JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 4, No. 1 / March, 2026
https://www.jopd.com.ng

THE IMPACT OF BANDITRY ON THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KATSINA STATE, 2019 – 2024

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of banditry on Socio-economic development of Katsina State in Northern part of Nigeria. The study was guided by five research questions and objectives respectively. Also, the study adopted a survey research design with a sample size of 400 respondents drawn from the population. A mixed research method involving questionnaires and In-depth interview was used to gather relevant data from the respondents which formed the basis for empirical inferences. Human Security Theory was adapted as the theoretical framework for the study due to it richness in explaining the research questions and objectives. The findings of the study revealed that banditry in Katsina State is primarily driven by economic factors particularly poverty, unemployment; and also influenced by ethno-communal tensions, political manipulation, and land-use conflicts. The findings also indicated that banditry has had a detrimental impact on socio-economic activities, leading to income loss, displacement, and the destruction of productive assets. Furthermore, the findings reveal that banditry in Katsina State has significantly disrupted access to education and healthcare. The study concluded that banditry poses a serious threat to the socio-economic development of Katsina State. It undermines agricultural productivity, disrupts essential social services, displaces communities, and erodes public trust in government institutions. The study therefore recommended that government should prioritize poverty alleviation and youth employment through vocational training, microfinance programs, and agricultural subsidies, particularly in rural communities most affected by banditry. The study further suggest that urgent investments are needed to rebuild destroyed schools and health facilities, recruit displaced personnel, and provide psychological support to victims of violence.

Keywords: Banditry, Conflict, Development, Socio-economy, Attack, and Violent

Introduction

Globally, banditry is increasingly conceptualized as a significant threat to security, economic development, and humanitarian stability, particularly within fragile and conflict-prone regions (UNODC, 2021). At the continental level, and especially within the African context, it is perceived as a critical factor contributing to forced displacement, rural insecurity, and food insecurity, largely due to persistent attacks on agrarian communities (ISS, 2020). In the West African sub-region, the phenomenon has become progressively intertwined with terrorism and transnational organized crime, thereby complicating distinctions between criminality and insurgency (OECD, 2021). At the national level, the Nigerian state frames banditry as a multifaceted security crisis, rooted in structural drivers such as poverty, weak governance institutions, and ethno-regional tensions (Abdulrahman & Omede, 2022). Public discourse within Nigeria often attributes the resilience of bandit groups to the state's failure to provide adequate security and its inability to address underlying socio-economic grievances (Yusuf, 2023). These multi-scalar perceptions have influenced the design and implementation of state responses, which range from militarized countermeasures to community-based peacebuilding and conflict resolution strategies (Eze & Nnamani, 2021).

Banditry in Nigeria, particularly in the northern regions, has become a significant security challenge, characterized by violent attacks, kidnappings, and cattle rustling. Banditry

in Nigeria primarily involves armed groups, often referred to as "bandits," who engage in violent acts against local populations, including theft, kidnappings for ransom, and assaults. This issue has escalated particularly in States Northern Nigeria like Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna.

Banditry refers to the criminal act of robbery, typically carried out by individuals or groups outside the bounds of law. It is often characterized by the use of violence or intimidation and can occur in various contexts, including rural areas, conflict zones, or urban environments. Historically, banditry has been associated with social and economic factors, such as poverty, political instability, and the breakdown of law and order. For example, in the American West during the 19th century, bandits and outlaws emerged in response to rapid expansion and insufficient law enforcement (Baker, 2001).

Katsina State, located in the northwestern region of Nigeria, has increasingly become a focal point of banditry, which has severely impacted its socio-economic landscape. Banditry in Nigeria has escalated over the past decade, characterized by armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and violent assaults, leading to a pervasive sense of insecurity (Umar & Ladan, 2021). This rise in violent crime is attributed to several interrelated factors, including poverty, unemployment, and a lack of governance (Obi, 2020).

Historically, northern Nigeria, including Katsina State, has faced significant socio-economic challenges, such as high poverty rates and low literacy levels. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), Katsina has one of the highest poverty rates in Nigeria, which exacerbates the vulnerability of communities to criminal activities. Economic opportunities are limited, particularly in rural areas, where the majority of the population relies on subsistence agriculture (Kasim & Abba, 2020). Katsina State, primarily agrarian, has a population that relies heavily on farming and livestock rearing for sustenance and income. However, the rise of banditry has led to widespread fear among farmers, resulting in decreased agricultural output and heightened food insecurity (Hassan & Sadiq, 2021). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), Katsina has one of the highest poverty rates in Nigeria, with over 60% of its population living below the poverty line. This economic vulnerability makes communities more susceptible to the influence of banditry, creating a vicious cycle of insecurity and deprivation (Kasim & Abba, 2020).

The disruption caused by banditry has further destabilized this agrarian economy, leading to decreased agricultural output and heightened food insecurity (Hassan & Sadiq, 2021). The impact of banditry extends beyond economic dimensions; it has severe consequences for educational attainment and healthcare access in the region. Schools frequently close or operate under duress, leading to increased dropout rates and limiting opportunities for children and youth, particularly girls (Aliyu et al., 2022). In healthcare, the threat of violence disrupts services, exacerbating existing health crises and leading to preventable illnesses and deaths (Yusuf & Gimba, 2023). Moreover, the social fabric of communities has been affected, as fear and mistrust among residents erode social cohesion. The breakdown of community trust has significant implications for collective action and resilience, which are essential for recovery from such crises (Ibrahim, 2021).

In other words, the increasing prevalence of banditry in Katsina State, Nigeria, has emerged as a significant challenge to the region's socio-economic development. Characterized by violent criminal activities such as kidnappings, armed robbery, and assaults, banditry has disrupted daily life and economic activities, fostering an environment of insecurity that undermines progress (Umar & Ladan, 2021). The implications of this violence are far-reaching, affecting various aspects of life in Katsina, from agricultural productivity to education and healthcare access.

Furthermore, banditry erodes social cohesion, fostering mistrust and fear among community members. The breakdown of social ties can hinder collective efforts to address

insecurity and rebuild communities, further complicating recovery efforts (Ibrahim, 2021). In response to the escalating violence, various state and federal initiatives have been introduced, including the deployment of security forces and community policing efforts. However, these measures have often faced criticism for being reactive rather than addressing the root causes of banditry. Despite various governmental efforts to combat banditry, including military interventions and community policing initiatives, these measures have often been criticized for their ineffectiveness and lack of a comprehensive approach (Obi, 2020). Corruption, inadequate law enforcement, and a reactive rather than proactive stance have further complicated efforts to address the underlying issues contributing to banditry.

Given these pressing issues, this study aims to investigate the impacts of banditry on socio-economic development in Katsina State. By exploring the direct and indirect consequences of violence on economic activities, education, healthcare, and social structures, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how banditry shapes the lives of individuals and communities in the region. Furthermore, this study will highlight the urgent need for effective policy responses that not only address the immediate security concerns but also tackle the underlying socio-economic challenges contributing to the rise of banditry.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of banditry on the socio-economic development of Katsina State from 2019 to 2024.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Literature review provides a systematic examination of existing scholarly works related to the study, with the aim of establishing a theoretical and empirical foundation for the research.

Concept 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. Due to the complex nature of bandits' activities, Egwu (2016) in a restricted manner, described banditry as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding of cattle from their ranches. In the same vein, banditry is reflected in criminal escapades like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and the brazen and gruesome massacre of people of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims, a development that has been brought to the front burner of national security (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018).

Also, the term **banditry** encompasses a range of criminal activities, often characterized by the use of violence or threats to achieve illicit gains. Banditry refers to organized criminal activities characterized by armed attacks. According to Okoli and Ugwu, (2019) banditry is the incidence of armed robbery or allied violent crimes such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village and market raids which involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill. They note that banditry is motivated by economic or political interests and can be classified based on the underlying intent or motive.

Similarly, International Review of the Red Cross. (2022) observed that banditry in Nigeria involves armed violence by non-state actors for personal gain or profit, often carried out by flexible, informal networks rather than hierarchical group. Ityonzughul and Changwak, (2021) view banditry as a form of criminal violence prevalent in rural communities involving

cattle rustling, extortion, destruction of properties, and systematic attacks on civilians. Banditry is an organized crime that involve activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, murder, rape, cattle rustling, and the exploitation of environmental resources. These acts are typically carried out by groups operating in rural communities, often exploiting weak governance and security structures.

Nigeria Watch & ACLED Reports, (2023) argued that banditry in Nigeria is violent criminal activities including attacks on villages, mass killings, and abductions, typically carried out by loosely organized armed groups in the Northwest and Northcentral regions. In other words, banditry is criminal acts typically characterized by robbery, raids, or acts of violence committed by individuals or groups outside the law. Banditry has been a common feature in various epochs, including pre-modern societies where the law was weak or absent, and in modern contexts where criminal organizations operate (Dunn, 2015)

Concept of Socio-economic Development

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic change and improvement in the quality of life of individuals and communities. It encompasses improvements in living standards, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, alongside social factors such as gender equality and community participation. According to *UNDP, (2010)* **Socio-economic development is the process of identifying both the social and economic needs of a population and creating strategies that will adequately address them.** *World Bank (2019) defined* **Socio-economic development as an improvements in the quality of life and living standards, including economic growth, access to education and healthcare, reduction in poverty, and increased employment. Socio-economic development is a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality, and eradication of poverty** *(Todaro & Smith, 2015).*

Socio-economic development also refers to the process of improving the quality of life, well-being, and economic conditions of individuals and communities within a society. It involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses various social, cultural, political, and economic factors. The goal of socio-economic development is to create a more equitable and prosperous society where people have access to basic needs, opportunities for advancement, and an improved standard of living.

According to Afolobi (2017), the key concepts and aspects of socio-economic development include:

i. **Economic Growth:** The increase in the production of goods and services in an economy over time, typically measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Economic growth is essential for funding social programs and improving living conditions (Todaro & Smith, 2015).
ii. **Social Change:** This involves shifts in societal norms, values, and structures. Social change is often associated with improvements in education, healthcare access, and gender equality, which contribute to overall development (Sen, 2019).
iii. **Poverty Alleviation:** Socio-economic development aims to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. Strategies for alleviating poverty include economic empowerment, vocational training, and social safety nets (United Nations Development Programme, 2021)
iv. **Human Development:** Expanding people's capabilities and freedoms is essential. The Human Development Index (HDI), developed by the United Nations, combines indicators of life expectancy, education, and per capita income as a measure of human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

v. **Sustainability:** Development must be sustainable to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This includes economic practices that protect the environment and promote social equity (Sachs, 2015).
vi. **Social Equity and Inclusion:** Development should promote social justice, reduce inequalities, and ensure that all individuals have equal access to opportunities and resources regardless of their background.
vii. **Gender Equality:** Empowering women and promoting gender equality are crucial for inclusive development. Addressing gender disparities in education, employment, and decision-making processes is essential.
viii. **Good Governance**: Transparent, accountable, and efficient governance is necessary to ensure that development efforts are effectively implemented and benefit all segments of society.
ix. **Social Capital:** Building strong social networks and community cohesion can contribute to better development outcomes, as people work together to address common challenges.
x. **Access to Financial Services:** Providing access to credit, savings, and other financial services can help individuals and small businesses participate in economic activities and improve their livelihoods.
xi. **Rural Development:** Ensuring that rural areas have access to infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities is vital for balanced development and reducing urban-rural disparities.
xii. **Industrialization and Diversification:** Developing a diverse range of industries and sectors can help a country's economy become more resilient and less dependent on a single source of income.

Nature of Banditry in Katsina State

Recently Nigeria has witnessed series of attack by armed bandits all over the country. Northern Nigeria, especially the Northwest, is the most affected by the activities of the armed bandits. Nigeria's Northwestern region, one of the country's six geopolitical zones, comprises seven of states. These are Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. It covers an area of 216,065 sq km or 25.75 percent of the country's total land mass (Moveh & Isa, 2022)

Its major ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani, who historically share strong cultural ties and are very much intermixed, with other smaller groups especially in Kaduna state. The region's estimated population of 33 million is predominantly Muslim (Sunni) and a significant part of the population (about 80 percent) are farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists or small-scale entrepreneurs (Moveh & Isa, 2022)

The deplorable social conditions of the Northwestern region has provided a fertile ground for banditry to thrive. Banditry in Nigeria started in the Northwestern region of Nigeria around 2011 in Zamfara State as a traditional farmer-herder conflict (Rufai, 2021). At inception, banditry essentially involved incidences of cattle rustling. Over the years, other allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, village or market raids and gender-based violence ensued (Moveh & Isa, 2022). The strategy of the bandits involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okoli & Okpaleke 2014). As noted by Shalangwa (2013) banditry in Nigeria is the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Indeed, as was the case with the European experience, the bandits operating in Nigeria's Northwest including Katsina are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination, but roam around the forest and

mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested (Moveh & Isa, 2022). According to ACAPS (2022) a non-profit and non-governmental based humanitarian organization, since 2011 bandits have jeopardized the livelihoods of about 21 million people living in the entire northwestern region. In Katsina State alone, the authorities estimate that as at 2019 there were over 10,000 bandits in over 40 camps across the State (Rufai 2021).

However, the most notable forms of banditry activities in Nigeria include the farmers/herders conflict and cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, rape and gender based violence and raids on local communities (Moveh & Isa, 2022). In recent years, the combination of environmental degradation in the far north, encroachment of grazing reserves and poor management by the government at both the federal and state levels, have resulted in a degeneration of the conflicts. This degeneration spawned the formation of many bandit groups and cattle rustling became one of their major goals (Rufai 2021). Between October 2013 and March 2014, approximately 7,000 cattle were rustled from commercial livestock farms and traditional herders in Northwest Nigeria (Azeez and Yahya, 2016). Similarly, Aminu Bello Masarithe Governor of Katsina State, announced the recovery of 30,000 cattle from rustlers within a few months of setting up a joint military operation against the menace of cattle rustling (Tauna 2016).

Aside cattle rustling, kidnaping for ransom has also within the last decade become a major form of banditry in Nigeria. In 2014, boko haram pioneered the practice of mass abductions of school children in the northeast when it kidnapped almost 300 school children from their dormitories (Moveh and Isa, 2022). In recent years, the practice of mass abductions of school children has also become common with bandits operating in the northwest region; confirming speculations that the bandits operating in the northwest have established links with, and are being significantly influenced by the Boko-haram insurgents. In December 2019, more than 300 boys were kidnaped in a boarding school in Kankara, Katsina state while the President was visiting the region (Yusufu, 2021). Between March 2020 and June 2021, over 1,400 students and staff were also kidnapped in several school abductions reported across North-west Nigeria (Moveh & Isa, 2022). One of the places the abductions took place is in Kankara and Mahuta of Katsina state

The United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (1999) observed that, survivors from acts of armed banditry in Nigeria described the perpetrators as poorly clad, heavily armed men who spoke hausa, the local language, with a strange accent and operated with uncommon violence. Otu (2003) also notes that, with such violent crimes as armed banditry, “the perpetrators are usually mainly males, predominantly of the ages of the active members of the working population, mainly those from the lower class income”.

Dambazau (1999) writing on the nature of armed banditry in North-western Nigeria, observed the need to conceptualize and explain crime victims. According to him, crime victims can be categorized in terms of age, gender, economic and social status. Specific crimes may be related to particular categories, as for example, victims of rape are mostly females while victims of neglect are children. He further notes that, “victimization of people may be as a result of what they possess or the activities they do or what they are”. It can therefore be said that victims of armed banditry are most likely to be farmers, herders and or travelers on the highways.

The view posited by Dambazau (1999) falls short in many ways. It risks reinforcing stereotypes. Linking specific crimes to certain categories of victims (e.g., “victims of rape are mostly female”) can reinforce stereotypes, potentially overlooking cases where victims fall outside of these categories. For instance, while most rape victims may be female, male victims of sexual violence are often marginalized or ignored due to such assumptions, which can affect the services and support they receive. Also, he ignored overlapping vulnerabilities in his explanation. Categorizing victims by single characteristics may overlook how

intersecting factors like gender, economic factors and ethnicity compound vulnerabilities. For example, low income, young women may be at heightened risk of certain types of victimization due to the combined effects of their economic status and gender. Also, he failed to address structural factors. Focusing on victim demographics may imply that personal attributes alone defines one's risk, rather than the structural or environmental factors that contribute to crime rates and types can vary significantly due socioeconomic conditions, community infrastructure, and policing quality, which affect everyone in a region, not just certain demographic groups.

Nkpa (1976) on the other hand, sees victims of armed banditry as being 'neutral victims' who despite having taken every reasonable precaution, fall victim to armed bandits. This class of victims he said includes poor defenceless farmers who are frequently molested and sometimes shot by the bandits. He further notes that, some victims take risks, perhaps being aware of the dangers and these include traders who usually travel to transact their businesses in various markets and get back home. These traders according to him carry money to pay for their merchandise and have always been victimized by bandits. He however summed it up that, "almost any weakness (and even virtue) on the part of an individual or individuals can be a cause of victimization depending on the circumstances".

It is imperative to note that while victims of armed banditry are mostly seen as neutral victims, as rightly pointed out by Nkpa (1976), certain areas of his analysis need further clarification. For a start, he overlooked systemic vulnerabilities because labelling victims as "neutral" oversimplifies the issue and fails to consider systemic factors like socioeconomic factors, regional instability, and lack of effective policing that make certain groups more vulnerable to crime. Those living in under-policed, economically marginalized areas may face heightened risks despite taking reasonable precaution. Also, he ignored crime prevention complexity. By framing victims as inherently neutral, this viewpoint may ignore the complexity of crime prevention. Effective precautions are often context-specific, and what qualifies as "reasonable" varies widely. It may not account for the variations in how people interpreted "reasonable" precautions based on their resources, knowledge of risk, and access to safety measures.

According to Dambazau (1999), "a person is regarded as a victim of crime regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted, and regardless of the familial relationship between the perpetrator and the victim". In order to qualify as a victim, he further States that, "an individual must have suffered loss or injury in emotional, economic and social terms". While the view of a victim stated by Dambazau (1999) is generally true, ignoring whether the perpetrator has been identified, apprehended, or prosecuted may sidestep the critical role of legal and social responses in addressing victimization. Justice processes, while not definitive in determining victimhood, are important for validation and redress, often helping victims process their trauma and feel that their suffering has been acknowledged by society. Also. Dambazau's view that familial relationships between the victim and perpetrator do not affect victim's status overlooks the complex emotional and social dimensions when a family member is involved. Family related victimization, such as domestic abuse or elder neglect, often has unique psychological impacts due to the breach of trust and can create distinct barriers to seeking help. Recognizing these nuances can be essential in offering appropriate support. Furthermore, although Dmbazau's criteria encompass a wide range of victim experiences, determining who qualifies as a victim can be subjective. Emotional harm, for instance, varies significantly in how individuals experience and report it, which may complicate fair treatment and support. Without clear guidelines, this may lead to inconsistent recognition of victim status across cases.

Writing further, Ojewale and Balogun (2022) stated that, in spite of the impact of violent attack by bandits, the significant toll of the impact on women and children is yet to receive significant attention in policy responses. This, they say is despite increasing attacks often targeting vulnerable women and children and endangering the latter's right to education. For emphasis, more than 61 children are still in captivity months after mass abduction by bandits, while many schools were shutdown indefinitely, according to recent reports. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says at least one million children will likely stay away from school because of the threat of violence, following the targeting of pupils in 2021 and presently in 2022. This prediction has been justified with the recent order by the Federal Government in July 2022 for all schools in the Federal Capital Territory to be closed down indefinitely over fear of attacks by bandits.

Furthermore, Ojewale and Balogun (2022) Stated that this trajectory portends serious implication for Nigeria, a country blighted by endemic poverty in the northwest and reputed to house the highest number of out of school children. They maintained that between these attacks, women and girls bear the most significant burden of banditry in the northwest region of the country. Sexual violence, they asserted, has skyrocketed with women frequently raped, kidnapped or commoditized by families who are forced to exchange their daughters for protection. They stated that for instance, at least 30 women and girls were raped indiscriminately across five communities in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. A similar act was carried out in Tsafe Local Government Area of Zamfara State in response to communities refusing to pay 3million Naira levy. In the unfolding events, they noted, bandits are also co-opting women for their criminal activities. In November 2021, the Nigerian Police Force arrested a woman for supplying 991 rounds of AK-47 live ammunitions and drugs to bandits in Zamfara State.

Theoretical Framework

The study after reviewing a number of theories that are suitable for this study, adopted Human Security Theory as its theoretical framework because to its people-centered and development-oriented approach to understanding insecurity. Unlike traditional security theories, which emphasize state sovereignty and territorial integrity, Human Security Theory focuses on the protection of individuals and communities, making it more suitable for analyzing the multifaceted consequences of banditry. In Katsina State, it is observed that banditry is not merely a security challenge; it is a complex phenomenon that directly undermines human welfare, disrupts livelihoods, and constrains socio-economic development. Human Security Theory provides a comprehensive lens to examine these interconnected effects.

The theory is built on the dual principles of "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," emphasizing that sustainable development is unattainable where individuals live under constant insecurity. In Katsina State, banditry has resulted in killings, kidnappings, displacement, loss of livelihoods, and destruction of property, making the human security perspective particularly relevant to this study.

The adoption of Human Security Theory is further justified by the multidimensional threats posed by banditry. These include personal security, threatened through violent attacks and abductions; economic security, disrupted by the interruption of farming, trading, and other income-generating activities; food security, compromised due to the abandonment of farmlands; community security, affected by displacement and social fragmentation; and limited access to social services, as schools and health facilities are forced to close or operate irregularly. These dimensions align directly with the core components of Human Security Theory, providing a robust framework for examining the socio-economic consequences of insecurity in Katsina State.

Moreover, Human Security Theory recognizes the cyclical relationship between insecurity and underdevelopment. Persistent banditry in Katsina State has weakened economic productivity, reduced household incomes, increased poverty, and constrained governmental development efforts. These socio-economic setbacks, in turn, exacerbate community vulnerability and limit recovery capacities. By framing banditry as both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment, Human Security Theory allows the study to analyze these dynamic interactions rather than viewing banditry solely as a criminal phenomenon.

The theory also elucidates the mechanisms through which banditry affects development. First, it explains how fear and violence disrupt economic activities, forcing residents to abandon farming, trading, and small enterprises, resulting in reduced agricultural output, rising food prices, and heightened unemployment. These outcomes constitute violations of economic and food security, which are essential for socio-economic development. Second, it highlights the developmental consequences of forced displacement, which undermines access to education, healthcare, and stable income, while increasing dependency on humanitarian assistance. Such displacement directly affects key development indicators, including literacy, health outcomes, and poverty reduction. Third, the theory underscores the importance of community stability and social cohesion, noting that banditry erodes trust, weakens traditional institutions, and hinders collective action, thereby limiting community-based development initiatives.

Additionally, Human Security Theory emphasizes the role of governance and institutional capacity in promoting human security. In Katsina State, the failure to effectively prevent banditry or protect citizens has eroded public confidence in state institutions, affecting development planning, investment, and service delivery. By incorporating governance considerations, the theory links insecurity to weakened institutional structures and poor socio-economic outcomes. Finally, the theory's relevance is reinforced by its alignment with global development agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Applying Human Security Theory situates the study of banditry within a broader development discourse, emphasizing that peace and security are prerequisites for sustainable socio-economic progress as banditry disrupts farming, trade, investment, and employment. Insecurity restricts access to clinics and hospitals. Fear of attacks and school closures affect student attendance Mass displacement, killings, and kidnappings increase personal insecurity. Thus, the theory helps explain the multi-layered impacts of banditry beyond just violence, by showing how it weakens all aspects of people's lives. However, the human Security Theory is ideal for explaining how banditry affects development indicators, such as: poverty levels, education attainment, healthcare delivery and investment climate. It helps shift focus from just containing violence to addressing structural conditions that allow banditry to thrive (e.g., youth unemployment, weak governance).

Methodology

The survey research design was employed for the study. The study also adopted mixed approach such as the questionnaire and interview to collect data for the study. The essence of adopting this method is based on the fact that survey design has proven to be very effective in obtaining data on people's views /opinions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions on issues. Survey thus helped in gathering vital information on the overview of the problem been studied. The choice of survey design is also justified because it is appropriate to the study objectives, which is concerned with obtaining opinions, attitudes and beliefs of group of people.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Katsina State located in north-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Katsina State was created out of the old Kaduna State in 1987 and it is divided into thirty four local government areas which include Bakori, Batagarawa, Batsari, Baure, Bindawa, Charanchi, Danja, Dandume, Dan-Musa, Daura, Dutsi, Dutsinma, Faskari, Funtua, Ingawa, Jibia, Kafur, Kaita, Kankara, Kankia, Katsina, Kurfi, Kusada, Mai-Adua, Malumfashi, Mani, Mashi, Matazu, Musawa, Rimi, Sabuwa, Safana, Sandamu, and Zango. Politically the state is divided into three zones Katsina Central, Daura zone and Funtua zone, the state has come under heavy attacks in recent times by suspected terrorist, and armed bandits affecting agricultural activities in the state which necessitate the choice of the study

Population of the Study

The population of the study are residents of Katsina state which cut across seven local government areas in Katsina State where banditry activities have been recorded and it include; Batsari, Dandume, Dan-Musa, Faskari, Jibia, Sabuwa, and Safana. These local governments have a projected population of 1,802,800 people and from this population, a sample size were selected for the purpose of gathering data through questionnaire. Also, selected people from ministry of Agriculture, security personnel, Bureau of statistics, non-governmental organization, community leaders, youth leaders and health workers will be interview to gather qualitative data.

Table 1. Population of the Study

S/N	Local Government	Population
1	Batsari	371,500
2	Dandume	259,700
3	Dan-Musa	202, 300
4	Faskari	347, 400
5	Jibia	299, 200
6	Sabuwa	251, 400
7	Safana	331, 000
	TOTAL	**1, 802, 800**

Source: (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022)

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was calculated based on Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula. Using Taro Yamane (1967) formula.

The sample size is calculated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (e)}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = finite population

e = level of significance

1 = unity

For instance, the population of the affected local government is 1, 802, 800, to estimate the minimum size needed for a statistical analysis at 0.05 levels.

n = sample

N = finite population = 1, 802, 800

e = 0.05
1 = unity
Therefore:

$$n = \frac{1,802,800}{1 + 1,802,800\ (0.05)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,802,800}{1 + 1,802,800(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,802,800}{4507.0025}$$

$$n = 399.9$$

Approximately = 400

On the whole, 400 respondents were selected for the study to represent the entire population of affected households, community members, and stakeholders within the study area.

Sampling Procedure

This study adopted the multi-stage cluster sampling which involves sampling in successive stages such that at each stage, a subset of the population is selected from larger clusters, progressively narrowing down to the final respondents while ensuring representation across different geographical locations and community groups

The first step in the multi stage sampling process involved the purposive selection of Katsina State which has 34 local government areas that are further divided into three senatorial zones

The second stage in the multi-stage cluster sampling process involved the use of simple random sampling to select one (1) LGA each from the three senatorial zones. The procedure first involved writing the names of LGAs in the 3 senatorial zones on pieces of paper. The papers were then dropped in a bag and thoroughly mixed. After this, one paper was picked at a time without replacement after recording it down. The selected local government areas are, Batsari in Kasina central senatorial zone, Dandume in Katsina Central and Faskari in Katsina North senatorial zone.

Methods of Data Collection

This study employed the use of data from primary sources. Primary data were collected from the respondents through the use of questionnaire and interviews to source the information from the respondents in the sampled area.

Quantitative data collection

For the quantitative aspect, the study used structured questionnaires to collect numerical data from respondents. The questionnaires were designed with closed-ended questions to ensure consistency and facilitate statistical analysis. It included multiple-choice questions and categorical responses covering key areas such as the impact of banditry on socio-economic development of Katsina State, how banditry affects access to education etc. Data were collected through face-to-face surveys with respondents in selected local government areas. Trained enumerators were engaged to administer the questionnaires, ensuring that participants understand the questions before responding. Where necessary, translations into local languages were provided. Responses were recorded electronically using mobile data collection tools to minimize errors and enhance accuracy.

Qualitative data collection

For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to gather detailed insights from individuals with direct knowledge or experience of banditry in the study areas. The study purposively selected key informants, including security personnel, traditional rulers, victims, youth leaders, etc. Semi-structured interview guides were used to facilitate open discussions, allowing respondents to express their experiences and perceptions freely. Interviews will be recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis.

The selection of youth leaders, security personnel, traditional rulers, farmers, ministry of agriculture personnel, NGO representatives, and religious leaders as key informants was based on their diverse and relevant experiences with the effects of banditry in Katsina State from 2019 to 2024. Youth leaders offer insight into how insecurity has disrupted education, employment, and social engagement among young people. Security personnel contribute expert knowledge on the nature and challenges of addressing banditry on the ground. Traditional rulers provide valuable perspectives on how banditry has impacted communal life, local governance, and conflict resolution. Farmers offer firsthand accounts of the disruption to agricultural activities and food production, which are central to the state's economy. Ministry of Agriculture personnel give policy-level insights into how banditry has influenced agricultural planning and intervention efforts. NGO representatives help to contextualize the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of banditry on vulnerable groups. Religious leaders contribute a moral and social understanding of the crisis, helping to explain how banditry has affected community trust and cohesion.

Coding of Key Informants

Table 2 explain the key informants interviewed, location where they are interviewed and the designated codes to identify them.

Table 2 Coding of Key Informants

S/N	Location (Community)	Key Informants	Code
1	Batsari	Non-governmental Organization (NGO)	NGO1
		Non-governmental Organization (NGO)	NGO2
		Traditional Ruler	TR1
		Traditional Ruler	TR2
		Security Personnel	SP1
		Ministry of Agriculture Representative	MAR1
2	Dandume	Ministry of Agriculture Representative	MAR2
		Farmer	F1
		Youth Leader	YL1
		Security Personnel	SP2
		Traditional Ruler	TR3
		Non-governmental Organization (NGO)	NGO3
3	Faskari	Traditional Ruler	TR4
		Security Personnel	SP3
		Farmer	F2
		Youth Leader	YL2

Key: NGO 1, NGO 2, NGO 3: Non-governmental Organization were interviewed across the three locations.

TR 1, TR 2 and TR 3: traditional rulers were interviewed across the study locations

SP 1, SP 2 and SP 3: Security personnel were interviewed in the course of this study.
M1, and M 2: ministry of agricultural representatives were interviewed across the local government areas under study.
F1 and F2: farmers were interviewed while, Y 1 and Y 2 means that two youth leaders were interviewed in the study locations

Validity of the instrument

The instruments were validated using content and face validity method. This was achieved through the judgment of the project supervisor and a statistician who were given a copy of the instrument, purpose of the study and the research questions to assess the relevance of content, clarity of statements and logical accuracy of the instrument. Their suggestions were used to modify the questions.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instruments were determined through test and retest method which involved conducting a pilot study by administering the instrument to a sample of 10 participants in the study area but was not constituted in the overall study

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected were subjected to quantitative (statistics). The collected data were transcribed, coded, and organized, then thematic analysis were carried out to identify patterns and derive meaningful insights that address the research objectives. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistical tools, such as simple percentages, frequency tables and mean and standard deviations, providing a clear and organized presentation of the findings.

Ethical Consideration

An introductory letter was presented to the respondent and informing them that the work is for academic purpose and would be treated with utmost confidentiality for necessary consent and approval. As well, the study was treated with maximum confidentiality by avoiding diversion of the result to unauthorized individuals.

Impacts of Banditry on Socio-economic Activities in Katsina State

The main objective of this study is to examine the impacts of banditry on socio-economic activities in Katsina State in the study locations, so this sets out to achieve the objective.

Table 3. Impacts of Banditry on Socio-Economic Activities in Katsina State

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Has banditry affected your daily economic activities	Yes	275	69.4
	No	121	30.6
If yes, how has banditry affected your economic activities?	No Response	121	30.6
	Loss of income due to destruction of property or goods	138	34.8
	Fear of going out to work or engage in business	19	4.8
	Increased costs of goods/services due to insecurity	27	6.8

	Inability to access markets	13	3.3
	Displacement from home/farm	78	19.7
Do you perceive the overall impact of banditry on the local economy of Katsina State?	Severe negative impact	189	47.7
	Moderate negative impact	130	32.8
	No impact	56	14.1
	Positive impact	21	5.3
Do you believe that banditry has led to a decline in investments or business opportunities in your area?	Yes	280	70.7
	No	78	19.7
	not sure	38	9.6
Total		396	100

Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents critical quantitative evidence on the impact of banditry across multiple dimensions of socio-economic life in Katsina State. These findings are particularly relevant to the second objective of this study, which is to assess how banditry affects socio-economic development in the state. The data reveal that the consequences of banditry extend well beyond individual victimisation, exerting systemic pressure on economic participation, market accessibility, livelihood sustainability, investment flows, and overall economic confidence within affected communities.

A considerable majority of respondents—**69.4%**—reported that banditry has negatively affected their daily economic activities. This widespread disruption underscores the scale of insecurity's intrusion into everyday livelihood strategies, particularly in a context where the local economy is predominantly informal, agrarian, and dependent on small-scale enterprises. The interruption of these routine activities has far-reaching implications, including income instability, food insecurity, and rising poverty levels—core indicators of socio-economic underdevelopment.

Among those affected, **34.8%** attributed their economic challenges to the direct loss of income resulting from the destruction of property or goods, such as farm produce, livestock, business assets, and market infrastructure. Additionally, **19.7%** reported displacement from their homes or farmlands—an outcome that not only severs people from their primary sources of livelihood but also increases their dependency on humanitarian assistance or informal coping mechanisms, both of which are often unsustainable in the long term. Displacement further contributes to the erosion of rural economies, weakens community cohesion, and places additional pressure on already fragile public services in host areas.

Moreover, **6.8%** of respondents noted increased costs of goods and services, largely attributed to disrupted supply chains, reduced agricultural output, and heightened insecurity along transportation routes. Smaller but significant proportions also reported **fear of going out to work (4.8%)** and **inability to access markets (3.3%)**, reflecting the psychological toll of insecurity and the logistical constraints that restrict both production and trade. Collectively, these outcomes reduce labour productivity, constrain economic mobility, and stifle commerce, thereby weakening the local economy's capacity to sustain growth or attract investment.

Perceptions of the broader economic consequences of banditry further reinforce these findings. Nearly half of the respondents **(47.7%)** described the impact as severely negative,

while an additional **32.8%** assessed it as moderately negative. A small minority **(14.1%)** perceived no impact, and only **5.3%** considered the effects to be positive—likely reflecting atypical instances of short-term gains through informal or opportunistic economic activity in unregulated environments. However, such instances do not represent sustainable or inclusive development and may, in fact, further entrench illicit economic behaviours. Equally concerning is the perception among **70.7%** of respondents that banditry has led to a decline in investment and business opportunities in their respective areas. This perception signals an erosion of investor confidence, both domestic and external, with direct consequences for economic diversification, job creation, and capital accumulation. The flight of investment—whether in agriculture, infrastructure, education, or trade—deepens unemployment and poverty, particularly among youth. It also increases vulnerability to further cycles of violence, as economically disenfranchised individuals may be more susceptible to recruitment by criminal networks or extremist groups.

Taken together, these findings provide compelling evidence that banditry in Katsina State constitutes a significant barrier to socio-economic development. Its impacts are felt not only at the household level—through income loss and displacement—but also at the macroeconomic level, where growth, investment, and human capital development are severely undermined. The widespread disruption of agricultural activities, informal trade, and service delivery contributes to a broader pattern of economic stagnation, social instability, and governance challenges. As such, addressing the impact of banditry is not merely a security imperative, but a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable development, rural transformation, and poverty reduction in Katsina State.

However, these findings are corroborated by **Umaru, Adejare, and Abdullahi (2023),** who found that persistent banditry in Katsina State significantly reduced maize farmers' yields and income levels, thus exacerbating rural poverty and undermining food security**. Isyaku, Yerima, and Aliyu (2024)** similarly observed that insecurity in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State led to mass displacement, destruction of farmland, and a severe decline in agricultural output and informal business activities,

However, the above findings aligned with the qualitative and quantitative data. An NGO Representative identified as (NGO1) Batsari said that to avoid being kidnapped;

> *"We observe increased poverty, food shortages, forced migration, and disruption of social cohesion"* (IDI, 2025).

Also, a Ministry of Agriculture Personnel identified as (MAR1) Dandume stated that;

> *"Banditry has reduced overall agricultural output, contributing to food insecurity. Some communities face shortages because farms are left uncultivated"* (IDI, 2025).

In addition, a Traditional Ruler from Faskari identified as (TR1) maintained that;

> *"Banditry has severely affected my people's livelihoods. Many farmers have abandoned their farms, and traders have shut down shops. Economic hardship is widespread due to loss of property and fear"* (IDI, 2025).

Furthermore, a Security Personnel from Faskari identified as (SP1) stressed that;

> *"In my experience, banditry has crippled everyday economic activities. People are afraid to go about farming, trading, or running small businesses. Markets operate at reduced capacity, and many residents stay indoors to avoid being targeted."* (IDI, 2025).

Similarly, a Farmer from Dandume identified as (F1) suggested that;

> *"We have lost crops destroyed during raids, livestock stolen, and farming equipment taken. Some farmers have been kidnapped or forced to flee"* (IDI, 2025).

Based on the foregoing, it will be deduced that banditry have a systemic pressure on economic participation, market accessibility and livelihood sustainability

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of this study was to examine the impacts of banditry on socio-economic activities in Katsina State. The findings reveal that banditry has had profound negative effects, including widespread income losses, displacement of populations, and destruction of critical productive assets such as farmland, livestock, and infrastructure. Empirical studies support these findings; for instance, Umaru et al. (2024) reported significant reductions in farmers' income and crop yields, while Adeola et al. (2024) observed declines in livestock production and forced relocations among herders. These impacts have weakened agricultural output, limited market access, increased operational costs, and reduced investor confidence, thereby undermining economic resilience and deepening poverty.

In addition, the study found that banditry has disrupted access to education and healthcare due to attacks on institutions and the displacement of key personnel, leading to school closures, reduced enrollment, and poor health outcomes. These disruptions threaten long-term human capital development and socio-economic stability. The findings align with the Human Security Theory, which emphasizes that security encompasses freedom from fear, want, and indignity. Banditry in Katsina, therefore, represents not only a security concern but a multidimensional humanitarian and development crisis that requires urgent, coordinated policy action.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that banditry poses a serious threat to the socio-economic development of Katsina State. It undermines agricultural productivity, disrupts essential social services, displaces communities, and erodes public trust in government institutions. These consequences are driven by deeper structural issues such as poverty, unemployment, poor governance, and limited access to state resources and protection. The failure of existing security strategies—largely militarized and reactive in nature—reflects the need for a shift toward more comprehensive, people-centered, and development-oriented interventions. Without addressing the root causes of insecurity, socio-economic development in Katsina State will remain stalled, and the humanitarian crisis will deepen.

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the impact of banditry on the socio-economic development of Katsina State

i. **Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Both local, State and federal government should prioritize poverty alleviation and youth employment through vocational training, microfinance programs, and agricultural subsidies, particularly in rural communities most affected by banditry.
ii. **Strengthening Local Security Infrastructure:** Community-based policing and intelligence-led security operations should be adopted by the State government in collaboration with **local government authorities** and the **Nigeria Police Force** to improve trust and cooperation between communities and law enforcement.
iii. **Educational and Healthcare Restoration:** Urgent investments are needed by the State government in collaboration with the federal government, **non-governmental organizations (NGOs),** and **international humanitarian agencies** to rebuild destroyed

schools and health facilities, recruit displaced personnel, and provide psychological support to victims of violence.

iv. **Institutional Reforms:** Improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in local governance is crucial to rebuilding public trust and addressing grievances that fuel insecurity.

v. **Inclusive Dialogue and Reconciliation:** The Katsina state government should engage in peacebuilding initiatives that include traditional rulers, youth groups, civil society, and former combatants to foster local ownership of security solutions.

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