

# LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF THE INHABITANTS OF A HILLY AREA: A STUDY OF MAFAN COMMUNITY IN KAURA LOCAL AREA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study explores the livelihood, challenges and coping strategies of the people of MafanTakad of Kaura LGA of Kaduna State. The purpose of the study was to examine the physical conditions at Mafan and to assess their survival strategies with a view to suggesting some measures in solving their challenges. Data were obtained by the use of questionnaire that was administered to 247 people based on their availability and consent. Frequency table and percentages were used to analyze the data. Pair-wise ranking was used to prioritize the needs of the people. The result showed that there were more males who are married than females in the community represented by 413 to 294 respectively, with a total of 707 people. The findings further revealed that the people are closely attached to their natural environment and farming is their main means of livelihood. Other activities like hunting, wild collection and palm- wine-tapping, are done more during the dry season when farming activities are over. The people rely more on the use of herbs to treat themselves. Security wise, the Mafan people have experienced several attacks from bandits, popularly called “unknown gun men”. Despite the security challenges, the people have no intention of leaving their ancestral homes.*

**Keywords:** Mafan-Takad, Livelihood, Security Challenges, Coping strategies, Voices.

## INTRODUCTION

Studies have revealed that settlements that are located in ecologically challenging conditions have livelihood activities that largely dictated by such ecological conditions (Sarkar, 1998). The challenges of sustainable livelihood activities are of significance for any settlement that is found within harsh geographical conditions such as hill settlements. Environmentalists have emphasized that global

environmental problems are intertwined with local people's action. In the middle belt of Nigeria, hill settlements were essential components of the cultural and physical landscapes because they served as defensive settlements against the Arab slave raiders from the north and the European slave traders from the south.

Therefore, it is crucial to study the livelihood activities in operation at Mafan (a hill settlement) in order to establish their survival strategies. The aim of the research work was to analyze the livelihood and coping strategies of the Mafan community in a marginal environment. The Takad of Mafan are the indigenous occupants of the Assop hills in Kaura Local Government Area in Kaduna State that extends to Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State. They live in a rugged terrain where farming is the main means of livelihood. According to Sarker, Alam, Wu and Shouse (2020), livelihood comprises the capability, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a living. They also stressed that livelihood resilience is the capability of all people across generations to sustain and improve their livelihood opportunities despite environmental, economic, social and political disturbances. In other words, livelihood resilience is an individual or communal adaptive efforts to overcome both natural and human-induced challenges towards improving and sustaining their survival in a given location

Ellis (2000), is of the view that the concept of livelihood involved multiple activities in which households are engaged to ensure the improvement of their lives. Chamber and Conway (1992), define livelihood as comprising the capabilities, assets, (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of livelihood, while coping strategies are those that mitigate the impact of an adverse shock by drawing down assets and reducing consumption drastically (Devereaux 1993).

They explore the resources within their vicinity to sustain themselves. As a major means of survival, they farm different types of crops and rear animals, while hunting is a common hobby practiced mostly in the dry season by men. The people emphasized that they have lived in peace on the hills long before the coming of the Whiteman. However, of recent, there have been series of banditry attacks on the hitherto peaceful community which resulted in the massacre of many people in this remote and isolated area. It is in the light of this concern that this study seeks to assess their livelihood based on occupation, hobbies, education, health and the coping strategies of the inhabitants of the hills. This study will help to unveil the resilient strategies of the people in the study area. Findings of the

research can help Government or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to extend intervention programs to the vulnerable people in Mafan. In addition to this, findings based on empirical evidence could provide an insight to policy makers on the appropriate intervention opportunities to improve the quality of life of the rural people in the face of environmental and security challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tenyah and Areola (2000), conducted a study on deforestation in Fako Division, Cameroon, focusing on local perception and coping strategies. The aim of the study was to examine people's perception of plantation agriculture and its attendant deforestation in the study area and to look at the measures they have adopted to cope with their rapidly declining resource base. Their findings revealed three major coping mechanisms. Firstly, many rural dwellers according to 35% of respondents have resorted to cultivating marginal lands, especially those unutilized or abandoned. Secondly, they also cultivate the vacant lands between the plantation farm plots, while the third major coping mechanism is the purchasing of foodstuffs at the local market.

Aderinoye–Abdulwahab and Nwanchukwu (2015), assessed the livelihood activities of rural farmers in Kwara state. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select the sampled communities from which a total of 160 households were randomly selected for the study. The quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect data for the study. The quantitative technique involved the use of questionnaire while the qualitative technique involved the use of PRA tools. The study found that 47.3% of the sampled farmers were in the age range of 56 years and above. The males (51.2%) outnumbered the females (48.8%) while educational levels were relatively low. Of the total households facilitated during PRA, 53% were considered “asset poor”. The major occupation for income generation in the communities was trading on non-farm produce. The study found that access to credit facilities was the major interest of the communities and existing groups were not strong enough to control market or operate as a pressure group to influence access to credit facilities.

Furthermore, Kibwage, Odondo and Momanyi (2009), carried out an assessment of livelihood assets and strategies among tobacco and non-tobacco growing households in South Nyanza region of Kenya. The study assessed households in comparison to non-tobacco growing households in the study area. The study was meant to provide a basic information that could be used to advice on local enforcement of Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco

Control (FCTC) through crop and livelihood diversification as an alternative strategy to tobacco farming. A multi-staged and stratified random sampling procedure was used to select and survey 440 households (i.e. 210 tobacco and 230 non-tobacco), from the study area. Data was collected using both structured and non-structured questionnaire, supplemented by four focused-group discussions (FGD). Findings revealed that an annual net income of the non-tobacco farmers is higher than that of tobacco farmers with an average annual difference of \$198 which is a significant margin in rural Areas. The study further revealed that a tobacco- farming households spends more income on health services than a non-tobacco household; an indication that the latter group is prone to illnesses. It was also noted that majority of the non-tobacco- farming households have better housing quality, educational levels and higher-enterprises diversity than their counterparts. In summation, although households engage in tobacco farming to improve their living standards, tobacco farming is basically responsible for the poor and un-sustainable livelihoods in the region.

Sanker and Barman (2017), carried out a study on the role of Lemon (Citrus Limon) production on livelihoods of rural people in Bangladesh. The study was undertaken to determine the role of lemon production to rural people, enhancing livelihood status which have a great contribution to the overall livelihood pattern in their families and communities. A sampled size of 21 respondents was drawn by using an interview schedule. It revealed that 52.4% of farmers were not educated but constituted an economically active group. The yearly income of the respondents was USD 610 to USD 730 from one acre-lemon field. It was also found that women played significant roles in lemon production alongside their male counterparts. The lemon-production improved the livelihood of the farmers in terms of access to land, ownership of well-built houses, social networks, health, education, and income, decision making ability and saving patterns.

Sarker, Monirul-Alam, Wu, and Shouse (2020), studied the livelihood resilience of riverine Island dwellers in the face of natural disaster using empirical evidence from Bangladesh. The study explored the livelihood resilience of vulnerable Char dwellers by employing Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) model. Survey data were obtained from 374 Char households using semi-structured questionnaire to know their resilience capacity (adaptive, absorption and transformative).

They revealed that Char dwellers have a poor level of resilience which made them unable to withstand the adverse effects of natural disasters. The major limiting

factors of livelihood resilience in the Char areas, include: access to food, income and health facilities, agricultural and non-Agricultural assets and the adoption of technology which needs to be improved upon for the survival of the Char dwellers. A Capacity building program through activating Local Governments, NGOs intervention and public-private partnership should be triggered to enhance the resilience of the Char dwellers across Bangladesh.

### **THE STUDY AREA**

The Mafan Community is located within the Kaduna and Plateau states hills popularly known as Takad hills in Kaura Local Government Area in the Southern part of Kaduna State. It is located on Latitude 9°32'31'' N and 9°37'10'' North and between Longitude 8°28'01'' and 8°32'53'' East. It is situated at an elevation of 1162m above sea level (ASL). The area occupied by the Atakad people extends from Kagoro in Kaura LGA of Kaduna State, to Ganawuri and Bachit Districts in Plateau State (Ngu, 1994). The Takad occupy mostly a hilly area which is literally covered with gullies at the foot of the hills. In other words, the Takad occupy the greatest portion of the Kagoro Hills, which is better known as Takad Hills. The geographical position of the Mafan community implies that Mafan is situated in hilly areas under Mifi District. Climbing up the hills at some points is an uphill task and implies that certain areas inhibit easy transportation and communication. Mafan is a hilly community, where walking on foot is the only means of transportation. Nobody owns even a bicycle in the community due to the rugged nature of the road on very vertical elevation when going up or steep slope when coming down. It takes an average of two hours to move from Mifi (the nearest built up settlement at the foot of the hill) to Mafan. The people carry goods in small quantities because of the nature of the road. On market days when coming down from the hills, the people first of all stop over at Mifi to repackage their goods into larger formations, before boarding vehicles to Manchokor Kagoro. The survival strategies of this hilly people need to be examined as they are faced with banditry attacks. This study may provide a better understanding and planning by the government on how to develop the area and provide the need services and amenities to ease the livelihood challenges of the people and reduce the wave of rural-urban migration.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data were collected with the use of structured questionnaire; key informants interview (KIIs) and field observation. The respondents were selected based on availability and consent. Due to the security challenges in the area, not

many people were willing to talk to unknown persons. However, the research assistants recruited for the research, who were from the immediate locality, were able to convince the respondents. A total of 247 persons responded to the questions in the questionnaire. The data to measure livelihood, were drawn from the respondents' Socio-economic and demographic characteristics, occupation, Health and Community Needs Assessment. Responses to the questions were collated and analysed and results were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. To assess the community needs, Pair-wise ranking was carried out.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age group, sex marital status and number of households. It reveals that 88.7% of the respondents were 26 years and above while 11.3% were less than 26 years. Although, this settlement is a rural settlement and one expect to have more young people, it must be stated that this distribution is not unusual as the respondents were head of households or any willing adult. This probably informed this pattern of distribution.

The distribution by sex reveals that over 77% of the people sampled were males. Females constitute about 23% of the population. Again, since the respondents were first and foremost head of households, Takad is a community where there are more males than females headed households. The distribution of respondents by type of marital status also reveals that most respondents were married. Only 11.7% have never been married. The high proportion of currently married has implications for fertility as the area is likely to have high total fertility rate (TFR) and consequently, high population growth rate.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<26yrs	28	11.3
26-34	66	26.7
35-44	76	30.8
>= 45	77	31.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Sex of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Males	191	77.3
Females	56	22.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Currently Married	200	81.0
Not Married	04	1.6

Single	29	11.7
Widowed	14	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of Respondents in a Household</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-5 persons	115	46.6
6-10 persons	123	49.8
>10 persons	9	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The distribution of respondents by household size has revealed that majority (49.8%) of the respondents were living in households with between 6 to 10 persons. Respondents in households with 1 to 5 members constituted 46.6% of the respondents, while those with more than 10 members make up 3.6% of the respondents (See Table 1). This pattern of distribution is to be expected as Mafan is a rural settlement and rural settlements generally tend to have high number of persons per household.

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by certain socio-economic characteristic. The distribution by religion shows that 100% of the respondents were Christians. All members of the community are Christians. This mono-religious Community can be a target as well as a pointer to the frequent armed bandits' attack experienced at Mafan. However, it must be stated that it is not unusual to find people who are also practicing traditional African religion side by side Christianity but will always report Christianity as their religion.

**Table 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Religion of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christianity	247	100.0
Muslim	0	0.0
Pagan	0	0.0
<b>Housing of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One room structure	26	10.5
Two rooms structure	45	18.2
Three rooms structure	91	36.8
Four rooms structure	85	34.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No formal education	43	17.4
Primary education	124	50.2
Secondary education	72	29.1
Tertiary education	8	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teaching	6	2.4
Farming	239	96.8
Hunting	2	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The results in Table 1 also reveal that most respondents were living in three rooms with 36.8% and 34.4% were in four room structure. These structures are not the conventional three bedroom and four bedroom flats as they are generally known. These are rooms that usually built in a way that the rooms are linked together but may not have separate sitting room or may have four rooms with one sitting room. The distribution shows that 28.7% of the respondents are living in between one to two room(s) structure. The number of occupants per room at Mafan was moderate as such has less pressure on the housing facilities.

The educational status of the respondents is also shown in Table 2. It reveals that over 82.6% have attended school, of that number 50.2% had attended primary school and 29.1% had attended secondary school. Those that had attended tertiary education were 3.2%. In all, 17.4% had no formal education. The distribution by respondents' occupation reveals that 96.8% of the respondents were engaged in farming, while 2.4% were teachers and a negligible proportion of less than 1% were engaged in hunting. Indeed, hunting that use to be a major livelihood activity of the people has not enjoyed the pride of place. The high incidences of insecurity and the significant reduction in games has led to a decline in hunting. Also, the research was conducted not within the hunting season which is usually between January and May.

Agriculture forms the economic mainstay of the people. This could be attributed to the rich weathered soil materials of the area. The farming system at Mafan is basically of mixed farming as the farmers practised inter-cropping. The farmers cultivate the plains for food crops, while the growing of tree crops is done along



the river valleys and swampy areas. The cultivation of major crops in Mafan is influenced to a great extent, by the interplay of suitable climate, soil fertility, cultural and economic factors. The people of Mafan are engaged in keeping of honey that is generally collected between March and May. This is not reflected in the responses on Table 2 because the question was on the main occupation. Other economic activities include the wild collection of fruits and plants especially the collection of *Croton Zambasicus* locally called Moro-moro. The seeds have multiple functions can be used for perfume and as tea, while the leaves serve as a fortifier for curing of headache, measles as well as the management for high blood pressure. The roots are used as laxatives and the barks are used for the cure of malaria.

Other economic activities include palm wine tapping and the brewing of the local brew known as *burukutu*. The Mafan people have a friendly way of taking palm wine and *burukutu*. The lack of money does not hinder someone from buying palm wine. There are a number of drinking points. Both the palm wine tapper and the *burukutu* sellers at each point, keeps a book for debtors. Most debts are paid after when women return from the weekly markets located at Manchok or Kagoro. The market at Manchok is held on Friday while that of Kagoro is on Saturday. All debts must be settled on Sunday to enable the debtor to obtain another debt. When someone persistently fails to pay his debt, the other drinking points are informed, who will deny such a person the privilege to obtain palm wine on debt again.

### Health Seeking Behaviours

Table 3 shows the health seeking behavior of the respondents. It reveals that 99.2% of the respondents reported to have ever been sick. On the medical facilities that respondents go for treatment, Table 3 shows that 31.6%, 35.2% and 33.2% patronized Traditional/Herbal Centres, Hospitals and Chemists respectively. There is almost equal number of persons that patronized three main sources of healthcare. Snake bites are common causes of ill-health in Mafan, the people rely more on herbs for the treatment of snake bites. For example, they use the juice of Sodom Apple to treat snake bites and scorpion stings. Since this is a rural settlement, most respondents have access to dispensary and private chemists that are found in Mafan and the adjoining settlements. In very serious cases reference is made to more equipped hospitals in Kagoro and Kafanchan.

**Table 3: Health Condition of Respondents**

Have you ever been sick?	Frequency	Percentage
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Yes	245	99.2
No	2	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Source for Treatment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Traditional/Herbal	78	31.6
Hospital	87	35.2
Chemist	82	33.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Place of Child Delivery</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Homes	217	87.9
Hospitals	30	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Provider that Assist with Child Birth</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nurses	33	13.4
TBAs	214	86.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source:Field Survey, 2022

In understanding the health seeking behavior of the people, respondents were asked to indicate where the women go for child delivery. In all, 87.9%stated that in the previous deliveries, women were delivered at home, and 12.1% stated that in the previous births, women in Mafan community were delivered in hospitals. This probably explains the higher proportion of respondents (86.6%) that indicated that women were assisted during deliveries by Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) as against 13.4% by Nurses.A significant number of the people interviewed asserted that they have fallen sick at a given time in their lives. Common diseases named by the respondents include Diarrhea, Malaria, and dysentery, Typhoid fever with occasional snake bites and scorpion's stings are noted.As for treatment, facilities, people without formal education, rely more on Herbs which could be attributed to lack of good health care facilities and services. The lack of good health facilities influenced the people's reliance on herbs to treat illnesses.

Access to healthcare facilities at Mafan is very low and poor, especially antenatal care. The women complained that they have very serious problems in getting healthcare services during child birth. Child delivery in a healthy facility is an important factor in reducing deaths arising from complications of pregnancy. It is expected that if a complication arises during delivery, a skilled health worker can manage the situation to some extent and to make a reference to a higher hospital

in more serious cases. The situation at Mafan is pathetic as women gives birth at home mostly assisted by their fellow women who are described here as Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA). The women that give birth at a hospital are usually the most educated. These women have knowledge of their Expected Date of Delivery (EDD) and when the EDD is near they normally moved their wives down to the plain at Mifi, Manchok or Kaura where there are government comprehensive health centers, facilities and medical personnel. A good place of birth and professional assistance during child birth is an important factor influencing the survival of the mother and child

### Community Needs Assessment

To understand the gaps in service delivery of the community understudy, a need assessment was carried out. Table 4 shows the need assessment carried out in Mafan Community covering five major areas such as Security, Communication, Health, Water and Road. To identify the pressing needs of the people, pair- wise ranking of five variables through voting was made as presented below and the result was given in other of ranking presented in Table 5.

**Table 4: Community Needs Assessment**

	Water	Health	Security	Road	Communication
Security	X	H	S	W	C
Communication		X	S	H	C
Health			X	S	S
Water				X	C
Road					X

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 shows that security challenge scored the highest number of four votes and therefore is the most serious threat to the survival of the people.

**Table 5: Summary of Pair-Wise Ranking Result**

Items	Order	Rank
Security	4	1
Communication	3	2
Health	2	3
Water	1	4
Road	0	5

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The paramount ruler of the TakadChieftdom in a recorded documentary testified that they were living peacefully with the Fulani, but surprisingly their attitudes

changed from holding sticks to guide their animals to hanging sophisticated guns on their shoulders. This strange attitude was followed by acts of vandalism through invading and the destroying farm products, cutting of unripe bananas and so on. There are many unreported cases of violence, which made security the number one priority of the Mafan people in particular and the TakadChieftdom in general as shown in Tables 4 and 5 of the Community Needs Assessment and the summary of Pair-Wise ranking. This agrees with Alam, Mushtaq, Sarker, & Hossain (2019), that insecurity on the plains drove many people to flee to the rocky hilltops. Agricultural harvest has dropped significantly in some cases to approximately one-tenth of previous levels in several areas. Because of incessant attacks by Fulani herders, the Mafan people reported fleeing from the hilltops down to the plains of Mifi and FadanAtakad, leaving behind their farm lands, which affected the level of food production.

Security seems to be the main concern of the people. This was very obvious during the in-depth interview carried out with opinion leaders in the community. According to Laraba (adult female):

*One day, I and my children went to collect cow dung from the nearby bush for cooking. When I returned home and started cooking all of a sudden, I saw my children running back to the house that the Fulani were attacking our village again. I dashed to my room to pick my Bible and hymn book. Lo and behold, there were gunshots all over. Looking around, I saw the Fulani, but they didn't see me. At this point I asked God to cover me with His blood. The Fulani then saw me from afar and started shooting. I took off. Due to the hilly nature of our area, they could not catch up with me. I ran into a cave where I could hear them singing and dancing. As it was getting dark, I managed to move out, but I could hear the Fulani voices not far from me. So, I ran into another cave. When I entered the cave, thinking I have found a flophouse, behold, there emerged a hissing sound alongside a crawling motion which emanated from a python. I developed flop sweat and begged the snake that I was running for my life but not with the intention to hurt it. We co-habited in the cave till far into the night when the python crawled out. I was there for two nights. I can't explain how hungry and thirsty I was.*

In another account:

*On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 we just heard gunshots all over the village and the surrounding villages of Mafan. We all ran in different directions, but Esther could not run because she was a cripple. From our hideout, we heard the people speaking the Fulani Language, but their intonation did not sound like the Fulanis we know. They entered many houses, killed those they could find, and burnt down the houses. Esther was an unfortunate victim. All my properties (house and food) were burnt down.....We need some help from the government to enable return fully to our settlements. We don't have Fulanis as neighbours any more. They all fled overnight for unknown reasons to us. The attackers came over from Plateau State”(Male Head of Household).*

Top most priority of the people is security. Hills and mountains were used most especially in the past, as defensive settlements and the Takad had enjoyed for centuries. Living on top of the hills, the Takad people were able to prevent all foreign aggressors of any extraction for many years. The experience of banditry in Takad land was from 2013, when series of attacks led to extensive destructions of houses and properties.

The challenge of lack of communication due to the ruggedness nature of the area makes accessibility difficult. Although more and more people are increasingly having access to mobile phones, the lack of electricity meant that people have to use either generators, inverters or solar of panels to charge their phones. This sometimes involved people travelling between seven and eight kilometers to charge their phones at Mifi, which has electricity supply. Communication plays a vital role in security matters. As earlier mentioned, Mafan is a hill settlement located at 1,165 meters above sea level. Even with the modern Global System mobile (GSM), service is very erratic at Mafan and it is received only at specific locations or positions. Under the threat of an attack, villagers have no confidence that their calls will get through. Even though the villagers know the terrain very well with caves, gaining access to caves goes with a measure of risk. At some points, escape routes are shared with dangerous reptiles as narrated by the woman that spent a night with a python.

The people stressed the fact that access to water was a major problem. The whole community is drained by narrow, muddy streams that physically, look dirty and unsuitable for human consumption. People drink and bathe in the same pool. In

Mafan community the stream is the only source for water for domestic use. These open streams are unsafe and not suitable for human consumption and therefore, fall under the objective of sustainable Development Goals, which aim to provide clean and safe water to all human beings irrespective of their status and location. A constant supply of safe clean water is essential for domestic purposes. Furthermore, the source of drinking water shows that it is suitable for drinking. Water that is fetched from an open source may be contaminated and may be responsible for some of the water borne diseases like diarrhea and malaria experienced in the study area. More so, river water is usually polluted by people (through open defecation) and by animals.

It is narrated that children of less than five years in Mafan have not seen a car because they are not yet strong enough to come down from the hills to have a look at the different types of vehicles and walk back home. Based on transportation difficulties, a cross section of the respondents were asked whether they have the intension of migrating down to the plain. ‘How can we leave our land and our dead relations here?’ That even if they travel to London, they will still be looking forward to returning to Mafan. “We were born in Mafan, and in Mafan we shall be buried”.

Crops grown in Mafan are basically for food and for preparing local delicacies such as Pate and Tuwo and for making local drinks *Kunu* and *Burukutu*. The *Burukutu* is made for commercial purposes while at other times, it could be served free during festivities, festivals and during communal labour for farming or harvest. To increase the potency of the local brew, local roots like that of Cactus are added during processing. Fresh maize and groundnut can also be boiled or roasted and eaten.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research has shown that survival and coping strategies of the people depends on environmental factors and that rural communities depend largely on the natural environment for their survival, which means the environment sets the limits for human interaction. Security is the major concern of the people and in as much as it has led to displacement of people there is the general feeling of defiance and even with the obvious environmental challenges the people face, they are committed to remaining in their community as long as possible. The study recommends that the both the State and Local Governments should provide the Mafan community with befitting health care facilities and schools. Providing the community with affordable communication services could

help bring the people abreast with the policies of government and enhance early warnings and policing.

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