

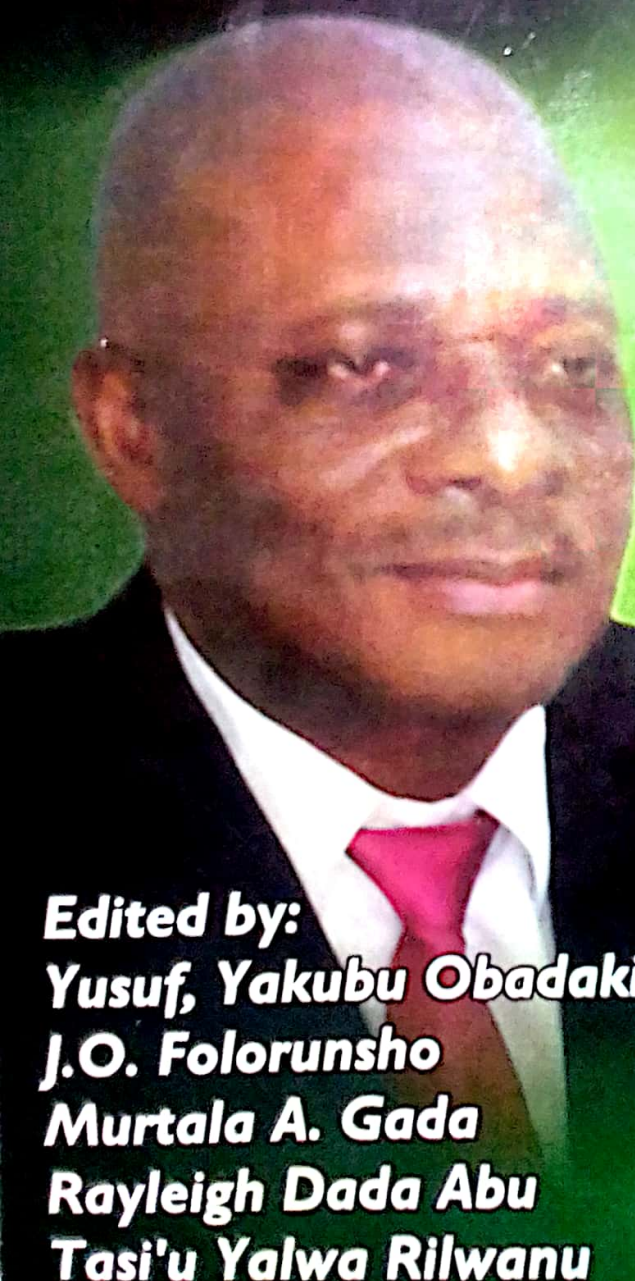


INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A Festschrift in Honour of

PROFESSOR EDWIN OSAWE IGUISI

Professor of Geomorphology & Hydrology



Edited by:
Yusuf, Yakubu Obadaki
J.O. Folorunsho
Murtala A. Gada
Rayleigh Dada Abu
Tasi'u Yalwa Rilwanu





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CHAPTER TEN

PASTORAL NOMADISM, NATIONALISM AND THE LAND QUESTION IN NIGERIA

Bako, A. I., Ola, A. B., Suleiman, R. A. and Jimoh, U. U.

Introduction

Pastoral nomads and farmers' crisis though not new in Nigeria, has gained unprecedented ascendancy in Nigeria's national discourse in recent times. Many lives and properties have been lost and attempt to assuage the bitterness exhibited by these gladiators towards each other have met with uncommon resistance. The strange and dangerous dimensions the crisis has recently assumed with criminal activities such as kidnapping, banditry, brutal murders, armed robbery and bold-face brigandage that are attributed to some pastoral nomads in some quarters have aggravated the frosty relationships (Eke, 2020). Pastoral nomadism is a type of subsistence farming that involves the herding of domesticated animals. Most nomads migrate around to find suitable grassland and water for their herds. Pastoral nomadism does not imply unrestricted and undirected wandering, rather, it is based on temporary centres whose stability depends on the availability of pastures for cattle and food supply for the nomads (Khazanov, 1994). It is a way of life of peoples who do not live continually in the same place but move cyclically or periodically with their livestock. It is distinguished from migration, which is noncyclic and involves a total change of habitat (Pavanello, 2010).

Pastoral nomadism is the traditional occupation of the Fulani ethnic group that is found in a narrow belt that stretches south of the Sahel, from Senegal, through Sudan, Mali, Chad, Niger, Northern Cameroun and Northern Nigeria (Lambrecht, 1976). The herders can be broadly divided into two main categories: the semi-nomadic and transhumant pastoralists, who raise cattle and sheep and, contrary to popular belief, also cultivate crops on a subsistence basis; and settled Fulani, who are not pastoralists and live in urban areas and villages as traders, farmers, traditional rulers, educated professionals (Majekodunni et al., 2014). At present, an estimated seven million Fulanis are dispersed over a distance of some 4,500 Km., from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Chad, within the grassland savannahs south of the Sahel and north of the main tsetse fly belts, half their numbers are located in Northern Nigeria (Brass, 2015). An estimate suggests that over 90 percent of pastoral nomads in Nigeria are Fulani ((Agbegbedia, 2014). Due to the association

of this group to pastoral nomadism, it has been arguably accused of perpetrating violence in the country.

It has, however, been argued in several fora that the indigenous Fulani group has been infiltrated by some criminally-minded foreigners of Fulani extraction from the politically unstable Sahelian States of Mali, Somalia and Central African Republic (Eke, 2020). The harbouring of these new entrants by their local kinsmen and the alleged pretentious feigning of ignorance of the criminal activities of the new immigrants are heightening the tensions between the Fulani nomads and their indigenous landlords. The situation has metamorphosed into Fulani (as an ethnic group) versus the indigenous people accommodating them.

This has brought to the fore the question of national integration and cohesion and the constitutional arrangement where every Nigerian irrespective of his status, tribe, religion is free to reside and do his legitimate business in any community in Nigeria. However, at the root of this crisis is the problem of restricted access to land often bedeviling pastoral nomadism. As observed by McCabe (1994), conflict over land resources is a risk in climatically unstable rangeland environments where people and their animals are routinely moving in search of water, forage, and markets. Chikaire (2017), similarly argued that an upsurge in violence caused by conflict over increasingly scarce land and water resources has been exacerbated by the ready availability of sophisticated weapons, often coming from politically unstable areas like Somalia, Northern Uganda, and parts of the Sahel. This paper seeks to explore the factors inhibiting pastoral nomads from securing land rights in Nigeria.

Pattern and Feature of Pastoral Nomadism

The pastoral nomads usually begin their southward journey with their herds during the second half of October which marks the onset of the dry season in Nigeria. The seasonal journey to the south in response to a shortage of water and good pasture on the home range is possible only because during the dry season, tsetse flies which transmits trypanosomiasis to the cattle have abandoned most of the open wood and grasslands to concentrate in restricted wetter habitats in the south (Isaac et al., 2017). Attempts to void exposure of the herds to tsetse flies which re-occupy during the wet season, most of the savannah land, and also the start of the planting season in the fields that would restrict cattle movement and pasture engineer the return of the nomads to their northern base (Odeniran and Ademola, 2018).

About ten to twenty households each possessing twenty to forty head of cattle usually constitute the migratory group. The group travels an average distance from

the base camp of about 180 miles (Lambrecht, 1976). In the course of the six months' journey (October to April), temporary camps are established where suitable pastures and water for animals are found. The occupation of such pasture is usually with the consent of the owner who values the manure that accumulates on his field and enjoys the privilege of keeping the cattle on his land.

Though most Fulani men herd cattle well past middle age, herding is dominated by the youths, while decisions about grazing are mainly made by the elderly family members (Adisa, 2009). The nomads make excellent use of sign language, the cane and verbal command to drive the animals, with faster animals occupying the front rows. During migration, a typical herd consisting of several family units moves in a column of up to five meters wide and two kilometers long (Adisa, 2009). The women are responsible for the milking of the cows and processing of various dairy products for sale and households' consumption, particularly in the urban centres. Proceeds from the sale of these products such as cheese and raw milk are used by the women to run the household (Badkhen, 2015). The care of the livestock is entirely that of the husband. The Fulani family depends on the herds for livelihood. The number of cattle heads that a family possesses epitomized strength of popularity and capital investment. The cattle are sold only to meet the financial needs and they are slaughtered for meat particularly during ceremonies and rituals.

Generally, pastoral nomadism is characterized principally by the types of animals being domesticated, how these nomads move, the typical climate, and how these nomads recognize territory. According to (Danver, 2015), the choice of animals depends on the environment and climate of the area they inhabit. For instance, camels are in North Africa, Southwest Asia, and other desert-like areas because they do not need a lot of water and are good at carrying the nomad's possessions. Goats are also used because they are tough and can eat anything. Sheep are used for clothing but are a lot of work for the nomads because they are not good at adapting to their environment. Routes are based on where resources such as water and pastures are and the political situation in the area. Many nomads use transhumance which is a periodic migration of livestock between different grazing areas (Yilmaz et al., 2019). The climate is usually very dry and hot in regions such as North Africa and Southwest Asia, and this makes it harder for the nomads to find resources such as water. These regions are so dry that no crops such as wheat or corn can grow. Consequently, they tend to move southward where the climate is more clement.

Pastoral Nomadism in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

Traditionally, pastoral nomads regularly move from one grazing area to another in search of green pasture and water for the animals. The wealth of the herders is in their animals, and the skills they needed to protect both animals and other groups of humans kept them continually prepared for combat (Blench, 2004). However, the wandering nature of nomadism poses serious limits to the nomads' economic and cultural development. With nomadism, they could accumulate only limited wealth, unable to develop a high degree of specialization and consequently, remained poor and illiterate (Majekodunmi et al., 2014). Notwithstanding the shortcomings of pastoral nomadism, it presents enormous ecological, social and economic benefits to the country and the society. Pastoral nomadism maintains an equilibrium between the resources of the natural environment and the needs of the people. It is a livelihood form that is ecologically adjusted at a particular level to the utilization of marginal resources. These resources occur in areas too dry, too elevated, or too steep for agriculture to be a viable mode of livelihood, and the nomadic pastoralist thus, makes use of resources that otherwise would be neglected (Omotayo, 2003)

In Nigeria, pastoralists own approximately 90 percent of the national herd, estimated at 19.5 million cattle, about 975,000 donkeys, 28,000 camels, 72.5 million goats and 41.3 million sheep (McDougal, 2015). Livestock represents between 20 and 30 percent of total agricultural production and about 6 to 8 percent of overall Gross Domestic Production (GDP) (Aderinoye-Abdulwahab and Adefalu, 2012). About 30 percent of live animals slaughtered in Nigeria are brought in by pastoralists from other countries (Okunlola, 2015). Despite these facts, very little is known about the economic benefits of pastoralism. As a result, nomadism is often seen as a traditional and backward way of life that will soon disappear. These misconceptions have led to legal, economic, social and political disincentives and barriers to the mobility of livestock and have entrenched pastoral poverty.

Land Issues in Nomadism

Land is perhaps the single most important natural resource in the sense that it affects every aspect of a people's life; their food, clothing, and shelter, it is the base for producing raw material for the manufacturing industry. Thus, access to land resources is central to pastoral nomadism, which is essentially a land-focused economic activity (McCabe, 1994). Previous discussions have identified restricted access to land as the main challenge of pastoral nomads in Nigeria. Therefore, it is

imperative at this juncture to examine factors inhibiting the nomads' access to land and water resources to optimally perform their economic activities.

Furthermore, government interventions in land administration did not do much to help the cause of the nomads as the laws governing land tenure remained almost the same as the customary law in the South. For instance, the proclamation No. 1 of 1900 (Native Land Acquisition Proclamation, 1900), provided that only the natives shall directly or indirectly acquire any interest in or right over land within southern Nigeria from fellow natives without the written consent of the high commissioner. Non-natives or aliens are to have right of access to land only through the high commissioner in writing (Nwabueze, 1972). This was the basis of the Native Land Acquisition Ordinance of 1908. Thus, the 1900 and 1908, legislations were aimed at ensuring that native occupiers enjoy customary use of land and restricting alienation of land only to dealings among the natives while frowning upon any act of transfer to aliens. As in the South, the laws governing land tenure in the North essentially embraced the customary system. For instance, proclamation No. 8 of 1900, which was later amended by proclamation No. 13 of 1902 both provided that natives may continue to acquire lands as they used to under the native law and custom, while the right of access to land to non-natives and aliens is by lease issued by the government with the consent of the high commissioner (Omuojine, 1999).

The Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1916, further reinforced the restriction of non-natives from acquiring land rights. The ordinance provided that all native lands and all rights over same are to be under the control and subject to the disposition of the government and shall be held and administered for the use and common benefit of the natives and no title to the occupation and use of such lands shall be valid without the consent of the governor (Isaac, et al., 2019). In this regard, the governor would have regard to the native laws and customs existing in the province or districts in which such land was situated in the course of executing his duties. These arrangements greatly placed a huge burden on the nomads who must acquire grazing land for their herds at suitable locations in the country.

The Federal Government responded to the frustrations of Nigerians including the nomads over restriction to acquire land right in any part of the country by promulgating the Land Use Act No. 6 of 29th March, 1978 (FGN, 1978). Section 6.2, of the Act empowers the local government to grant a customary right of occupancy to any person (native or non-native) on 235 acres of land for agricultural purposes and 12,355 acres (5000 hectares) for grazing purposes. If the land in

question is in excess of what is stated, the local government must obtain the consent of the governor before granting the right of occupancy (FGN, 1978).

The twin factors of population pressure and urbanization equally influence nomads' restriction to graze land. The population of Nigeria grew from 18.63 million in 1921 to 45.1 million in 1960. By 1980, the number of people had increased to 73.4 million, 88.5 million in 1991, 140.5 million in 2006 while the 2021 projected figures show that the population of the country is 211.4 million (NBS, 2019). Moreover, in 1921, 7.2% of the population lived in cities of at least 20,000 people. By 1960, 6.9 million people lived in cities, representing about 10% of the total population. The proportion of city dwellers rose to 16.1 million in 1980, 29.5 million (38%) in 1991, 56.9 (45%) in 2006 and about 111.5 million (50%) in 2021. This has increased the density from 45.11 Square Kilometre in 1955 to 104.54 Square Kilometres in 1990 and 232.11 Square Kilometre in 2021 (UN, 2018).

About 72.5% of the 415 grazing reserves established by the then northern regional government in the 1960s, have since been lost. Only 114 grazing reserves were formally documented or demarcated (Babalobi et al., 2000). This has been attributed to the failure of the government to back these grazing reserves with legislation guaranteeing exclusive usage or take active measures to prevent encroachment (Ismail, 2013). With the fragmentation of the then Northern Region into nineteen states, reserves straddling two or more state jurisdictions lost collective management. Consequently, politicians and business elites, some of whom are even Fulani, have taken over pastoral land, grazing reserves and forest reserves at the expense of smaller-scale farmers and herders (Abdullahi et al., 2015). These land grabs are happening at significant environmental cost as the extension of cultivation into protected areas has destroyed tree cover and reduced savannah biodiversity in Northern Nigeria.

In compliance with various international treaties to which the country is a signatory and recommended global best practices of nature conservation to minimize climate change and its adverse impacts, as well as educational and scientific purposes, the Federal Government of Nigeria has appropriated for protection, a certain expanse of land in various parts of the country through legislation (Nwafor, 2006). The practice which started during the twilight years of colonial administration has gained much acceptance in post-colonial Nigeria. The country currently has 26 protected areas covering about 10 million hectares of land (FAO, 2007). The bulk of areas falls under the stricter categories in the International Union for Conservation of Nature protected area classification system such as land designated

for scientific purposes, wilderness protection, national parks, or habitat/species management (Blench, 2010). Consequently, the areas are subjected to tight restrictions on their use and occupation by local people. The apparent eviction of local people from these protected areas and lack of tenure security led to social dislocation and economic disempowerment (Onyenekenwa and Agbazue, 2011). In these circumstances, the nomads are usually the worst hit because some of these protected areas especially in the North are good grazing fields and their protection makes the nomads wander farther away from their traditional northern base.

Furthermore, as increasing urbanization, demographic pressure, and economic opportunities are depopulating the rural areas of Nigeria, demand for rural land for infrastructural development is increasing, forcing both farmers and herders to adjust to a transition from a land-abundant to a land-scarce rural economy (International Crisis Group, 2017). This process has tended to undermine pastoral land rights.

The agricultural policy of President Buhari's administration that tends to favour large-scale mechanized farming has lured many elites into the agricultural sector while those who have been in the business of farming have intensified their operation (Felix and Bassey, 2018). The intensification of farming activities and expansion of farmlands occasioned by agricultural mechanization means the pastoral nomads have lost secondary property rights such as grazing on the fallow or harvested fields that are used by farmers. The expansion of cultivated areas has encroached on livestock trek routes, pastures, and around watering points, exacerbating herders' problem of securing appropriate grazing areas for their herds (Felix and Bassey, 2018). The loss of pastoral access to pockets of highly productive land can also be attributed to the changing climate. The protracted series of droughts that occurred in the Sahel at the end of the twentieth century (Eze, 2018), provides a foretaste of how pastoralists might respond to climate change by attempting to adjust their tenure rights. During the decades of drought, Sahelian rainfall/agro-climatic zones shifted southward (Shiru et al., 2018), and so did pastoral production systems. Pastoral nomads were forced out of their accustomed northern grazing areas on the desert fringe and moved south where rapid population growth has put pressure on land for shelter and food production.

Insecurity in many northern states, due to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and under-reported rural banditry and cattle rustling in other areas, have also restricted pastoral nomads' land rights. One report estimated that in 2013, more than 64,750 cattle were stolen and at least 2,991 herders were killed in states across the

North-central zone (Bello, 2013). In Borno state, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), claims over one million cattle have been lost to the Boko Haram insurgency (Adeyemo, 2018). A report by the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps revealed that bandits, cattle rustlers and other criminals killed 1,135 people in Zamfara state alone between 2011 and 2015 (Egbejule, 2017). This has triggered the massive movement of the nomads away from their grazing areas southward. The promulgation of the Anti-open grazing law is another major issue that created a sense of insecurity for the nomads. The enforcement of the law in the State by creating livestock guards created a situation where pastoral nomads have accused the livestock guard of cattle rustling. Cases of cattle rustling became more widespread after the implementation of the anti-grazing law (Tade, 2020). This forced the nomads out of the vast grazing land and denied them access to water especially in the various tributaries of River Benue. It should be noted that the aim of the Anti-Open Grazing law was to prevent clashes between farmers and herders, halt the destruction of farms and the environment, prevent the spread of diseases caused by animals and create an enduring environment for large scale crop production (Tade, 2020). However, its economic implications on pastoral nomads were enormous. First, open grazing afforded the nomads the opportunity to freely pasture their animals with little or no cost on their business, but with the implementation of the anti-open grazing law, such opportunity was removed. Second, some nomads who were barely settling with their family and animals were forced to move out of the state living behind their camps that were procured at a cost. Also, some nomads who had established trade relationships with the natives of the state were forced to abandon this and move out of the state.

The Way Forward

Pastoral nomadism, despite the arguments and calls for its abrogation in some quarters simply because 'it is an ancient practice that does not meet the requirement of the modern-day livestock rearing, has continued to contribute the lion share to meat-requirement of Nigerians, provide employment and income to a fragment of the Nigerian population and contributes immensely to the agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Therefore, the survival of the livestock sector depends on the reformation and creation of enabling environment for the pastoral farmers to thrive. As noted earlier, unhindered access to land is central to the optimal performance of the pastoral nomads, certain measures must be taken to first reform the pastoral nomads and increase their access to land resources.

On this note, it is imperative to embark on massive educational and awareness programmes for the nomads on the need to jettison the old system of wandering around with animals and adopt ranching, which is the modern system of livestock production. It is gratifying to note that the current administration has acknowledged ranching as a veritable means of addressing the challenges of the pastoralists. The Northern leaders submit of 2017, and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (the umbrella body for Fulani livestock producers), though initially reticent about the ranching option, have equally accepted it. The Agriculture Promotion Policy (2016-2020), states that the cattle value chain has become a security problem as roaming cattle increasingly is a source of friction between sedentary farmers and herdsmen. Accordingly, a key shift is necessary - retaining cattle in ranches (FMARD, 2016). The federal government subsequently announced its plan to establish grazing reserves across the country in March 2016, but vehement opposition from north-central and southern states who accused the federal government of sinister motives forced the government to relent. Notwithstanding the opposition, the federal government is yet to establish new grazing reserves in the ten northern states that have already provided 55,000 hectares of land to that end. The government should engage the southern and north-central governments and the local people more persuasively to secure land for this purpose. Unlike nomadism, ranching requires some monetary investments in land acquisition and other facilities within the ranch. The nomads must be made to realize this and be ready to commit resources to the business. Their financial muscles to undertake proper ranching could be bolstered by helping them establish cooperatives and linking them up with financial institutions such as the Bank of Agriculture (BOA) and Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL).

Better coordination between federal and state governments to combat desertification would be another important step. Estimates suggest that during the twenty-first century, two-thirds of Nigeria's eleven far northern states could become desert or semi-desert regions (Heunis, 2017). Besides triggering monumental economic and livelihood losses, this would force many more pastoral nomads to migrate southward, thereby compounding the land management problem in the south. The way out is for the federal and state governments to swiftly commence and intensify the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel (UNCCD, 2007). The project initially called for planting a 15km wide belt of trees, running 7,775 Km across nine African countries from Senegal to Djibouti. It was later broadened to include building water-retention ponds and other

basic infrastructure, establishing agricultural production systems, and promoting other income-generating activities (UNCCD, 2007). Although, the federal government had planned to rehabilitate 22,500 sq km of degraded land across the eleven impacted states by 2020 (FGN, 2014), the plan largely exists on paper and should be implemented now.

The Federal Government should ensure a comprehensive implementation of the National Policy on Climate Change developed and adopted in 2012 and the Plan of Action on Climate Change component of Vision 20:2020 adopted in 2009, to address the climate change challenges (FGN, 2009). The two documents contain potent strategies for mitigating the impact of climate change. However, the ever-changing climate and its attendant natural disasters will always drive the nomads southward for now. Therefore, they must be thoroughly schooled to respect the land rights of the local people and be prepared to persuasively purchase or lease the land from them.

Conclusion

Land is among the most important assets for people around the world. It can be a vital part of cultural and social identities, a valuable asset to stimulate economic growth, and a central component to preserving natural resources and building societies that are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. All societies have a system to govern property rights - whether formally defined by law or informally established through customary systems - and these rules evolve and change. Land tenure is the relationship that individuals and groups hold with respect to land and land-based resources, such as trees, minerals, pastures, and water. Land tenure rules define the ways in which property rights to land are allocated, transferred, used, or managed in a particular society. When land tenure is secure, land can be a cornerstone for economic growth and an incentive for investment, but when land rights are insecure, this can lead to conflicts, instability and the exclusion of vulnerable groups, as the case with the pastoral nomads in Nigeria. As argued in this paper, livestock production has the potentials to largely address the food security problem, boost the industrialization drive in the country, contribute to foreign exchange earnings, reduce unemployment, boost sedentary farming, and assist in maintaining ecological balance. It should be noted that investments in the sustainable herding of nomads will not only help overcome their poverty but also hugely benefit the national economy. Therefore, assisting them to overcome the land challenges is a task every Nigerian should undertake.

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This is a festschrift in honour of Professor Edwin Osawe Iguisi, whose teaching career started at the Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, on March 8th, 1985 as an Assistant Lecturer where he rose to the rank of Professor in 2007. He served at different capacities apart from teaching, training and mentoring. He served as Departmental Examination officer, Faculty Examination officer, and Member University Committees, Head of Department, Deputy Dean of the Faculty, Acting Dean and Pioneer Director, Centre for Disaster Risk Management and Development Studies. Many papers, book chapters and books were published all to his credit. He attended many conferences, local and international and is a member of many professional bodies and organizations.

The content of the festschrift revolves around the theme: Integrated Environmental Management Issues comprising of sections that deal with climate change and food security, land resources management, water resources management and disaster risk management with each sub-theme having not less than three peer-reviewed chapters. In all are 19 chapters, with the last sub-theme being blessed with a contribution from the honouree on Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction as a Panacea for Disaster Risk Management in Nigeria. Generally, the findings and recommendations from the authors create a better understanding of the environment and emphasize the significance of its management.

This book is a clear indication of the fruitful contributions of Professor Iguisi to the advancement of knowledge. Prof. Iguisi's efforts and contributions touched the lives of many Nigerians, Africans and beyond, geographers and non-geographers, as such, he deserves commendation.



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