



IMPLICATION OF BANDITRY ACTIVITIES ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN BARKIN LADI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

In Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria, a field assessment was conducted to examine the impact of banditry activities on food production. Foron, Fan, Gashish, Ropp, and Heipang were the locations. 100 randomly chosen farmers from the chosen district were given a set of comprehensive and well-organized questionnaires. The responses cover a variety of topics, such as the respondents' production profiles, the types of attacks carried out by bandits in the study region, the extent of harm done to farming operations by banditry, and the efforts made to stop banditry in the study area. Using SPSS version 24, the data were presented as frequency distributions with percentages and means determined. Based on the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area, the study came to the following conclusions: the majority of respondents—about 43.0%—were single, and a bigger percentage—about 39.0%—were in the 18–28 age range. Around 60.0% of the respondents were men. Additionally, it was noted that the majority of respondents (54%) agreed that raping women (52%) and ritual killings (40%) are the most common types of attacks committed by bandits in the research area, followed by market raids (59%), animal rustling (45%), highway robberies (45%), and kidnapping for ransom (45%). The study also reveals that a higher proportion of respondents concur that some of the levels of damage caused by bandits in the study area include: fallowed and unharvested crops (73%), reduction in the output of produce (74%), loss of household heads (49%), reduction in the output of animal products (65%), rural-urban migration (51%), displacement of farmers (58%), loss of crops due to pest infestation (53%), and illegal burning

of buildings and structures (50%) The research also showed that of the efforts made to reduce banditry in the study area, community efforts accounted for the biggest percentage (42.0%), followed by individual efforts (35%).

Keywords: Survey, Banditry activities , Food production,

INTRODUCTION

Banditry is defined as the act of robbing and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not it was premeditated, using weapons of offense or defense, especially in semi-organized groups for the purpose of overwhelming the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals (Shalangwa, 2013). Egwu (2016) approaches armed banditry from the perspective of robbing herders of their cattle and other livestock or the process of attacking ranches for livestock. Additionally, he makes the case that these operations were typically motivated by a variety of other strategies and elements. He nevertheless continued to view it generally as a type of economic wrongdoing that was spread through an unofficial network. He goes on to claim that armed banditry developed as a technique of "primitive" cow herd acquisition in the context of subsistence and commercial pastoralism. Bandits are therefore criminal gangs that terrorize and rob locals and visitors of their precious possessions, including goods, cash, livestock, camels, and sheep, among others (Abdullahi, 2019). These bandits are typically viewed as desperate, lawless marauder who traverse the mountains and forests in order to avoid being recognized, apprehended, and identified as outlaws.

Food is a basic human necessity, and throughout history, human endeavor has

been shaped by this desire. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2010) describes food production as the availability of food in terms of production, distribution, and consumption. Given their resources and conditions, farmers use an integrated set of operations on their farms to produce food in an effort to maximize productivity and net farm revenue over the long run. The concept of productivity, profitability, stability, and long-term viability forms the basis of a farming system, which is a method for constructing farm-household systems.

Nigeria's agriculture industry is seriously threatened by banditry-related insecurity. In Northeast Nigeria, terrorist and banditry activities have a negative impact on agriculture, disrupting the farming operations of farming communities. For example, farmers in these locations are unable to visit their farms to plant, control weeds, or harvest their crops due to the banditry attacks of the pastoralists. In addition to the physical assault, the bandits' devastation exacerbates the suffering of the helpless farmers. Most often, the farmers are defeated, hurt, or murdered, while others are forced out of their homes and this continue to be one of the biggest risks to food production in the nation, according to Ofem & Basse (2014) and Bilis (2018). These conflicts between herdsman and farmers frequently occur. As a result, places where food crops are planted or produced are no

longer farming due to insecurity, which has an impact on the growth in the price of food commodities, shortages of specific food products, and acute food scarcity in the nation. Therefore, the objective of this study was to examine the implications of banditry activities on food production in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

Barkin Ladi Local Government Area is one of the seventeen (17) Local Government Area in Plateau State which consists of five (5) districts namely; Foron, Heipang, Fan, Ropp, and Gashish. It's headquarter is in the town of Gwol. The district is located in the Northern senatorial district of Plateau state. Barkin Ladi is predominantly an agricultural local government with about 70% of the population engaged in agriculture. The major crops grown in the area include Maize, Potato, assorted vegetables, Acha, Millet, Sorghum, Cowpea, Coffee, Rice and Wheat. The major livestock kept include cattle, pig, rabbit and poultry and some small ruminants like sheep and goats.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A total of twenty-five (25) village extension cells were created by choosing five (5) village extension cells from each district. Additionally, four (4) farmers were chosen at random from each village cell, giving each village a total of twenty (20) farmers. The total of them equals one hundred (100) respondents, which is the sample size for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaires were the major tools used to gather the primary data since they were created to ask respondents for the right information. In order to guarantee that the questionnaires were properly filled out, interviews were specifically performed among people who could not read or write in English. Both the oral interviews and the questionnaires were designed to provide the farmers a chance to express their thoughts on how banditry activities may effect food production in the research area and how that may affect the entire nation

Data Analysis

A frequency distribution with percentages generated was used to illustrate the data. Using SPSS version 24, the table was analyzed using the chi square statistical test, and the means were separated using the least significant difference at the $P < 0.05$ level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n=100)

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-28	39	39.0
	29-38	17	17.0
	39-48	32	32.0
	49-58	7	7.0
	59 and above	5	5.0
Sex	Male	60	60.0
	Female	40	40.0
Marital status	Single	43	43.0
	Married	42	42.0
	Divorced	4	4.0
	Widow	10	10.0
	Widower	1	1.0
Educational level	Primary	5	5.0
	Secondary	31	31.0
	Tertiary	59	59.0
	Non-formal	5	5.0
Occupation	Farming	42	42.0
	Civil service/Farming	28	28.0
	Trading/Farming	20	20.0
	Others	10	10.0
Household size	1-5	39	39.0
	6-10	45	45.0
	11-15	10	10.0
	16-20	6	6.0
Farm size	1-2 ha	28	28.0
	3-4 ha	31	31.0
	5-6 ha	33	33.0
	7 ha and above	8	8.0
	Type of labor	Family	58
	Hired	42	42.0
Sources of income	Family/Friends	34	34.0
	Cooperatives	20	20.0
	Banks	14	14.0
	Personal savings	32	32.0
Farming experience	Less than 1 year	9	9.0
	1-5 years	42	42.0
	6-10 years	14	14.0
	11-20 years	25	25.0
	20 years and above	10	10.0

Source: Field survey 2022

Table 2: Type of Attack by Bandits in the Study Area (n=100)

Type of attack	A	D	SA	SD	Mean	P-value
Village raid by bandits	74	7	17	2	1.4700	0.000
Market raid by bandits	59	22	18	1	1.6100	0.000
Animal rustling	45	35	16	4	1.7900	0.000
Highway robbery	45	21	29	5	1.9400	0.000
Kidnapping for ransom	43	6	45	6	2.1400	0.000
Ritual killings	40	29	20	11	2.0200	0.000
Raping of women	52	8	31	9	1.9700	0.000

Source: Field survey 2022

Table 3: Levels of Damage Caused by Banditry on Farming Operations (n=100)

Levels of damage	A	D	SA	SD	Mean	P-value
Fallowed and un-harvested crops	73	5	18	4	1.5300	0.000
Reduction in the output of produce	74	6	18	2	1.4800	0.000
Loss of head of households	49	9	36	6	1.9900	0.000
Reduction in the output of animal products	65	17	15	3	1.5600	0.000
Fear of going to farm to work by girls and others	51	11	35	3	1.9000	0.000
Rural-urban migration	58	12	30		1.7200	0.000
Displacement of farmers from their homes	53	7	37	3	1.9000	0.000
Loss of crops due to pest infestation	50	32	14	4	1.7200	0.000
Drop in the country's Gross Domestic Products	57	21	21	1	1.6600	0.000
Illegal burning of buildings and structures	48	26	22	4	1.8200	0.000
Reduction in farmers sources of income	62	7	26	5	1.7400	0.000
Abduction and recruitment of residence	41	33	21	4	1.8788	0.000
Maiming of farmers	61	23	8	8	1.6300	0.000
Abduction of farmers for forceful marriage	60	18	16	6	1.6800	0.000
Killings and looting	60	13	24	3	1.7000	0.000
Loss of resources due to ransom payment	60	9	30	1	1.7200	0.000

Source: Field survey 2022

Table 4: Effort at Curtailing Banditry (n=100)

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage	P-value
Government effort	23	23.0	0.63
Community effort	42	42.0	
Individual effort	35	35.0	

Source: Field survey 2022

DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

As shown in Table 1, the socioeconomic traits of the respondents in the study area taken into account include age, sex, marital status, level of education, employment, household size, farm size, kind of labor employed, source of income, and farming experience. According to the analysis's findings, 39% of the respondents, or 39 of the total respondents, were between the ages of 18 and 28, and 32% were between the ages of 39 and 42. Therefore, it could be concluded that middle-aged people who are capable of handling, managing, and cultivating land for agricultural purposes, which requires a great deal of labor and time-consuming through proper management, are more likely to engage in conflict. They are also active, more productive in the economic sectors. The average age of farmers, according to these studies, was 42 years old, which is consistent with findings from Kahinde (2011) and Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008), suggesting that farming draws a younger demographic. According to the results, there were 40 women and 60 men among the sampled farmers, respectively. This indicates that men made up the majority of food producers in the study area. This may

be because men are typically the family's primary breadwinners, and as a result, they engage in food production for both supplemental and monetary needs of their families. This result was in line with Adisa's (2012) observation that men make up the majority of crop farmers in the research area and that they are more likely to engage in conflict because they are more active. Since men are seen as the defenders of each community, this result was also compatible with the idea that men are more likely to engage in conflict than women.

Additionally, 42% of those in the table were married. It's possible that their obligations to provide for their families, pay for their children's education, pay their rent, and fulfill other obligations drive people to engage in food production. Only 1% of widowers were among the 43% of single people, 10% of whom are widows. According to a West African Network of Peace building (WANEP, 2019) report, banditry in the state of Zamfara caused 4,983 women to become widows and 25,000 children to become orphans between June 2011 and May 2019. The data also shows that 31% of respondents attended secondary school, 59% of respondents attended college or university, and 5% had no formal education. Since 59% of the respondents had

university education and 31% had primary education, the data indicates that the majority of food producers in the research area are educated. This provides the farmers with the tools, know-how, and skills necessary for improved agriculture, ensuring effective resource management and enhanced farming practices. This was in line with what Ofuoku and Isife (2009) stated in their study on farmer-herder conflict, which found that educated people are more likely than illiterate people to have a better grasp of problems. A person with education may be more receptive to discussion amid conflict.

According to the occupational distribution of food producers in the research area, 42% were full-time farmers; this finding may reflect the fact that food production is potentially a very lucrative business that can meet their demands. 20% of people engage in both trading and farming, 10% of people are involved in other activities, 20% are involved in commerce and farming, and 38% are involved in both. According to the study's analysis of labor distribution, the majority of respondents—58%—used family labor, which may be related to the high cost of labor.

Type of Attack by Bandits in the Study Area

Table 2 presents the findings for the type of bandit assault in the research area. According to the study, there are many different forms of bandit attacks in the study area, including assaults on villages and markets, theft of livestock, highway robberies, and kidnappings for ransom, ritual killings, and the rape of women. The

findings showed that the majority of respondents (74%) agreed that raiding villages is a tactic utilized by bandits in the study area, while 18% strongly agreed, 5% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. A majority (59%) of respondents, which was also indicated by the results, concurred that robberies of markets are a common form of banditry. In addition, the results show that 45% of respondents agreed, while 35% disagreed, that animals were also rustled during banditry-related operations. Bassey and Agbor (2016) made a similar observation in a report, noting that more livestock had been taken in broad daylight without causing any harm to anyone. In the study area, bandits kidnap homes for ransom, according to 45% of respondents who strongly agreed and 43% who agreed. A comparable report was provided by The Humanitarian (2018), who said that some robbers have gone as far as to kidnap foreign miners and demand a suitable ransom before releasing them. 40% of respondents agreed that bandits kill for ceremonial purposes, while 29% disagreed.

The results also showed that 52% of respondents in the research area agreed—and 31% strongly agreed—that women were raped during the bandits' operation, with only 8% opposing. The aforementioned finding was in agreement with Olaniyan, (2018), who in a related study claims that bandits were spotted harassing herders' communities, farms, villages, and highways while brandishing automatic guns with the intent to kill people, abduct children, and plunder cows. In some cases, they also kidnap girls or women in the process, as noted by Akowe & Kayode (2014).

Levels of Damage Caused by Banditry on Farming Operations

Table 3 shows the results for the level of harm inflicted by banditry on agricultural operations and seasons. The findings showed that 73% of respondents agreed—and 18% strongly agreed—that the study area contained fallowed land and unharvested crops. This might be due to fear of being killed, raped, kidnapped, or a variety of other factors that are best known to the farmers. 74% and 18%, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that the output of agriculture products has decreased. 36% strongly agreed, and 49% agreed, that so many families lose the breadwinner. This is in line with the findings of Dauda (2014) and Rufa'i (2016), who reported that the year 2010 saw the emergence of a group of criminal gangs that were experts in armed banditry. As a result, a new type of banditry emerged that not only involves rustling animals but also killing the owners and frightening locals away from their communities. This act of banditry, notably in Zamfara and other neighboring states, crippled socioeconomic progress. The outcome also showed that the majority of respondents (65%) agreed that there has been a decline in the production of animal products such as milk, hides, and skin, etc., which has led to a drop in the supply of raw materials for Nigerian companies. Women and girls fear going to the farm, according to 51% of respondents, with 35% strongly agreeing. Given that they are the target populations, this may be due to rape.

According to the results, 58% agreed and 30% strongly agreed that migration from rural to urban areas had an impact on food production. Farmers are being relocated to IDP camps from their houses, according to 53% of respondents, while 37% disagreed. The results show that 50% agreed and 32% disagreed that crop loss occurs as a result of pest infestation and crop devastation. 21% disagreed and 21% strongly agreed that crops are included in the nation's Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The results showed that there has been a glaring failure on the part of the security authorities of the government in efforts to prevent and control armed banditry in the studied area. The study focused on Barkin Ladi Local Government Area in Plateau State to evaluate how banditry activities affect food production in Nigeria. The introduction of the study provided a broad overview of banditry from its inception. The study concluded that the threat of banditry is becoming alarming due to a high rate of unemployment, a poor security system, poverty, the porousness of Nigeria's borders, the proliferation of weapons, and the existence of sparsely regulated areas that serve as the bandits' hideouts.

As a result, the study shows that the region has experienced a significant number of banditry attacks on farm communities, villages, and highways, which have led to kidnapping and livestock rustling with associated security concerns. The report

came to the conclusion that because of the alarming prevalence of banditry, which has resulted in huge looting and carnage, and the consequent condition of insecurity in the region, Nigerian security has been quite tense and volatile in the north.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results obtained from the study, it could be recommended that:

- i. The Nigerian government should plan to develop meaningful employment for the youths caught up in the phenomena by developing programs that seek to combat the pervasive poverty in the state in particular and the nation in general.
- ii. The Nigerian government should support the military's efforts in waging the battle against banditry and provide the security forces with the necessary incentives and modern equipment to enable them to do their duties without interference.
- iii. The population needs to be re-oriented to instill ethical ideals, respect for life, human rights, and the need to live in harmony with others regardless of religion or ethnic preferences.
- iv. To address the issue of regional weapons proliferation, the government should step up efforts to mobilize financial and human resources for de-radicalization and disarmament programs.
- v. Adequate supplies and installations of contemporary technology, as well as greater surveillance, should be made available. Border security

officers are urgently needed to stop trans-border crimes, which are one of the primary factors igniting banditry in Nigeria.

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