



Insecurity and Sustainable Development in Kaduna State: A Case Study of Chikun Local Government Area (2015–2025)

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Abstract

The conceptual nexus between national security and sustainable development is intrinsically symbiotic; the materialization of institutional and socio-economic progress relies heavily on a stable, secure, and predictable environment. Over the past decade, Nigeria has grappled with an escalating, multifaceted security crisis that has threatened its sovereign stability and severely compromised its developmental trajectory. This study empirically examines the impact of insecurity specifically armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom—on key indicators of sustainable development within Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, Nigeria, covering the period from 2015 to 2025.

Adopting an eclectic theoretical framework that synthesizes Frustration-Aggression Theory, Structural Functionalism, Social Contract/State Fragility Theory, and Human Security Theory, the study investigates how localized, non-state armed violence disrupts grassroots economic stability, agricultural productivity, and human capital development. A convergent parallel mixed-methods research design was deployed, utilizing both quantitative survey questionnaires administered to a sampled population of 398 respondents (comprising farmers, small business owners, and local residents) and qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) held with community leaders, security personnel, and executives of agricultural cooperatives.

The empirical findings reveal that persistent armed banditry has decimated local commerce, triggered extensive capital flight, and crippled the internally generated revenue (IGR) of the local council. Furthermore, the commercialization of kidnapping has weaponized the agricultural sector, forcing widespread farm abandonment, reducing crop yields, and engendering an acute localized food security crisis. The study also confirms that deliberate targeting of educational and healthcare facilities has severely eroded human capital accumulation. The paper concludes that military kinetics alone are insufficient to address this crisis. It recommends a paradigm shift toward integrated, non-kinetic strategies, including community-centric intelligence architectures, formal institutionalization of localized vigilante frameworks, and the deployment of "Safe Farming Frameworks" to restore sustainable developmental trajectories at the grassroots level.

KEYWORDS: Armed Banditry, Kidnapping for Ransom, Sustainable Development, Grassroots Economy, Chikun LGA.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In the contemporary discourse of political economy and international development, the relationship between national security and sustainable development is recognized as fundamentally co-dependent. Sustainable development—conceptualized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) as development that balances economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability without compromising future generations—cannot manifest within an environment characterized by systemic violence and structural instability. Security provides the institutional predictability and physical safety required to attract capital investment, facilitate human mobility, foster educational advancement, and maintain resilient public health frameworks. Conversely, a state of pervasive insecurity destabilizes these foundational pillars, reversing hard-won developmental gains and plunging subnational jurisdictions into severe socio-economic distress.

Over the last decade, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has confronted an unprecedented, fractured security landscape. While the North-East geopolitical zone has been historically defined by the ideological insurgency of Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), the North-West zone has degenerated into an epicenter of a highly lethal, asymmetric crisis. This crisis is driven by armed banditry, mass kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, and targeted rural executions (Ojo et al., 2023). This security breakdown is deeply pronounced within Kaduna State, a region that historically served as the political, administrative, and economic nerve center of Northern Nigeria.

The security profile of Kaduna State has evolved dangerously from episodic, urban-centered ethno-religious conflicts to deeply entrenched, highly organized, and trans-local rural banditry. Major transit corridors, particularly the strategic Abuja-Kaduna highway, have become perilous zones dominated by non-state armed actors. This dynamic has inflicted deep psychological trauma on the citizenry, disrupted interstate logistics, and fractured commercial supply chains (Ugwuoke et al., 2023). This pervasive lawlessness has induced what contemporary conflict theorists describe as "captive population syndrome" (Okoli et al., 2024), where vulnerable rural and peri-urban populations are either subjugated by armed groups within their communities or forced into mass displacement, overwhelming the infrastructure of safer urban centers.



Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) serves as a critical microcosm of grassroots developmental disruption. In geographically expansive and ecology-rich, Chikun Local Government Area function as a primary agrarian belt for Kaduna State. However, its proximity to vast, ungoverned forest reserves has transformed it into an ideal operational theater for bandit syndicates. Incessant attacks have compelled agrarian populations to desert their ancestral lands, directly undermining United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 1 (No Poverty). Furthermore, the targeted abduction of students and educators has forced widespread school closures, disabling the mechanisms of Goal 4 (Quality Education). While state-centric security discourses focus heavily on kinetic counter-insurgency and military deployment (Aina et al., 2023), there is an urgent imperative to empirically investigate the localized, downstream socio-economic consequences of this violence at the community level.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The motivation for this study stems from the widening divergence between macro-level national security assessments and the lived micro-economic realities of rural communities. Most federal and state-level policy interventions treat armed banditry primarily as a tactical, law-enforcement problem requiring military neutralization. This approach often overlooks the long-term, structural erosion of the grassroots productive economy. By focusing on Chikun Local Government Area, this research provides an empirical baseline documenting how rural households experience structural poverty, asset depletion, and food insecurity as a direct consequence of conflict. Understanding these specific dynamics is critical for crafting post-conflict stabilization policies, reviving local markets, and designing targeted rehabilitation programs for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION

Despite its immense agricultural potential, strategic location, and role as a key commercial feeder zone for the Kaduna metropolis, Chikun Local Government Area has seen its developmental indicators systematically eroded by unchecked violence. Ideally, the local government should leverage its arable land and labor force to advance the metrics of SDG 1, SDG 2, and SDG 4.

However, the reality over the 2015–2025 decade presents a starkly different picture. Armed



non-state actors have established a parallel economy of violence. Farmers are no longer free to cultivate land without facing abduction or paying exorbitant "protection levies" to criminal syndicates. This has led to massive harvest deficits and widespread rural abandonment. Simultaneously, the deliberate targeting of schools symbolized by high-profile mass abductions has disrupted educational delivery and entrenched a deep structural deficit in future regional human capital.

The core problem this study addresses is the continuous degradation of sustainable development indicators caused by this unabated insecurity. While the state has deployed military operations, these interventions have largely focused on macro-containment rather than protecting grassroots socio-economic structures. A significant empirical gap exists: existing literature largely treats the North-West crisis through a broad geopolitically aggregated lens, leaving a deficit of localized, data-driven studies that quantify the developmental regression within specific agrarian frontline LGAs. Without localized empirical data to document these precise socio-economic impacts, future recovery frameworks risk being generalized, reactive, and disconnected from the communities they aim to rebuild. This study justifies its focus by filling this analytical gap, offering a data-driven foundation for community-centric security and recovery strategies.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between insecurity and sustainable development in Kaduna State, using Chikun Local Government Area as an intensive case study.

The specific analytical objectives are:

1. To evaluate how systemic insecurity has affected the overall indicators of sustainable development in Chikun LGA.
2. To ascertain the extent to which armed banditry has disrupted grassroots economic activities, trade, and commercial investment in Chikun LGA.
3. To determine the precise impact of kidnapping for ransom on agricultural processes and food security metrics in Chikun LGA.
4. To identify and formulate actionable, community-centric strategies to mitigate insecurity and restore a sustainable developmental trajectory in Chikun LGA.



1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The boundaries of this investigation are defined across four distinct dimensions:

THEMATIC SCOPE: The study focuses specifically on the intersection of rural insecurity (limited to armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom) and key sustainable development metrics (restricted to agricultural productivity, grassroots commerce, and basic educational continuity). It deliberately excludes urban petty theft, cybercrime, and broader industrial macro-economics.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE: The research is strictly confined to the rural and peri-urban frontiers of Chikun LGA within Kaduna State, focusing heavily on heavily hit ward clusters including Kujama, Chikun, Gwagwada, and Sabon Tasha.

DEMOGRAPHIC SCOPE: The unit of analysis is centered on the primary victims and grassroots actors within the local economy, specifically smallholder farmers, market traders, small business owners, traditional community leaders, and displaced persons.

CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPE: The study spans a ten-year window from 2015 to 2025. This timeframe marks the period when rural criminality in Northern Nigeria transitioned from localized cattle rustling into a highly commercialized, armed threat to human survival.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

INSECURITY

Insecurity is conceptualized not merely as the absence of physical safety, but as a multi-dimensional state of vulnerability, psychological distress, and structural exposure to systemic harm. In contemporary African security studies, insecurity reflects the erosion of the state's capacity to project authority and maintain its monopoly over the legitimate tools of violence within its borders (Egwu, 2015). For this study, insecurity is operationalized through three distinct, interlocking phenomena:

ARMED BANDITRY

Contemporary rural banditry in the North-West is no longer characterized by low-level highway robbery or opportunistic cattle theft. It has transformed into a heavily armed, highly organized criminal enterprise (Rufa'i, 2021). Operating from vast, ungoverned forest reserves like Kamuku, Kuyambana, and parts of the Eastern security corridor bordering Chikun LGA, bandit syndicates utilize military-grade weapons to launch coordinated raids on rural



communities. This dynamic creates a predatory parallel authority that extracts economic rents from vulnerable populations (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM

This is the unlawful abduction and detention of individuals to extort financial concessions. Over the last decade, kidnapping in Nigeria has transitioned from an elite-targeted crime in the Niger Delta to a mass-market illicit industry in the North-West (Chukwudi et al., 2020). Criminal networks routinely target rural commuters, small-scale farmers, and school populations, extracting resources from impoverished communities and driving a cycle of asset depletion.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

This encompasses violent confrontations between distinct identity groups, frequently manifesting in Chikun LGA as resource-driven clashes between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary agrarian communities over land and water access. These conflicts are often compounded by ethnic and religious differences, fueling reprisal cycles that destabilize the rural social fabric (Best, 2007).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the subnational and local government levels, sustainable development is operationalized as the continuous, uninterrupted expansion of human capabilities, economic choices, and social security. It requires an environment where human capital can accumulate without structural disruptions. This study measures sustainable development through three interconnected sectors:

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

The foundational engine of the Chikun local economy. It encompasses the entire farming cycle—including land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, and market transport. Agricultural sustainability ensures local food security and provides primary employment for the rural population.

GRASSROOTS ECONOMIC SPACE

The day-to-day commercial framework sustaining the local populace. This includes rural market operations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), transport logistics, and the unhindered flow of credit and goods between rural supply points and urban consumption centers.



HUMAN CAPITAL ACCUMULATION (HEALTH AND EDUCATION)

The long-term pillar of development. It relies on the safe, continuous operation of schools and healthcare centers, enabling the community to build a healthy, literate, and economically productive workforce for the future.

1.7 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

ARMED BANDITRY AND GRASSROOTS ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

Empirical studies across sub-Saharan Africa show a clear correlation between rural armed conflict and local economic decline. In their assessment of banditry in North-Western Nigeria, Ladan and Matawalli (2020) observed that armed groups intentionally target economic lifelines by ambushing commercial vehicles and raiding village markets. These actions undermine rural commerce by discouraging external traders and forcing periodic market closures.

Furthermore, this pervasive violence drives extensive capital flight. Small business owners and local investors frequently relocate their capital from volatile rural jurisdictions to more secure urban centers, draining the local economy of liquidity. This shift severely harms local government finance; as trade declines, the collection of market tolls and trade taxes drops, reducing Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and limiting the council's ability to maintain public infrastructure (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM AND THE WEAPONIZATION OF AGRICULTURE

The commercialization of kidnapping has significantly impacted the agricultural sector in Northern Nigeria. Chukwuma (2020) demonstrated how the threat of abduction forces smallholder farmers to alter their risk calculations, often leading to partial or complete farm abandonment. In many cases, criminal syndicates demand formal protection levies or "harvest taxes" as a condition for accessing fields.

Ojo (2020) conceptualizes this predatory practice as "agro-terrorism," noting that it directly disrupts planting schedules, leaves vast tracts of fertile land uncultivated, and lowers overall crop yields. This dynamic triggers localized food inflation and deepens rural poverty, converting self-sufficient farming households into dependent, food-insecure populations.



CONFLICT, COMMUNAL VIOLENCE, AND HUMAN CAPITAL EROSION

The long-term impact of rural conflict on health and education is well-documented in empirical literature. When communal violence spreads, social infrastructure is often targeted or neglected. Rural clinics are frequently abandoned by healthcare workers fleeing the violence, leaving communities without basic medical services, maternal care, or immunization programs (Ilekoya, 2021).

In the educational sector, the impact can span generations. Chikun LGA has experienced severe disruptions due to mass school abductions, such as the attack on Bethel Baptist High School. In response to these vulnerabilities, state authorities have frequently ordered defensive school closures in high-risk areas. While intended to protect students, Amnesty International (2021) notes that these extended closures significantly increase the number of out-of-school children, creating a long-term human capital deficit that undermines future developmental capacity.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To capture the complex dynamics of insecurity and underdevelopment in Chikun LGA, this study utilizes an eclectic theoretical framework that integrates four complementary paradigms.

FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION THEORY

Originally formulated by Dollard et al. (1939) and expanded by Gurr (1970) through relative deprivation models, this theory posits that systemic frustration often produces aggressive behavior. When individuals encounter structural barriers to legitimate economic survival—such as chronic unemployment, systemic poverty, and limited social mobility—the resulting frustration can lead to alternative, often criminal, survival strategies. In Chikun LGA, deep-seated socio-economic marginalization provides a recruiting ground for bandit networks, offering financial rewards through kidnapping and illicit operations.

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

Developed by Talcott Parsons (1951) and refined by Robert Merton (1968), this theory views society as a system of interdependent institutions working together to maintain stability. When one institution experiences a functional failure, it inevitably disrupts the performance of the



others. In this case, a breakdown in the state's security apparatus directly impairs the economic, agricultural, and educational systems in Chikun LGA, demonstrating how institutional failure can impede overall sustainable development.

POLITICAL THEORY (SOCIAL CONTRACT AND STATE FRAGILITY)

Rooted in classical political philosophy (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1689) and contemporary state fragility concepts (Rotberg, 2003), this paradigm focuses on the foundational contract between the citizen and the state. Citizens yield certain liberties in exchange for systemic protection and public order. When a state loses its monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its borders, it experiences institutional fragility. The presence of armed bandit syndicates operating openly in rural areas indicates a breakdown of this social contract, creating an environment where formal socio-economic development faces severe structural challenges.

HUMAN SECURITY THEORY

Introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) and analyzed by scholars like Paris (2001), this theory shifts the analytical focus from state-centric border defense to the well-being of individual citizens. It emphasizes two core dimensions: "freedom from fear" (safety from physical violence) and "freedom from want" (basic economic and food security). In Chikun LGA, contemporary banditry undermines both elements, as the persistent threat of violence directly interferes with rural production and food cultivation.

1.9 CRITIQUE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CRITIQUE OF FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION THEORY

A key limitation of Frustration-Aggression theory is its tendency toward economic determinism, which implies a direct, automatic link between poverty and violent crime. As Berkowitz (1989) noted, frustration does not lead inevitably to aggression; rather, it creates an emotional readiness that requires specific environmental triggers and personal choices to manifest as violence. Many individuals face severe economic hardship without turning to armed criminality.

Furthermore, this model can overlook the role of organized, profit-driven crime. Collier and



Hoeffler's (2004) "greed versus grievance" thesis suggests that modern rural conflicts are often driven less by objective socio-economic frustrations (grievances) and more by the financial profitability of criminal enterprises (greed). Contemporary banditry in Kaduna State operates as a lucrative illicit economy, indicating that financial gain, rather than simple frustration, plays a central role in sustaining these networks.

CRITIQUE OF STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

Critics, particularly conflict theorists, argue that Structural Functionalism contains a conservative bias that prioritizes social consensus and equilibrium over power dynamics and systemic inequalities (Holmwood, 2005). By treating insecurity as a temporary institutional "dysfunction," the theory can obscure instances where political actors or local elites derive material benefits from ongoing instability. Reno (1999) observed that in some fragile political economies, elite networks may work around formal state systems to profit from informal or parallel economies, meaning that what appears to be institutional failure can sometimes serve specific private interests.

CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL THEORY (SOCIAL CONTRACT AND STATE FRAGILITY)

Social Contract theory is built primarily on Western political history, which can limit its applicability to post-colonial African states. Ekeh (1975) pointed out that colonial administrations often created state boundaries and institutions without a voluntary social contract among the population, leaving a complex relationship between central governments and rural communities.

Additionally, state fragility frameworks often adopt a state-centric perspective that views the centralized government as the sole legitimate provider of security and governance. Boege et al. (2008) argue that this focus can lead analysts to overlook how the erosion of traditional, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms contributes to security vacuums in rural areas.

CRITIQUE OF HUMAN SECURITY THEORY

The primary academic critique of Human Security theory focuses on its broad, expansive



scope. Paris (2001) argued that by placing a wide array of challenges—including poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and violent crime—under the single banner of "security," the concept can become difficult for policymakers to translate into specific, operational priorities.

Furthermore, Duffield (2001) raised concerns regarding the "securitization of development," noting that framing all developmental deficits primarily as security threats risks encouraging short-term, militarized responses to complex, structural socio-economic issues like systemic unemployment or shifting agricultural patterns.

1.10 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ECLECTIC APPROACH

Because no single paradigm fully explains the interaction between rural banditry and developmental stagnation in Chikun LGA, this study uses a multi-theoretical framework to balance these limitations. While Frustration-Aggression highlights the underlying social grievances that fuel recruitment, the Greed thesis accounts for the financial motivations behind the kidnapping industry. Concurrently, Structural Functionalism and State Fragility theories illuminate the institutional breakdowns that allow criminal networks to operate, while Human Security theory provides a framework for measuring the direct impact of this instability on individual livelihoods and grassroots development.

1.11 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilizes a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design, which allows for the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. This dual approach ensures that statistical trends regarding economic and agricultural declines are contextualized by qualitative insights into the lived experiences of affected populations.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population for this study comprises the primary economic actors, community leaders, and institutional representatives within Chikun LGA. This includes registered smallholder farmers, market traders, small enterprise operators, internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in temporary settlements, traditional rulers, and local security coordinators.



SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

To determine a representative sample size from an amorphous population, the Cochran (1977) formula for infinite populations was applied

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = Desired sample size

Z = standard normal deviation at a 95% confidence level (1.96).

p = Estimated proportion of the population experiencing the phenomenon (assumed to be 0.5 to maximize sample size).

q = 1 – p = 0.5.

e = Acceptable margin of error (0.05).

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

To account for potential non-response or unreturned questionnaires, the sample size was increased to 420. A total of 398 fully completed questionnaires were recovered and used for final analysis.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique combining probability methods was adopted to select study participants:

Stage 1 (Cluster Sampling): Chikun LGA was geographically clustered into four high-impact ward clusters: Kujama, Chikun, Gwagwada, and Sabon Tasha.

Stage 2: (Purposive sampling): Specific communities within these clusters were purposively selected based on their level of exposure to banditry and kidnapping over the study period.

Stage 3: (Convenience and snowball sampling): Given the serious logistical and security constraints of the local environment, convenience and snowball sampling techniques were



utilized within the selected communities to identify and reach farmers, traders, and IDPs

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Quantitative data was gathered through a structured questionnaire titled the Insecurity and Grassroots Sustainable Development Assessment Questionnaire (IGSDAQ). The instrument used a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to eliminate neutral response biases. Qualitative insights were gathered via a semi-structured Key Informant Interview (KII) guide tailored for community leaders, agricultural cooperative executives, and local security officers.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire underwent face and content validation by three independent experts in conflict studies and development economics. To assess internal consistency, a pilot test was conducted with 40 participants in a neighboring LGA experiencing similar security dynamics (Kajuru LGA). The resulting quantitative data yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.84, exceeding the standard academic reliability threshold of 0.70.

1.12 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores) alongside inferential statistics (Chi-Square test of independence) via SPSS Version 28 to evaluate the relationships between security variables and development indicators. Qualitative data from interview transcripts was analyzed using thematic analysis, coding responses into narrative categories that correspond to the core research objectives.

1.13 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The final analyzed sample consisted of 398 respondents across the designated ward clusters in Chikun LGA.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Gender	Male	244	61.3
	Female	154	38.7
Primary Occupation	Smallholder Farmer	182	45.7
	Market Trader / Artisan	126	31.7
	Civil Servant / Teacher	48	12.1
	Unemployed / IDP	42	10.5
Duration of Residency	Less than 5 years	35	8.8
	5 to 10 years	112	28.1
	More than 10 years	251	63.1

1.14 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Overall Impact of Insecurity on Sustainable Development Indicators

This section examines the broad impact of systemic insecurity on the general socio-economic wellbeing and development indicators of the area.

RESPONDENT AGREEMENT LEVELS (N=398)

Systemic insecurity has systematically reversed developmental gains.

[SA/A: 93.2%] =====> [D/SD: 6.8%]

Pervasive fear restricts human mobility and social integration.

[SA/A: 89.9%] =====> [D/SD: 10.1%]

Local infrastructure investment has stalled due to safety concerns.

[SA/A: 86.4%] =====> [D/SD: 13.6%]

SurveyItem	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean Score
Systemic insecurity has	262 (65.8%)	109 (27.4%)	18 (4.5%)	9 (2.3%)	3.57



systematically reversed developmental gains in this community.					
Pervasive fear of attacks restricts daily human mobility and social integration.	215 (54.0%)	143 (35.9%)	27 (6.8%)	13 (3.3%)	3.41
Local infrastructure investment (roads, clinics) has stalled due to safety concerns.	198 (49.7%)	146 (36.7%)	39 (9.8%)	15 (3.8%)	3.32

The baseline data indicates strong agreement (Mean = 3.57) that insecurity has reversed developmental progress in Chikun LGA. Physical insecurity alters the baseline conditions necessary for community development, as fear of violence restricts mobility and creates a high-risk environment that discourages public and private investment in local infrastructure.

Objective 2: Extent to which Armed Banditry Disrupted Grassroots Economic Activities

This section assesses the specific effects of bandit raids, market closures, and taxation by non-state actors on local commerce.

SurveyItem	StronglyAgree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean Score



Regular bandit attacks have forced the closure or contraction of rural markets.	234 (58.8%)	121 (30.4%)	31 (7.8%)	12 (3.0%)	3.45
Business owners have relocated capital to safer urban centers (capital flight).	187 (47.0%)	154 (38.7%)	42 (10.6%)	15 (3.7%)	3.29
Local government revenue collection has dropped due to disrupted commercial activity.	165 (41.5%)	178 (44.7%)	44 (11.1%)	11 (2.7%)	3.25

The data shows that 89.2% of respondents agree that armed banditry has forced the closure or reduction of rural market operations. The reallocation of capital to safer urban zones (85.7% agreement) demonstrates how persistent security risks can discourage rural investment, leading to lower liquidity and reduced economic opportunities at the grassroots level.



Objective 3: Impact of Kidnapping for Ransom on Agricultural Processes and Food Security

This section examines how the risk of abduction, illegal farm levies, and displacement affect agricultural productivity.

SurveyItem	StronglyAgree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean Score
Fear of kidnapping has caused farmers to abandon their farmlands.	289 (72.6%)	87 (21.9%)	15 (3.8%)	7 (1.7%)	3.65
Bandits impose illegal protection levies or harvest taxes on local farmers.	241 (60.6%)	114 (28.6%)	32 (8.0%)	11 (2.8%)	3.47
Agricultural output in this LGA has declined significantly, raising local food prices.	274 (68.8%)	99 (24.9%)	18 (4.5%)	7 (1.8%)	3.61

The agricultural indicators show high agreement scores. Widespread farm abandonment due to



abduction risks received 94.5% agreement (Mean = 3.65). Combined with the imposition of illegal protection levies (Mean = 3.47), these factors contribute directly to lower crop outputs and increased local food costs, indicating a significant disruption to regional food production.

1.14 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

To examine the statistical relationship between insecurity and development outcomes, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to evaluate the link between the perceived intensity of kidnapping and levels of farm abandonment.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between the frequency of kidnapping incidents and the rate of farm abandonment by smallholder farmers in Chikun LGA.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between the frequency of kidnapping incidents and the rate of farm abandonment by smallholder farmers in Chikun LGA.

CHI-SQUARE CROSS-TABULATION
[High Kidnapping Risk] ----> 91.2% Farm Abandonment
[Low Kidnapping Risk] ----> 18.4% Farm Abandonment
Calculated $X^2 = 84.62 > \text{Critical } X^2 = 7.82$ (df=3, $p < 0.05$)
Result: Reject Null Hypothesis (H ₀)

The statistical analysis yielded a calculated Chi-Square value (χ^2) of 84.62, which substantially exceeds the critical value of 7.82 at 3 degrees of freedom (df=3) and a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected. This provides statistical support for the conclusion that the risk of kidnapping is a significant factor driving farm abandonment within the studied communities.

QUALITATIVE DATA SYNTHESIS (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS)

Thematic analysis of the interviews conducted with community leaders, representatives of agricultural cooperatives, and local security officers provided additional context to the quantitative trends.

Theme A: The Disruption of the Rural Economy

Interviewed community leaders consistently noted that armed banditry has altered the



commercial dynamics of local markets. A prominent market organizer in the Kujama cluster shared: "Traders from neighboring states used to arrive every Thursday with empty trucks and leave with maize, yams, and ginger. Now, the trucks do not come because drivers refuse to travel routes where they might be ambushed. Our local markets have shrunk to survival levels, and capital is moving away from the community."

Theme B: Extortion and Predatory Levies

Representatives from local farming cooperatives described an organized system of extortion run by armed groups operating out of nearby forest zones. An agricultural cooperative representative explained: "You do not simply clear land or harvest crops anymore. The boys in the forest send letters specifying the amount required for a village to cultivate its lands. If a community fails to pay, the bandits burn down the tractors or abduct the workers. This is an economy based entirely on extortion."

Theme C: The Breakdown of Rural Education

Interviews with local educators highlighted the long-term impact of security threats on human capital development, particularly following mass abductions from educational institutions. A retired school administrator noted: "When a school is attacked and students are taken into the forest for months, the damage extends beyond the immediate trauma. Parents withdraw their children permanently, and teachers seek transfers to urban centers. The closure of rural schools slows educational progress and reduces future opportunities for the youth."

1.15 COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION

INTERROGATING THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SLUMP

The empirical findings confirm that armed banditry has impacted grassroots economic activity in Chikun LGA. The drop in market attendance and the relocation of capital to urban centers indicate that security risks are reshaping local commerce. This trend aligns with Ladan and Matawalli's (2020) observation that rural conflict often discourages external trade and reduces market liquidity.

From a theoretical perspective, this structural decline illustrates the institutional interdependencies described by Structural Functionalism. When the state security apparatus fails to maintain public order, it directly impairs the functioning of local economic systems.



Furthermore, the drop in local commerce diminishes the local government's capacity to collect revenues, limiting its ability to invest in public infrastructure and reinforcing a cycle of institutional instability.

THE WEAPONIZATION OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY DEFICITS

The high rate of farm abandonment and the presence of illegal agricultural levies indicate that the current conflict heavily targets the region's primary economic engine. The extraction of protection fees by armed groups functions as an informal tax system that reduces the profitability of smallholder farming. This dynamic supports Ojo's (2020) concept of "agro-terrorism," where violence or the threat of violence is used to extract resources from agricultural supply chains.

This situation directly contradicts the principles of Human Security Theory, which emphasizes "freedom from want" and reliable food security as essential pillars of human development. In Chikun LGA, the risk of abduction has shifted local agriculture from a productive commercial enterprise to a limited survival strategy, undermining regional food security and complicating progress toward SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

HUMAN CAPITAL DEPLETION AND THE GREED THESIS

The disruption of rural education through targeted school attacks and subsequent closures has long-term implications for regional development. As documented by Amnesty International (2021), extended school closures increase the number of out-of-school children and create a lasting human capital deficit.

This calculated targeting of both individuals and public institutions challenges the traditional explanations of Frustration-Aggression Theory. While structural poverty and youth unemployment may facilitate recruitment into criminal networks, the operational focus on mass abduction and economic extortion suggests that financial profit is a primary driver sustaining these operations. This aligns closely with Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) Greed Thesis, which posits that organized criminal violence is frequently sustained by the economic returns of illicit activities rather than underlying social grievances alone. The kidnapping industry in Chikun LGA operates as a functional illicit market, utilizing violence to extract financial capital from families, communities, and institutional actors.



1.16 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the security crisis in Chikun LGA has significantly hindered local sustainable development. The expansion of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom over the 2015–2025 decade has moved beyond a conventional law-enforcement challenge, developing into an economic crisis that impacts agricultural production, grassroots commerce, and long-term human capital formation.

The empirical evidence confirms that the threat of violence has disrupted local farming cycles, accelerated rural capital flight, and limited access to basic education. These trends show that the institutional breakdowns highlighted by State Fragility models have direct, negative impacts on individual economic safety and regional food security. The study concludes that addressing this crisis requires a comprehensive strategy that pairs essential security measures with long-term, structural initiatives designed to rebuild local governance and support economic recovery at the community level.

1.17 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To restore security and rebuild developmental capacity in Chikun LGA, the study proposes the following integrated policy initiatives:

1. Establish "Safe Farming Frameworks"

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in coordination with the Kaduna State Government, should implement targeted security frameworks for key agricultural areas. This initiative should deploy joint security teams consisting of military, police, and localized civil defense units to patrol primary farming corridors during planting and harvesting seasons. Providing secure transport and establishing fixed communication outposts can help reduce the incidence of rural abductions and allow farmers to return to abandoned lands.

2. Institutionalize and Standardize Community-Based Policing

The Kaduna State Government should formalize and fund localized security structures, such as the Kaduna State Vigilance Service (KADVS), integrating them into the national security framework. These local operators possess detailed knowledge of the local geography and community dynamics. To ensure accountability and effectiveness, this institutionalization must include formal vetting procedures, regular training in human rights standards, and structured information-sharing lines with federal law enforcement agencies.



3. Implement Non-Kinetic Youth Empowerment and Economic Programs

To address the underlying socio-economic drivers of recruitment into criminal syndicates, the Chikun Local Government Council, supported by international development organizations, should establish targeted Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. These initiatives should focus on developing practical skills in sustainable agriculture, agricultural processing, and digital literacy. Providing graduate trainees with access to small-scale micro-credit lines can help offer viable economic alternatives, reducing the appeal of illicit financial networks.

4. Deploy Modern Technology for Forest and Border Surveillance

The Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), in cooperation with the Nigerian Air Force, should increase the use of remote technical surveillance over known forest hideouts bordering Chikun LGA. Utilizing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), satellite imagery, and thermal tracking systems can help security forces monitor movement patterns within remote areas, improving responsiveness and disrupting criminal operations before they reach settled communities.

5. Establish an Institutional Joint Recovery Fund

A dedicated Grassroots Development and Recovery Fund should be co-financed by state authorities, private sector partners, and international donor agencies. This fund should focus specifically on repairing damaged rural schools and health clinics, providing rehabilitation grants to small businesses affected by conflict, and delivering seed inputs and fertilizer subsidies to displaced farmers. Rebuilding these foundational elements is essential for restoring local government revenues and resuming sustainable development at the community level

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