal grazing areas	77	62.10	47	37.90	124 (100%)



16	Mobility of herds, people, and their habitats	84	67.74	40	32.26	124	(100%)
17	Rely only on herbs for survival	18	14.52	106	85.48	124	(100%)
18	Survive more on itinerant trade	20	16.13	104	83.87	124	(100%)

From Table 3, it can be discerned that the majority of the respondents think that the common elements of nomadic people are predominant economic dependence on the herds, dependence on domesticated animal husbandry, migration along established routes between focal grazing areas, mobility of herds, people, and their habitats.



**Discussions**

The finding of the study revealed that nomads have some major activities of nomads in selected communities in Cross River State. Also, the majority of the have some common lifestyle of nomadic people and finally, there are some basic elements of nomadic people. The finding agrees with the study of Aruwayo, Adeola and Ibrahim (2021) whose study revealed that the major age group is 61- 70 years and about 37% of the respondents have no form of formal education. Most of the nomads keep more cattle (63% having more than 200 heads) and fewer camels and goats (77% and 88% having less than 50 camels and goats respectively). The major challenges they face are disease and pest attacks (90%), insecurity (60%) and inadequate water (83%). In the same vein, Keswet, Bash and Kabang’s (2015) findings showed available activities in the LGA but with less participation by the young nomads. The two null hypotheses were both rejected, which revealed that there is a significant difference in the participation of the youths of the Local Government. Similarly, the ways of enhancing modern activities due to gender were rejected.



## SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Before the introduction of sociology in the school curriculum, the study of society was carried on in an unscientific manner and society had never been the central concern of any science. It is through the study of sociology that the truly scientific study of society has been possible. Sociology alone studies social relationships, and society itself. Sociology is interested in social relationships not because they are economic or political or religious or legal but because they are at the same time social. Therefore, studying nomads' characteristics will help sociologists to understand how to live and relate with people in the environment.

## COMMUNICATING THE SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE

Communicating the sociological experience of the characteristics of nomads provides a better understanding of societal social differences, especially the differences in social behaviours. This is because through sociology the scientific study of the great social institutions and the relation of the individual to each is being made. The home and family, the school and education, the church and religion, the state and government, industry and work, the community and association, these are institutions through which society functions. Sociology studies these institutions and their role in the development of the individual and suggests suitable measures for strengthening them to enable them to serve the individual better. When individuals in their respective communities understand the role of nomads in terms of their social nature. It tells us why man is a social animal, and why he lives in a group, communities and societies. It examines the relationship between individuals and society, the impact of society on man and other matters. The science of society assists an individual to understand himself, his capacities, talents and limitations. It enables him to adjust himself to the environment. Knowledge of society, social groups, social institutions, associations, their functions etc. helps us to lead an effective social life.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proffered to guide the study

1. The government (state and federal) should regulate the activities of Nomads in the country. This will help to regulate the incessant movement of the activities of nomads in the state.
2. Laws should be enacted prohibiting normal activities at night. This is because most of the attacks carried by headers who are claimed to be nomads are at night
3. Building ranchers would help to control the irrelevant movement of nomads across the states of Nigeria.

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