
**ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF ARMED BANDITRY ON
NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS**

¹Babajide Olanipekun **OLAOJO** & ²Gideon Funmilade **AWONIYI**

¹*Department of Social Studies, Federal College of Education
(Technical), Omoku, Rivers State*

²*Department of Educational Psychology, Emmanuel Alayande
College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State*

Abstract

Violent conflict resulting from armed banditry have become a recurring decimal in Nigeria's drive to nationhood. It has assumed a grievous dimension in recent time thereby threatening peaceful coexistence, economic growth and development of Nigeria. The study also shows that the armed banditry has affect economic activities in the form of trading, markets and agricultural production, and livestock production. As a matter of fact, incidences of banditry have greatly affected the image of the country both domestically and internationally especially in the area of the nation's quest to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and also an attempt to develop a viable economy. It was recommended that Government should create employment for the youths and train them on different programmes so as to reduce poverty in the country. In Nigeria, government should put in place functional security system to cub banditry.

Keywords: Armed banditry, Nigeria's Economic growth, National development, Counselling implications.

Introduction

The activities on banditry over the years have paralysed economic activities in Nigeria since majority of the populace derived their livelihood from farming. The menace posed by banditry has affected rural populace income livelihood thereby making them sojourning in the neighbouring local government area. Nigeria is facing series of challenges which are affecting the economic growth of the country. One of such problems bedeviling economic growth of the country is the issue of kidnapping and banditry. This has turned into a social problem which is affecting virtually every member of the Nigerian society in one way or the other. Banditry and other forms of conflicts have recently come to constitute a subject of great concern in Nigeria. Study and other media report indicates that, in the first quarter of 2014 alone, 262 persons lost their lives in 15 separate attacks in Benue state and before and after the 2019 general election sporadic clashes has continued. In one instance, bandits brazenly attacked the state governors convey. Similarly, 16 separate attacks were reported in Plateau and Kaduna state. Banditry activities have of recent increased tremendously along Abuja-Kaduna road, the development left many motorist and passengers unaccounted for just as their belongings were carted away by the bandits (Chukwueme & Agaba, 2019).

Moreover, banditry violence is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. The history of banditry in Nigeria can be traced to pre-civil war period when government deteriorated in certain parts of the old western region resulting in political violence, crime and organized insurgency (Chidi, 2018). Mustapha (2019) stressed further that in the Northwest area of Nigeria particularly in Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna and Kebbi states, the activities of bandits have been particularly worrisome. The activities of these bandits' ranges from kidnapping to murder, robbery, rape, cattle-rustling, and the like, their modus operandi involves maiming and killing. Their victims when they least expect. Usually, they mobilized themselves through the forests into the neighborhood riding on fast motorcycles especially in the nights and shoot at will. Sometimes in the afternoon, once they were sure there were no security presence

of the police or military around; they unleash terror in the communities. This growing threat is claiming victims in hundreds. Several children have been orphaned and women became widows overnight while the issue of food security as well as humanitarian tragedy will further make life unbearable for many Nigerians.

Furthermore, apart from fatalities recorded, bandits attack on communities increased social risks, discouraged investment and triggered economic crisis for individuals and communities. The conflict is causing a spill-over effect on communities and hindering inter-communal and inter-state trade. In many farming communities across the state for instance, locals no longer go to farms due to fear of bandits. These are people who cultivate crops and other food items that which the city dwellers relied on. They also produce certain raw material needed for the continued survival of local industries such as edible oil refineries, bakeries, animal feed production firms etc. As long as these farmers keep away from their farms for fear of their lives, the local production of food and these raw materials would be affected and the resultant affect will be an unprecedented increase in price of food and other human necessities in the market. The paper therefore examined the security threats posed by banditry in Nigeria, to investigate the implication of banditry in the Nigeria's economic development. It also investigated the causes and solutions to the menace of armed banditry in Nigeria and its negative effect on Nigeria citizens and economy.

Banditry and Insecurity in Nigeria

Banditry has emerged as the new bogeyman for insecurity in Nigeria, joining a long and still growing list that includes Boko Haram, cultists, herdsmen, militants and host of others. In different parts of the North-West, from Birnin Gwari in Kaduna to Tsafe in Zamfara, bandits are offered as the trope for an intolerable carnage, and the inexplicable haplessness of Federal Government that does not appear to care for much else in an election season. Nigeria Watch (2011) observed that banditry means occurrence of prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. It involves the use of force, or threat to

that effect, to intimidate a person with the intent to rob, rape or kill. Banditry is a crime, as well as cause violence in contemporary societies. The fact are scary. About 1,100 people were murdered in 2018 in states of Northwest, over 2,200 were killed in 2019 and 1,600 killed in 2020. According to ACAPS (2020) about 247,000 people had been displaced while their activities alone have led to the production of more than 41,000 refugees. In Zamfara alone, over 8,000 people have been murdered in the last decade, 200,000 displaced internally and others fleeing to neighbouring states. ICGP report (2020) stressed that the situation is so porous already that the religious leader and sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar opined that "Bandits now move in the North from house to house with AK47 and lamented that the region had become the worst place to live in Nigeria.

The Nigeria economic rating with major focus on growth has witnessed an increase in spending on military hardware as well as equipping the personnel security, systems and training to make them efficient to cope with the insurgent phenomena and ensuring sustainability of economic growth (Ruys, 2004). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020 put Nigeria's unemployment rate at 23.1% of which youth unemployment is 55.4%. This figure has continued to increase yearly as Nigeria institutions keep graduating batches of youth with the prior impression of getting a better job and opportunities after graduating. No wonder, Suleman (2018) opined that anxiety from Nigerian graduates that later turn to frustration, and then to aggression on the government is what has fuelled the emergence of most of these security threats in the country. The idle youths easily get enticed with the riches, and as a result, they tend to do whatever it takes to get rich. Adeolu, (2018) noted that the failure of successive administration in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty bewilder the nation has made life worrisome and only the fittes survive hence, the cause of banditry in Nigeria.

Armed banditry and cattle rustling has become rampant especially in more recent times in Nigeria's history. Basse and Ubi (2016) opined that there are more cases of being stolen without

harming anyone, even in broad daylight. Before the year 2010, armed banditry used to be overlooked and under-reported mostly handled by the locals. The incident of banditry has affected the image of the country both domestically and internationally as a nation. It has affected Nigeria's also an attempt to develop a viable tourism industry, as visitors are regularly warned by their countries to be wary of coming to Nigeria. Many of the investors have also stayed away for fear of being kidnapped (Ekpe, 2009). The bandits are involved in highway robbing, cattle rustling looting, laying siege on rural markets and killing innocent people. More recently, there has been a growth informal mining activity in the mineral-rich region, which has attracted people from outside the state, further fueling instability. 300 persons were killed and 200 abducted in Niger State in two weeks (The Nation, 2022).

In his own opinion Akinkunmi (2020) attributed youths resource scarcity and financial constraints and leaders failures, peer groups, and foreign, interferences as part of causes of banditry in Nigeria. The obvious effects of youth restiveness on the Nigerian society are loss of lives and properties, which constitute a major threat to security of the state as well as its corporate existence. It also discourages genuine economic and democratic development. Youths are behind every of these social vices in the world and most especially in Nigeria and they play prominent or centre roles. Many culprits of banditry obviously are largely unmarried and are below 30 year of age (Olaajo & Bade, 2019). Banditry is a form of evil, wicked and criminal actions or behavior in the society. This is a social situation that a large number of observers feel is inappropriate and need remedy; it is a social vice that violate societal norms and values.

The recent reported incidences of banditry in Northwest and North central geopolitical zones are presented below:

Table 1: Recent incidences of Banditry in Nigeria

SN	News-paper	Reporter(s)	Date of Publication	Nature and Place of Attack	Causalities
1.	The Punch	Gbenro Adeoye	March 31, 2018	Bandits attacked Bawan Daji village of Anka LGA of Zamfara state and killed over 30 peoples	Over 30 people were killed
2.	The Nation	The Nation	March 1, 2019	21 killed in Kawaye village in Bagega community of Anka LGA of Zamfara State.	21 people were killed and 40 others abducted
3.	The Punch	The Punch	June 9, 2019	25 killed in bandit attacks in Klahu, Tsage and Geeri villages in Rabah LGA of Sokoto State.	25 people were killed
4.	The Punch	Olaide Oyelude	July 19, 2019	11 killed in bandit attacks on Kandara and Danmusa LGA of Sokoto State.	11 people were killed.
5.	The Nation	The Nation	August 19, 2019	Four villagers were killed in banditry attacks in Tsayu village of Jibiya LGA of Katsnia State.	Death of 4 villagers
6.	The Punch	Maiharaji Altine	January 17, 2020	Zamfara bandit kill 31 persons in attacks in Tsayu village in Gummi LGA and Makosa village in Zurmi LGA of Zamfara State.	Death of 31 persons
7.	Nigerian Tribune	Muhammad Sabiu	March 2, 2020	Bandits kill 50 people in villages in Igabi and Giwa LGA of Kaduna State.	50 people were killed while several others injured
8.	The Punch	Olaide Oyelude	April 20, 2020	Bandits kill 47 people in multiple attack on Kurechin Dutse, Makauwachi and Daule villages in Katsina State.	A total of 47 people were killed in all the villages

Table 1 (cont'd)

9.	The Nation	AbdulGafar Alabelewe	April 24, 2020	Bandits kill seven and kidnap one in Akwunakwo, Kabriasha and Damba villages in Chikun LGA of Kaduna State.	7 persons were killed and 1 person was kidnapped
10.	Nigerian Tribune	Muhammad Sabiu	May 6, 2020	5 killed, DPO shot and 1 kidnap in multiple bandit attack at Faskari and Sabuwa LGA of Katsina State.	5 people were killed, 1 kidnapped and DPO was shot
11.	The Punch	Maiharaji Altine	May 20, 2020	Bandits kill 12 in attack on three (3) communities in Tsafe LGA of Zamfara State	Death of 12 people and cart away animals
12.	The Punch	Maiharaji Altine	June 5, 2020	Bandits kill 21 people in Maru and Talata-Mafara LGA of Zamfara state	Death of 21 people
13.	The Nation	Justina Asishana	June 25, 2020	Four fered killed in Sunko, Gavya and Marafa communities in Manta District of Shiroro LGA of Niger State.	Death of 4 persons
14.	The Nation	Justina Asishana	July 21, 2020	16 persons kidnapped in bandit attacks in Magari and Tungan-Bajo communities of Rafi LGA, Niger State.	16 persons were kidnapped
15.	The Nation	AbdulGafar Alabelewe	July 26,2020	Bandits kill 10 in two attacks on 3 villages of Jema's and Kaura LGA of Kaduna State.	10 persons were killed
16.	The Punch	Olaide Oyelude	August 9, 2020	Eight bandits, two others skilled after bandits attacks on Zamfara village in Batsari LGA of Katsina State.	Death of 2 villagers and 8 bandits

Table 1 (cont'd)

17.	Vanguard	Vanguard	Sept. 4, 2020	Bandits kill 22 people, including 19 vigilantes in Dukku and Kagara towns, Niger State.	22 people were killed
18.	Vanguard	Ibrahim Hassan Wugo	Sept. 13, 2020	Bandits abduct 16 family members of Udawa farming communities of Kaduna State.	16 people were killed
19.	Vanguard	Ibrahim Hassan Wugo	Sept. 18, 2020	Bandits invade police station in Tangaza LGA of Sokoto State.	DPO and 1 inspector were killed and 2 women abducted
20.	Vanguard	Wole Mosadomi and Shehu Danjuma	Oct. 12, 2020	Bandits kill 14 persons in Ruwan Godiya village of Faskari LGA of Kastina state and Kagara town of Fafi LGA of Niger State.	14 people were killed, 3 injured and 1 kidnapped
				Bandits kill Southern Kaduna District head and son	Death of people
21.	Vanguard	Ibrahim Hassan Wugo	Nov. 17, 2020	Bandits kidnap 8 BABU students on the Kaduna Abuja Road.	8 students were kidnapped
22.	Vanguard	Wole Mosadomi	Nov.20, 2020	Bandits Kidnap 14 And Kill Mobile Policemen In Mariya LGA Of Niger Delta State.	14 people were kidnapped and death of a policemen
23.	Vanguard	Ifeanyi Nwannah	Nov.23, 2020	Armed Bandits Kidnap Imam, 17 Worshippers From A Mosque In Kanoma District, Maru LGA Zamfara State.	18 persons were kidnapped.
24.	Vanguard	Bashir Bello	Dec. 1, 2020	Bandits Invade Tashar Bama, Dogun Muaze And Unguwar Maigayya Villages Of Sabuwa LGA Of Katsina State.	7 farmers including nursing mother were killed and abduct 30 others

Table 1 (cont'd)

25.	Vanguard	Vanguard	Dec. 5, 2020		Bandits Attack Kasuwan Magani Town In Kajuru LGA Of Kaduna State.	1 persons was killed
26.	Daily Posi	Daily post	Dec. 2020	10,	Kidnappers raid Rmahbe layout in Ushafa, Abuja	3 persons were abducted
27.	The Nation	Uja Emmanuel	Dec. 2020	12,	Gun Men Kill Four And Injure Seven In Tse-Angande In Makurdi LGA Of Benue State.	Death of 4 persons and 7 persons injured
28.	Vanguard	Vanguard	Dec. 2020	12,	Banditry: Police confirm attack on Government Science Secondary School (GSSS) in Kankara LGA of Katsina State.	About 333 students missed
29.	The Nation	Justina Asishana	Dec. 2020	13,	Bandits kill ECWA Gospel Kubwa Kuta in Chukuba villiage of Shiroro LGA of Niger Delta	1 person was killed and 20 others were kidnapped
30.	VOA News	VOA News	Sept. 2021	22,	Bandits attack Bini primary health clinic, Sokoto	More than 100 killed
31.	Vatican News	Nathan Morley	Dec. 2021	20,	Armed Bandits Attack Kauran Fawa Markets And Rlhey Villages In Idasu, Giwa LGA Of Kaduna State.	38 people were killed
32.	Vatican News	Nathan Morley	Oct. 2021	19,	Bandits Attack Sokoto State.	12 peoples were killed
33.	Vanguard	Ibrahim Hassan Wuyo	Dec. 2021	23,	Bandits kill 6, kidnap many travelers in Birnin Gwari Road	6 people were killed and many were kidnapped.

Source: Nigeria Newspapers

Effect of Banditry in Nigeria

Banditry activities carried out comes with it corresponding consequences, which unfortunately largely affect third party such as the victims and the society at large. Reduces foreign direct

investment: The high rate of banditry in certain area of the country has made such area high risk zone for foreigners. This scares away foreign investors from investing in that region, as can be seen in the northern of Nigeria where Boko Haram and banditry is operating everywhere. Psychological stress and trauma: The traumatic experience that the victims of kidnapping and banditry undergo usually leaves an indelible mark on them that last as life time. This has a negative psychological effect, especially in children and in most cases leads to depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which unfortunately has a long-lasting effect. Atmosphere of fear and general distrust: In society where the incidence of banditry is high, there is usually an atmosphere of fear and general lack of trust; this tends to limit people's lives and actions which unfortunately has a long-lasting effect.

National Development as an Antidote to Banditry

For any nation to have positive national development and able to reduce banditry, such a nation should pay a special attention to the following:

Youth Empowerment: The three tiers of government federal, state and local government must ensure that youth are empowered. Because the youths of any nation constitute a political force to accelerate national development. In doing this, youths must be given adequate training, sound education, employment opportunities and host of others. Fadeiye (2005), stressed that in a situation where competent, certificated, highly skilled and promising Nigerian youth are roaming the nooks and crannies of the country is an open invitation to disaster and chaos, as many of them take to life of brigandage, lawlessness and in the process terrorize that these innocent youths fall within the age composition that constitute to working population that can be utilized to promoted national development.

Education: Education is very important when we are considering issues relating to national development. Therefore, the three tiers of government in Nigeria need to give adequate and prompt

attention to education at all levels, so that its citizens can possess the necessary qualities experience, skills and knowledge which are the bedrock for promoting national development (Ellah & Olajo, 2013). In fact, education equip individuals in the society with relevant knowledge and skills that are really essential in promoting national development, it is those who have acquired enough experience and necessary skills that can make meaningful contribution to national development.

Women Empowerment: The contribution of women in all spheres of human endeavors to the overall development of the home, the community, the state, the nation and the world at large could no longer be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Honestly, women now constitute important partners in progress in any serious movement towards national development in all its ramifications. It is a common knowledge that no nation, regardless of its status, whether develop or developing can rise beyond the quality of its citizenry. Therefore, when you educate a woman, you, educate a whole family. Hence, the essential role of woman in national development can no longer be dismissed or disregarded (Fadeiye, 2005).

How to Encourage Economic Development

The provision of capital through the establishment of financial institution. Such government sponsored financial institution as the Nigeria industrial development bank could be encouraged to make loan to investors. Guidance of behaviour of industrial and commercial concern through the enactment of appropriate laws. The provision of technical advice to private inventors. The creation of more stable political climate. Political stability will lead to the direction of efforts towards projects which will help to stimulate economic development. Sound economic planning and approved policy directions. The provision of economic and infrastructural facilities such as electricity, transportation network and water supply. Direct investment in productive ventures by the government to supplement private efforts either in the form of joint enterprises or wholly government owned concerns. Diversification of the economy

through a balance growth of the various sectors and the reduction of reliance on single products.

Conclusion

The activities of banditry have created a bad image for the country as information coming from Nigeria is frequently regarded as a scam and everyone always afraid of kidnapping. Nigeria in its budget, spent a whopping sum of ₦195 billion for security, the huge amount is enough to relieve Nigeria of major socio-economic development issues. The implication being that is Nigeria continues to spend such amount annually, it will not have sufficient funds to embark on important socio-economic development projects. On the issue of revenue generation in Nigeria, the nation is losing a lot of income revenue because of the frequent attacks on expatriates working in different companies in Nigeria. Hence, foreign workers are scare of coming to work in Nigeria which is affecting Nigeria socio-economic development. Also, increase in the occurrence of rape have continue to be on the increase and constitute another setback in the socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Implications for Counselling and Suggestions

Government should create employment for the youths and train them on different programmes so as to reduce poverty in the country. In Nigeria, government should put in place functional security system to cub banditry. Proper orientation is highly needed by the Nigeria youths and security personnel on the need to maintain peace and order. Bandits should be declared as a terrorist group and proactive measures should be put place to tackle banditry both tactically and institutionally. Government should make sure there is a special court to try suspected cases of banditry. The criminal justice system of Nigeria should be repositioned and revitalized through progressive reforms to enable it acquire the integrity and competences to sanction crime aright. Public security agents should be exposed to periodic training to the globally tenable best practices and knows how to counter banditry. Modern equipment and technology should be deployed in the curbing of banditry.

Government should provide more funding to the security sector and the welfare of security agents should be guaranteed.

References

- ACAPS (2020, January 10). Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest. Retrieved from <https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/production>.
- Akinkunmi, B. (2020). Causes, effects and solution to farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflict in North central, Nigeria. *Research review*, 18 (3), 82-91.
- Chidi, A. O. (2018). Banditry in Nigeria: A brief history of a long war. *Punch*, December 27, 2018.
- Chika, F. & Onyene, V. (2010). Youth restiveness in the Niger Delta of Nigeria: Implication for education and leadership. *European Journal of Social Science*, 18(2), 286-296.
- Chukwueme, K. K., Phinos, N. & Agaba, H. (2020). The impact of banditry and kidnapping on Nigeria's economic growth in the fourth republic: An analysis. *South-South Journal of Humanities and International Studies*.
- Chukwueme, K. K. and Agaba, H. (2019). *The impact of banditry and kidnapping on Nigeria economic growth in the fourth republic: An analysis*.
- ICGP Report (2020). International crisis group report 2020. Violence in Nigeria's north west: Rolling back the mayhem, 288:3.
- Mustapha, U. N. (2019). Armed banditry and internal security in Zamfara state. *International Journal of Scientific and Engineering Research*, 10 (8), 12-20.
- Nigeria Watch (2014). *Fourth report on violence in Nigeria (2006-2014)*. Available at www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/NGA.watch-report14.pdf
- Olaajo, B. O. & Bade, G. A. (2019). Effects of migration by nomadic farmers on farmers-herdsmen crisis. *Social Science Review*, 24 (1), 132-143.
- Ruys, G. (2004). *The fight against terrorism and the European security strategy*. Institute of international faculty of law. Available at <http://www.internationalallaw.com>
- Suleiman, A. O. (2018). Thematic appraisal on the impulsive upsurge of yahoo-yahoo in the 21st century in Nigeria: Quranic standpoint. *The Nation* (2019, March 1). 21 killed in Zamfara community's bandit

attacks. Retrieved from <https://thenationonline.net/21-killed-in-zamfara-community's-bandit-attacks/>

The Nation (2019, August 19). Four killed in fresh Katsina bandits attacks. Retrieved from <https://thenationaline-ng.net/just-in-four-killed-in-fresh-katsina-bandits-attacks/>

The Nation (2022, January 19). 300 killed and 200 abducted in Niger state.

Punch (2019, June 9). 25 killed in Sokoto bandit attacks. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/25-killed-in-sokoto-bandit-attacks/>

Vanguard (2020, December 12). Banditry: Police confirm attack on school Katsina. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/bandits-police-confirm-attack-on-school-katsina/>

Vanguard (2020, December 5). Bandits attack Kaduna community, shoot Fulani leader. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardr.com/2020/12/bandits-attack-kaduna-munity-shoot-fulani-leader/>

Vanguard (2020, November 22). Gunmen attack Zamfara mosque, kill give kidnap 18-police. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardr.com/2020/11/gunmen-attack-zamfara-mosque-kill-five-kidnap18-police/>

Vanguard (2020, September 4). ICYMI: bandits kill 22 in Niger, including 19 vigilantes. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardr.com/2020/gunmen-kill-22-in-niger-including-19-vigilantes/>