



Impact of Armed Banditry and Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood in North Western Nigeria

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Abstract

The primary responsibility of every government based on Thomas Hobbes social contract theory, is among other things, protection of lives and property of its citizens. However, in Northwestern Nigeria, the security of life and property of a common man is becoming a mirage. The region is presently affected by banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping. This affects mainly the eight frontline Local Government Areas (LGAs) namely Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, Dandume and Sabuwa of Katsina state. Anka, Maradun, Maru Shinkafi, Tsafe and Zurmi of Zamfara state and Chikun, Kajuru, Kachia, Zangon-Kataf, Kauru, Lere, Birnin-Gwari, Giwas of Kaduna state. While there is a consensus among scholars of the devastating effects of the conflicts, only a few studies have looked at the impact of the conflict on women and sought to explain how women are the biggest victims. Therefore, this attempt bridges the gap in literature. The study adopts the frustration-aggression theory as its theoretical framework. Survey design and structured questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion were used as an instrument for the collection of data. Data generated were analyzed using descriptive analysis and inferential statistics while qualitative data generated from the in-depth interview were analyzed by using transcribed information. After careful analysis and interpretation of the data collected, it was found that women are the biggest victims of the conflict which government need to step up efforts to address the menace. Finding also reveals that, the conflicts have impacted negatively on Political and socio-economic development in the frontline Local Government Areas (LGAs). The paper concluded that protection of women against all violence is the responsibility of all. Therefore, there is need to urgently device new strategies in confronting the bandits and ending banditry in Katsina state. This is important considering the fact that the bandits still carry out attacks in the region despite the presence of the troops.

Keyword: Banditry, Kidnapping, Governance, Northwestern Nigeria, Women Security.

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Introduction

Nigeria is currently grappling with existential security threats. These threats range from the Boko Haram menace in the Northeast, armed bandits in the Northwest, kidnapping in the North-Central, cultism and yahoo boys in the Southwest, and until recently, the Niger-Delta militancy in the South-South. These anti-social forces had decided to make the Nigerian state ungovernable and expose its citizens to unimaginable level of insecurity in different parts of the country. These conflicts have reduced the country into war zone, characterized by a high rate of destruction of lives and properties. This explains why there were several renewed calls for the adoption of divergent approaches to mitigate the ferocious, intermittent and persistent blood bath in Nigeria.

In a latter part of 2020, reports shows that the Nigerian armed forces killed 2,403 Boko-Haram terrorists, bandits and other criminal's offenders, as well as arrested and recovered 1,910 persons and ammunitions. In spite of these successes, the state at which Nigeria is as a country currently is unbearable. The country at large is facing the greatest rise of insecurity, violence and crisis of all sorts. Series of crimes, hostilities and disorder have become the order of the day. The consequence of these anomalies is the death of many Nigerians, displacement of citizens from their original communities and homes, poverty and starvation. According to The West Africa Network for Peace building (WANPBR) reports (2019) there was a 1.4% increase in the number of violent deaths in Nigeria in 2018. Fatalities increased from 10, 515 in 2017 to 10, 665 in 2018. This has led many to question the ability of the Nigerian national security. According to the social contract analysis, government is the sine qua non to the resolution of any kind of instability in the state. But the government has been slow in tackling the insecurity. Currently, the issue of bandits has become a common terminology in Nigeria. This is because, every reports document the activities of bandits and their evil practices. Many authors have stated that most of these bandits are not indigenous Nigerians. This alone, calls to question the country's capacity to defend its territorial integrity. According to UNHCR (2020), the most dangerous states in Nigeria in 2018 included Borno, Zamfara, Benue, Kaduna and Adamawa. The report further stated that, these states were mostly ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency, banditry and pastoral conflicts. Also, cited in (WANEP, 2020), the report of the committee setup to find



solutions to banditry in Zamfara State, supervised by the erstwhile Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, reported a total of 6,319 deaths including women and children between June 2011 and May 2019 in the State. Similarly, an estimated 4,983 women were widowed, 25,050 children orphaned, and 190,340 others internally displaced between June 2011 and May 2019 in Zamfara State. Furthermore, in Katsina State, over 2,000 people were killed, 500 communities destroyed and over 33,000 people displaced. If one can advance a general theory on banditry in the area of study, it is that, although social breakdown is a constant stimulus for brigandage within the State, its escalation, and threat to regional security is a factor of the unstable external political environment (UNICEF, 2019).

The Nigerian security forces initially responded to this issue by increasing the deployment of the military and police to the troubled zones. These deployments were code named “Operation Puffr Adder,” “Diran Mikiya,” “Sharan Daji,” “Hadarin Daji,” “Thunder Strike,” and “Exercise Harbin Kunama III.” But these operations have produced mixed results. While the security forces successfully pushed back bandit attacks, destroyed several hideouts and killed or arrested hundreds of bandits, attacks have continued. Against this backdrop, the governors of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara, agreed on peace deal with the armed bandits in 2019. According to Governor Aminu Bello Masari of Katsina, negotiation was the best way to achieve lasting peace in the North West. The agreement involved disarmament, the release of kidnapped victims, and an amnesty for the bandits. But the agreements did not last. While there was a lull in attacks toward the end of 2019, the attacks have peaked up again in 2020. Masari (2019). One state governor recently admitted that the bandits had reneged on the terms of their agreement. Shinkafi, (2020). Following the failure of the governors’ peace deal, Nigeria’s former chief of army staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Burutai said that dialogue was not a good military option for tackling banditry, kidnapping, and other heinous crimes bedeviling the North-West. General Burutai’s admonition is telling. Whether it is dispersing protests, responding to separatist agitations or, as in one particularly brutal case, responding to the obstruction of General Burutai’s convoy, the penchant that violent problems require violent solutions is ingrained in the psyche of the Nigerian security forces. The resort to shallow and poorly conceived peace deals is an age-old failure of the Nigerian security and political establishment. However, despite the



North-Western State governments' commitment to contain banditry, bandit' activities continue to escalate in an alarming proportion. This is evident in how bandits take over towns and villages, constituting themselves into 'Kangaroo government,' collecting taxes from the locals and killing some of them with impunity. Marafa (2019).

This study sets to examine Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood in North Western Nigeria where armed banditry and kidnapping have become widespread. The states in the region are Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. However, the impact of banditry and kidnapping has been felt more in Zamfara, Katsina and Katsina States. It should be noted that this security challenge has spread beyond our area of study to some parts of north central, particularly Niger and Plateau States. Armed banditry and kidnapping have become widespread with the effect felt on all aspects of life in our area of study. For the purpose of clarity, this paper focuses mainly on kidnappings which takes place in our area of study and the consequent impact of that act on women.

Banditry

Conceptually, banditry is a derivative of the term bandit meaning an unlawful armed group terrorizing people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Egwu, 2016).

Banditry simply refers to criminal acts such as armed robbery or allied violent crimes, namely kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or community raids. The act involves the use of force, threat to life, to intimidate persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). Armed Banditry is a type of organized crime committed by outlaws typically involving the threat or use of violence. A person who engages in banditry is known as a bandit and primarily commits crimes such as extortion, robbery and murder, either as an individual or in groups. Banditry is a vague concept of criminality and in modern usage, can be synonymous for gangsterism, brigandage, marauding and thievery. Banditry can be motivated by economic or political interests. The economic angle to it is the quest to accumulate wealth while the political



side has to do with the desire to rob, assault or to liquidate a person or groups of financial capacity based on political or ideological stand point. Thus, bandits are gang groups terrorizing and dispossessing local people or travelers of their valuable items or properties such as merchandise, money, cattle, camel, and sheep, among others. They operate within and along rural borders with the assistance of their local collaborators including in some cases, state agents deployed to work for the safety and security of the people (Abdullahi, 2019). This paper views banditry as any act of armed robbery, rape, raid and holding someone hostage against his or her will for ransom either for economic or political reasons.

Concept of Kidnapping

Scholars have defined kidnapping using various terms because the concept lacks straight-jacket description. However, a few of such descriptions are considered in this section starting with Turner (1998), who contends that kidnapping is an act of capturing people under duress and conveying them to a terminus where they are held in an illegitimate confinement against their wish. Similarly, Asuquo (2009; Nkwede, 2013)) sees kidnapping as a popular crime against the law and an annoying action carried out against the victims, while Abraham (2010) cited in Ene, (2018), perceives kidnapping as an act of capturing, taking away and keeping people in custody either through force or deceit. Robertson (1968) (cited in Ene, 2018), views kidnapping as an offence relating to capturing, authorizing seizing or taking away of persons coercively and subjecting them to unintentional servitude with the aim of collecting a ransom or in furtherance to another crime. Nwaorah (2009) contends that kidnapping is a deliberate deed carried out by aggrieved persons with an intention of arresting people's value who could be salvaged by those who care for them.

Dwelling on the above various perspectives, it could be observed that most authors united on the fact that kidnapping is a criminal and forceful act deliberately carried out against the wish of the victims for monetary gain, forcefully or deceitfully. However, none of the above views perceived kidnapping as a reaction against injustice. Although, Nwaorah, (2009) perceives the act as the action carried out by aggrieved persons, but the source of their grievances was not mentioned. The paucity of justice in Nigeria since independence could be associated with kidnapping just as



it has connected injustice with intimidation, criminality and violence in the study of Ogungbola, (2013). This author advances that such cases persist because the Nigerian government usually denying the populace rudimentary requirements for survival Ogungbola, (2013) by increasing and normalizing suffering for the populace through unemployment, lack of social and infrastructural facilities, poverty, lack of health and educational facilities etc. Thus, the commonalities are frustrated to survive via any means available to them, kidnapping inclusive.

Kidnapping is not a new or emerging crime, as some observers may believe (Caplan, 2011; Okoli, 2011). It has long been recognized as a significant criminal disorder in contemporary society (Gallagher & Tzanelli, 2009 cited in Okoli 2015). Nonetheless, current scholarly thinking on the subject is still evolving. In this light, the actuality of kidnapping has been variably interpreted from the following perspectives:

- i. Criminal Intention
- ii. Primitive amassing;
- iii. Capitalist transaction and/or exploitation that is perverse (Tzanelli, 2009; Hobsbawn, 2000; Detotto, McCannon & Vannini, 2012).

Tzanelli (2009), in what passes for a political economics perspective, cites Okoli (2015), who sees kidnapping as an exchange. Kidnapping, he claims, is a "kind of transaction based in modern socioeconomic and political systems of society." He goes on to say that "kidnapping is the illegal counterpart of a lawful exploitation system that has existed for centuries: capitalism exchange." The concept of trade, as suggested by the preceding, is central to every abduction situation. However, exchange in abduction does not follow the logic of an open market transaction, in which the conditions are open and readily negotiated. Instead, trade in abduction is forced and determined by the kidnapper's illegitimate whims (s). The trade can take several forms, including material, political, and symbolic exchanges.

Historicizing Armed Banditry and Kidnapping in Northern Nigeria

Banditry did not originate today in northern Nigeria. There were bandits who operated on a small scale on some high way along the forest who attacked traders in the past. That was the reason



travelers moved together in large numbers with adequate security. What is new is the way and manner in which banditry has become a well organized crime covering large territorial space. Armed banditry emerged alongside its dreaded components; cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery and the last aspect is sexual assault which has not attracted much attention. Indeed banditry is the generic term related, but not limited to organized crime associated with violence, terror, stealing and rustling of animals, dehumanization, kidnapping and sexual assault.

Therefore, the organized form of the crime started in an area where there has been many centuries of co-existence between two major ethnic groups, the Hausa who were predominantly farmers and the Fulani whose way of life was based on herding of animals especially cattle. There was climate change in the area resulting in the shortage of arable land for farming and even pasture. The state of Zamfara has a land mass of 39, 762 square kilometers. In the last sixty years, over 350,000 square kilometers of the already arid region started turning into desert thereby reducing arable land in the region Momale, Nawaj and Duperas (2019). The shortage of pasture ground led to herders allowing their herds to graze in farmlands which resulted in conflicts between the farmers and the pastoralist. It should be noted that, the shortage of pasture was not naturally induced. The 1999 democratic government of Zamfara allocated the pasture areas of Zamfara to elite farmers, thereby upsetting the life cycle of the herders in the area which dated back to many centuries. This condition led to the emergence of the activities of bandits who steal domestic animals to make a living. In order to stop the bandits from stealing at the early stage of the crisis, vigilantes formed a group to counter such acts, and in the process innocent Fulani were killed. The crisis in Zamfara took a violent turn on 7th July, 2011, with the killing of innocent Fulani by the vigilantes. At the end of it all, about five hundred innocent Fulani and bandits were killed. The Fulani organized themselves and brought AK 47 rifle and other sophisticated weapons and started a counter attack on villages that participated in the killing of Fulani and bandits (Nadama, 2019). The crisis took an ethnic dimension between the Hausa vigilantes killing the Fulani and on the other side the Fulani being killed (Vanguard, May29, 2019). It should be noted that, Fulani groups were not the only ones involved in the crisis. Some Fulani became victims of cattle rustling as their herds were taken away and some of them killed in the process. The Fulani Association of Herders in Nigeria (Miyetti Allah) said that



they have been affected by the activities of the bandits, as they lost 30% of their cattle to the crisis that had taken place (BBC News, 05 July, 2020).

The act of organized crime has become more disastrous due to the level of sophistication and organization which involves the recruitment of young men and women into the act. The gloomy aspect of it all is that, the bandits have not taken the act as a form of acquisition of wealth and property alone, it has taken an ethnic dimension, whereby the Fulani have organized themselves into groups, in order to protect the Fulani ethnic group. That probably explains the involvement of Fulani elders and youngsters and even the women folk in the crime. Those who could not give their children in the battle for survival, were asked to contribute wealth (Vanguardngr.com, May 29, 2019). Therefore, what started as defense from attack degenerated into full blown banditry attack on non-Fulani groups and even Fulani who did not support violence. This adoption of force by the police and the military in stopping the dastardly acts resulted in bombing of the bandits den in Zamfara. The result was not positive. The killing of the bandits led to more reprisal attacks and more people were killed.

This was the genesis of the killings, cattle rustling and kidnappings which emanated from Zamfara, subsuming all the local government of Zamfara State. These dastardly acts were perpetrated due the forest cover which the forest region of the area offered to the bandits. They know the inside out of the forest that is why they are able to establish their base and camps. The bandits have the advantage of controlling the forest areas due to semi-control and neglect of such areas by the government. Therefore, they became the masters of the region. The porous borders between Nigeria and Niger Republic also gave them the opportunity to acquire weapons at will. These organized crimes became more lucrative than pastoralism, as whenever they attack villages they cart away animals, loot shops and kidnap people whom would only be released upon the payment of ransom.

The situation in Zamfara State as regards to armed banditry was perceived as a threat not only to the State, but the whole of Northern Nigeria (Vanguardngr.com, May 29, 2019). The fears became real as the conflict transcended into other states neighboring Zamfara. However, the effect is not the same across all the states in the region. In some of the areas more local



government areas have been affected by this crisis than in other areas in the region. What has been heard as Zamfara crisis took a new dimension and escalated into an organized crime whereby it spread to neighboring states bordering Zamfara State. In Sokoto State, ten out of the twenty three local governments have been affected. Also in Katsina State, ten out of thirty four local governments have been affected by the crisis. According to findings by the International Crisis Group, the spread of banditry in other States of the region took this dimension:

Starting in late 2015, attacks by herder-allied armed groups, vigilantes and criminally motivated groups spread from Zamfara to other states (primarily, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Niger) with varying intensity. Violence in these states has been concentrated in areas near their borders with Zamfara, or close to the forests where all sorts of armed groups have made camp. In Katsina State, most attacks have taken place in ten of the thirty four local government areas, particularly in Batsari, Danmusa, Faskari, Kankara and Safana. In Sokoto state, violence has broken out in nine of the twenty three local government areas, but mostly in Gada, Sabon Birni, Goronyo and Isa to the north, along with Rabah and Tureta to the east. In Kaduna State, the attacks have occurred mostly in the Birnin-Gwari, Igabi, Giwa, Kajuru and Chikun local government areas. In Niger state, ten of the twenty five local government areas have experienced attacks by roving armed groups-mostly in Shiroro, Mariga and Rafi.

Thus, banditry and its allied crimes are felt to a large extent in the afore-mentioned areas of the region. Some states went to the extent of negotiating with the bandits for peace. Katsina State for example, negotiated with the bandits in the year 2019, and relative peace was achieved in the area, whereby some of the bandits were disarmed. The Governor of Katsina State in an Interview with the Nation said the dialogue yielded fruits (Masari, 2019). In fact, there was relative peace in Katsina due to the negotiation Oyelude, (2020). However, the peace enjoyed in Katsina from banditry and kidnapping was short lived. As more attacks were unleashed on communities in Katsina State. In the year 2020, within three months over a hundred people were killed, and many sexually assaulted in banditry attacks in Katsina State (BBC News, 05 July, 2020). This goes to show that negotiation with the bandits is not a way out. And even when force is applied, and the den of the bandits bombarded, they tend to shift their base to the forest, as this has been the case with bandits in Birnin Gwari and Zamfara forests.



Certainly, there has to be a solution to this crisis, because the bandits have been having hey days in their attacks of communities. Some of the highways have become no-go-areas. The Kaduna-Abuja road has been overtaken by the activities of bandits, whereby banditry and kidnappings have become lucrative business. Passing vehicles have been attacked and passengers kidnapped, and some shot dead. In fact, Kaduna-Abuja road being an important link that connects north western States and North Eastern States with Federal Capital Territory has been used by the bandits to attack vehicles and people plying that road. Thus, many vehicles were attacked by the bandits. The kidnapped victims included prominent political office holders in Nigeria such as federal and state lawmakers, ex ministers and expatriates. The kidnappers were mostly in army or military uniforms, as a disguise strategy to attack their prey during the operation. The crime rate on that road has been increasing almost on a daily basis from 2016 to date (Rufus, & Eyo, 2017). Kidnapping of students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, along that road in November, 2020 is a testimony to how deadly travelling along that road has become.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Routine Activity Theory (RAT) as theoretical framework of analysis

Routine Activity Theory (RAT)

Kidnapping is a crime. Therefore, this paper adopts Marcus Felson and Lawrence Cohen's Routine Activity Theory (RAT) of crime in explaining the menace of banditry and kidnapping on rural women livelihood in Nigeria's north-west region. The theory was propounded in 1979 (Hsieh & Wang 2018). Felson and Cohen used the theory to explain the changes in the rate of crime in the United States of America for the past four decades. Since its formulation, the theory has been extensively applied to studies on crimes, and has become one of the most cited theories in criminology. Unlike criminological theories of criminality, RAT studies crime as an event; it closely relates crime to its environment and emphasizes its ecological process thereby diverting academic attention away from mere offenders.

The theory holds that crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial-temporal convergence of three essential elements of crime, namely a motivated offender, an attractive target, and the



absence of capable guardianship. According to the exponents of the theory, motivated offenders are individuals who are capable and willing to commit a crime while suitable targets can be persons or objects that are considered by offenders as vulnerable or attractive. On the other hand, guardianship can be a person or an object that is effective in deterring offense to occur. Mere physical presence of guardianship in space and time can deter crime committal.

Basic Assumptions of RAT

The following are the basic assumptions of RAT:

- a. Crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial-temporal convergence of three essential elements of crime, namely a motivated offender, an attractive target, and the absence of capable guardianship;
- b. The factors that render a particular target attractive are situational and crime-specific;
- c. Crime can be perpetrated by anyone who has the opportunity in terms of capability and availability of vulnerable target;
- d. Victims have choices on whether to be victims mainly by possibly avoiding situations where a crime can be committed against them (Cohen & Felson 1979).

Application of the Theory

According to this theory, crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial-temporal convergence of three essential elements of crime, namely a motivated offender, an attractive target, and the absence of capable guardianship. A motivated offender in this case is the kidnapper who is motivated to commit crime because of frustration caused by unemployment, poverty and economic hardship among others. This explains why these kidnappers ask for ransom from their victims' families. Attractive targets are vulnerable persons such as innocent travelers on the highways or those considered to be rich enough or capable of paying ransom. Some of these attractive targets are even kidnapped from the comfort of their homes. Absence of capable guardianship means the absence of law enforcement agents (security officers) that are supposed to provide security for the lives and property of the citizens. The absence of these security agents



makes the citizens even more vulnerable since protection is lacking. This is typically the situation in Katsina State where kidnappers are having a sustained field day in criminal escapades that is threatening to overrun the North-West in particular and the Northern region in general.

Methodology

The design of this study involves a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Impact of Banditry, Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood in North Western Nigeria: Issues and Policy Recommendation. The study focused on rural communities in 6 banditry prone local government areas (LGAs) in Zamfara State. These include Anka, Bagega, Wuya, Yarsabiya, Maradun, Maradun, Damaga, Gidan Goga, Maru, Bindin, Dangulbi, Jangeme, Shinkafi, Badarawa, Jangeru, Shanana, Tsafe, Kizara, Magazu, Yandoton Daji, Zurmi, Birane, Gulbin Baure Rukudawa, the eight frontline Local Government Areas (LGAs) namely Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, Dandume and Sabuwa of Katsina state. Chikun, Kajuru, Kachia, Zangon-Kataf,,Kauru, Lere, Birnin-Gwari, Giwas of Kaduna state.

Data for the study were drawn from primary sources, using structured questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The questionnaire copies were administered to households randomly selected from the 6 identified armed banditry prone local governments in the region. A multi stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. In the first stage, Six (6) Local Government Areas (LGAs) with high reported cases of banditry attacks were purposely selected. In the second stage, (3) most affected banditry prone communities were purposively selected from each of the LGAs. The unit of analysis consists of forty-four (42) local government areas (LGAs) that were specifically chosen from communities at risk of banditry in, Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara States in North Western Nigeria, during the inquiry period (2015-2023). From Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara, seven (26) LGAs each, were chosen. Table 1 below lists the selected LGAs from the states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara.

**Table 1: Unit of Analysis**

S/No	State	LGAs	Sample Size
1.	Kaduna State	Chikun , Kajuru, Kachia, Zangon-Kataf,, Kauru, Lere, Birnin-Gwari, Giwas	69
2.	Zamfara	Anka, Bagega, Wuya, Yarsabiya, Maradun, Maradun, Damaga, Gidan Goga, Maru, Bindin, Dangulbi, Jangeme, Shinkafi, Badarawa, Jangeru, Shanana, Tsafe, Kizara, Magazu, Yandoton Daji, Zurmi, Birane, Gulbin Baure Rukudawa	245
6.	Katsina	Batssari, Danmusa, Faskari, Jibiya, Kankara, Sabuwa, Safana	65
		Total Sample of Respondents	379

Source: Field research, 2023.

The sample size of the study was computed using a Krecie and Morgan Table and Yamanese formulae. A sample size of 379 respondents was drawn from the three states mostly affected by banditry in the region, with 30 questionnaires administered in each frontline local government. The justification for the above was the accessibility of respondents who have either had direct contacts with the bandits as victims, or relations who actually participated in the negotiations for payment of ransom or others whose relations were killed and their life savings, properties, businesses and houses destroyed by the ravaging bandits. In depth interviews sessions were also conducted by the researcher to elicit deeper information where the questionnaires couldn't explore in details. The SPSS package was used to analyze the collated data. The population of the study was determined on the basis of the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics data that reveals that an average population of households in communities of north western Nigeria is 250 households. This gives us a population of 4, 5000 households from 18 selected communities with a sample size of 379 households.

The study collected data using qualitative methods. Focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to get detailed and individualized accounts from stakeholders in the study area. Given the security/access of the study settings, which were only available during the day, the interviews and FDGs were deemed appropriate to gather quality data in a timely manner. The qualitative technique generated different views to the knowledge, gave a fair stakeholder



impression, and reduced bias responses. Every FGD and interview was conducted in either Hausa or English. Later, responses were translated into English from Hausa. The interview's ethical guidelines called for voluntary involvement, no damage to subjects, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, rewards and goodwill for subjects, candor with subjects, and ethical reporting. The researcher ensured the validity of the instruments by making sure that the contents of the instruments are consistent with both the objectives and assumption of the study. Also, efforts were made to ensure that all aspects considered relevant to the study are adequate covered. Therefore, in order to ensure this research possesses high validity, external criterion method was adopted and was achieved by checking how correct the findings of a particular instrument is by comparing the results with existing knowledge as well as the findings of the research gotten from interview. These methods described above were carefully employed so as to ensure that the study is highly reliable and valid.

Finally, in order to ensure that the instruments are reliable and pave way for accurate testing of assumption of study which will in turn enable a dependable and objective deduction, inferences and conclusions, internal consistency method was effectively adopted. This was achieved by crosschecking information alongside other sources of data collection and by ensuring that the facts and figures collected from other sources mentioned earlier are accurate and would remain the same if the collection is repeated over time. To also ensure that the instruments have high reliability, the interview was structurally constructed in a simple, concise and unambiguous manner so as to allow easy understanding of the questions by the respondents and so as to ensure consistency in their answers.

**Data Presentations****Table 1: Respondents Bio-data**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25 Years	74	23.3
26 – 33 Years	163	32.1
34 – 41 Years	87	27.4
42 Years above	55	17.2
Total	379	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	103	63.5
Female	279	36.5
Total	379	100
Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Married	229	60.4
Widowed	133	35.1
Divorced	17	4.5
Total	379	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	311	82.4
Primary	22	5.8
Secondary	28	7.4
Diploma and Equivalent	18	4.7
Degree and Equivalent	0	-
Total	379	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	105	27.7
Crop Rained Farming	131	34.6
Petty Trading	80	21.1
Livestock Farming	15	3.9
Civil Servants	9	2.4
Others	38	10.2
Total	379	100
Household Size	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5	103	27.2
6-10	148	39.1
11-20	111	29.3
More than 20	17	4.5
Total	379	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023



As shown in Table 1 above, the ages of respondents where 23.3% are between 18-25 years, 32.1% are between 26-33 years, 27.4% are aged between 34-41 years and the remaining 17.2% are 42 years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 26 and 33 years. From the table, it can be concluded that the research received response from all adult categories in the study area. The sex distribution of the respondents on the other hand indicates that out of the 318 respondents, 202 representing 63.5% were males while 116 representing 36.5% were females. This therefore implies that majority of respondents are males, however, the view of females were not left out. The table also indicates that 131 of the respondents representing 41.2% were affiliated to Christian religion while 187 of them representing 58.8% were said to be affiliated to Islamic religion. None of the respondents claimed affiliation to traditional religion. This indicates that Islam is the dominant religion in the study area. In respect of occupation, the table shows that 20.4% are civil servants, 38.1% are engage in various types of businesses, 3.8% are into farming, 9.1% are teachers at various level, 17.9% are students while, 10.7% are into different occupation such as artisan like, mechanics, tailoring, driving, barbers, etc. Majority of respondents therefore are business persons. The findings further reveal that households across the banditry prone communities have a large population with an overall average size of 10 members. The large household size has implication for resource allocation and banditry activities, particularly in an area where majority of the population are poor and extremely vulnerable with few or no assets.

Results on the impact of banditry, kidnaping on women household livelihood presented in Table 3 indicated that banditry has adversely affected the means of household livelihood in the banditry prone communities. About 30.61% of households had lost their occupations due to the rising level of insecurity in the State. This may likely deepen employment crisis which have been one of the drivers of banditry in the region. By comparing means of households livelihood in pre banditry and banditry periods, the results show that about 25% of the households have quit farming activity due to fear of banditry attack. Quittance from farming lead to decline in agricultural production in the midst of the existing food crisis, thereby enhancing food security in the region and country as a whole. Banditry has also limited trade flows which consequently lead to decline in market supplies in the worse affected areas. The results presented in Table 2 also



revealed that about 3.16% of the rural households have moved to the transportation and general services sector. This issue will have negative impact if the predominant farmers form the quantum of transition to other set of jobs.

Table 2: The Impact of Banditry, Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood

Major Means of Level	Pre-banditry Period		Banditry Period		Banditry Impact
	Hhs No.	%	F	%	
Unemployed	0	0	116	30.61	30.61% lost their jobs
Rain-fed Farming	217	57.15	112	32.19	25% abandoned farming
Petty Trading	94	24.80	77	20.32	4.5% stop trading
Livestock Farming	29	7.65	14	3.69	4% stop livestock farming
Civil Servant	9	2.37	9	2.37	No Change
Transportation	8	2.11	12	3.17	1.06 moved to transportation
Weaving	14	3.69	13	3.43	1.07 stops Weaving
Mining	3	0.79	3	0.79	No Change
General Services	5	1.32	13	3.43	2.11% moved to General Service
Total	379	100	379	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The results also indicated that banditry had devastating effect on farming activity in banditry prone communities to Zamfara State. Results presented in Table 3 revealed that about 53.83% of the households have abandoned their farm land due to fear of banditry attack. Out of the 53.8%; 11% fall in the category of 0.5-3 hectares. 27% abandoned 2-3 hectares and about 13.48%. Farming activity has now been restricted within distances of few kilometres from the city and village centres due to fear of attacks by the bandits. This has made majority of the farmers to be cultivating less than 1 hectare of land. Accordingly, significant percentage of large-scale farmers cultivating 4 hectares and above, have abandoned their farmlands.

**Table 3: Frequency of attack in North-Western Nigeria.**

Bandits attack	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	74	23.3
Weekly	163	32.1
Monthly	87	27.4
Quarterly	55	17.2
Total	379	100
Presence of police post in the community	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	3.9
No	364	96.1
Total	379	100
Possibility/affirmation of sufficient security in the community	Frequency	Percentage
Very sufficient	74	23.3
Sufficient	163	32.1
Not sufficient	87	27.4
Not even present	55	17.2
Total	379	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 above shows that 26 (34.7%) say that attacks often occur in their area daily, 29 (38.7%) says weekly, 15 (20.0%) says monthly while 5 (6.6%) of the respondent says that attacks often occur in their area quarterly. The table indicates that 364(96.1) respondents were of the view that no police post exist in the community while 15 (3.9%) opined that police post exists. On the other hand, 0 (0%) respondents' maintained that they have sufficient police officers, in other words, none says they are sufficient, 60 (79%) says they are not sufficient while 15 (19.7%) says that they are not even present.

**Table 4: Factors responsible for banditry and kidnapping in North-Western Nigeria.**

Option opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Rural poverty	53	18.1
Greed	86	29.4
Corruption	35	11.9
Poor security	50	17.1
Unemployment	69	23.5
Total	293	100
Types of Crimes Committed by Bandits in the region	Frequency	Percentage
Village raids	79	27.0
Highway robbery	56	19.1
Rape	60	20.5
Kidnapping/abduction	69	23.5
Murder	29	9.9
Total	293	100
Communal and Government Efforts Put in Place to Curb banditry	Frequency	Percentage
Vigilante/night watch volunteers	62	21.2
Cooperating with other communities	88	30.0
Joint military operations	95	32.4
Formation of anti-banditry task force	48	16.4
Total	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 shows data collected on factors responsible for banditry in North-Western Nigeria. Significant proportions (29.4%) of the respondents are of the view that banditry occurred as a result of greed, 11.9% was due to corruption by leaders, 17.1% was due to poor security network while 23.5% attributed banditry to unemployment among youths. These factors had adverse effects on communities in the state leading to heinous attacks. This finding is in tandem with that of Rufai (2017) who said that several attacks are carried out by bandits against settlements of herders/farmers. They kill, steal cow and farm produce in Nigeria.



The above table presents the type of crimes committed by bandits. A significant proportion (27.0%) of the respondents were of the view that village raids are the main crimes committed while (73%) indicated crimes such as highway robbery, rape, kidnapping/abduction and murder. The finding of this study agrees with those of Chukwuma and Francis (2014) who observed that recently, the rate of rural and cattle rustling in the northern part of Nigeria most especially in herding and farming communities affect farm produce and livestock's.

Data presented in the table above show that majority of the respondents (32.4%) said that Joint military operations will forestall peaceful atmosphere, 21.2% see Vigilante/night watch volunteers as an effective measure, 46.4% suggested cooperating with other communities and formation of anti-banditry task force as measures needed to combat banditry in North-Western Nigeria.

Reflections on Key Issues

Kidnapping and the related sexual assault crime associated with it has some effect on Women. They include:

- i. Psychological effect: This has to do with the impact of abduction on the mind of the victim, which is accompanied by trauma and extreme fear that affect the victim negatively. This can be as a result of sexual assault on the victim, whether committed in front of the family of the victim or in seclusion in the forest. It is an act that leaves an indelible mark on the victim for a life time. In fact, even if the female was not sexually assaulted during kidnapping act, it traumatizes her even after release or rescue.
- ii. Morality: The act of kidnapping and the allied crime of sexual assault on victim raises the question of morality both for the victim and the perpetrators of the crime. On the part of the victim, the act does not in any way question her morality, but the society of Northern Nigeria, especially in Muslim dominated part, gives credence to virtuous women and virgins during marriage. Therefore kidnap and sexual assault dehumanize the female, and it is gender based violence against women and girls. On the part of the bandits and kidnapers, such act is a negation of the principle of respecting and protecting the gender. The women and girls are the mothers, sisters, and daughters who uplift the society. Yet, they have now become target of assault, considering the fact that humiliation of the



female gender is similar to the humiliation of a whole society. The prevalence of such heinous act can destroy moral values in the society and trust.

- iii. Social effect: Banditry and kidnapping result in widowhood of women as some lost their husbands to that dastardly act. This result in shifting all family responsibilities to the widow, which involves seeking for resources to tend to the family in the midst of poverty. The pain of losing a son is unbearable to the womenfolk. It is clear evidence that younger men are the highest casualty, as many of them have been killed in the act of banditry and kidnapping. For example, in Batsari Local Government Area of Katsina State, many men were killed when they went to the farm, at the beginning of rainy season in 2020. The killing has resulted in making many women widows while many more lost their sons (Interview with Mallam Lawal, 2020). The problem of banditry and kidnapping has resulted in robbing many people of their houses in the affected communities. Many had abandoned their communities and found shelter in more peaceful communities. In Katsina State for example, this act has led to the movement of people from Batsari into Katsina metropolis. Such people have lost their means of livelihood and houses, only to find themselves in a situation whereby it is difficult to afford three square meals a day. In fact, finding shelter in their new found settlements is a problem to these people (Interview with Mallam Binta Aliyu, 2020). The sad part of it is that some of the women are reduced to begging for food from neighbours in their new settlements. However, in some cases the assistance of the wall to do in society is sought for the provision of food, shelter and clothing for this vulnerable group (Interview with Aliyu Ibrahim, Jan, 2021). Also, the health condition of females affected by the menace of sexual assault during banditry and kidnapping is really sad and worrisome. Some end up with dreaded disease like HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. On social media an anonymous lady once sought for advice on how to handle unwanted pregnancy which resulted from her kidnap by bandits in 2020 in the North Western Nigeria. This shows that the effect of these crimes on women is negative in all ramifications.



Discussion of Findings

This study observed that, the act of kidnapping was and is still not limited to a particular social class, gender or ethnic group. This is a crime that affects all and sundry. Therefore, the crime rate is not limited to the female gender alone. Male and female genders have been affected by the act of kidnapping. Indeed, children suffered to a large extent as a result of kidnapping act (Ani and Nweke, 2014). What is prevalent in our area of study is kidnapping for ransom. The activities of bandits and kidnapers in the North West have internally displaced over one hundred and sixty thousand while over forty thousand others have left the shores of Nigeria to Niger Republic people (Abdulyakeen, 2022; Okoli, 2019).

Findings also revealed that, the act is accompanied with violence, destruction and immoral acts that lead to psychological trauma, fear and stigmatization of women. Women had been given utmost respect in northern Nigeria as they have been considered treasures that needed to be given utmost respect and protection from looming danger in the society. Armed banditry and kidnapping have led to degradation of women in the society as they have become the major targets of these organized crime.

Gender Dimension of Banditry and Kidnapping in Northwestern Nigeria.

DATE	PLACE OF BANDITRY	NATURE OF CRIME	VICTIMS	DEATH/RANSOM /RELEASED	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
11 th -17 th January, 2021	Zamfara/Kaduna State	Kidnapping	600 Women, Men over 300 248 children	17 death	CCCM Cluster, 2021
Jan, 2021	Kaduna	Kidnapping	4 victims		TVC News, 31 st January, 2021.
Jan, 2021	Kaduna-Kachia road	Kidnapping	21 victims		TVC News, 31 st January, 2021.
January, 2021	North-West	Kidnapping	642 people	Rescued	This Day, 6 th January, 2021.
January-March, 2020	North-West	Kidnapping	436		CCCM Cluster, 2021
Nov-	Zaria	Kidnapping of	3 staff of	Released	Ahmadu Bello



December		victims in their houses	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria		University, Zaria News Bulletin, Nov, 2020.
15 th March, 2020	Birnin-Gwari Kaduna road	Kidnapping	Travellers		Idowu H. A., Reappraising Conflict Trends in Nigeria amidst the Covid 19 Pandemic”, www.accord.org.za March, 2020.
29 th March, 2020	Bungudu, Zamfara State	Kidnapping		Rescued	Ibid
April, 2020	Katsina State	Bandits attacks	47 people killed		Ibid
25 March, 2019	Kachia Local Government of Kaduna State	Kidnapping	A catholic priest		Okoli C. and Ugwu A., “Of Marauders and Brigands: Scoping the Threat of Banditry in Nigeria’s North West, Brazilian Journal of African Studies, 2019.
25 th March, 2019	Tsafe Local Government Area, Zamfara State	Kidnapped	A North-Korean Medical Doctor		Ibid
21 st October, 2018.	Zurmi Local Government Area, Zamfara State.	Kidnapping	Twin sister	Released	Ibid
December, 2018	Jibia LGA, Katsina State	Kidnapped	290 caregivers		Ibid
22 nd February	Kaduna	Kidnapping	2 German Archaeologi	Released	Samuel O., “Organized



, 2017			sts		Crime, Kidnapping and Nigerian National Security”, THEIJSSHI, 2019.
1 st January, 2017	Kogi	Kidnapping	Isa Achuja (HRM)	Ransom of N20 Million	Ibid
2016	Kogi state	Kidnapping	Three Osun State Government Officials		Oguebui V.K, “Kidnapping in Nigeria: The Way Forward”, Journal of Criminology and Forensic Studies.
20 th Nov. 2016	In his house in Kaduna	Kidnapping	Ambassador Bagudu Mamman	Ransom collected before he was released	Sa’idu B. et al, “Kidnapping and Rising Insecurity in Nigeria: A Case of Kaduna State.
27 th March, 2016	Kaduna	Kidnapping	Col. Samaila Yunusa	Killed	Samuel O., “Organized Crime, Kidnapping and Nigerian National Security”, THEIJSSHI, 2019.
24 th April, 2016	Benue	Kidnapping	Revd. John Adeyi		Samuel O., “Organized Crime, Kidnapping and Nigerian National Security”, THEIJSSHI, 2019.
P	Kaduna	Raping/kidnapp	-	-	Dayo O. A.



		ing of women			2015
2014	Plateau	Raping/Kidnapping	-	-	Dayo O. A. 2015

Author's compilation

The study observed that, data on the statistics of kidnapped victims in the North is difficult to come by. However, the act of banditry goes along side kidnapping and sexual assault on women. It has now become a norm for the bandits to attack a community whereby they go to a family and request for all the money in possession of the man, the family head. In the end, they rape his wife and daughter's in his presence (Vanguardngr.com, 229th May, 2019). Women and young girls are kidnapped and taken to the bush, whereby some of them are raped, while some ended up unharmed. In whatever situation they found themselves, they were only released after the payment of ransom to the kidnappers. The forests have become kidnappers den, as there is little or absence of government control there. The fact that a female is taken to the bush whether raped or not, becomes a great challenge to her personality. Some people tend to look at her as if she was sexually molested, even if she was not.

The study also revealed that, kidnapping and raping of women and young girls is an act of Gender Based Violence (GBV), a humiliating act on the female gender. The United Nations defines Gender Based Violence as any act "that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". (West African Network for Peace building (2020).

Conclusion

Armed Banditry and kidnapping are a menace to our society. Everyone suffers from the brunt of such acts. However, the condition women have found themselves needs to be urgently addressed in the society. This is because, women are the foundation and strong pillars that support the society. Already many people are in an economic crisis deepened by poverty in the villages and towns of the region. Unless urgent measures are adopted the crisis will continue to linger and the effect is enormous. Traditional ruler have been complicit in banditry and kidnapping, as many Emirs and districts heads have been part and parcel of these crimes that linger from 2011 to



2019 (WANEP, 2020). Protection of women against all violence is the responsibility of all. Therefore, there is need to urgently address such problem before we run into humanitarian crisis as a result of banditry and its allied crimes.

Policy recommendation

- i. Government should as a matter of urgency, restructure the security architecture for effective intelligence gathering.
- ii. Poverty alleviation programmes, job opportunities and soft loans should be provided for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in order to reduce the rate of unemployment in the country.
- iii. Both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches should be applied in order to bring to an end the menace of banditry in the country.
- iv. Bandits camp should be destroyed anywhere they found across the country.
- v. Fight against corruption should be holistic.
- vi. The country's land borders should be properly policed in order to prevent arms smuggling into the country.
- vii. Community policing should be encouraged across the northern region.
- viii. Parents should inculcate the culture of values in their children such as respect for constituted authority, hard work and tolerance of one another among other values so that when they grow up, it becomes part of them.
- ix. Finally, government should always be proactive on security issues in order to prevent same from getting out of hand, as peaceful environment encourages both foreign and local investors to invest in the State and the country, generally.



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APPENDIX 1

INTERVEIW SHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

The following questions were asked to participants:

The interview guide helped to answer research questions framed in the course of the study. These questions were posed to participants drawn from Civil Societies and Academicians.

- i. The researcher will ask questions in relation to examine Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood in North Western Nigeria. Follow up question will be asked.
- ii. The researcher will like to know the underlying causes of the current banditry and human security in Northern Nigeria and their mode of operation through which the bandits spilled over to the rest of the country. Follow up question will be asked.
- iii. The researcher will like to espouse the lessons learnt by Nigerian and the response made by the Nigerian policy makers. Follow up question will be asked.
- iv. The researcher will recommend policy measures that should be adopted to reduce the negative impact of similar crisis in the future. Follow up question will be asked



APPENDIX 11

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The following questions were asked to participants:

The focus group discussion guide helped to answer research questions framed in the course of the study. These questions were posed to participants drawn from religious leader, civil servants and artisans.

- i. The researcher will ask questions in relation to examine Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on Rural Women Livelihood in North Western Nigeria. Follow up question will be asked.
- ii. The researcher will like to know the underlying causes of the current banditry and human security in Northern Nigeria and their mode of operation through which the bandits spilled over to the rest of the country. Follow up question will be asked.
- iii. The researcher will like to espouse the lessons learnt by Nigerian and the response made by the Nigerian policy makers. Follow up question will be asked.
- iv. The researcher will recommend policy measures that should be adopted to reduce the negative impact of similar crisis in the future. Follow up question will be asked