



Socio-Economic Implications of Banditry on Chikun and Giwa Local Government Areas of Kaduna State, Nigeria (2015-2022)

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Abstract

This study examines the Impact of Banditry and National Security in Nigeria, focusing on Chikun and Giwa Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna State between 2015 and 2022. The increasing wave of armed banditry in northern Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna State, poses serious threats to national security, economic development, and societal cohesion. Using a mixed-method approach, the study draws on both primary and secondary data to assess the socio-economic consequences of banditry, the challenges of its mitigation, the relationship between banditry and national security, and the strategies for curbing its spread. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The findings reveal that banditry has had a devastating impact on the agricultural economy of Giwa and Chikun, leading to massive displacement, school closures, and the destruction of health and public infrastructure. Moreover, banditry undermines governance, erodes public trust in state institutions, and contributes to the broader insecurity across Nigeria. The research also highlights key challenges in addressing banditry, including inadequate government response, poor coordination among security agencies, proliferation of illegal arms, and socio-economic marginalization. The study establishes a strong nexus between the activities of armed bandits and Nigeria's national security crisis, emphasizing how the persistent violence weakens internal state control and exposes systemic governance failures. It further reveals that government responses have largely been reactive and short-term, lacking comprehensive strategies for prevention. The study recommends a multi-pronged approach to addressing the crisis, including youth empowerment, the strengthening of community policing, coordinated security efforts, and socio-economic development. Empowering traditional and local governance structures to play a more active role in peacebuilding is also deemed critical. Overall, the study contributes to the discourse on internal security in Nigeria and offers practical policy recommendations to enhance peace and stability in affected regions.



1. Introduction

As a predatory, greedy, and violent action by groups of men (sometimes including women), Banditry has a long history dating from ancient Greece, Rome, and China. Banditry is an armed violence driven principally by the criminal intent to steal and plunder. It is motivated by the quest for economic accumulation. The victims are individuals and communities with material valuables. In central and eastern Europe and the Balkans, it was found in the countryside, in specific conditions such as following wars and massive dislocations and in specific periods, especially in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the modern nation-state was emerging.

In Latin America, it was part and parcel of an expanding frontier economy. Banditry tended to emerge in remote, difficult-to-control mountainous areas containing large numbers of semi-mobile and state-resistant pastoralists (Grafe, 2021). Although there are examples of lone bandits, bandits tended to form into fluid bands, sometimes of up to twenty persons. Kinship, real or fictive, was an important component of their organisation, and solidarity was reinforced through the institutions of blood brotherhood and adoption, as well as through feasting and other rituals. Banditry can be seen as a continuum from the camel raiding Bedouin, through the “noble bandits” of the nineteenth-century Greek Klephts, to contemporary armed autonomist groups (such as Chiapas in Mexico, Kurds in Turkey, and Chechen fighters against Russian intervention in Chechnya were labelled as "bandits" by the state (Vande, 2023).

In Europe, Banditry assumed its most important forms in rural societies, particularly in Mediterranean regions, as property relations changed in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. However, more informal kinds of Banditry occurred in other settings. After wars, for example,



in the eighteenth century, veterans often roamed the country in predatory groups that some peasants regarded as bandits or brigands. Fears of Banditry of this sort surfaced in 1789, during the French Revolution, and helped trigger rural risings (**Sophoulis, 2020**). While Banditry as an outcome of social instability has declined in most of Europe, thanks to firmer policing and changes in military recruitment and policies toward veterans, echoes persist, for example, in the formation of criminal groups in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989.

The available Literature on the Horn of Africa focuses mostly on social Banditry in the 19th century, whose motive, as noted by (**Vande, 2023**), was to protest against the centralism of authority. Further, traditional Banditry has been explored as a vocation where individuals waged war against greedy village chiefs or the political unit on behalf of the local community while living in the forest as hermits until justice was exacted. This has been happening in various independent states of Africa; countries like Ethiopia, Mali, Chad Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo are all examples of countries in Africa that face and are still facing Banditry.

In the area of study, Mburu (1999) was among the pioneer scholars on the subject. He argues that whereas the motive for Banditry was protest and redress, the opportunity was the existence of a bureaucracy that was too rudimentary to control the periphery of the social-political unit, such as the pre-nineteenth century Abyssinian (Amharic) Empire.

In a way, it explained the existence of Banditry in economically underdeveloped countries of the Horn of Africa. Some discussions on the phenomena have been adulatory and explicated positive aspects of traditional brigandage as an honourable option that attracted sons of people with low incomes or those who wanted to attach a sense of self-achievement beyond customary inheritance. In compliance with that, Mburu (1999) noted that in some African polities, the



exploits of a bandit were celebrated in the oral narratives of the community. Thus, their community immortalized the names of individual brigands, which sanctioned and preserved the tradition of brigandage.

The running theme in the existing Literature on the subject is that the rise of the social bandit in the region before the nineteenth century was due to the dissolution of law and order. However, their analysis is short on the attraction of cross-border Banditry to people dislocated mass by civil wars, its domino effect, and the anchor of Banditry to regional political instability.

A review of the Nigerian Fourth Republic quickly portrays the nation with uncertainty, as many Nigerians are apprehensive about the country's future. This is a result of a series of threats and attacks that have been ravaging the nation in recent times. With the proliferation of arms and ammunition gaining entrants into the country daily, it becomes glaringly clear that insurgents are emerging in different parts of the country. This also has resulted in bunkering of Nigeria's oil, armed robberies, kidnapping and rising trends in ethno-religious conflicts across the countries (Ahmadu, 2019).

Over the years, emerging forms of human, social and political organisation have stimulated the necessity for the protection and safety of the individual, family, community and nation. As threats become incessant and recurring daily, insecurity emerged as the dominant fear of human beings. Insecurity in the present circumstance arose out of social and political contradictions, such as the crisis of legitimacy, autonomy and sovereignty. Thus, at the regional level, porous borders, insurgent movements, poverty, human trafficking, official corruption with impunity and underdevelopment have resulted in high-level insecurity. To this end,



internal and external threats are becoming global (Okoli & Ioryer, 2014).

Northwest Nigeria, being one of the six geopolitical zones, comprises seven out of the 36 states. These are Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. It covers an area of 216,065 sq km or 25.75 per cent of the country's total land mass (**Garba, 2021**). Banditry is on the increase in northern Nigeria, with the most common form manifesting in the form of cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, village raids, and mass killing, among others. From this, the study enquires on the Impact of Banditry on National Security in Nigeria using the Case Study of Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State.

The study examined the intricate dynamics and implications of the frequent acts of Banditry and other forms of violence in Northern Nigeria in relation to national security as the country battles the twin problem of banditry and terrorism, most especially in the Northeastern part of the country.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The socio-political landscape of Northwestern Nigeria, particularly Kaduna State, has been redefined by a decade of escalating organized violence that has transitioned from localized communal friction to sophisticated, large-scale banditry. In the specific socio-economic setting of Chikun and Giwa LGAs, which are predominantly agrarian, the collapse of traditional security systems and the colonization of unregulated forest reserves, such as the Kamuku and Kiyanbana forests, have created "ungoverned spaces" (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). This environment is characterized by a fragile socio-economic order where high rates of youth unemployment and extreme poverty generate a "frustration-aggression" dynamic, fuelling



recruitment into criminal gangs (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018).

The central problem is that despite various kinetic military interventions, such as *Operation Puff Adder* and *Operation Thunder Strike*, banditry remains persistent and has transformed into a resilient, lucrative kidnapping-for-ransom industry (Abubakar & Musa, 2022). What is fundamentally inadequate or contradictory in existing outcomes is the state's inability to maintain a permanent security presence in the rural hinterlands, leaving many communities to defend themselves through ill-equipped vigilantes. While the Governor is recognized as the Chief Security Officer, the federalized policing architecture often results in delayed responses where security personnel arrive only after an attack has occurred (Adamu & Audu, 2020). Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of coordination and intelligence sharing among security agencies, leading to disjointed efforts that allow bandits to exploit operational gaps and evade arrest (International Crisis Group, 2021).

The magnitude of this crisis is documented by severe human and economic fatalities. Between 2015 and 2022, the region witnessed a surge in violent crimes including cattle rustling, village raids, and mass killings. Empirically, it is estimated that over 1,000 civilian deaths occurred in the Northwest in 2019 alone, a figure surpassing those killed by Boko Haram in the same period (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). In terms of academic and social disruption, banditry has forced the total closure of schools and health facilities in affected areas of Giwa and Chikun (Audu & Agba, 2022). Economically, agricultural output in these LGAs has declined significantly, as the menace has led to devastating economic losses for farmers and traders who can no longer access their farmlands for fear of abduction (Adamu & Audu, 2020).

While existing research has focused heavily on the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East,



there is a significant paucity of empirical findings regarding the specific socio-economic impact of banditry in the localized contexts of Chikun and Giwa LGAs. Most literature treats the security challenges of Northern Nigeria as a monolith, failing to scientifically analyse the nuanced impacts within these distinct localities (Abubakar & Musa, 2022). Furthermore, while theories like Rational Choice Theory explain why individuals join gangs, there is a gap in understanding how these individual choices aggregate to undermine the national security of the Nigerian state. This study fills this gap by providing a targeted assessment of how banditry specifically degrades the social fabric and internal state control within these two strategic LGAs.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

- i. What is the nexus between Banditry and Nigeria's national security?
- ii. What is the socioeconomic impact of Banditry on Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State?
- iii. What are the challenges faced in mitigating banditry activities in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State?
- iv. What are the strategies employed to curb banditry activities in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State?

1.4 Empirical Literature

The nexus between banditry and Nigeria's national security is intricate, encompassing a



confluence of socio-economic, political, and criminal elements. It presents a complex interplay of challenges that profoundly impact the country's stability and socio-economic development. The pervasive Banditry and its associated threats to security, which have enveloped Nigeria, particularly, Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Niger States, have become a worrisome national security issue of public concern (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016).

Nigeria has faced devastating attacks from armed bandits for several years, particularly in Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Sokoto. Such attacks are driven by many overlapping factors, including cattle rustling, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, illicit artisanal mining, youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality. This is further compounded by the weakened, stretched, and demoralized security services deployed in thirty-five of Nigeria's thirty-six states and will soon enter the second decade of their war against Boko Haram, one of Africa's deadliest terror groups. It is estimated that many of the armed bandits, as are many of the victims, are of Fulani origin. Banditry, which includes armed robbery, murder, rape, and cattle rustling, is present in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Senegal and Mali (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Considering Nigeria's economic potential, the North West has the highest poverty rate. As of 2019, poverty levels were above the national average of 40.1 per cent for all seven states in the region, led by Sokoto (87.7 per cent), Jigawa (87 per cent) and Zamfara (74 per cent) (UNICEF, 2019).

Scholars such as **Okoro (2021)** have also underscored that banditry, characterised by its criminal and violent nature, not only threatens the safety of citizens but also undermines governmental authority and erodes public trust in governance structures. This erosion of trust is particularly significant in regions like Chikun and Giwa local government areas of Kaduna



State, where banditry has intensified, causing widespread fear and insecurity among the populace.

The banditry's nexus with socio-economic factors exacerbates the security situation. Studies by **Ojo et al (2023)** emphasise the correlation between poverty, unemployment, and the proliferation of banditry. Economic marginalisation in affected regions fuels recruitment into bandit groups, perpetuating cycles of violence and instability. Therefore, the socio-economic dimension significantly impacts Nigeria's national security, hindering progress and development efforts.

Banditry also intertwines with other security challenges, particularly terrorism, as evidenced in reports by **Aluko et al. (2023)**. Criminal networks often collaborate with terrorist organisations, blurring the lines between distinct security threats and amplifying the complexity of the security landscape. The nexus between banditry and terrorism poses a formidable challenge to law enforcement agencies, necessitating a multifaceted approach to address these interconnected issues.

Millions need access to basic health care and clean water, and immunisation coverage is well below national objectives. Although the area has a long and proud tradition of Islamic and Arabic scholarship, apathy for formal education and insufficient investment have led to a literacy rate of 29.7 per cent over the decades (Hanna, 2018). The region has the largest number of out-of-school children in Nigeria (Hanna, 2018). Millions of children are in the poorly resourced and poorly controlled Quranic school system, or almajiranci, which creates cohorts of unqualified youth on top of those who do not attend school (Alkali, 2015).



From January to December 2019, armed bandits were responsible for more than 1,000 civilian deaths in the Northwest, according to a West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) report by **Abdulrasheed (2021)**. This is greater than the civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period, according to the Nigeria Security Tracker (though not greater than all those killed, which includes soldiers and Boko Haram members). The consequences of these deaths have ripple effects that last for decades across cultures. As emphasised by Rabi'u & Muhammad (2022), a committee investigating the danger of armed Banditry, headed by former police inspector general Muhammed Abubakar, estimated that 4,983 women were widowed in Zamfara state between June 2011 and May 2019.

Bandit and Insecurity in Giwa and Chikun Local Government Areas of Kaduna

The Northwestern hinterlands are characterised by extremely dispersed rural settlements, separated by volatile rangelands and farmlands (Gaye, 2018). There have been various attacks in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State by bandits, which have dispersed and displaced many people from the study area. Importantly, many bandits have been apprehended and are severely under-policed, making them ideal for all types of jungle criminals. As a result, violent crimes like Banditry have thrived in such densely forested locations. Often, most attacks occur in rural settlements in forested areas in the Northwest, where protection is limited.

Banditry is also common in wide strips of forest reserves that are largely outside the reach of Nigerian security forces. Most bandit activities occur in Northern Nigeria's state-owned reserves, such as the Kamuku, Kiyanbana, and Fagore forests. The forests are ideal hideouts for criminals who want to avoid being apprehended by security forces. The Nigerian security



forces' reluctance to penetrate these forest areas appears partly due to inefficiency, local people's complicity, a lack of advanced equipment, and a lack of enthusiasm (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). The high unemployment rate in Nigeria is another element that encourages Banditry in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State. Nigeria's unemployment rate was 23.1 per cent in 2019, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), with youth unemployment reaching 55.4 per cent. Similarly, the state's poverty index is 43.5% (KBS, 2020). These rates have continued to rise yearly as Nigerian universities continue to graduate batches of young people with the expectation of improved jobs and prospects following graduation (Adegoke, 2019).

The creation of most of these bandit attacks and security threats in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State has been fuelled by the citizens' fear, which eventually turns to frustration and finally to violence against the government (Suleiman, 2017; Mustapha, 2019). The rising tide of crime in Giwa and Chikun Local Government areas of Kaduna State has been blamed on rising unemployment. As a result, idle youngsters are more likely to engage in criminal activities to keep up with current trends. They will go to any length to become wealthy quickly. Hence, violent crimes such as Banditry become juicy and get quick opportunities.

Unemployment and poverty remain significantly high with a rapidly growing population. Nigeria has surpassed India as the country with the most people living in extreme poverty, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians, or over half of the country's population, living on less than \$1.90 per day. Nigeria has an estimated population of 88.4 million people living in extreme poverty. The number of men in the country living on less than \$1.90 per day is roughly 44.7



million, while the number of women is around 43.7 million. As it stands, Nigeria accounts for 12.9 per cent of the world's population living in extreme poverty in the year 2022. Banditry, terrorism, and other criminal acts are connected to poverty and unemployment. Another important aspect promoting Banditry in northwestern Nigeria is the issue of arms proliferation. Since the fall of Ghadaffi's rule in Libya, there has been a steady influx of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) into Nigeria (Gaye, 2018).

1.5 Routine Activities Theory

Routine Activities Theory (RAT) was propounded by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979 as an environmental explanation of crime. In their landmark article, Cohen and Felson (1979) argued that crime is best understood not only by examining criminal motivation but by analysing the everyday activities that create opportunities for criminal acts. The theory marked a shift from traditional criminological perspectives that focused primarily on offender pathology, social disorganization, or economic deprivation, toward a situational and opportunity-based explanation of crime.

According to Routine Activities Theory, crime occurs when three essential elements converge in time and space: (1) a motivated offender, (2) a suitable target, and (3) the absence of a capable guardian. The theory assumes that motivated offenders are relatively constant in society; therefore, fluctuations in crime rates are largely influenced by changes in target suitability and guardianship rather than changes in offender motivation (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Felson (2002) further expanded the theory by emphasizing that routine activities, such as work,



school attendance, farming, trading, migration, and transportation, structure the movement of people and property in ways that either increase or reduce crime opportunities. Social changes such as urbanization, economic restructuring, and mobility patterns can therefore alter crime rates by influencing exposure to risk. In this sense, RAT links macro-level social change to micro-level crime events.

The theory has been widely applied in environmental criminology and crime prevention studies. Felson and Boba (2010) argue that crime prevention strategies should focus on reducing opportunities by strengthening guardianship and target protection rather than concentrating solely on offender punishment. Thus, Routine Activities Theory provides a practical and policy-relevant framework for understanding crime patterns.

1.6 Methodology

A research design serves as the conceptual framework guiding the conduct of research. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), it functions as the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data, encompassing the entire research process from background assumptions to the final data analysis.

In this study, a case study research design is adopted to elucidate the impact of banditry on national security in Nigeria, with a focus on Chickun and Giwa Local Government Areas of Kaduna State (2015 – 2022). The purpose of the case study is to furnish descriptive, explanatory, and explorative information, supporting the incorporation of the theoretical framework.



The case study methodology facilitates a systematic and intensive examination of individual units, procedures, and the means of collecting, analyzing, and presenting the resulting data.

By adopting a case study approach, the research examines a phenomenon in its natural setting, utilizing multiple data collection methods to gather information from one or a few entities (individuals, groups, or organizations). The boundaries of the phenomenon are not predetermined, and there is no experimental control or manipulation. This method is chosen to perform a descriptive, explanatory, and illustrative role, aiming to establish a theory explaining a specific case, and testing the efficacy, functionality, and relevance of the generated theory. Furthermore, it seeks to elucidate causal mechanisms and links in a real-life situation. Additionally, this approach allows participants to provide detailed information through the use of multiple data sources.

Giwa local government area is in Kaduna state, Northwest Nigeria and has its headquarters in the town of Giwa. According to Aga (2009), Giwa LGA shares borders with Funtua, Birnin Gwari, Igabi, Dandume, Sabuwa, Kudan, and Danja LGAs. Several towns and villages make up Giwa LGA, and these include Shika, Kidandan, Galadimawa, Kakangi, Kadage, Idasu, Wazata, Yakawada, Gangara, Panhauya, and Danmahawayi.

The 2022 projected population of Giwa Local Government Area, according to the National Population Commission (NPC), is 432,000 inhabitants, with the most prominent tribes in the area being the Hausa and the Fulani.

On the other hand, the Chikun Local Government share boundaries in the North with the Igabi local Government and Kaduna North in the Northwest. The area shares boundaries with Birnin



Gwari and Kaduna South Local Government, while in the South Western part, the Local Government share border with Niger State, and in the Eastern part Chikun Local Government share boundaries with Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Area.

The Local Government is located at the intersection latitude of 10 degrees North and a longitude of 8 degrees East with a 2022 projected population of 231,582 by the National Population Commission.

The population of the study comprises all 23 wards in Giwa and Chikun Local Government Areas. According to the National Population Commission projection of 2022, the population of Giwa is 432,000 and Chikun Local Government Areas is 550,000. That is a heterogeneous population that comprises males, females, children, adults, old, youth, farmers, civil servants, Muslims, Christians, as well as other categories of the inhabitants of the state.

1.7 Findings of the Study

This study investigated the socio-economic implications of banditry in Giwa and Chikun Local Government Areas of Kaduna State between 2015 and 2022. Guided by four objectives, the research examined the nexus between banditry and national security, the socio-economic impact of banditry on the study areas, the challenges faced in mitigating banditry, and the strategies employed to curb its spread. The findings presented here are derived from questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis, and they provide a comprehensive account of the realities uncovered.

1.8 Banditry and National Security

The findings reveal that banditry in Giwa and Chikun LGAs has evolved from localized



criminal activity into a major national security threat. Respondents consistently emphasized that the activities of armed bandits undermine Nigeria's sovereignty and weaken the state's ability to exercise effective territorial control. The proliferation of illegal arms, coupled with porous borders, has enabled bandits to operate with relative impunity. Forest reserves such as Kamuku and Kiyanbana have become "ungoverned spaces," serving as operational bases for criminal gangs and making it difficult for security forces to penetrate.

Banditry was found to contribute to broader insecurity across Nigeria, with ripple effects extending beyond Kaduna State. The kidnapping-for-ransom industry, entrenched in Giwa and Chikun, has spread to other parts of the country, eroding public trust in government institutions and exposing systemic governance failures. Respondents noted that the inability of the state to maintain a permanent security presence in rural hinterlands has created a vicious cycle where insecurity fuels further instability. This situation has weakened internal state control and highlighted the fragility of Nigeria's national security architecture.

Socio-Economic Impact of Banditry

The socio-economic consequences of banditry in Giwa and Chikun LGAs were found to be devastating and multifaceted. Agriculture, the backbone of these communities, has been severely disrupted. Farmers reported massive economic losses due to their inability to access farmlands, leading to significant declines in agricultural output. Livestock rearing has also been affected, with cattle rustling becoming a common occurrence. These disruptions have contributed to rising food insecurity and deepened poverty levels.

Education has suffered greatly as schools were closed following repeated attacks and



kidnappings of students and teachers. Respondents lamented that children were denied access to education, leading to rising illiteracy rates and a generation at risk of being permanently disadvantaged. The closure of schools undermined community development and created long-term socio-economic challenges, as education is a critical driver of progress in rural communities.

Healthcare facilities were abandoned or destroyed due to bandit attacks, leaving residents without access to basic medical services. Respondents noted that people were forced to travel long distances to seek healthcare in relatively safer areas, exacerbating health challenges, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly. The destruction of health infrastructure further weakened community resilience.

Displacement was another major consequence. Banditry forced many households to flee their communities, creating internally displaced persons (IDP) camps with poor living conditions. Respondents described overcrowded camps where displaced persons struggled with inadequate shelter, food, and sanitation. The displacement disrupted social cohesion, weakened traditional community structures, and created humanitarian crises that strained local resources.

Trade and commerce were also severely affected. Traders and business owners suffered significant losses due to attacks on markets, roadways, and transport systems. Respondents reported that economic activity in the region declined sharply, with many businesses closing down. This not only affected livelihoods but also reduced the revenue base of local governments, further weakening their capacity to provide services. Overall, the socio-economic impact of banditry was enormous, touching virtually every aspect of life in Giwa and Chikun LGAs.



1.9 Challenges in Mitigating Banditry

The study identified several challenges that hinder efforts to mitigate banditry in Kaduna State. Respondents consistently criticized government interventions as reactive and short-term. Security personnel often arrived only after attacks had occurred, leaving communities exposed. This reactive posture was seen as ineffective in addressing the persistent nature of banditry.

Poor coordination among security agencies was another major challenge. The findings reveal a lack of synergy and intelligence sharing among military, police, and paramilitary forces. Respondents noted that disjointed efforts allowed bandits to exploit operational gaps and evade arrest. The absence of coordinated strategies was identified as a major obstacle to effective mitigation.

Traditional community-based vigilance systems, age-grade groups, and indigenous intelligence networks have declined in effectiveness. Respondents lamented that these structures, which historically played a role in maintaining security, were no longer capable of countering modern forms of insecurity. The weakening of these traditional structures left rural populations vulnerable to repeated attacks.

Socio-economic marginalization was found to be a key driver of recruitment into bandit gangs. High rates of youth unemployment and poverty created fertile ground for criminal activities. Respondents explained that many young people, frustrated by lack of opportunities, were easily lured into banditry. This “frustration-aggression” dynamic was identified as a root cause of the persistence of insecurity.

Geographical factors also played a role. The presence of vast forest reserves provided bandits



with safe havens that were difficult for security forces to penetrate. Respondents emphasized that these ungoverned spaces enabled bandits to regroup and launch attacks with minimal resistance. These challenges collectively explain why banditry has remained resilient despite various military operations and government interventions.

1.10 Strategies for Curbing Banditry

The findings also highlight strategies that respondents believe could help curb banditry in Giwa and Chikun LGAs. Strengthening community policing was emphasized as a critical measure. Respondents argued that empowering local vigilante groups under legal frameworks would enhance security, given the proximity of local actors to the communities they protect. Community policing was seen as a viable strategy to reduce attack rates and restore confidence.

Youth empowerment emerged as another critical strategy. Providing job opportunities and education for young people was identified as a long-term solution to reduce recruitment into bandit gangs. Respondents argued that addressing unemployment and poverty would restore hope among the youth and weaken the appeal of criminal activities.

Coordinated security operations were also highlighted. The findings underscore the need for better coordination among military, police, and paramilitary agencies. Respondents called for integrated strategies that close operational gaps, enhance intelligence sharing, and ensure timely responses to attacks. Such coordination was seen as essential to restoring security in affected communities.

Socio-economic development programs targeting rural communities were identified as necessary to restore livelihoods and rebuild trust in governance. Respondents emphasized the



importance of rebuilding infrastructure, providing social services, and supporting displaced persons. These initiatives were seen as critical to reducing vulnerability to banditry and fostering sustainable development.

The role of traditional rulers and religious leaders was recognized as vital. Respondents noted that these actors remain influential in their communities and could play a more active role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Empowering traditional and religious leaders to mediate conflicts and promote dialogue was seen as a key strategy for restoring stability.

The findings of this study demonstrate that banditry in Giwa and Chikun LGAs has severe implications for both local communities and national security. The socio-economic impact is profound, affecting agriculture, education, healthcare, trade, and social cohesion. Efforts to mitigate banditry face significant challenges, including inadequate government response, poor coordination among security agencies, and socio-economic marginalization. However, respondents identified several strategies that could help curb the menace, including community policing, youth empowerment, coordinated security operations, socio-economic development, and the involvement of traditional leaders. These findings provide a solid foundation for recommendations that are directly tied to the realities uncovered, ensuring that proposed solutions are grounded in empirical evidence.

1.11 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined the rising threat of banditry and its implications for national security in Nigeria, using Chikun and Giwa Local Government Areas of Kaduna State as case studies. The findings clearly indicate that banditry has significantly disrupted the socioeconomic life



of residents in these areas, leading to widespread displacement, destruction of farmlands and property, closure of schools and healthcare centres, and a general atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

The research has shown that banditry in these LGAs is not only a local security issue but also a national challenge that undermines state authority, weakens governance structures, and contributes to Nigeria's broader insecurity. Weak governmental response, poor coordination among security agencies, proliferation of illegal arms, and limited investment in intelligence gathering have all compounded the problem.

Moreover, the lack of socio-economic opportunities, especially among the youth, has created a fertile ground for criminal networks to thrive. While security operations have been ongoing, they remain largely reactive and insufficient. The failure to address the root causes of banditry, such as poverty, unemployment, weak institutional capacity, and poor rural development, has further complicated counter-banditry efforts.

Therefore, tackling banditry requires a multidimensional and sustained approach. Beyond military force, there is a need for the state to engage in community policing, legally back vigilante groups, promote youth employment, and strengthen institutions of justice and accountability. It is also imperative for the Nigerian government to invest in long-term development strategies and ensure that local communities are part of the security architecture.

Therefore, without restoring security in places like Chikun and Giwa, Nigeria's national development will remain threatened. A stable, professional, and community-embedded security system is vital not just for the people of Kaduna State but for the survival of the



Nigerian state and its democratic future.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

To address youth unemployment and poverty that fuel banditry, the **Kaduna State Government**, through its Ministry of Youth and Agriculture, should establish vocational training centers and provide microcredit for small businesses. Targeted agricultural support programs must be rolled out to help young people access inputs and secure farmlands, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by criminal groups.

The **Kaduna State Security Council**, working with the Nigeria Police Force and Civil Defence Corps, should formalize vigilante groups under a legal framework. These community-based structures must be trained, supervised, and integrated into intelligence-sharing networks to ensure accountability and effective collaboration with conventional security agencies.

The **Federal Government of Nigeria**, through the Office of the National Security Adviser and Nigeria Customs Service, should intensify border security and arms control. A coordinated arms mop-up campaign in rural communities, backed by modern surveillance technologies, is needed to reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that sustain banditry.

The **Kaduna State Peace Commission**, in partnership with traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society organizations, should lead grassroots peacebuilding. These actors should be empowered to mediate disputes, promote dialogue, and provide trauma support for victims, thereby rebuilding trust and strengthening social cohesion in Giwa and Chikun LGAs.



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