

Grazing Rights and Land Politics: The Land Use Act and Its Disruption of Pastoral Traditions in Nigeria

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Abstract

Land tenure systems determine how individuals and communities access, use, and manage land. In Nigeria, the relationship between land use policies and pastoralist practices has become increasingly complex, especially since the passage of the Land Use Act in 1978. This work investigates how the Land Use Act has influenced pastoralism, especially among the Fulani herders, and how changes in land administration have contributed to persistent conflicts. By examining the evolution of land tenure- from pre-colonial to post-colonial Nigeria, the study sheds light on how traditional grazing rights were disrupted by statutory land control, leading to tensions between pastoralists, farmers, and state authorities.

Keywords: Land tenure, Grazing, Pastoralism, Fulani

Land Tenure

Land tenure is the legal or customary relationship among individuals or groups over land. It determines who can use land for how long and under what conditions³. Traditional customs and practices govern customary land tenure, varying from one community to another. Statutory land tenure is subject to federal and state laws, following formal legal processes. In pre-colonial Nigeria, southern and northern Nigeria practised similar land tenure systems, regulated by customary law with roots in the traditional concept that land had economic, social, political, and religious significance.⁴ Therefore, Nigerian communities are considered a shared resource or collective property of the extended family or clan.⁵ Land use was hereditary, passing from generation to generation. Upon the death of a landowner, the land may pass to their designated heir or successor,

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³ Sumner La Croix, *Land Tenure: An Introduction*, No. 200213, Working Papers, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Department of Economics, 2002.

⁴ Maduekwe, Nkiruka, *The Land Tenure System Under the Customary Law* (May 2014).

Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2813056> or

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2813056>

⁵ ibid



as determined by customary practices⁶. Hence, pre-colonial Nigeria had a customary land tenure system, where land rights were determined and governed by the traditional customs and practices of various ethnic groups and communities. However, colonial and post-colonial land policies initiated the customary and statutory land tenure systems, where both government and local communities have jurisdiction over land matters.

In colonial Nigeria, land use management and regulation were primarily shaped by British colonial interests and policies. They introduced land laws, which conflicted with existing customary land tenure, and brought about a customary and statutory land tenure system. For instance, in Lagos and Southern Nigeria, the Crown Lands Proclamation of 1906 declared lands as Crown land, giving the colonial government authority over vast areas without recognising customary ownership⁷. In Lagos specifically, all land comprising the colony of Lagos was declared Crown Land⁸, and the Crown could also take over any land in southern Nigeria according to its interests. Similarly, the Lands and Native Rights Ordinance of 1916 was established⁹, and vested all lands in the Governor, held in trust for the native population. It provided natives with the avenue to acquire lands as they were used to under the native law and customs¹⁰. Primarily applied in northern Nigeria, it recognised the authority of traditional rulers, but subordinated them to colonial administrators. Individuals could not own land but were granted occupancy rights, allowing control without technically abolishing customary rights.

Furthermore, the Public Lands Acquisition Act of 1917 granted the colonial Governors the power to acquire land for public use¹¹. This is largely used for infrastructure, urban expansion, and facilitating the extraction of resources like minerals and agricultural products through establishing plantations. This led to displacing local populations or limiting their access to ancestral lands. It stated that compensation should be provided for already occupied lands, although the compensation rates are usually inadequate. While statutory laws began and continued to dominate in this era, colonial administrators still acknowledged customary land laws, especially in rural areas, specifically northern Nigeria. However, these customs were gradually weakened as colonial rule expanded. Indigenous Nigerians increasingly lost control over their land, with

⁶ Ehi Oshio, *Indigenous Land Tenure and Nationalisation of Land in Nigeria*, *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law* 5, no. 2 (1990): 685–701, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42842561>.

⁷ Udoekanem, Namnso & David, Adoga & Onwumere, Victor. (2014). *Land Ownership in Nigeria: Historical Development, Current Issues and Future Expectations*. *Journal of Environment and Earth Science*.

⁸ Ghebru, Hosaena, and Austen Okumo. *Land Administration Service Delivery and Its Challenges in Nigeria: A Case Study of Eight States*. Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research Paper 58. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, 2017.

⁹ Otubu, Akintunde. "The Land Use Act and Land Administration in 21st Century Nigeria: Need for Reforms." *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 9, no. 1 (2018): 81–106. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jsdlp.v9i1.5>.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ CJ Okoye Lawview & Co. "Topic 1: Introduction/Historical Evolution of Land Law in Nigeria." *CJ Okoye Lawview & Co.*, accessed May 6, 2025. <https://cjokoyelawview.com/law-421-land-law-i/topic-1-introduction-historical-evolution-of-land-law-in-nigeria>.

limited avenues for legal redress. The state became the central authority in land allocation, a shift that undermined traditional governance structures.

Land Use Act 1978

The colonial administration's control of land ownership during colonial times established the basis for the Land Use Act of 1978 to establish state land ownership in post-colonial Nigeria.¹²In essence, this Land Use Act vests the control, administration and management of land in Nigeria in the hands of state governors¹³. The law allows state governments to maintain all their state land under trust for public benefit. The governor, therefore, has the power to allocate, grant, or lease land in the state to individuals, organisations, and government bodies. The state only lacks jurisdiction over lands belonging to the Federal Government and its agencies; over minerals and national defence areas, along with all federal properties held by the government¹⁴.The federal government also regulates the Federal Capital Territory¹⁵.

Each state has a State Ministry of Lands and other relevant agencies responsible for land administration, allocation, and regulation within their jurisdiction. In this sense, ownership refers to all the rights and powers that can be used with land, including the freedom to use it for personal purposes, management authority, and the unrestricted ability to sell or alienate land¹⁶. Through the Ministry of Lands, state administrators grant rights to land through the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) documents. Possession of a C of O allows someone to occupy and utilise land property, but the state governor can rescind and change current land allocations. The Act recognises two distinct forms of land ownership through the state governor's statutory and customary occupancy rights, supervised by local governmental bodies. Each State's governor has exclusive authority over managing and controlling all land in metropolitan areas. At the same time, the local government exercises jurisdiction over all other lands in the rural areas¹⁷. Individuals no longer

¹² Allott, Nicholas. "Nigeria: Land use Decree, 1978." *Journal of African Law* 22, no. 2 (1978): 136-160. doi:10.1017/S0021855300009633.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ La Croix, Sumner. (2002). *Land Tenure: An Introduction*.

¹⁵ Adavize, Sanni. (2022). *LAND TENURE SYSTEM AND LAND ADMINISTRATION IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT), ABUJA*.

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Stephen Olasunkanmi, Abatan&Lawal, Musibau&Omolara, Bankole& Racheal, Babarinde. (2021). *HISTORY OF NIGERIA LAND USE ACT (AN OVERVIEW)*. *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology*. 6. 10.33564/IJEAST.2021.v06i05.031.

owned land outright but were given statutory or customary occupancy rights¹⁸. The Act allowed the two tenures to coexist¹⁹.

Yet, any occupancy right under customary or statutory laws is subject to potential termination whenever the land becomes essential for public use pursued by either Federal, State or Local governments, according to Section 28(4) of the Act. The legally acknowledged definition of public purpose is vague because governments can revoke occupancy rights to benefit private firms for economic, agricultural, or industrial purposes²⁰. Although if the government acquires land for public purposes, it must compensate the landowners or rights-holders²¹. The Land Use Act outlines the processes for determining and paying compensation. So, contemporary Nigeria has a dual legal system, which includes customary, long-standing traditions upheld by local communities and traditional leaders, and statutory laws, established at the state level to provide a legal framework for land ownership and transactions. While the former is dominant in rural areas, the latter is rampant in urban settings.

The 1978 Act has significantly affected Nigeria's land tenure, property rights, and land-related disputes. While it provides a framework for land administration, and is designed to facilitate land use for development, reduce land speculation and land-related conflicts, and provide legal security for land users, its implementation and effects vary from one state to another due to their degree of urbanisation, which results in differences in local land tenure systems and land policies. Urbanisation drive led to rapid city growth, with the attendant consequences of evictions and poorly regulated land management. There are several challenges, such as bureaucracy and corruption, in acquiring a Certificate of Occupancy. This, many times, is slow, expensive, and on a connection basis. Another challenge is that traditional rulers still control land in many rural areas, leading to conflicts between formal and informal systems.

Fulani Pastoralists' Access to Land and Grazing Rights from Antiquity

From antiquity, nomadic herdsmen have remained a migrant race who do not own land and care less about land ownership²². Furthermore, governance in pre-colonial Nigeria favoured them as it was characterised by decentralised political systems, with authority vested in traditional rulers and local chiefs who were usually farmers because farming was the only dominant trade in this pre-colonial era. Fulani pastoralists, if needed, often negotiate access to fallow lands directly with these local authorities based on established customary practices and norms. Essentially, from ancient times, the Fulani established agreements with local leaders after moving their settlements to obtain access

¹⁸Trusted Advisors Law. 2024. "Understanding the Land Use Act in Nigeria: A Comprehensive Guide." September 26, 2024.

<https://trustedadvisorslaw.com/understanding-the-land-use-act-in-nigeria/>

¹⁹ La Croix, Sumner. (2002). Land Tenure: An Introduction.

²⁰ Muktar, Mohammed, Michael Otu, (2009). The issue of compensation on Revocation of Rights of Occupancy under the Land Use Act: Problems and Prospects.

²¹ ibid

²² Rashid Adisa, *Land Use Conflict Between Farmers and Herdsmen: Implications for Agricultural and Rural Development in Nigeria*, April 2012,

rights for living and grazing their cattle²³. Fulani rights to areas for dwelling and trade typically exclude permanent access, although there are no time restrictions. The village leadership and the farming community allow the arrangement while making no monetary requirements. If Fulani want to keep their usual land permission, they provide free cattle manure to farmers who live close to them and occasionally give meat gifts to farmer families²⁴. The willingness of the farming community to give land loans to the Fulani depends on their need for animal manure, which brings special benefit to their farming lands and the derivation of protein from beef and dairy products. Meanwhile, beyond the access to grazing lands that the Fulani had, they also had nomads who relied on farm produce for food²⁵.

The permission granted to Fulani herders for dormant farmland occupancy reduces bush growth, thus saving farmers' future labour costs during land preparation phases. Until recently, both Fulani herders and farmers usually have an agreement that livestock could freely access any uncropped or harvested area. This practice and symbiotic relationship have been observed with the highest ethical standards by the Pastoralists in every new community they stopped over²⁶. The pre-colonial relationship has been well managed and controlled so that internal security and agriculture are unaffected²⁷. The long history of herders' migration has been that of coexistence and cooperation with farmers and host communities over shared available resources²⁸. Visit to the Internally Displaced Persons' camp in Benue state confirmed that there used to be a cordial relationship between them and the Fulani, whom they regarded as brothers. However, the once peaceful co-existence across Nigerian states has now been marred with conflicts owing to several factors that have been widely researched, one of which this work focused on- land management.

Colonial and post-colonial Nigeria changed land use, and the existing Land Use Act of 1978 appropriated the highest authority for the state government in Nigeria's land use, management, and regulation. Beyond this, the national secretary of MACBAN, Alhaji Bello Gotomo, asserted that, historically, Fulani pastoralists have relied on traditional grazing routes that traverse different regions of Nigeria²⁹. These routes were established long before Nigeria's independence and have been used by generations of Fulani herdsmen to move

²³ Waters Bayer and Taylor Powell, *Settlement and Land Use by Fulani Pastoralists in Case Study Areas*, Social Scientists ILCA Subhumid Zone Programme,

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Okoi Ofem Okoi and Basse Inyang, *Livelihood and Conflict Dimension Among Crop Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen in Yakurr Region of Cross River State*, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 8 (2014): 512–519.

²⁷ Tor Benjaminsen and Boubacar Ba, *Farmer–Herder Conflicts, Pastoral Marginalisation and Corruption: A Case Study from the Inland Niger Delta of Mali*, *Geographical Journal* 175, no. 1 (2009): 71–81.

²⁸ Charlène Cabot, *Climate Change and Farmer–Herder Conflicts in West Africa*, in *Climate Change, Security Risks and Conflict Reduction in Africa*, (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2017), 11–44.

²⁹ Interview conducted with Alhaji Bello Gotomo, National secretary, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) on 17th July 2024

their cattle between seasonal grazing areas. These were further strengthened by the 415 national grazing reserves created in 1965³⁰.

The Implication of the Land Use Act on Fulani Pastoralists in Post-Colonial Nigeria

The Land Use Act altered these dynamics. With the centralised control of land under the government and state governors holding land in trust for their respective states, the Act changed the traditional land tenure systems that many pastoralist communities had relied upon for generations. Thus, it significantly altered land tenure systems and affected the access of Fulani pastoralists to grazing lands, as these lands became subject to government allocation and control. Acquisition of land for urbanisation and agricultural expansion was rampant, resulting in encroachment on traditional grazing lands and reducing the available grazing lands for Fulani pastoralists, exacerbating their challenges. Therefore, agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, urban settlements, population growth, and increased demand for land for private purposes were major activities that inspired land purchase since its vesting in state governments.

According to Alhaji Bello Gotomo, the national secretary of MACBAN, to avoid confrontation, Fulani pastoralists, in many cases, were left to graze their cattle on uncultivated or marginal lands left fallow without formal authorisation³¹. This practice is often associated with areas where land tenure is unclear or where enforcement of land-use regulations is weak. Thus, their lack of grazing areas and state governments' hesitation in allocating lands for this purpose have limited pastoralists' access to legitimate areas where they can graze.

With the increased population and urbanisation, there is a further threat that agricultural lands, including grazing areas, can continue to shrink, especially as many states prioritise urbanisation and transforming rural areas into urban centres. The researcher asked ESV Abdul-Azeez Bello of the Land and Housing Development Department, Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, if there are caps, restrictive policies or limits in land acquisition to save agriculture³². He responded that there are, on a state-by-state basis, but there is no political will and that the departments that oversee them in several states are either not working or not complying with the limits; hence, anyone with purchasing power or in a good relationship with any political leader of repute and influence can choose to purchase land anywhere, including where should be off limits. In summary, the Land Use Act reduces land accessibility for pastoralists, considering that they rely on free land.

Grazing Reserves, Powers of the Governor and Land Allocation for Pastoral Purposes

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Interview conducted with Alhaji Bello Gotomo, National secretary, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) on 17 July 2024.

³² Interview conducted with ESV Abdul-Azeez Bello, Official, Land and Housing Development Department on 10 July 2024

Grazing reserves are usually introduced as a measure for modernising the livestock industry³³. The main emphasis is on providing pastoralist communities with more secure tenure rights to discourage traditional transhumant methods of raising cattle and lessen conflicts between crop farmers and pastoralists³⁴.

The Grazing Reserve Act was enacted in 1965 by the Ahmadu Bello government, the premier of the Northern Region at that time.³⁵ It was a significant legislation aimed at addressing issues related to grazing lands and livestock management, particularly in the country's northern regions³⁶. The law's primary objective was to establish designated grazing reserves to provide pastoralist communities with access to grazing lands and water resources. It also sought to provide legal mechanisms for managing livestock grazing. Hence, the law empowered the government to identify, demarcate, and establish grazing reserves on public lands in the northern regions of Nigeria³⁷. It granted security of tenure to pastoralists, which meant they had legal rights to use these routes for grazing purposes. Similarly, the law also criminalised open grazing in those states that domesticated the Grazing Reserve Law.

While the 1965 Northern Grazing Reserve Law aimed to address land tenure and resource access issues, its implementation faced various challenges and controversies. Critics argued that the creation of grazing reserves favoured pastoralist communities at the expense of sedentary farmers³⁸. Nonetheless, 415 grazing reserves were established using it, but only 141 are gazetted, constituting about 2.7 million hectares of land³⁹. The places where these reserves were created are in Adamawa, Zamfara, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, Zamfara and Plateau. Adamawa, with 69 grazing reserves and 31 gazetted, is the highest.

Since there is no implication of not gazetting a grazing reserve, several states have declined to gazette them formally; in fact, some of these grazing reserves

³³ Josephine Okojie, "Explainer: What Are Grazing Reserves?" *Businessday NG*, 16 June 2021.

³⁴ "The Existence of Grazing Routes in Nigeria: Fact or Fiction (Part 3)," *This Day Live*, September 7, 2021.

³⁵ Josephine Okojie, "Explainer: What Are Grazing Reserves?" *Businessday NG*, 16 June 2021.

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ Marie J. Ducrotoy, Ayodele O. Majekodunmi, Alexandra P. M. Shaw, Husein Bagulo, Wilson J. Bertu, Amahyel M. Gusi, Reuben Ocholi & Susan C. Welburn. Patterns of passage into protected areas: Drivers and outcomes of Fulani immigration, settlement and integration into the Kachia Grazing Reserve, northwest Nigeria. *Pastoralism* 8, 1 (2018).

³⁸ Ingawa, Salihu, Tarawali, Gbassey, and Kaufmann, Ralph. "Grazing reserves in Nigeria: Problems, prospects and policy implication." International Livestock Centre for Africa. 1989

³⁹ Marie J. Ducrotoy, et al. Patterns of passage into protected areas: Drivers and outcomes of Fulani immigration, settlement and integration into the Kachia Grazing Reserve, northwest Nigeria. *Pastoralism* 8, 1 (2018).

have become forest reserves⁴⁰, for several reasons, including paucity of funds and pressure from citizens and non-Fulani stakeholders. Even where they have been gazetted, the effectiveness of the reserves has been hindered in meeting the needs of pastoralist communities: many facilities within these reserves no longer exist due to neglect, inadequate infrastructure and support services, and desertification, as in the case of Adamawa⁴¹. Some grazing routes also faced environmental degradation due to overuse⁴².

Despite its limitations, the 1965 Northern Grazing Reserve Law represented an early attempt by the Nigerian government to address the complex issues surrounding pastoralism and land management. Subsequent legislative efforts and policy initiatives have built upon the framework established by the law, reflecting ongoing efforts to promote sustainable land use practices, mitigate conflicts, and support the livelihoods of pastoralist communities. Such efforts include the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA), proposed by the Muhammadu Buhari administration⁴³. His government planned to establish RUGA settlements across states. These settlements, like the 1965 Grazing Reserves Law, were to include infrastructure such as water sources, veterinary clinics, marketplaces and schools⁴⁴. The government had proposed partnerships with state governments, local communities, and private investors to secure land, establish settlements, and fund infrastructure development. Still, the RUGA initiative has faced significant opposition and sparked widespread controversy from various quarters, specifically in southern Nigeria⁴⁵.

Several governors relied on the provisions of this Act to reject this and other similar initiatives. For example, the immediate past Governor of Ondo State, Late Arakunrin Akeredolu, who was the chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum at the time, repeatedly maintained that no southern governor would give their land as a grazing reserve for the herdsmen⁴⁶. He had several verbal confrontations with the national government, even though they belonged to the same political party⁴⁷. The sentiment was the same in the north-central region. The immediate past Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, argued that the Land Use Act grants state governors the last say over land use and would not grant it for this purpose⁴⁸.

⁴⁰Ingawa, Salihu, et al. "Grazing reserves in Nigeria: Problems, prospects and policy implication." International Livestock Centre for Africa. 1989

⁴¹ Joseph Onyekwere and AmehOchojila, "Interrogating the Constitutionality of Retracing Old Grazing Routes," *The Guardian Nigeria News*, last modified 21 September 2021

⁴²Salihulngawa et al. "Grazing Reserves in Nigeria: Problems, Prospects and Policy Implication," *International Livestock Centre for Africa*, 1989

⁴³ Joke Falaju, "FG Shortlists 21 States for Pilot Grazing Reserves," *The Guardian Nigeria News*, 18 June 2021.

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ Adebayo Taiwo, "Ruga: Steeped in History of Distrust, Nigeria's Botched Solution for Deadly Conflicts," *Premium Times*. 2024.

⁴⁶ Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, "'I Will Spare No Effort To Protect My People, Akeredolu Replies Presidency,'" *Leadership Nigeria*, 2022.

"Open Grazing: You Lack Authority to Make Policy Statements for FG, Gov Akeredolu Replies Garba Shehu," *TVC News*, last modified May 2021.

⁴⁷ Olalekan Adetayo, "Herdsman Can't Leave Ondo Forest, Presidency Replies Akeredolu," *Punch Newspapers*, last modified 19 January 2021.

⁴⁸ George Okoh, "Benue Rejects Planned Review of Land Use Act," *THISDAYLIVE*, 30 June 2021

Section 28(4) of the Land Use Act gives the Federal Government the power to claim any land by issuing a notification to the state government where the land is located.⁴⁹A state governor must cancel a right of occupancy whenever the Head of the Federal Government issues a notification of public necessity for the land.⁵⁰Even while this is the case, it could nevertheless be interpreted legally depending on whether giving property to herders serves a public interest. This sentiment was echoed by several non-northern stakeholders who were interviewed. It is up for debate and legal consideration, therefore, whether reclaiming or taking over private property to create ranches or grazing reserves for private individuals to raise and graze cattle qualifies as a public purpose under the Land Use Act, even though this definition includes acquiring the land needed for or in connection with agricultural purposes.

The present socio-political climate of the Nigerian state suggests that several states will never allow such a practice in their states, even as several state governments do not prioritise pastoralism. Following an agreement by the 17 governors of the southern states of Nigeria, who gathered in Asaba, Delta state, on 16 May 2021, the governors, operating under the auspices of the Southern Governors Forum, not only rejected the RUGA plan but also outlawed open grazing in their states⁵¹. Outside the joint resolution, several states passed anti-open grazing laws, although the herdsman continued to graze openly in those states despite the ban⁵². This has inspired several states to initiate local security outfits to compel obedience. These have instead led to more problems as clashes between the pastoralists and the vigilantes have become rife, as in the case of Zamfara, Sokoto, Ondo, and Benue, to mention a few. The researcher's interaction with the executives of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, such as Barkindo Abdulrahman and Alhaji Bello Gotomo, revealed that they continued to engage and solicit the understanding of the state governors despite the ban, claiming that only Benue state has been left alone, considering the political colouration of the conflict. Therefore, so long as the Land Use Act of 1978 vests power in the state governments, having gazetted and functional grazing reserves in Nigeria will remain herculean and likely continue to inflame social tension.

Conclusion

This work provides a detailed understanding of the interplay between pastoralism, land use, and conflicts in Nigeria; it looks at land use across different epochs in Nigeria, specifically focusing on the Land Use Act of 1978. The Act facilitated the encroachment on grazing lands for urban development, agricultural expansion, and infrastructure projects, further marginalising pastoralists. State governors who hold the final authority over land allocation rejected some initiatives to make land available to pastoralists. Southern governors' rejection of the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) initiative illustrates

⁴⁹ Overview of Land Policy in Nigeria," *Lexology*, 10 May 2021

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ Adejumo Kabir, "UPDATED: 17 Southern Governors Resolve to Ban Open Grazing of Cattle," *Premium Times*, 11 May 2021

⁵² "Despite Ban, Open Grazing Persists in Southern States," *THISDAYLIVE*, 7 June 2021

pastoralists' challenges in securing land under the Land Use Act. The Act's broad definition of public interest and purpose is debated, particularly about revoking land for pastoralists' use, and the legality of creating grazing routes and ranches remains contentious, often leading to political and legal disputes. Thus, although the Land Use Act was enacted and adopted in 1978 as a legal tool for land ownership and management in Nigeria, it has also exacerbated tensions between pastoralists, farmers, and state governments. While it provided some legal structure for land use, the Act has significantly impacted the Fulani pastoralists, limiting their access to traditional grazing routes and contributing to ongoing conflicts over land use. Addressing these challenges requires revisiting the legal frameworks surrounding land allocation, ensuring equitable access for all land users, and fostering dialogue between stakeholders to create sustainable solutions that balance development with pastoral livelihoods.