

EFFECTS OF BANDITRY ON FOOD SECURITY IN ZAMFARA STATE

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Abstract

Banditry is a great security issue in the Northeastern part of Nigeria for years. It affected the human life and security of properties. Food security to be precise is one major aspect that is affected where livestock, market and other food related commodities are badly affected in terms of production, consumption and commerce. This paper aims to look in to the effects of banditry on food security in Zamfara State. Selected areas for the study are where data from focus group discussion were derived for the study, it includes among others; Shinkafi, Bakura Maradun and Anka. The study employed Frustration Aggression Theory as the theoretical pedestal to analyze the drive causing food security in the study areas. Among the findings of the study is that, banditry has a great effect on the security of food in the study area, it reduces production, retards other farming activities, destroys livestock, halts commercial activities, causes famine and destroys the environment. Other findings angles on the human security in Zamfara State, lives are not secured, farmlands are abandoned, cattle are rustled which cripples the political economy of Zamfara State. The paper thus recommends a holistic and strategic approach curtail banditry especially in the areas riddled with its effect, farmlands, market places and grazing lands should be adequately protected to secure food and safe peoples' life. Intelligence on the hideouts of the bandits and their plots should be acquired using traditional or people at the grass root, to detect abnormal activities like huge procurement of food from the markets, drugs from pharmacies, supply of fuel and presence of unknown people in the areas.

Keywords: *Banditry, Food Security, Zamfara, Insecurity, Cattle Rustling.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Banditry in nowadays Nigeria and in Zamfara State particularly has reached an alarming rate. It has become everyone's concern because of the incessant attacks of the bandits on farmers, farmland and market place which directly affects livelihood and endangers food security in Zamfara State. Onah (2010) opined the easiness to carry out incessant attacks due to negligence of both the authorities and the people on the movements of the bandits, they move around with ease across the rural communities unperturbed. Also, uneven developments in the states promoting socio-economic across the communities is viewed by Asiwaju (2004), as another reason that facilitates bandit activities, for instance, roads are dilapidated, there is lack of health facilities, inadequate or absence of schools and other educational institutions, in fact the environment is an abandoned forest with no presence of governance which are readily used by bandits as their hideout.

A bandit is an outlaw or robber who is a member of a gang and who generally works in a distant or lawless section of a country. Bandits use weapons to steal or rob people (Onah, 2010). Robberies and violent crimes committed in locations where the rule of law has disintegrated are referred to as banditry (Collins, 2000). The act of an armed gang or individual attacking, destroying, vandalising, and interfering with the activities of a state, an organisation, companies, or other persons or groups is known as banditry. Both joining these gangs and taking part in their attacks is deemed banditry (Collins, 2000).

Since the 19th century, when bandits, who were primarily mounted on horseback, travelled from their hideouts to attack villages and then fled back to their hideouts, banditry has existed and functioned in various places of the world (Asiwaju, 2004). In Europe, the bulk of bandits have resided in mountainous areas like Greece, Italy, Spain, and Turkey (Cassia, 1993). There have been bandits in a variety of Asian countries, including Iran, the Philippines, and India (Bankoff, 1998). Thus, despite continued measures to eradicate it, banditry has a long and lucrative history throughout south Asia, and it is still a concern in India today (Dmella, 2018).

Nearly forty years of unsettled conflicts between nomadic herding communities and established farmers in the high plains of northern Nigeria, notably the North West geopolitical zone in states like Zamfara, contributed to the growth of banditry in Nigeria (Anka, 2017). Beginning in 2009 or thereabouts, banditry in Zamfara State intensified in 2011, especially following the general elections (Anka, 2017). Actually, Zamfara state was the hub of banditry in Nigeria,

home to the bulk of the bandits' leaders. From the state's woodlands, the robbers would ride motorcycles to nearby states like Katsina, where they would operate before returning to their wooded caverns (Farouq and Chukwu, 2020). Thus, by 2010, banditry had expanded over Katsina State, notably in the seven Local Government Areas (LGAs)—Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, and Sabua—that shared a border with Zamfara state. Food security will surely be influenced by banditry since it entails violent and robbery acts against persons, particularly rural populations who are mainly involved in farming, rearing cattle, and other food production activities (FAO, 2008). "When all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life," is how the World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security (FAO, 2008). Food security is simply described by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, 2010) as the availability of food in terms of production, distribution, and consumption.

Food security is unavoidably compromised by any sort of violence that produces instability in rural regions where the bulk of people are farmers. The United Nations reported in September 2020 that assaults by the terrorist organisation Al-Shabaab would worsen food shortages in Mozambique far into 2021 (Channels, 2020). In order to preserve farmers and agricultural interests throughout the nation, the Federal Government of Nigeria understood that banditry constituted a severe danger to farming communities in the country's northern areas. As a consequence, in April 2017, the Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development and Interior jointly initiated the construction of a unique Agro Rangers Corps unit (The Sun, 2017). In order to meet the Federal Government's pledged food security goals, it was predicted that the employment of Agro-Rangers would prevent assaults on farmlands and enhance farmer confidence to work on their fields without fear of attacks (NSCDC, 2020). President Buhari announced the deployment of 5,000 Agro-Rangers to guarantee protection to farmers and agricultural investments countrywide during his June 12 Democracy Day Speech (Oyeleke, 2020). During an on-the-spot assessment of bandits' operations in the state in December 2018, the Minister of Interior stated that the continued attacks by bandits on Zamfara state residents would undermine food security throughout Nigeria (Agency Report, 2018).

Banditry and Bandits

The notion of banditry has developed across time, throughout location, and under varied situations. In the 19th century, a bandit was a freedom fighter in Europe and the Americas

whose objective was in part to secure the emancipation of the downtrodden from the upper class or colonised over the coloniser (Warto, 1994). Moreover, thieves such as Santanon, Herachio Bernel, and Chucho el Roto were widely hailed as heroes of Mexican independence (Robinson, 2009). As a consequence, Mexicans regard the "social workers" with great esteem and respect, despite the fact that the State typically considers them as criminals and nuisances who should be eradicated (Watts, 1987).

But from a historical sense, banditry is nothing new in West Africa. Its genesis and expansion may be traced back to inter-tribal periods when the subregion was still relatively young and marked by conflicts and fighting over limited economic resources and the desire to expand territory in order to achieve political dominance. During the slave trade, colonial, and post-colonial centuries, similar conflicts happened over the majority of Africa (Robinson, 2009). The socioeconomic and political variables continue to play a crucial role in explaining why banditry and other types of conflict are so widespread in the subregion, despite the considerable changes in the nature and pattern of these occurrences in West Africa (Abdullahi, 2019).

The problem of banditry, especially rural banditry related with cattle rustling, has arisen as a substantial public policy burden in modern Nigeria and numerous other African states. Accordingly, it relates to the act of robbing herders of their livestock or seizing other animals and cattle (Abdullahi, 2019). It is increasingly an economically-based sort of crime carried out by informal networks, while being driven by a range of needs and situations (Kwaja, 2014). Therefore, in the environment of subsistence and commercial pastoralism, rural banditry grows as a sort of 'primitive' accumulation of cowherds. Banditry has been a big concern in the recent past (Abdullahi, 2019).

Concerning the Northwest region of Nigeria, notably the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Niger, the pervasive banditry and security problems it raises have grown to be a severe national security threat (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). According to accounts, a bandit outfit that was infamous for killing people, kidnapping, and pillaging cows is on the increase. Members of the organisation have been observed terrorising farms, villages, herders' settlements, and roadways while brandishing automatic rifles (Olaniyan, 2018). 7,000 cattle were allegedly rustled from traditional herders and commercial livestock ranches in Northern Nigeria between October 2013 and March 2014 (Bashir, 2014; Tauna, 2016). In addition, between January and July 2019, 1,460 bandit assaults and 1,460 documented fatalities occurred (Abdullahi, 2019). Before taking away their cows, the bandits frequently killed, maimed, and

sexually molested the peasants (Akowe & Kayode, 2014). In rare cases, however, they also abducted girls or women (Adeniyi, 2015).

Cattle Rustling

The complete herd held by a house may be stolen by force in cattle rustling occurrence, risking the lives of the effected families and communities (Mashi, 2017). Similarly, Mashi (2017) underlined that there is a strong relationship between violent crime and banditry because they are both kinds of social instability that are distinguished by shortcomings in the institutional capabilities of the government to cope with problems of extreme poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. The removal of pastoralist transhumant activities, which is frequently coupled with rape, kidnapping, coordinated attacks on villages and communities, stealing valuables from the occupants, devastation of farmland, and loss of life and property, is the most unsettling consequence of this banditry (Olaniyan, 2018).

According to Cheserek et al. (2012) and Tangorra et al. (2013), cattle rustling is defined as the unauthorized and forcible seizure of livestock from owners or communities, using any weapon at hand with no concern for the lives lost or property destroyed of the victims. Some scholars have sought to differentiate between cattle rustling and cattle raiding, despite the fact that there is no agreed-upon definition for the phrase. For example, Cheserek et al. (2012) have stated that cattle rustling frequently happens on a commercial scale and is carried out aggressively with the purpose of killing or injuring the property of the livestock owners. Contrarily, a cow raid is a nonviolent manner of collecting cows without meaning to inflict harm to the owners. Put another way, stealing from a livestock raid is considered stock thievery, while rustling cattle is labelled rural banditry. However, the majority of scholars used the phrase "cattle raids" to refer to the same phenomena as "cattle rustling" (Greiner, 2013). According to research done in Karamoja, Uganda, raiders were generally spotted carrying offensive weapons like AK-47s for operations, which validates these assertions (Eaton, 2010). More precisely, as the aforementioned explanations make obvious, cow rustling, livestock raids, and rural arm banditry are all the same because the motives behind the crimes, as well as the sorts and qualities of the weapons used, were discovered to be comparable. Because the names are used interchangeably, it is therefore a nomenclature difficulty.

One of the major security dangers confronting Nigeria today is cattle rustling, which has taken many rural communities' lives and property. In light of the aforementioned assertions, Saleh

(2015) noted that the nature and frequency of cattle rustling in Nigeria have made it a hazard to the survival of rural communities, especially in the country's northern areas. Cattle rustling is atrocious and a national tragedy, according to Abubakar (2016), the head of the Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training in Zaria. It's as dangerous as the terrorist outfit Boko Haram, which is often in the headlines. According to Abubakar, 120 individuals were killed in a single day in the northwest area of Nigeria as a consequence of the operations of cattle rustlers. The spike in cattle rustling in Nigeria in recent years has taken the form of significant village raids, in which the communities of pastoralists are often harassed, sexually assaulted, and all accessible items—beyond stock theft—are taken. In the three geopolitical zones in the northern regions of Nigeria, these types of attacks have increased in frequency (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014).

For a long time, the most frightening challenges facing the population of Katsina State's southern portion have been banditry and cattle rustling, notably in the districts that bordered the famed Rugu Forest. Over 220 km of Rugu woods have acted as a shelter for bandits and a no-go zone for everyone (Eaton, 2010). The Rugu Forest poses a security concern to the populations inside the eight (8) frontline local government areas (LGAs) it borders: Sabuwa, Dandume, Safana, Batsari, Danmusa, Kankara, Jibia, and Faskari. It also acts as a nexus for the illicit wildlife trafficking (Shehu, et al 2017). Granted, these bandits, who have converted the forest into their hideouts, have claimed hundreds of lives, raped many women, maimed several individuals, and murdered thousands of cattle worth at billions of naira (Ladan, 2019).

Food Security

In sub-Saharan Africa, around 240 million people, or more exactly, one in four people, do not have access to adequate food. A combination of drought and increased food prices is pushing many to famine and starvation. Now that the world population has crossed 7 billion, how many people will need to be fed? At the World Food Conference in the middle of the 1970s, the word "food security" first surfaced (1974). Food security was defined during the conference as "the supply of food that ensures the availability and price stability of essential foodstuffs at the national and international level." Since the 1974 World Food Conference, the notion of food security has matured into the generally recognized definition that was adopted for the 1996 World Food Summit. Food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and

economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life," according to a 1996 World Food Summit agreement.

One of the Millennium Development Goals is food security, which is often viewed as a critical measure of a nation's progress towards overall well-being (Vasco, 2007). Food security, therefore, is the availability and accessibility of food; a family is considered to be food secure if its members do not suffer famine or hunger (FAO 2001). This definition, which neglected the quality of the food that is available, took a microscopically microscopical perspective of food security, principally from the aspect of availability.

The 1996 World Food Summit defined "Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional, and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Otekunrin et al. (2019) used a more sophisticated meaning of this word. In a nutshell, food security in a family refers to everyone having access to appropriate food for an active, healthy life at all times.

Food security is a complicated problem combining social, environmental, and economic elements. Even though there are more food-insured individuals in Asia than in Africa overall, 18 of the 23 nations with the highest rates of undernourishment are in Africa. Four unique dimensions of food security may be identified based on this definition: food stability, availability, access, and utilization. To fulfil the aims of food security, all four conditions must be addressed simultaneously, according to the handy booklet Food Security Information for Action. Based on FAO the four components can be delineated as follows:

Availability: There has to be physical, social and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food by all people and at all times. Such food must satisfy the dietary needs and preference of the people. It is the amount of food physically available in a region or place. To a great extent, food availability depends on the level of local production; imports, stock levels and net trade in food items.

Access: This refers to economic, social and physical access to food by all people at all times. That an adequate amount of food is available at the regional, national or international level does not imply it is accessible at household level. It must be locally accessible and affordable.

Utilization: Generally, utilization refers to the pattern in which the body makes use and benefits from the various food nutrients. Utilization is determined by food quality, nutritional values, preparation method and storage as well as feeding pattern.

Stability: this refers to the stability of food availability, accessibility and utilization over time. All three components must be present simultaneously at all times. A person who has adequate access to quality food today is still considered food insecure if he has periodic inadequate access to food, which may cause his nutritional level to deteriorate. Variation in weather conditions, political and economic instability, and price fluctuation are some factors that may impact on food security status.

Without a doubt, the most essential necessity for human survival is food. Despite the huge efforts made to raise the amount and quality of the world's food supply, food insecurity is still a serious concern, particularly in the southern nations of Asia and Africa. In Nigeria, for example, malnutrition has claimed the lives of countless citizens. According to African Food Security Briefs (AFSB), roughly one in three individuals in sub-Saharan Africa are undernourished. Without healthy and well-nourished people, establishing sustainable economic progress in Nigeria and throughout Africa would remain a pipe dream. In truth, a lot of social crises, such as riots and civil disturbances in various big cities throughout the world, have unavoidably resulted from the failure to ensure food security. According to Behnassi et al., the food system and its governance are intricate processes that frequently cross over or even contradict official norms and regulations. These conditions are further aggravated by unwritten laws and behaviours that may be impervious to governmental persecution. Therefore, there is a considerable link between food insecurity and other global concerns like population growth, an increase in energy use, the loss of land and water, and climate change.

The top priority among the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is food security. Food security has remained one of the largest concerns in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the fact that over 60 countries made significant performance in their attempts to complete the MDG hunger aim of lowering the number of food poor people between 1990 and 2015. Particularly in Africa, certain places of acute hunger have aroused serious concerns. As of 2006, around 39 nations suffered serious food shortages and needed food help from other countries globally, with 25 of these severely food insecure countries being in Africa.

2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Regarding the degree to which banditry and food security are connected, notably in Katsina State, the research has yielded inconsistent and unclear conclusions. Some studies have even demonstrated a negative link between food security and banditry in Nigeria. According to these studies, there is a negative correlation between Fulani/Herdsmen and food security because banditry activities like cattle rustling, armed robberies, and rapes can result in killings, cattle theft, farmland abandonment, and village destruction, among other negative outcomes that negatively impact food security (Abbass, 2012). Some of the few empirical research on food security in the context of banditry in Nigeria generally and Katsina state specifically are given below.

When Smith and Bagu (2017) asserted that the majority of bandits are criminal gangs made up primarily of young people from farming and herding communities who have left their communities and adopted new values and behaviours such as robbing people on the highways and rustling cattle for personal gain, they expressed concern about this new development in banditry. They further stated that both the agricultural and herding groups are victims of this crime. According to a report by the Centre for Democracy and Development (PDFD, 2015), bandits have extended their criminal operations beyond highway robberies and rustling to include looting, creating traps in local markets, and killing defenceless Nigerians who are not armed.

Insecurity and economic growth in Nigeria are adversely connected, according to a research by Adofu & Alhassan (2018) that employed trend analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation of the failed state index, the human development index, and Legatum's prosperity index. According to Adofu and Alhassan (2018), there has been a recent displacement of people in certain localities of Katsina state due to recurrent banditry and kidnapping, which has resulted in the closure of schools and the abandonment of farming and trading activities due to fear of attack and the need to flee for one's life. These results are consistent with the horrific impacts of Boko haram terrorism on the economic environment of the North-eastern states of Nigeria, notably Borno state. The nation's political and economic leaders, as well as the general populace, are mourning over the deaths of loved ones, lost investments, and the lack of safety in many regions of the country owing to the challenging security concerns that have taken on a bigger relevance (Onifade, et al, 2013). A study on the influence of the Fulani invasion on the degree of household poverty among farmers of arable crops in Southwest Nigeria was carried out by Adepoju et al. (2017). The research employed a logistic regression model and

descriptive statistics to assess qualitative data from a well-structured questionnaire in the sampling region. It discovered that adults between the ages of 16 and 49 were the majority of crop producers who were most impacted by banditry, which raised their degree of poverty and had a detrimental influence on the nation's food security (Adepoju et al., 2017).

One thousand (1000) civilian killings were recorded from January to December 2019 in the North West region owing to bandit activities, according to a document from the West Africa Network of Peace Building (WANEP, 2019). In reaction to this alarming development, the same source said that a committee chaired by the former Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, was constituted to engage in discussions with bandits in Zamfara State between June 2011 and May 2019. During this period, the committee observed that armed banditry in the State had resulted in the widowhood of 4,983 women, the orphanage of 25,000 children, and the relocation of almost 190,000 individuals (WANEP, 2019). John Campbell (2021) however, noted in his blog that although the army conducted a number of military operations in the nation to put an end to banditry—Operation Puff Adder, "Diran Mikya," "Sharan Daji," "Hударin Daji," "Thunder Strike," and "Exercise Harbin Kunama III"—they have only caused conflicting emotions in the minds of Nigerians. The program, Africa in Transition and Nigeria on the edge. Although the operation has had some success—it has occasionally held the bandits at bay, damaged their caverns, and killed some of them—their activities are still developing and they are launching more violent attacks on a continuous basis. According to Campbell (2021), the governors of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara struck a peace accord with the armed bandits in 2019 in response to these issues; unfortunately, the agreement crumbled when many persons were slaughtered and abducted.

A review of rural banditry in Nigeria's Kaduna state's "Kamuku Forest" was authored by Gadzama et al. (2018) in the Birnin-Gwari local government zone. The study used descriptive statistics on the qualitative data collected from well-structured questionnaires in designated areas of Birnin-Gwari LGA to demonstrate how various factors, including age, sex, and marital status, poverty, greed, and a lack of security, have contributed to the start and worsening of rural banditry in the state. This has led in the robbery and looting of agricultural supplies and animals as well as the indiscriminate kidnapping of local inhabitants, which has placed the region's and the state's human and food security at danger (Gadzama et al., 2018). Using cross-sectional data from 1488 respondents chosen from the state's local government districts, Abdulrasheed et al. (2018) conducted study on the "Incidence and impact of cattle rustling in

some rural communities in Katsina state" using inferential statistics and the classical independent t-test. According to the study's results, inhabitants in rural regions are not severely uprooted or on vacation, but the fear of cattle rustling still adversely impacts their economic well-being by decreasing their income levels (Abdulrasheed et al., 2018).

Research titled "The menace of cattle rustling in North-west Nigeria: A case study of Katsina state" was conducted out by Shehu et al. in 2017. Shehu et al. (2017) employed descriptive statistics in their analysis, employing a standardized questionnaire that was given to seven (7) local government areas chosen for the study. These territories were sites where the danger of instability, including cattle rustling, banditry, and kidnapping, was common. They came to the conclusion that the threat of cattle rustling and insecurity generally causes livestock theft in the state, as well as the loss of lives and property and the distortion of rural residents' economic activities, all of which have a lasting negative impact on the state's rural population, human injury rates, and levels of poverty (Shehu et al., 2017). This finding might contradict the prior idea that food security grows in proportion to the frequency of disagreements between farmers and herders (Owolabi et al., 2016).

Theoretical Framework: Frustration-Aggression Theory

This paper adopts theory of Frustration-Aggression theory. The theory of frustration-aggression was proposed by Fererabend and Fahrauben in 1972, and it was described in a book released in 1939 by five scholars at the Yale Institute of Human Relations. The basic assumption of the paradigm is that aggressiveness always originates from frustration, that aggressive conduct always implies the presence of frustration, and that frustration always generates aggression (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; Fererabend & Feirauben, 1972). Therefore, violent action always arises from frustration. Additionally, they classified frustration as an obstacle to an evoked goal response happening at the proper period in the behaviour sequence (Dollard et al., 1939).

Miller (1941) noticed that presuming that violence is necessarily caused by dissatisfaction or that frustration must always precede aggressiveness was overly broad. Due to his participation, the notion experienced a second lap that reflected the more commonly understood fact that aggravation may lead to a range of varied sorts of reactions, including the inciting of enmity (Miller, 1941). A few years later, however, Berkowitz (1989) offered a fundamental change to the thesis. He argued that people are more likely to attack when they discover that they are

being intentionally sabotaged or denied what is rightfully theirs rather than when the interference is an unintentional occurrence, and that aggression can be motivated by inherent personal benefits to the aggressor rather than necessarily by past wrongdoings. According to his concept, frustrations are unpleasant experiences that only make individuals more aggressive when they have a damaging consequence (Berkowitz, 1989).

Thus, frustrations and attempts to generate economic assets are important drivers behind the country's rising bandit attacks, especially in the northwest. Frustrations give rise to frightening acts of banditry, including physical assaults, kidnappings, cattle rustling, and agricultural invasions (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018). Additionally, Fererabend & Feirauben (1972) claim that discontent coming from a person's inability to attain their aims leads to aggression. Thus, aggressive behaviour that develops from difficulties like unemployment and poverty, among others, is what leads to banditry (Maureen & Blessing, 2018; Adegoke, 2019). This research applies this theory to the present examination of bandit activities on food security in Zamfara state. According to numerous literatures, the country's banditry is a consequence of frustrated elements of society's desire to escape poverty and rise up the social ladder. For this reason, ransom taking is a typical occurrence in banditry operations. When the ransom is not paid, however, the bandits grow restless and enraged and resort to killing their prisoners. For this reason, in analysing the present situation, the two theories start to complement one another and strengthen one another.

3. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

In the in-depth interview conducted by the researcher in order to find more on banditry and its effect on Food Security, some of the interviews dwell generally on the dangers of banditry, its effect on human security and the difficulty the communities are experiencing. An interviewee for instance narrated his dilemma saying:

“I never knew that after 58 years of my existence in my community, I will wake up one day to witness the burning of my family, our farmland and crops, shooting and killing of my family members on the farm and raping of my three innocent daughters in my presence, I wept bitterly without anything to do”

Other interviewees hailing from Shinkafi and Anka local government areas of the State also expressed their concern on the complicity of their wards in banditry:

“Our youths have now found new businesses, collaborating with bandits, they know the spies of the bandits in the community and often go there to give

information about who is keeping money at home, the bandits will just ride on bikes numbering between 20 to 30 in broad daylight and come straight to your houses to demand for the money and even direct us to where we kept the money to bring it out or they kill you. They will collect the money and yet kidnap your wife or daughters and still ask you to look for money to pay as ransom to serve as punishment”.

Other interviewees disclosed that:

“In Katakare village in Birnin Magaji Local Government Areas, an area which has been known over the years as major cattle markets, the bandits have rustled over 1000 cattle heads and headed to their settlement in the forests, now we are witnessing shortages in our meat consumption and a large chunk of our sources of livelihood and cattle trading has been affected”.

When further prompted to find out whether they have received any support from the government so far, the interviewees had this to say;

“Which government? The same government whose security officers even know the routes used by the bandits, let me tell you, some of them even have the telephone numbers of the bandits, which is why when the bandits strike, you don't see any security personnel around, they also serve as informants to the bandits. Do you know what happened in Katakare recently, when they attacked the town? All the security personnel couldn't resist them, when they did nothing, our vigilantes rushed into the police station, picked the arms of the police officers and retaliated the gun shots, the bandits ran away after killing eight vigilantes', the next day police officers started raiding our houses to arrest those vigilantes' that entered they police station. Do you know that the vigilantes wilfully returned the guns to the station? Yet many of them were arrested by the police. We are now leaving in fear, afraid of our lives and having shortage of our cash and food crops to survive”.

Some interviewees, interjected:

“do you know that if we want to go to the farms to harvest our farm produce, we now have to go to the spies and informants with money to inform them to kindly tell the bandits that we are hungry and need to go to our farms to harvest food and cash crops? This is how serious the situation has become”.

Lamenting about their situation, three of the interviewees raised their concern imploring for government intervention:

“kindly go back and tell the government to provide new places for us, we don't know where to go, our great grandfathers were born here, our farmlands are here. We are not educated and cannot do government jobs in the city, please help us convey our situations to the government”.

In contrast, two of the interviewees disagreed with the plea saying “which government are you talking about; they will only take you to the camps located in Anka town and be feeding you and your family with bread”.

As for others, they are buried in despair and hopelessness:

“I have lost hope in government since our chief was kidnapped, I was among those that took my motorcycle to Bakura town to dispose of it in order to bring my own contribution to be taken to the bandits in the bush, we are now contacting our fore-fathers and invoking our masquerades to come out, we spend so much time in our individual shrines praying against the bandits return to our villages daily”.

Generally, if nothing drastically is done by government through protection of lives and properties, the situation of anarchy may take place as citizens and indeed residents of Zamfara state are likely to resort to self-help of any form in defence of their existence.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that banditry poses a threat of significance importance to availability and security of food in Zamfara State. Farmland which is one of the variables in the study revealed that destruction of farmland also affected food security negatively. It is devastating considering the loss of cattle, sheep, rams and others. Also, animal husbandry which is a source of livelihood in most part of the affected areas has been badly affected which has led to loss in business and worsen the market in the affected areas.

This is collaborated by Adofu and Alhassan’s (2018) research where they conducted a study on insecurity and economic development in Nigeria. The reoccurrence of banditry and kidnapping led to closure of schools and markets, regressed farming and trading activities for the fear of indiscriminate attacks. As a result, the production of crops for consumption and export has dropped and human security in the area is greatly affected for the loss of lives.

With people being killed on daily basis, others alive become fear-stricken and cannot freely carry out their domestic chores, attend to their farms nor sell their farm products. These and other factors had led to challenges of availability of food for consumption and exportation thereby risen the crisis of food security.

5. CONCLUSION

Banditry is alarmingly a threat to human security and to the means of livelihood of the people in Zamfara State. The activities of these bandits have pushed the State to battle with its food production for consumption and other purposes. This is as a result of the incessant attacks on farmers by bandits in their farms which led to the abandoning of farmlands. The attacks led to the killing of farmers and instilled fear in the communities, thus, a challenge to food security in Zamfara State.

Banditry has other effects which include; depopulation of farmers in Zamfara, rampant kidnapping and continued demands of outrageous ransoms from both farmers and other inhabitants of the affected areas kidnapped. To stay safe, farmers thus stayed away from farming and other daily activities which directly or indirectly affect food security in Zamfara State. Cattle rustling is also a disturbing phenomenon that affect food security in the State, it made rearing cattle and other animals a dangerous expenditure because bandit attacks both at home and in the markets. Productive communities are now chased out and away from their destinations only for them to be camped in IDPs and await dash-out meals.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study the research recommended that security agencies should be placed in strategic locations to protect farmers and build confidence in them to carry out their farming activities. The security personnel should also be armed with sophisticated weapons so as to repel or proactively attack bandits in suspected areas. Also, there is need to create awareness towards community participation on security.

It also recommended that government becomes more proactive in arresting and prosecuting criminal bandits in order to reaffirm its position as principal provider of security to the people. This will improve the level of human security and create more confidence in the people thereby securing lives and promoting food security.

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