



The Socio-Economic Implication of Kidnapping in Nigeria: A Study of Chickun and Igabi Local Government Areas of Kaduna State (2015 - 2024)

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping has emerged as a significant socio-economic and security challenge in Nigeria. This study examines the socio-economic implications of kidnapping in Chikun and Igabi Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna between 2015 and 2024. The research is framed within the Social Disorganization Theory, which explains crime as a function of structural and environmental breakdowns in communities. Using a pragmatic research philosophy, the study adopts a descriptive research design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data were gathered through questionnaires and key informant interviews with, community leaders, law enforcement agents, and local business owners, while secondary data were sourced from relevant literature and reports. Findings reveal that kidnapping has severely disrupted agricultural activities, which form the backbone of the local economy. Farmers have abandoned farmlands due to insecurity, leading to decreased food production and increased prices of essential commodities. The education sector has been significantly affected, with frequent school closures and declining enrollment rates due to fear of abduction. Similarly, commercial activities have dwindled, as traders and transporters avoid high-risk areas and that further exacerbated poverty and economic instability. Security agencies have been overstretched, and the government's response has been inadequate in curbing the menace effectively. The study recommends a multi-faceted approach to address the crisis which includes enhanced security deployment, improved intelligence gathering, community policing initiatives, and socio-economic interventions to tackle poverty and unemployment. Strengthening local governance and promoting grassroots participation in security strategies are also crucial.



1. Introduction

Kidnapping, a criminal phenomenon characterised by the unlawful abduction of individuals for ransom, political leverage, or other illicit objectives, has emerged as a significant socio-economic challenge worldwide. Historically, kidnapping is not a new crime but one deeply rooted in various societies and eras. In ancient Rome, for instance, the practice of abducting individuals into slavery was rampant (Amielańczyk, 2020). Similarly, during the medieval period, the feudal system witnessed instances of noble families being targeted for ransom (Ross, 2018). The advent of modern transportation and communication technologies in the 20th and 21st centuries has exacerbated the problem, enabling organised crime networks to expand their operations globally. In the Americas, kidnapping has manifested in diverse forms as it ranges from the abductions by cartels in Mexico to fund drug operations to high-profile cases in the United States and often involving political motivations or monetary gain. As cited by Toobin (2017), the kidnapping of Patty Hearst in 1974 by the Symbioses Liberation Army highlights how such crimes can intersect with ideological movements. In Latin America also, the phenomenon of "express kidnappings," where victims are quickly abducted to withdraw ransom from ATMs, became prevalent in countries like Brazil and Venezuela (Gilbert, 2020). In the thought of Corcoran (2013) and Waldron (2014), it was stated that, cartels and organised crime groups in Mexico, such as Los Zetas, have made kidnapping a lucrative criminal enterprise and that further destabilises the communities and economies of the region.

Likewise in Europe, kidnapping is often linked to human trafficking and terrorism



as the Basque separatist group ETA in Spain and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland historically used kidnapping as a political tool (Kalandadze, 2022). Similarly, recent cases in Eastern Europe highlight the role of organised crime syndicates in abductions for ransom or forced labour as human trafficking networks frequently use kidnapping as a means to recruit victims, particularly in countries like Ukraine and Moldova. The position of scholars like Dupont (2015) and Clarke (2018) pointed out that, in Asia and most especially in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Philippines, kidnapping has been employed by terrorist groups like the Taliban and Abu Sayyaf as a means of financing their operations. Their operations often targeted the abduction of foreign nationals and aid workers. For example, in the Philippines, Abu Sayyaf's kidnappings have strained governmental resources and hampered development in the Mindanao region.

Africa, with its diverse socio-political landscape, has witnessed a surge in kidnapping incidents in recent decades. Various scholars like Baken & Mantzikos (2016) and Gazdik (2015) explain the instances in the North Africa, with the rise of Islamist insurgent groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and how they have contributed to the wave of abductions, particularly targeting Western nationals. In Central and East Africa also, groups like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda and rebel factions in the Democratic Republic of Congo have engaged in mass abductions, often involving children, to sustain their insurgencies (Laube, 2018).

In West Africa, the socio-economic implications of kidnapping are particularly



severe, as it undermines regional stability and economic growth. Countries like Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have seen an increase in kidnappings linked to jihadist insurgencies. The Sahel region, in particular, has become a hotspot for such activities, with groups using ransom payments to finance terrorism (Kfir, 2016). The situation in Nigeria is emblematic of the crisis, with the problem evolving from isolated incidents to a full-blown epidemic of issues that affects the various parts of the country. The Niger Delta region for instance initially experienced the rise of kidnapping as a tactic by militants protesting environmental degradation and economic marginalisation (Alumuna et al., 2017). Over time, this practice spread to the North and Central regions, fuelled by different socio-economic grievances.

Kidnapping in Nigeria has taken multiple forms which includes politically motivated abductions, banditry, and the notorious activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram (Okwuwada, 2023). The incident of the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction in 2014 that drew international attention reiterates the dire security situation in the country. Also, Barnett et al. (2022) cited the abduction of over 300 schoolboys in Kankara, Katsina State, in 2020 as a manifestation of the growing insecurity concern. While initially concentrated in the Northeast, kidnapping has since spread to other regions, including the Northwest and North Central zones (Abdulyakeen & Mumuni, 2024). Kaduna State which is located in the North Central region, has become one of the epicentres of kidnapping in Nigeria. The Kaduna Central Senatorial District which encompasses the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Chikun and Igabi among others has been particularly affected. Those LGAs have witnessed an alarming increase in abductions that are attributed to the activities of



armed bandits and criminal gangs (Anjide, 2023). For instance, Osimen and Daudu (2022) cited that, in 2021, several incidents were reported in Chikun LGA includes the mass abduction of students from the Bethel Baptist High School. Similarly, Igabi LGA has experienced numerous attacks on villages and highways and that resulted in the mass displacements and economic hardships (Abdussalam et al., 2022).

The socio-economic implications of these kidnappings are profound. Chikun and Igabi LGAs, which are predominantly agrarian communities, have experienced disruptions in farming activities due to insecurity (Sylvanus, 2023). Residents are forced to abandon their farms with the detrimental consequences reduction in agricultural productivity and food insecurity. The fear of abduction has also led to a significant decline in economic activities, as traders and transporters avoid high-risk areas. Moreover, the constant threat of abduction has stifled educational pursuits, with schools frequently targeted by kidnappers. Many schools in those areas have closed and that deprive children of their right to education and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

The economic cost extends to the depletion of family resources through ransom payments and the erosion of public trust in state institutions. Families sell properties, exhaust savings, or incur debts to secure the release of abducted relatives (Okoro, 2022; Sylvanus, 2023). On a broader scale, the state's resources are stretched thin as security forces attempt to combat banditry and kidnappings. Socially, the trauma endured by victims and their families has long-term psychological effects, while communities grapple with heightened fear and distrust.



The Kaduna Central Senatorial District's unique position as a transit hub further complicates the security landscape. Major highways connecting Northern and Southern Nigeria pass through this region and that makes it a strategic target for criminal elements (John, 2022). For example, the Abuja-Kaduna highway which serves as a vital economic corridor has become notorious for frequent abductions. The lack of adequate security infrastructure, combined with socio-economic inequalities and weak governance, exacerbates the prevalence of kidnapping in those LGAs which lies along the busy route.

In essence, the phenomenon of kidnapping has evolved into a complex socio-economic issue with global, regional, and local dimensions. The historical trajectory from ancient practices to modern criminal enterprises reiterates the adaptability of this crime. Within Nigeria, and particularly in Kaduna Central Senatorial District, the interplay of socio-economic, political, and security factors necessitates a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes and mitigating the adverse impacts of kidnapping. With central focus on Chikun and Igabi LGAs, this study aims to provide a detailed examination of the socio-economic implications of the pervasive menace.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Kidnapping has evolved from a sporadic and localised crime into a pervasive socio-economic and security challenge that threatens the stability and development of affected regions. While initially associated with political motives or ideological movements, the crime has increasingly become a lucrative business for criminal



gangs, insurgents, and other actors. In Nigeria, this evolution has been particularly pronounced, with kidnapping now constituting a significant aspect of organised crime and insecurity across the country.

Kaduna State, situated in North Central Nigeria, has emerged as one of the epicentres of this crisis, particularly within the Kaduna Central Senatorial District (Peace, 2020). The Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Chikun and Igabi, which are predominantly agrarian and strategically located along critical transit routes, have witnessed a sharp escalation in kidnapping incidents. Despite government efforts to curb this menace, the problem persists, with dire socio-economic and psychological implications for the affected communities.

One of the critical issues underpinning the persistence of kidnapping in these areas is the weak state presence, inadequate security infrastructure, vast ungoverned spaces, porous borders, and insufficiently equipped security forces that create an enabling environment for criminal activities. The strategic location of Kaduna Central Senatorial District which serves as a transit hub for major highways that connects the North and South of Nigeria, further exacerbates its vulnerability. Those highways, including the notorious Abuja-Kaduna expressway, have become hotbeds of criminal activity, instilling fear in commuters and disrupting economic activities.

The socio-economic impact of kidnapping on the communities in Chikun and Igabi LGAs is profound. These LGAs are predominantly agrarian, and the constant threat of abduction has forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands, resulting in



reduced agricultural productivity and heightened food insecurity. The disruption of farming activities not only affects local livelihoods but also contributes to broader economic instability, as agriculture remains a cornerstone of Nigeria's economy. Education in the region has also suffered significantly. With schools frequently targeted by kidnappers, many institutions have been forced to shut down and that deprive children of access to quality education while continue perpetuating cycles of poverty and illiteracy.

Likewise, the economic toll on the Kaduna state is immense. Resources that could be allocated to developmental projects are instead diverted to combatting insecurity, while the local economy suffers from decreased investment and productivity. The inability of the state to effectively address the kidnapping crisis has also eroded public trust in government institutions and law enforcement agencies. This erosion of trust, in turn, undermines efforts to foster community cooperation in combating criminal activities.

The persistence of kidnapping in Kaduna Central Senatorial District raises critical questions about the underlying drivers of this menace. What socio-economic, political, and structural factors contribute to the high prevalence of kidnapping in Chikun and Igabi LGAs? How does the interplay of these factors exacerbate the vulnerability of these communities? What are the long-term implications for the socio-economic development of the region, and what measures can be implemented to address this crisis effectively?

This study seeks to address these pressing questions by examining the socio-



economic implications of kidnapping in Chikun and Igabi LGAs within Kaduna Central Senatorial District. By identifying the root causes, assessing the impact, and exploring potential solutions, the study aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the problem and provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, security agencies, and community stakeholders.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What are the socio-economic factors contributing to the high prevalence of kidnapping in Chikun and Igabi LGAs of Kaduna Central Senatorial District?
- ii. How does the insecurity caused by kidnapping affect agricultural productivity, education, and local economic activities in the affected LGAs?
- iii. What are the socio-economic consequences of kidnapping for victims and their families in these communities?
- iv. What strategies can be adopted to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of kidnapping in Kaduna Central Senatorial District?

1.4 Empirical Literature

The menaces of Kidnapping, alongside other social vices like arms trafficking and arms banditry is a severe threat to socio-economic development (Okwuwada, 2010). He further emphasised that one of the immediate challenges facing the Nigerian security operatives is the need to elimination the issue of kidnapping in Nigeria. That was further buttressed in the opinion of Omotola and Oyewole (2024) with the



assertion that, the phenomenon of kidnapping in Nigeria has taken an alarming and disconcerting dimension which tends to threaten the substratum of the country's socioeconomic development.

The socio-economic development of any nation is paramount for the survival of that nation's sovereignty. Socio Economic development is one of the essential issues of government to provide social amenities for the welfare of the people. Such menaces as Kidnapping are not only peculiar to Nigeria but also to other countries of the world. During the summit organised by the Ministry of Interior, Nigeria, emphasis is made on the issue of Kidnapping as a threat to socio-economic development. According to the discussion at the summit, as quoted in 'Next' internet publications, kidnapping remains one of the latest additional criminally violent activities in the country. It is more threatening to the state and national security (Sebastine, 2010).

The issue of human security as it relates to national security is highly threatened by the menace of kidnapping that has ravaged the country. Although the crime of kidnapping is relatively new to the polity of Nigeria, it has in its short period of existence been a significant worry for both the government of Nigeria and the people of Nigeria. According to Said, national security and human security are mutually supportive (Said, 2008). After all, most of the security problems reflected in intra-state warfare result from the absence of human security. However, in support of this view, an idealistic viewpoint, Seidensticker adds that human security can reduce superfluous state discretion in realizing rights (Seidensticker, 2008).



Seidensticker (2008) assumes that the fight for human rights is only the way to national security. In the words of the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan which was cited in Williams (2024), today no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from national security crises in another. That condition is attributable to the fact that if everybody in a nation lives well without fear, hunger, exploitation, disease, or injustice, there will be a state of human security that can engender national security stability.

Studies have shown that the economy is the bedrock of national development (Akpan, 2010; Famoye, 2015), but the role of human resources in any developing economy is very crucial. Security could be regarded as the central pillar of national development (Famoye, 2015). However, human resources could offer the best of their capabilities if their safety is secured. Under a secured atmosphere, all development machinery can function effectively to achieve desirable results. The adverse effects of Kidnapping on human resources that produce goods and services for home consumption and exportation cannot be overemphasized (Akpan, 2010). More often than not, it has resulted in the closure of companies/establishments, most of which are oil and gas companies (Akpan, 2010).

Since Kidnapping is a major issue of insecurity, its economic implications are briefly discussed as follows. Parenthetically, the socio-economic sector is the mainstay of the national economy, as no other industry generates foreign exchange and local revenue for Nigeria than the sector and other allied services. With this development, Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could reduce drastically. Besides, the negative effect could deter the growth of industrialization, most



especially tourism, which can attract employment opportunities for the jobless and a considerable resource for the nation's socio-economic development. If the trend continues, prospective development associates could be driven away, and Nigeria could be deprived of development alliances and opportunities (Akpan, 2010). It could also hinder the bulk of investments and capital that flow to Nigeria from overseas for national development. As kidnapping cases in Nigeria have continued to attract global attention, governments of foreign countries constantly warn their nationals to desist from coming to Nigeria out of fear of being kidnapped (Omonijo et al., 2019).

The negative effect of Kidnapping on security and government agencies, and the citizenry should not be waved aside. According to Babaita (2020), Lagos state alone in 2009 spent three billion naira on security within two years. With this amount spent in a state, one could imagine the cumulative effect on all the states in the federation since the commencement of the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria. At the individual level, a lot of money that would have been invested in profitable ventures has been diverted to ransom by the victims of kidnapping to regain their freedom. According to Kyrian (2009), fifteen billion naira was paid to kidnappers as ransom between 2006 and 2009. With a high level of poverty prevailing in Nigeria, the money may not be available. Still, because the victims value their freedom, they sell their valuables to raise ransom or borrow from different sources to set themselves free from captivity. Studies have shown that enterprises thrive in an atmosphere adequately organized and managed by the private sector in a development-oriented manner (Gberevbie et al., 2015). This



condition can only be achieved in a peaceful atmosphere. The constant Kidnapping cases could negate this submission in states where the ban is placed on movement from dusk to dawn. Transporters such as bikes, cabs, and bus owners who usually operate within this period could be negatively affected (Soyombo, 2009).

The case of national security in Nigeria related to the issue of kidnapping is highly inherent in the matter of the Northern crises. It also bears its effects from the fight for human rights proposed by Seidensticker (2008)). This situation is the aftermath of a social problem, and human rights struggle approvingly. Although the menace of kidnapping evolved into the propelling issues of the economic conditions of youths in the society by their demands for ransom, as postulated by Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) it is, however, rooted in the concept of a failing state as supported by Tzanelli (2007).

There is no doubt that Kidnapping has had a tremendously adverse effect on the nation's socio-economic development (Okorie-Ajah, et al., 2018). Inyang and Ubong (2013) observed that in the last few years, the income earners and the wealthy were kidnapped and set free only after ransom payments. Okorie-Ajah et al. (2018) submitted that Kidnapping exerts enormous and far-reaching social and economic costs. For them, it induced and created despair and a palpable ambiance of fear for all citizens and stamped sustainable economic development.

They asserted that one of the critical challenges bedevilling socio-economic development in Nigeria today is kidnapping. In conclusion, they opined that



kidnapping drives away investment, both foreign direct investments and domestic, and consequently slows down growth with its devastating impact on the socio-economic situation in the family.

Kidnapping has plagued the socioeconomic development of Nigeria and has lured some jobless youths and graduates into it as a lucrative and alternative means of making money, acquiring economic power, and getting out of poverty (Okorie-Ajah et al., 2018). According to Ayegba (2015) the issue of poverty and unemployment of youth and social injustices and unfair distribution of the nation's resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. Those factors have caused the youths to engage in Kidnapping and criminal activities to get their share of national wealth.

Ngwama (2014) contended that kidnappers are greedy and criminally minded business people. Due to greed, it is one of the lucrative businesses in Nigeria after oil bunkering (Dodo, 2010). According to Bello, P. O. (2022) kidnapping for ransom is propelled primarily by greed. Akpan

(2010) buttressed that, kidnappers have criminal, economic, political, and greedy motives. Greed for money is a severe factor when discussing the social vices of kidnapping. He maintained that kidnapping pays positively and is the easiest way of making money for those who engage in it. He argued further that Kidnapping has a devastating effect on the victims and their families regarding finances and the trauma they face. The money that ought to have been channelled for improving their socio-economic wellbeing is diverted for ransom payment to release their kidnapped relations. In Nigeria, people got kidnapped for various reasons ranging



from political, economic, personal grievances, and greed. Some kidnapped victims are killed before they are rescued, while others are saved by their relatives and friends after paying a ransom (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2010).

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory is a framework within the field of criminology with general applicability to varying issues of life. It emerged in the early 20th century as a response to the growing challenges of understanding crime and deviance in rapidly urbanising societies. The theory traces its intellectual lineage to the Chicago School of Sociology, an influential academic hub that sought to analyse societal problems through empirical research and urban sociology (Boyd, 2020).

The genealogy of Social Disorganization Theory begins with its foundational proponents, Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, who introduced the concept of ecological studies in their seminal work, "The City" (1925) (Park & Burgess, 2019; Boyd, 2020). They argued that the dynamics of urban growth and organisation profoundly influenced human behaviour. Their concentric zone model highlighted how urban areas, particularly zones of transition, were characterised by instability and social disorganisation which fosters conditions that are conducive to crime and deviance.

Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay later refined and formalized Social Disorganization Theory in their ground-breaking study, "Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas" (1942) (Cullen & Wilcox, 2010). Drawing on extensive data from



Chicago neighbourhoods, Shaw and McKay demonstrated that crime rates were not evenly distributed across the city but were disproportionately concentrated in areas of poverty, high residential turnover, and ethnic heterogeneity (Schnell, 2017). They concluded that these structural conditions disrupted social cohesion and weakened community controls by creating an environment where criminal behaviours could thrive.

Several historical and social events shaped the evolution of Social Disorganization Theory. The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to unprecedented migration into cities and that created densely populated urban centres. This influx strained social institutions and created fragmented communities. The Great Depression further exacerbated economic disparities by contributing to social instability in urban neighbourhoods. During this period, sociologists sought to understand the relationship between these structural changes and rising crime rates (Zwiers et al., 2016).

The Chicago School's emphasis on ethnographic and empirical research methods was instrumental in the theory's development. Through immersion in urban communities and employment of innovative techniques such as crime mapping, early proponents of the theory were able to link social conditions to crime patterns by providing a scientific basis for their claims. Over time, Social Disorganization Theory has undergone significant revisions to incorporate contemporary insights. Modern interpretations emphasise the role of collective efficacy, social networks, and informal



social controls in mitigating the effects of structural disadvantage. Despite these advancements, the core premise of the Social Disorganization Theory remains intact on the basis that crime is profoundly influenced by the social and structural characteristics of communities.

4.1 An Overview the Rise of Kidnapping in Kaduna State

Kaduna State, strategically located in Nigeria's North Central region, has evolved into one of the epicentres of kidnapping in the country. That phenomenon is the culmination of several factors that includes socio-economic disparities, weak governance, and the proliferation of armed groups. Form the time immemorial, Kaduna State has held significant importance as a cultural, political, and economic hub that host diverse ethnic and religious communities. Despite that, it remains vulnerable to variance on insecurity issues out of which kidnapping has become more pronounced in modern time.

Kidnapping in Kaduna State can be traced back to broader security challenges that began escalating in Northern Nigeria in the early 2000s (Saidu et al., 2018). The emergence of Boko Haram in the Northeast and its subsequent displacement of populations created a ripple effect, with displaced insurgents and other criminal elements seeking refuge in neighbouring regions, including Kaduna. Initially, these activities were sporadic and confined to isolated incidents. But, as of mid-2010s, kidnapping had become a more organised and lucrative enterprise that is driven by bandit groups which operates across the Northwest and North Central regions.

The shift from isolated incidents to an epidemic of kidnappings in Kaduna State



coincided with the rise of armed banditry in the region. Bandit groups, primarily based in forested areas such as the expansive Kamuku and Kuyambana forests, began targeting villages, highways, and schools for mass abductions (Ojo et al., 2023). Those groups exploited the state's porous borders, lack of adequate security presence, and limited economic opportunities to establish operational bases. That account for the more reason why the Abuja-Kaduna highway which is a critical economic corridor has become notorious hotspot for frequent kidnappings for travellers.

Wanting on the list of the contributing factors for the development is the socio-economic landscape of Kaduna State. Its high levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth, have created a pool of individuals susceptible to recruitment into criminal networks (Saliyuk, 2024). For instance, many young men that are unable to find legitimate employment join bandit groups as foot soldiers or informants. That has further been promoted by the lucrative nature of ransom payments by their victims as it incentivised these groups.

Political and ethnic tensions within Kaduna State have added another layer of complexity to the issues of kidnapping. The state is deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines, with recurring communal conflicts over land, resources, and political representation (Usman, 2019). These tensions often spill over into criminal activities, with some kidnappings perceived as ethnically or politically motivated. Just as Usman (2019) cited, disputes between herders and farmers in rural areas have created opportunities for bandit groups to exploit vulnerabilities and target communities for ransom.



As of 2015, the situation had worsened significantly, with mass abductions becoming a common occurrence. Local Government Areas (LGAs) such as Chikun and Igabi which are part of Kaduna Central Senatorial District emerged as hotspots for these crimes and still remains susceptible to the occurrences. Those areas are characterised by a mix of urban and rural communities that are strategically located along major transport routes and near forested regions used as hideouts by kidnappers. The abduction of students from the Bethel Baptist High School in Chikun LGA in 2021 and repeated attacks on rural communities in Igabi highlight the extent and persistency of the crisis (John & Olorunsogo, 2024).

The rise of kidnapping in Kaduna State has had far-reaching socio-economic implications as many residents in affected areas have been forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods, particularly in farming communities where insecurity has disrupted agricultural activities. Schools have become frequent targets and that has led to the closure of educational institutions and depriving children of access to education (Amadi-Robert et al., 2024). The constant fear of abduction has stifled economic activities, as traders and transporters avoid high-risk areas while that also deepens poverty and underdevelopment.

Chikun Local Government Area

Chikun local government area is located to the south of Kaduna metropolis and is characterised by a mix of urban and rural settlements. It serves as a transitional zone between the urbanised core of Kaduna city and the agrarian hinterlands. The population of Chikun is diverse as it comprised of Gwari, Hausa, Fulani, and other



ethnic groups. The area is known for its vibrant agricultural sector, with crops such as maize, millet, and vegetables dominating production (Bununu et al., 2015).

Chikun is also home to several educational institutions, health facilities, and industrial establishments. In terms of education, Chikun hosts several notable schools, including Government Secondary School in Udawa, Command Secondary School in Sabon Tasha, and

Government Junior Secondary School in Chikun (Doyani et al., 2020). Private institutions, such as PET International School in Sabon Gari Nassarawa Ward, also contribute to the area's educational offerings (Guga, 2014). The healthcare services in Chikun are well-represented with facilities like Haske Hospital and Maternity and Kujama Rural Hospital in Kujama. The Sabon Tasha General Hospital and Primary Health Centre further strengthen public healthcare provision, alongside private centers like Salama Health Centre.

Despite those infrastructural facilities and considerable level of development, in recent years, Chikun is faced with significant security challenges. Kidnappings, particularly along highways and within rural communities, have disrupted economic activities and displaced many residents. A notable incident was the mass abduction of students from Bethel Baptist High School in 2021, so, the fear of abduction has also led to the closure of schools and a decline in agricultural output, as farmers avoid high-risk areas.

Igabi Local Government Area

Igabi Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the 23 LGAs in Kaduna State,



Nigeria. Located in the central northern region of the state, Igabi serves as a strategic area due to its proximity to the Kaduna metropolis and its location along major transportation routes, including the Abuja-Kaduna highway and rail corridor. The LGA is part of Kaduna Central Senatorial District and has its headquarters in the town of Turunku, which is historically significant as the birthplace of the ancient Zazzau (Zaria) Emirate (Salihu, 2018).

Igabi LGA spans a vast area of land, covering both urban and rural landscapes. Its diverse topography consists of plains suitable for agriculture, with a climate that supports a mix of wet and dry seasons. According to the 2006 Nigerian census, the population of Igabi LGA was approximately 636,400, but this number has grown significantly due to urban expansion and migration. The LGA is inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups, including the Hausa and Fulani, along with smaller populations of other Nigerian ethnic groups, reflecting the cultural diversity typical of Kaduna State.

The economy of Igabi LGA is predominantly agrarian. The area is known for the cultivation of crops such as maize, millet, groundnuts, and sorghum. Livestock rearing, especially cattle, goats, and poultry, is also a significant economic activity, with the Fulani playing a dominant role in pastoralism (Usman, 2022). In recent years, urbanization has led to the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), retail markets, and real estate development, particularly in areas closer to Kaduna city.

Igabi LGA is governed by an elected chairman and a legislative council responsible



for decision-making and local development. The area is subdivided into wards, which serve as the smallest administrative units for political and developmental purposes. These wards facilitate governance and service delivery to local communities. As a key transit route, Igabi has benefited from some infrastructural development, including roads, bridges, and communication networks (Hamzat, 2016). The education sector is served by a mix of public and private schools, ranging from primary to secondary levels, with efforts to improve literacy rates in the region. Healthcare services are provided by government-run primary health centers and private clinics, although access to quality healthcare remains a challenge in rural areas.

Igabi LGA has faced significant security challenges in recent years, including issues of banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and clashes between farmers and herders. The Abuja-Kaduna expressway, which passes through the LGA, has become a hotspot for criminal activities, necessitating increased security measures by both state and federal authorities. Collaborative efforts between

community leaders, security agencies, and the government aim to address these challenges and restore stability (Ojo et al., 2023).

Economic Activities and their Vulnerability to Insecurity in Chikun and Igabi

LGAs The local governments of Chikun and Igabi in Kaduna Central Senatorial District are economically vibrant, but the prevalence of insecurity, particularly kidnappings and banditry, has disrupted livelihoods and undermined economic stability. This review highlights their economic activities and examines how



insecurity has heightened vulnerability across these areas.

Chikun LGA is characterized by a predominantly agrarian economy, with crops like maize, millet, sorghum, and yams being widely cultivated. The area also supports small-scale trading, artisanal mining, and livestock rearing. Chikun's proximity to urban centres such as Kaduna City boosts its economic activities, particularly in transportation and commerce. However, the rise in insecurity has severely affected these sectors.

The presence of forests and remote terrains has made Chikun a target for bandits, who use these areas as operational bases. Kidnappings have led to the displacement of farmers, abandonment of agricultural land, and a sharp decline in productivity. For instance, smallholder farmers have reported being unable to access their farmlands due to the fear of attacks, contributing to food insecurity across Kaduna State. In addition, ransom payments have drained family resources, further entrenching poverty in the area (Adetayo, 2021; Yamtara-Wala Journal, 2022). Igabi LGA is a major agricultural hub, contributing significantly to Kaduna State's food supply. Key economic activities include crop farming (e.g., maize, beans, and groundnuts), animal husbandry, and small-scale agribusinesses. The area's fertile lands and active farming communities have historically supported its economy. However, Igabi has become increasingly vulnerable to banditry and cattle rustling. These crimes have disrupted farming cycles, with many residents abandoning their homes and farms to seek safety. Cattle rustling, a prevalent issue in the area, has devastated livestock owners, reducing meat and dairy production and depriving families of income. Market activities, a vital component of rural economies, have



been curtailed due to fears of attacks on transportation routes and market centres. These disruptions have significantly undermined local food security and economic resilience (Oluyemi-Kusa & Salihu, 2015).

Across Chikun and Igabi LGAs, insecurity has amplified vulnerabilities in several ways. Firstly, the disruption of agricultural activities has not only affected local incomes but also exacerbated food insecurity across Kaduna State. Secondly, the cost of ransom payments and property losses has pushed many families into debt and poverty. Thirdly, the closure of schools and displacement of communities have eroded human capital development, further weakening socio-economic structures. The psychological and social impacts, especially on women and children, are also profound. Women, often primary caregivers, face increased responsibilities in the aftermath of attacks, while children are deprived of education and stability. Insecurity has created a vicious cycle where economic hardship fuels further crime, perpetuating instability in the region.

The economic activities in Chikun and Igabi LGAs are deeply intertwined with the region's socio-economic well-being. However, the persistent insecurity has eroded livelihoods, displaced populations, and disrupted essential services. A coordinated effort to address the root causes of insecurity, alongside targeted economic interventions, is essential to restore stability and resilience in these LGAs.

1.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveal that kidnapping is not just a security issue but a complex socio-economic crisis with deep-rooted causes and far-reaching consequences. The study



established that poverty, unemployment, and weak security structures have created an environment where kidnapping thrives, particularly in Chikun and Igabi local government areas (LGAs) which are the duo focus of the study. The economic struggles faced by residents, combined with the proliferation of illegal arms and the inefficiency of law enforcement agencies, have further exacerbated the crisis. The persistence of this menace has led to significant disruptions in agriculture, education, business

activities, and social cohesion, making it a critical issue that requires urgent and strategic intervention.

One of the most striking revelations from the study is the direct link between economic hardship and the rise in kidnapping cases. The revealed that many perpetrators are driven by economic desperation, with a lack of sustainable employment opportunities pushing individuals, particularly the youth, into criminal activities. The situation is worsened by weak governance and inadequate law enforcement, which allow criminal elements to operate with minimal fear of prosecution. The inability of security agencies to effectively prevent, respond to, and prosecute kidnapping cases has further emboldened kidnappers, making kidnapping-for-ransom a lucrative and persistent enterprise in the region.

Beyond the economic drivers of kidnapping, the study highlights the devastating impact on agriculture, education, and economic activities in Chikun and Igabi LGAs. Many farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands, leading to declining agricultural productivity and worsening food security. Schools have



closed or relocated due to repeated attacks, causing disruptions in education and increasing the number of out-of-school children. Additionally, local businesses have suffered as investors and traders relocate to safer areas, further worsening economic instability in the region. The financial burden placed on families of kidnapped victims, who often sell properties or take loans to pay ransom, has also contributed to widespread economic hardship.

The social consequences of kidnapping are equally troubling. Victims and their families experience severe psychological trauma, which affects their well-being and long-term productivity. Furthermore, social mistrust has grown within communities, as fear of informants and kidnappers living among them has made collaboration difficult. The reintegration of victims into society has also been a challenge, as some returnees face stigma and alienation. These social dimensions show the long-term implications of kidnapping beyond the immediate security concerns, making it a national crisis that requires urgent and holistic intervention.

In a nutshell, the menace of kidnapping in Chikun and Igabi LGAs is a multi-dimensional challenge that requires a strategic and coordinated response. While the security aspect is critical, it is equally important to address the socio-economic conditions that fuel the crisis. The study emphasizes that without adequate intervention in security reforms, economic empowerment, and community collaboration, the kidnapping epidemic will continue escalating while threatening the stability and development of the affected areas.

To effectively curb the menace of kidnapping and address its underlying causes, the



study proposes a combination of security enhancements, economic empowerment initiatives, and community-driven solutions. These recommendations are based on the validated findings from primary data collected during the study and supported by secondary sources. If properly implemented, they can significantly reduce the prevalence of kidnapping and restore peace, economic growth, and social stability in the affected areas.

I. Strengthening Community Policing Initiatives

The study found that 83.33% of respondents agreed that enhancing community policing can help reduce kidnapping incidents. Security agencies should work closely with local communities to establish neighborhood watch groups, vigilante teams, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms to improve surveillance and early detection of criminal activities.

Increasing Government Investment in Job Creation and Skill Development
68.42% of respondents supported job creation as a critical solution to kidnapping. The government should introduce vocational training programs, youth empowerment schemes, and entrepreneurship support initiatives to provide economic opportunities for vulnerable populations and discourage criminal involvement.

II. Enhancing the Presence and Capacity of Security Agencies

Security forces in Chikun and Igabi LGAs lack the resources to combat kidnapping effectively. More personnel should be deployed to the region,



with better training, modern equipment, and increased funding to enable rapid response and intelligence-driven operations against kidnappers.

III. Implementing Stricter Arms Control Measures

The study revealed that the proliferation of illegal arms has escalated kidnapping incidents. Security agencies must tighten border controls, enforce stricter arms regulations, and conduct disarmament campaigns to curb the circulation of illicit weapons in the region.

IV. Reforming the Criminal Justice System to Ensure Swift Prosecution of Kidnappers

Many kidnappers evade justice due to weak law enforcement and judicial inefficiencies. The government should implement faster trial processes, stiffer penalties, and increased judicial transparency to deter kidnapping and ensure that offenders are held accountable.

V. Developing an Effective Early Warning and Rapid Response System

Many kidnappings could be prevented if communities had access to an efficient early warning system. Security agencies should set up hotlines, emergency response centers, and real-time intelligence networks to enable faster intervention in kidnapping cases.

VI. Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Farmers and Traders in the Affected LGAs

Since kidnapping has disrupted agriculture and local businesses, the government should introduce subsidies, agricultural loans, and business grants to support farmers and traders in rebuilding their livelihoods and mitigating the economic effects of insecurity



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