



LEVEL OF CRIMINALITY EXPERIENCED AMONG FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN AKOKO SOUTHWEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ONDO STATE NIGERIA

¹Olumoyegun A. T; ²Olumoyegun B. A.; ³Akinbola E.T, and ²Adeniyi, R.T

¹Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Ondo State. ²Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State. ³Department of Crop and Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State
Email: b.aina@acu.edu.ng **Telephone:** 08029059937

Abstract

Increasing crime threatens the development of Nigeria and negatively affects every sphere of human security. A safe space for the rural populace to operate is imperative for agricultural development and food security. This study investigated the level of criminal activities occurrence among farming households in Akoko South Local Government Area, Ondo State. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 120 household heads using interview schedule. Data on respondents' socioeconomic characteristics' and criminal activities experienced were analysed with descriptive statistics like frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean score. Results showed respondents were married (70%), Christian (70%), literate (93.3 %) and male (70%) with mean age and household size of 43.3years and 5.6 persons respectively. Criminal activities identified to be highly prevalent in the area include farmland destruction by grazers (2.73), herdsmen attack (2.70) and farm produce and livestock theft (2.10). Moderately prevalent vices include gangsterism (1.97), destruction of properties (1.93), kidnapping (1.87) and violent fight (1.87) while attempted murder (0.97), manslaughter (0.97) and child stealing (0.83) had low incidence rates in the study area. This shows that farming households suffer more from livelihood related criminal activities, which consequently poses a challenge to their productivity. Hence, the developmental agencies should create job to reduce youth unemployment, increase peace building capacity between Herders and farmers and increase law enforcement presence in rural areas for sustainable production of Agricultural produce.

Key words: Criminality, Insecurity, rural development, food security.

Introduction

Crime in its different types, facets and magnitudes plagues the world especially the developing nations such as Nigeria. This phenomenon bedevils many nations across the globe in diverse degrees impacting policy and development. It constantly threatening the political, economic and social security of nations; being a major contributor to underdevelopment by deterring foreign and domestic investment, lowering the standard of living, ruining people and government relations, destroying human and social capital, undermining rule of law and democracy, thus hindering the nations capacity to foster development (Adebayo, 2013 and Alabi, 2014). Notably, certain crimes are off shoots of development realities such as migration, modernisation and population growth; others are brought on by social prejudice and marginalisation of certain segments of the society including the rural communities. This is a persistent dilemma that knows no regional or global bounds. In Nigeria, there are crimes perpetuated at various levels utilising different harmful, dangerous instruments and weapons; hence resulting in a great deal

of human suffering, property damage, risking public safety and placing a heavy strain on social networks within the society. Indeed crime has existed from the beginning of time, more and more forms of criminal behaviour continually evolve as knowledge, science and technology advances. The resulting effect has been extremely terrible, shocking, mindless and violent consequences, hence the conversation on safety, protection and peace keeps getting more complicated and crucial in Nigeria (Inyang and Inyang, 2019).

Despite the country's wealth in natural and human resources, there has been a recent rise in the frequency of crime committed in Nigeria, and it has continued to rise exponentially. Due to the inability to ensure the safety of people and their property, this has caused a tangible fear among the community. Ruwan *et al* (2020) said that Nigeria has been included in the worldwide map of crime since 1980. The notable crime types perpetuated almost everywhere in Nigeria include burglary, bribery, armed robbery, car theft, drug trafficking,

corruption, fraud, food and drugs adulteration, money laundering, kidnapping, internet scams (yahoo yahoo), rape, human trafficking, impersonation, domestic violence among other. According to Adebayo, (2013) criminal activities particularly among the young segment of the population, seems to be a constant feature in our society today. This over four decades of increasing criminality may be due to the poverty induced get-rich-quick mindset, parenting failure, law enforcement ineffectiveness, inept national security strategies, youth avarice among others. Many crimes due to their frequency of occurrence are no longer news to people with many accepting them as normal part of everyday living. However, the Nigerian crime rate by type prevalence mapping varies even within the country. For instance, crimes like militancy, oil theft , pipeline vandalism, armed robbery, and kidnapping are common in the Niger-Delta region while bombing, religious conflict, terrorism, killing, cattle rustling suicide bombing, and banditry are peculiar to the country's northern region, particularly in the States of Adamawa, Borno, Kaduna, Kano and Yobe. Crimes like armed robbery, ritual killing, assault, kidnapping, rape, theft, ethnic clashes, and other crimes are common in the

Southwest and Southeast regions of the nation. This means that while crime type rates may vary across borders, no village, town, city or state in the country is completely free of crime. It is notable that the criminal activities perpetuated in remote areas of Nigeria comprises of terrorism, theft, cattle rustling, ethnic and religion based violence, kidnapping, banditry, farmers and herdmen conflicts among others (Yekinni , Adeniyi and Adebisi, 2017 and Kuna and Ibrahim, 2015). This serious concern of Nigeria with its monumental security crisis as a nation, has led to more higher budgetary investment in security infrastructure, often at the expense of other sectors such as health, education and agriculture whereas, crime and safety are significant aspects of sustainable rural development (Olufolabo et al., 2015 and Ceccato, 2016).

In the past, several studies have been carried out on criminal activities and livelihoods. For instance, studies on the effects of herdsmen and farmers conflicts on socioeconomic development of Nigeria and the negative effects of criminal activities on farmers livelihood revealed that criminal activities and herdsmen-farmers conflict created food insecurity, distrust, food crisis, loss of lives and property, hunger, loss of

shelter, forced migration, diseases and unemployment(Okoro, 2018; Onyekwere and Nworgu, 2020). Furthermore, investigations on human abduction and its effect on livelihood of rural farm households in Abia State also showed that abductions (kidnapping) have significant impacts on livelihood activities of farming households in the following ways: late planting of crops, reduction in output due to late planting, scarcity of labour, urban congestion, destruction of properties, displacement of homes and reduction in business activities generally(Odoemelam and Alozie, 2014).In most rural areas, there is usually low police presence in terms of police size and patrol in rural areas. This makes it possible for some criminal elements to hide in rural areas while committing crimes, leading to further growth of crime rate (Arisukwu *et al.*2020).

However, increased number of unemployed youth to 27.3 million in 2010 and to 44.2 million in 2018, contributed to increasing crime rate in the rural environment. Some of the solutions to this menace include infrastructural development in the country and provision of employment opportunities in rural communities. These could help reduce and ameliorate the level of crime activities in such areas and generally in Nigeria (Balogun, 2021).In addition to this,

a study that identified the major causes, effects and approaches to curbing crimes in South-Western Nigeria concluded that if adequate measures to curb these crimes are not urgently taken, more lives will be lost, businesses will continue to fold up, investors will withdraw their investments, poverty and hunger will take over and life will become more unbearable for the common man (Nwagoso and Etim 2019).

Conversely, the development of rural areas has been found to be seriously hampered by crime, which is significantly more prevalent in developing countries than in industrialized ones and it has been a significant barrier to the underdeveloped nations' progress. In other words, continued criminality in rural regions will most likely lead to unsustainable development, robbing people of their livelihoods and encouraging the emigration of young household members to metropolitan centers. The rural areas being at the backwaters in all development matrixes considered; is no better in the matter of safety and security. Yet this is the major food producing center of Nigeria as a whole as this could have significant effects on food security because of reducing rural workforce and worsening environmental conditions due to crime. Hence, more food must be produced to feed the growing

population. So a drastic cutdown on crime especially in rural Nigeria is an urgent concern. So understanding the social, political and economic environment that breeds or influences crimes becomes essential given the worrying situation of criminality in Nigerian rural communities (Grote and Neubacher, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria obviously has a crime crisis at hand, given the severity of the alarming crime situation and the inefficiency of the crime control mechanisms. Recent events demonstrate that the crime wave has reached crippling proportions and necessitates the engagement of policy makers in this area. Increasing frequency of crimes in recent years has caused tremendous worry among residents and all levels of government. Majority of daily media reportage is of gory tales of crime and woe, with an apparent powerless law enforcement, specifically the police; unable to stop the nasty and unsettling trend. This has the potential to undermine Nigeria's efforts in pursuit of sustainable development as well as its corporate survival. (Adebayo, 2013, Oluwaleye 2021).

Vast cropping and grazing friendly land, water, favourable climatic conditions and a

thriving workforce are few of the reasons why Nigeria has a lot of potential for growing its agricultural output. However, the recent plague by serious criminal activity, has had a detrimental effect on its investment and agricultural productivity. Agriculture is negatively impacted by crime in a number of ways. For instance, crimes can significantly displace farm labour and alter the distribution and supply of agricultural resources. Hence, agricultural investment becomes impossible to preserve in a criminally unstable climate due to these compounding difficulties which can hinder sustainable rural development (Nodim and Ochogba, 2018). This means, continued criminal activity in rural regions will most probably lead to more displacement, restrict growth, destroy livelihoods, create survival pressure in otherwise safer climates, creating an increasing web of poverty, insecurity and restlessness. The negative effects of criminal activities on farmers livelihood revealed that criminal activities and herdsman-farmers conflict created food insecurity, distrust, food crisis, loss of lives and property, hunger, loss of shelter, forced migration, diseases and unemployment (Okoro, 2018; Onyekwere and Nworgu, 2020). This can have significant effects on food security in the

nation since more food must be produced to feed the teeming population while the workforce in rural regions declines because the environment is damaged by crime. Crime have an indirect psychological cost that makes people feel uneasy at home in addition to the loss of goods and lost productivity. If cattle, field crops, equipment, or tools are taken from farms or homesteads, farming households lose their source of income. Recently, crime has occurred at a significant rate, which has caused tremendous alarm among individuals and all levels of government (Ruwan *et al*, 2020).

Van Kesteren *et al*, (2014) noted that despite the pressing need to support sustainable development in rural regions, the issue of crime in these areas remains understudied and disregarded. Furthermore, discussions of crime have largely focused on urban settings rather than much on rural ones up to this point. Although it is believed that crime in rural areas is of less significance, little is actually known regarding the scope and frequency of criminal activity that takes place there. Hence, this study takes into account the degree and frequency of crimes suffered by agricultural households in Akoko Southwest LGA based on the gap that has been found.

Methodology

The study was done in Akoko Southwest Local Government Area of Ondo, state. According to 2006 census the area of 226km² is occupied by 229, 486 people. It is made up of 15 districts/wards namely; Oba, Oka, Oki, Korowo, Ikese, Iwonrin, Ebo, Ayegunle, Owalusin, Ayepe, Akungba, Ikun, Supare, Okela and Bolodunro. The people are mainly farmers (70%) producing arable, tree crops and also rearing livestock and poultry. Akoko Southwest local government area was purposively selected due to its high concentration of farming districts. The research objective was achieved using quantitative research approach (Interview schedule). Multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for this study. Stage one involved the random selection of 40% of the ward in the study area. The wards selected were Oba, Ebo, Ayegunle, Iwonrin, Oki and Supare. The second stage involved the systematic random selection of 20 farming household in each of the wards; given 120 respondents for the study.

The respondents' personal characteristics such as age, sex, highest educational level attained, household size, marital status and religion were measured accordingly.

Respondents' prevalence of criminal activities in the study area was measured with 26 possible crimes that could occur in the area. Respondents were asked to identify the crimes they have experienced and also indicated the level of prevalence of the identified crimes in their locality with a 4 point likert type scale of 'Very high, high, low and not at all' with the scores of 3, 2, 1 and 0. The weighted mean score was used to rank the statement in descending order. The level of crime occurrence was measured using mean as a benchmark. The statement whose mean fall above the average was categorised as very high crime, while the crime that fall within the mean were classified to be high and the crime that falls below the mean were categorised as low level of crime experienced.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and weighted mean

Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	≤ 30	16	13.3
	31 -40	56	46.7

Table 1 reveals that the majority (60%) of the sampled respondents fall between 30 - 50 years of age with the mean age of 43.27 years. This shows that farming is carried out by strong productive middle aged persons within the study area which also resonates with the findings of Yekinni, Adeniyi and Adebisi, (2017) and Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008). Table 1 further shows that most of the respondents were male (84 = 70%) while majority (93.3%) have completed at least primary school education and 6.7 percent of them have no formal education. The data collated revealed that the average household size was 5.6 members with majority (70%) having less than or equal to seven household members. The higher number of household size might be to supply the labour as suggested by Adeniyi and Yekinni, (2015) that most rural household depends on family labour. More than two thirds (70%) of the respondents are married and Christian (70%). The Findings from this study implies that (Table 1) many of the respondents are mature, married, literate and Christian males with moderate sized households.

Mean = 43.27 ± 14.27	41-50 ≥50	16 32	13.3 26.7
Sex	Male Female	84 36	70.0 30.0
Educational level	No Formal Education Primary Education Secondary Education Tertiary Education	8 23 52 37	6.7 19.2 43.3 30.8
Household Size Mean = 5.60± 2.86	≤3 4-7 8-11 ≥12	36 48 32 4	30.0 40.0 26.7 3.3
Marital Status	Single Married Widowed	16 84 20	13.3 70.0 16.7
Religion	Islam Christianity Traditional Worship	28 84 8	23.3 70.0 6.7

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Prevalence of criminal activities in the study area

Table 2 shows that of the 26 crimes investigated, 8 (31%) of them in order of occurrence included destruction of farmland (2.73), herdsmen attacks (2.7), aiding and abetting(2.27), gambling(2.27), farm produce and livestock stealing(2.10), robbery (2.07), unlawful possession of arms and weapons(2.0) and store breaking (2.0) have very high frequency of occurrence within the study area. These crimes ranked 1st to 7th among the crimes investigated by the study. This shows that 4 crimes causing

material loss (property) or damage, which wastes their farming and livelihood resources occur more frequently in the study area. Crimes against lawful authority reported to be very high, with 2 tying at the 3rd position are gambling and aiding & abetting and unlawful possession of arms and weapons being at the 7th position within the very high prevalence category. Crimes which directly affect and threaten the security of income resources take the top spot among crimes experienced. Grazing and herdsmen related crimes takes the 1st and 2nd positions, a confirmation of how the

insecurity issues which result from farmers – herders conflict greatly affect the rural areas. This agrees with finding of Adelokun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2017) and Yekinni, Adeniyi, and Adebisi, (2017) that crop damage by animal grazing, farmland destruction by bush burning are major cause of conflict between farmers and herders.

Most crimes that disrupt law and order fall into the high category such as gangsterism

(1.97), violent fight (1.87), kidnapping (1.87), Breach of peace (1.87), Cultism (1.73), Arson (1.70), Forgery (1.57) and rape (1.03). Many of these crimes within the high prevalence category can be associated with unemployment among youths as posited by Adebayo (2013). Suicide (0.53) is discovered to be the least occurring crime within the study area

Table 2: Level of Prevalence of Criminal Activities among Respondents

Crime	Score weighted Mean	Rank	Category
Destruction of Farmland by Grazers	2.73	1 st	Very High
Herdsmen attacks	2.70	2 nd	
Aiding & abetting	2.27	3 rd	
Gambling	2.27	3 rd	
Farm produce and livestock stealing	2.10	5 th	
Robbery	2.07	6 th	
Unlawful possession of arms and weapons	2.00	7 th	
Store breaking	2.00	7 th	
Gangsterism	1.97	9 th	High
Destruction of properties	1.93	10 th	
Violent fight	1.87	11 th	
Kidnapping	1.87	11 th	
Breach of peace	1.87	11 th	
Cheating	1.87	11 th	
Cultism	1.73	15 th	
Arson	1.70	16 th	
Assaults	1.60	17 th	
Greivous harm	1.57	18 th	
Forgery	1.57	18 th	
Rape	1.03	20 th	Low
Attempted murder	0.97	21 st	
Manslaughter	0.97	21 st	
Child stealing	0.83	23 rd	
Murder	0.83	23 rd	
Ritual killings	0.80	25 th	
Suicide	0.53	26 th	

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Figure 1 shows that crimes that fall into the very high category occur 31% times of crimes experienced; which means that 3 of 10 crimes experienced fall within the very high prevalence

category, while the high category has more crime types experienced, the low category also has the least number of crime type by category. This points out that prevention of crimes that fall within the very high and high categories are key to improving the safety and security of the study area.

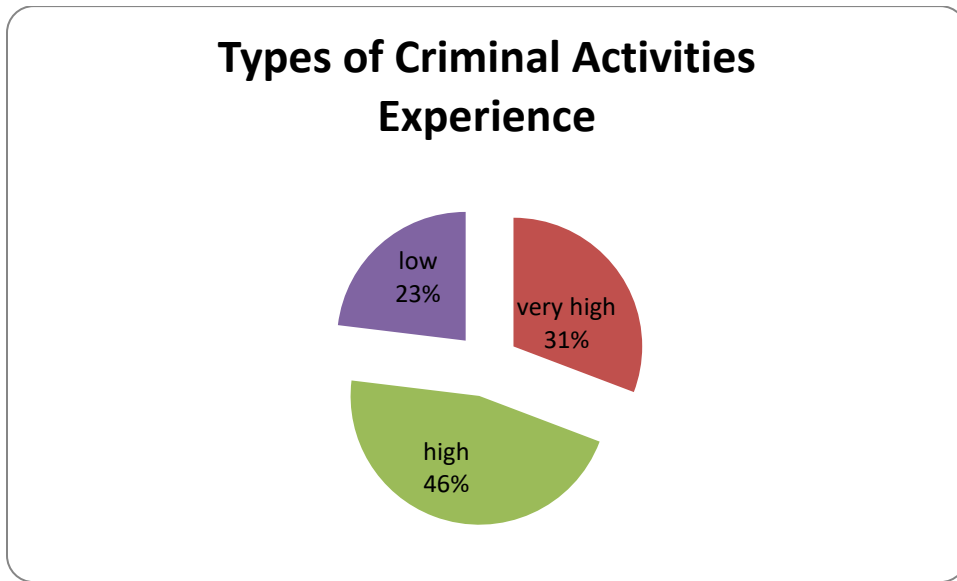


Figure 1: Distribution of Crime Types Experienced by Respondents

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that farmland destruction by grazing and herdsmen attacks are the foremost criminal activities experienced in the study area. This reveals how much the persistent farmer – herder conflict existing in the agrarian space affects the lives of the rural populace. Study showed that farming households suffer more from livelihood affecting criminal activities which consequently may likely pose challenges to their agricultural productivity.

The study recommends that public and private sectors of the economy should invest in rural areas thus creating more job opportunities for youths hence reducing youth unemployment. All relevant stakeholders in the nation must invest in sustainable conflict resolution infrastructure, mechanism and capacity, in pursuance of herders and farmers conflict resolution. There is need for increasing law enforcement presence and effectiveness in rural areas for more effective law enforcement, prosecution of criminals so as

to reduce impunity among criminal and improve safety of lives and property.

References

Adebayo O. O and Olaniyi O. A. (2008). Factors Associated with Pastoral and Crop Farmers Conflict in Derived Savannah Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Human Ecology*, Vol 23(1): pp 71-74

Adebayo, A. A. (2013). Youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria: A nexus and implications for national development. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5(8), 350-357. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5897/USA2013.0452>.

Adelakun O.E. Adurogbangba B. and Akinbile, L.A. 2015. Socioeconomic Effects of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict on Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria *Journal of Agricultural Extension* Vol. 19 (2) Pp 60-70, December, 2015 ISSN(e): 24086851; <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v19i2.5>

Adeniyi, R.T. and Yekinni O.T. (2015): Arable farmers' characteristics affecting the utilization information and Communication Technology for Agricultural Marketing Information on Oyo state, Nigeria. *Nigerian journal of Rural Sociology (NJRS)* Vol 16,

No. 1, June 2015. ISSN 0189-7543 Pp. 23-29.

Alabi, T. (2014): Youth's Unemployment and Crime Control: An Analysis of Nigerian Experience. *European Scientific Journal*, January 2014 edition vol. 10, No 2 ISSN:1857-7881 (print) e-ISSN 1857-7431.

Arisukwu, O., Igbolekwu, C., Oye, J., Oyeyipo, E., Asamu, F., Rasak, B. and Oyekola, I. (2020): Community Participation in Crime Prevention and Control in Rural Nigeria. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05015>

Balogun, C.E. (2021): Rural Crime: The Social Cost of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2021.

Ceccato, V. (2016): Rural crime and community safety, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

Emeh, O. (2011, January 5): Analysing Nigeria's Current Crime Surge. *Vanguard*, P57.

Grote, U. and Neubacher, F. (2016) : Rural crime in developing countries: Theoretical framework, empirical findings, research

needs, ZEF Working Paper Series, No. 148, University of Bonn, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn'

Inyang, M.N. and Inyang, M.F. (2019): Curbing Youth Criminality through Creative Employment: Ushafa Pottery Centre Abuja in Focus. *Sociology and Criminology*. Open Access. Research Article. (2019) Volume 7, Issue 1.

Kuna, M. J. and Ibrahim, J. (2015) ed.: Rural Banditry and Conflicts in Northern Nigeria, Abuja-Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development.

Nodim, A.U. and Ochogba, C.O. (2018): Impact of Cult Activities on the Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural Dwellers in Orashi Region of Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 6(1):56-63, Jan-Mar., 2018

Nwagboso, C.I. and Etim, E.E. (2019): Identify Major Causes, Effects and Approaches to curbing Crimes in South-West Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering Development*.-Vol. 2 Issue 3, May-June 2019.

Odoemelam, L. E., and Alozie, O. A. (2014): Effects of Human Abduction and Livelihood activities of Farm Households in Rural Communities of Abia State, Nigeria. *Discourse. Journal of Agriculture and Food Sciences*, 2, 315-321.

Okoro, J. P. (2018): Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts and its Effects on Socio-economic Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Peace, Security and Development*. Vol. 4, No.1, 2018. Pp.143-158. ISSN: 2360-9435

Olufolabo, O.O., Akintade, O.J., and Ekum, M.I. (2015): Analyzing the Distribution of Crimes in Oyo State (Nigeria) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) *IOSR Journal of Mathematics(IOSR-JM)*. e-ISSN: 2278-5728, p-ISSN: 2319-765X. Volume 11, issue 3 ver. I (May-June 2015), PP 90-96. www.iosrjournals.org.

Oluwaleye, J. M. (2021): Youth Unemployment, Rising Criminality and the Challenge of Sustainable Security in Nigeria's South West Region. *International Journal of Social Sciences Perspectives*. ISS: 2577-7750 Vol. 8, No.1, pp. 31-40.2021.

Onyekwere, I. A. and Nworgu, K.O. (2020): Threats to Rural Livelihoods in Nigeria: Implications for Social Order and Crisis Management. *Advances in Applied Sociology* 10(03):41-60
DOI:10.4236/aasoci.2020.103004

Ruwan, I. I.F., Garba, M. Y., Ishaya, D.S. and Godija (2020): An Assessment of Violent Crimes: Armed Robberies and Murder in Lagos State, Nigeria from 2011-2019. *KIU Journal of humanities {S.I}* v.5, 7.2, p.169-176, July 2020. ISSN 2522-2821.

Van Kesteren, J.N., Van Dijk and Mayhew, P. (2014): The International Crime Victims Surveys: A Retrospective December 2013 International Review of Victimology 20(1):49-69
DOI:10.1177/0269758013511742

Yekinni, O. T., Adeniyi, R. T. and Adebisi, S. A. (2017): Crop farmers' adaptation strategies to mitigate conflicts with Nomads in Oyo state. *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology* Vol. 17, No. 1, 2017. Page 1- 6