

THE ROLE OF VIGILANTE GROUPS IN CURBING BANDITRY IN BIRNIN GWARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA FROM 2012-2018

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria needs more than ever before the involvement of informal security actors in peace and conflict resolution. This is as a result of the multifaceted activities of banditry across different geo-political zones in the country. The problem of banditry necessitated the use of vigilante groups in Birnin Gwari LGA from 2015-2019. Despite this innovative security measure, Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna state seems not to be recording meaningful drop in the rate of banditry, hence the need for empirical verification. This study therefore, assessed the role of vigilante group in Birnin Gwari LGA from 2015-2019. Relying on both of primary and secondary sources, the paper posits that banditry constitutes a serious threat to Nigeria's public safety and, by extension, national security.

Keywords: *Vigilante Group, Rural Banditry, Security, Crime, Kidnapping.*

Introduction

Nigeria needs more than ever before the involvement of informal security actors in peace and conflict resolution. This is as a result of the multifaceted activities of bandits across different geo-political zones in the country, insurgency in the North-East, Pipeline vandalization and activities of militants in the Niger Delta in the South-South, while North -West and North Central endemic cattle rustling and armed banditry, the underlying assumption is that the police and other security personnel will provide security of life and properties for average Nigerians, but unfortunately the country has gross shortage of formal security personnel in an ever increasing state of insecurity.

There are about 377,000 policemen for about 170 million Nigerians. sadly, enough more than half of these policemen are attached to politicians and other top government officials, this invariably means that the ratio is one poorly motivated police officer to over 500 disgruntled and discontented Nigerians, this ugly situation has created an avenue for the formation and proliferation of different informal security outfits to fill up the vacuum left by the Nigerian Police Force. The vigilante group of Nigeria is the oldest and largest informal security outfit in Nigeria with a total of 3.2 million members across different States and Local Governments in the country. There number is nine times larger than the Nigerian Police, which invariably means that if properly and adequately trained on security strategy and tactics will go a long way in bridging security gap in the country (Usman 2014).

One of the cardinal principles of establishing conventional police force in Nigeria is to maintain law and order, safe guard and protect lives and properties of all citizens of the country, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that the Nigeria Police Force duties include prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of the offenders, preservation of law and order and the protection of properties, the Police Force exist primarily to promote harmony and security of lives and property in the society, the existence of police has been made necessary due to the fact that conflict is expected in human societies and if not regulated may threaten the existence of the society, it is in the realization of this role of the police and other security outfit that the Nigerian government has been putting huge resources purposely to tackle insecurity. However, the police without the cooperation of the public cannot address crimes, banditry inclusive, especially with the social and economic transformation taking place in the society. Thus, without tides with the vigilante groups in BirninGwari the police and in fact any other policing work may not have access to vital information from the citizens that could assist to counter insurgency and other

security challenges. Consequently, the idea of vigilante groups became eminent, vigilante groups, in simple terms, refers to cooperation between the police and the host community to fight crimes and ensure safety of lives and properties (Alemika 2007).

Theoretical Framework

This study employed on broken window theory. Broken window theory was used to explain the place of Vigilante Group structures in crime control. Broken window theory was proposed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982. They used broken windows as a metaphor for disorder within neighborhoods. The theory focuses on the control and prevention of crime from within the community as against from outside the community. It explains how effective and efficient informal policing structures are in controlling crimes compared to the formal policing structure that is made up of strangers. The theory holds that only the community members can safeguard themselves from crimes. This is because they live in the community and can work and watch at all times. They also know who those potential criminals are and how best they can be contained.

The core principle of informal policing structures is the constant maintenance of law and order in the various communities by members of that community. This is in line with the core notion of broken window theory, which asserts that the constant presence of police structures makes a community less conducive for crime and criminals. Increased police presence and enforcements of informal rules of conduct and laws can make a community seem less chaotic and safer, thereby, increasing the presence and involvement of residents in their community and lowering crime rates (Palmiotto, 2000).

The Broken Window Theory can be incorporated into the concept of informal policing in the sense that collective efforts by both the police and community dwellers can help alleviate the rate of crime in the community as the police see residents as partners in development and vice versa. The broken window theory asserts that if there is a crack anywhere in the community and no one is available or observant enough to take care of it, overtime it becomes a deep ditch that would pose a serious security risk to members of the society. The theory also assumes that most neighborhood crimes are more often than not perpetrated by offenders who reside near the victims; this makes crime primarily a local problem which can best be solved locally.

The Broken Window Theory has been criticized for been legitimizing informal policing which can lead to misappropriation of application of law in the society. Because the informal personnel are usually recruited on voluntary basis, they are not based on formalities. It can also lead the violation of right of the people. However, informal policing structure may tend to be controversial and conflictual with formal policing. Informal police is vigilante group. They may have no skill and technique which is a preliminary and necessary requirement for security provision and maintenance of law and order in the society.

Methodology

The methods adopted for data collection in this research are primary and secondary methods. The primary sources are questionnaire and it consist of two sections. Section A contains questions on the socio demographic attributes of the respondents while section B contains the body of the research work which seeks to find out the respondent's views regarding the variables of the research work.

The secondary source is from textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and reports from the radio. This study adopted random probability sampling technique. One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to some selected political wards due to the large size of the study area through the application of stratified sample technique. The questionnaires were both close ended and open ended. The method of data analysis involved the use of simple frequency distribution table.

Review of literature

Vigilante Groups and Global Trends

According to Usman (2014) the idea of vigilante started in the United States in the early 1970s when it was found that individuals and neighborhood groups were capable of contributing to their own security. This period witnessed such programmes like, neighborhood watch, home security, personal safety training et cetera, the modern idea of vigilante group first developed in America and Europe at the dawn of 1980s when it was increasingly realized that the best way to ensure a comparatively crime free society was to establish a joint co-operation between a professional police service and a responsible public.

Vigilante group is an act of policing based on the concept that the Police and citizens working together in creative ways can solve contemporary community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder and general neighborhood conditions. The philosophy is premeditated on the belief that achieving these goals requires the Police to develop a new relationship with citizens, allowing them the power to set local police priorities and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their community. Vigilante shifts the focus of police work from handling random crime calls to addressing community concerns (Anderson 2005).

According to Brainard and Derrick-Mills (2011) vigilante group as a belief or intention held by the police that they should consult with and take account of the wishes of the public in determining and evaluating operational policing policy and practice and also Collaborate with the public whenever possible in solving local problems.

The Activities of Vigilante Groups in Nigeria

According to Abrahansen and Williams (2005) the limited state capacity to provide safety and security to the public has led to self-help responses on the part of citizens including vigilante activity and in addition to vigilantism, is a rapid growth in commercial security. That public yearning for vigilantism could be considered as a response to wide spread negative perception that the police, the courts and other institutions of the state were too corrupt to curtail the level of crime. the vigilante groups who have been seen as better alternative to the police refers to some members of an official or unofficial group within a community that partner with the police to keep watch in a community for the purpose of maintaining law and order in the community and preventing crime, the group may or may not have any government support (Smith 2007).

Furthermore, to Alemika (2000) the growth of vigilante groups and the fact that various States of the federation are giving approval and solid support to the role of vigilante groups indicates that their operation are valued. However, a number of serious concerns have engaged the minds of scholars and well-meaning individuals in the country as regards to their operational logistics. These concerns range from concern about the character of the vigilante members, the manner of admission of the members, the training they receive, the remuneration and upkeep of the same, the power relationship between the members and the citizens, to the allegiance of the vigilante members to the State authority as well as the level of cooperation between the groups and the conventional security forces of the State, vigilante groups has been rapidly spreading in Nigeria as a result of a shift in emphasis for traditional policing, which is directed towards deterring crime and apprehending suspects, to one that is focused on police community partnership in solving the problem of crime in society.

Unlike the Nigeria Police Force whose history dates back to 1930 when the regional police forces were amalgamated, the vigilante groups emerged as a single body in 1989 and became a full-fledged organization in 1999 after its registration with Corporate Affairs Commission Companies and Allied Matters of Nigeria as an NGO. The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) is still crying for recognition by the Nigerian government. It is important to note that in a country like Nigeria bedeviled by different types of crises: ethnic, religious, political and even land- related conflicts. Vigilante groups stand to play a vital role in conflict prevention and mitigation (Adam 2016).

The Activities of Vigilante Groups in Kaduna State

The idea of the informal security system called *Yan bangain* Hausa language has its root in the pre-colonial security system in what later became Nigeria. The main objective of this pre-colonial policing system was to ensure the enforcement and maintenance of norms, values and traditions. The task of community policing during this period was not difficult due to low level of crime. Members of the group were also few and the group had no organized leadership structure. The idea of vigilantism has a very long history in Kaduna state, because the entire region was known for high levels of armed robbery, cattle rustling and all forms of rural banditry prior to the British conquest of Nigeria. This scale of insecurity led to the early formation of local vigilante groups in the area (Fouchard 2008).

On June 6, 2013, the Kaduna State House of Assembly ratified the State Vigilante Service Law, which legalized the operation of vigilante groups. The law states: "Vigilance Service is a registered service of people in a community that have agreed to render assistance on crime detection, prevention, and promotion of security consciousness in the community." The law regulates the activities of the VPS to assist in securing lives and properties in the rural communities. The VGN in Kaduna dates to 1982, when it provided voluntary

surveillance to the Tudun Wada community of Kaduna North local government, a safe haven for criminal activities. The operations of the vigilante groups are now cover the all twenty-three LGAs in the state. The VGN Kaduna chapter is one of the most well-established branches, largely because the VGN's national headquarters were based in Kaduna before they were relocated to Abuja in 2011. Following the 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna, the Jema'a emirate of the Vigilance Service was established in Kafanchan to help protect the community from attacks. Kafanchan, the capital of Jema'a, had been adversely affected by the violence. The other voluntary policing actors in Kaduna are the community and neighborhood watches, with operations at the LGA and district levels. The community neighborhood watches were established to monitor activities of unknown gunmen in the southern Kaduna communities. The Antang and Sanga community watch groups are typical examples. However, the other parts of Kaduna State both Northern and Kaduna Central were not left behind in times of formation of various vigilante groups for safeguarding their community (Ernest&Ogbozor, 2016) cited in (Abdul-qadir, Kamar& Usama 2020).

Banditry in Nigeria

According to Ndudi (2014) Nigeria is, arguably, a country under distress. The country's woes are most evident in the torrential spate of armed violence and criminality in various parts of the country. Nothing explains this awry situation better than the apocalyptically volatile security ambience in the wider northern Nigeria. The northeastern Nigeria is still patently under the Boko Haram scourge, amidst the precarious counter-insurgency endeavors of the government (Ojie and Ewruhjakpor 2009). The north-central area has been afflicted by herdsmen militancy, which has plunged the region into dire humanitarian crisis (Okoli and Ogayi 2018). The northwestern region has recently been enmeshed in the rapid upsurge of banditry along its international frontiers as well as the forested interior. Banditry in the northwestern Nigeria against the backdrop of the rapid upsurge of the incidence over the recent years. The northwestern Nigeria encompasses seven states namely Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna, Zamfara, Jigawa and Sokoto. Five of these states, which are Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto, have been mostly affected by the scourge of rural banditry. Of these five states, Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara have been the most critical hotspots. Suffice it to note that the incidence of rural banditry is not by any means limited to northwestern Nigeria. In fact, it is also reasonably prevalent in parts of north-central region, with states like Niger, Nasarawa, Plateau and Benue as veritable hotbeds.

Banditry in BirninGwari Local Government Area

In Northwest Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna State and most especially in BirninGwari Local Government Area, criminal gangs are engaging in rural banditry by kidnapping, stealing cattle and livestock leading to the displacement of rural dwellers. The theft of animals forces the rural inhabitants to migrate southward; causing environmental degradation, population growth, increase in the price of cattle, regional instability influence and exacerbates farmers/herders conflict dynamics. Rural banditry and cattle rustling appear to be increasing by the day because of several interconnected issues involving tensions between farmers and pastoralists exploited by criminals masquerading as herdsmen (Mukhtar 2012).

The phenomenon appears to be connected to government security inadequacies, identity and intergroup relations and the worsening socioeconomic conditions of the people. The rural areas are populated by farmers and pastoralists who form the economic foundation of the nation contributing over 40% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product in recent years (Mahmoud & Usman 2014). Rustling and other animal theft has a different significance in the context of perennial conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers. Hence, conflicts are driven by insecurity perpetuated by grazers in this area. For instance, the growing menace of cattle rustling by armed gangs and bandits appears to differ in terms of scale and economic consequences in "ungoverned" spaces, and territories between Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States. These armed gang and bandits routinely raid cattle ranches owned by traditional pastoralists.

According to Mohammed Bello Tukur, Secretary of Myetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), there is weak state capacity to regulate and establish effective governance which accounts for the high level of illegal activities perpetrated by criminal gangs and networks. Most especially, in the BirninGwari area of Kaduna State which is a death trap where cattle rustling and other related criminal activities have become concentrated. Tukur further noted that BirninGwari, through Funtua, Faskari, parts of Zamfara going to Anchau is not safe due to cattle rustlers and bandits. Every cow there has been stolen including cows belonging to some Nigerian army generals and top civil servants (Tukur, 2013).

Challenges of Vigilante Groups in Nigeria

Despite the perceived effectiveness and commitment of vigilante groups, their operations have been noted to face many challenges. Marx and Archer (1999), noted five outstanding organizational problems which the vigilante groups are facing. These problems are their relationship to the police and legal system; their legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they wish to serve; the recruitment and management of personnel; the choice of appropriate operations; and the maintenance of resources, incentives, and motivation for the groups' survival. Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), identified their problems as: lack of funding by the government, harassment from the police when carrying out their duties, lack of proper training and adequate arms, lack of basic operational equipment's such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain boots, rain coats, identity cards, whistles, uniforms etc. Other shortcomings experienced by the groups include, poor screening of new members and presence of touts or 'bad eggs' among the vigilante members, multiplicity of the organizations, and poor accountability by the groups.

According to Ekeh, (2002), reacting to shortcomings of the Nigeria Police, reasoned that many Nigerian communities no longer rely on the police for their security; rather they have resorted to unregulated and violent reprisal against suspected sources of their collective endangerment. Of course, the preference of the vigilante groups to the police by the people would generate rift and mutual distrust between the two security bodies, the vigilante group would always accuse the police of corruption, while the police would accuse the vigilante of indulging in extra-judicial executions and illegal detention of suspects. This scenario creates a serious setback to the security activities of the two bodies, and thereby worsening the security challenges in the country.

Vigilante groups often encounter threats from hoodlums who use sophisticated weapons in their robbery operations. He equally noted that the vigilante groups have problem of lack of cooperation among the members of the group particularly from the higher-ranking officers who do not respect certain decisions made (Olaniyi 2005).

Data Analysis

Demographic Information of Respondents and Discussion of Findings

The demographic information of the respondents comprises of sex, age, marital status and occupation/profession.

Table 1. Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	72	72%
Female	28	28%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1 showed that out of the 100 respondents of the study, 72 respondents representing 72% indicated male, while the remaining 28 respondents representing 28% indicated female. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in the area under study indicated male than females.

Table 2. Age

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentages
18-25 years	43	43%
26-35 years	32	32%
36-50 years	17	17%
50 years and Above	8	8%

Total	100	100 %
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Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 showed that out of the 100 respondents of the study, 43 respondents representing 43% indicated that they are from the age bracket of 18-25years, 32 respondents representing 32% indicated that they are from the age bracket of 26-35years, 17 respondents representing 17% indicated that they are from the age bracket of 36-50years, while the remaining 8 respondents representing 8% as indicated fall within the age bracket of 50 years and above. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in the area under study fall within the age bracket of 26 to 35 years.

Table 3 Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Single	37	37%
Married	54	54%
Widow/Widower	7	7%
Separated	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 shows that out of 100 respondents of the study, 37 respondents representing 37 % indicated single, 5respondents representing 54% indicated married, 7 respondents representing 7% indicated widow/widower, while the remaining 2 respondents representing 2% indicated separated. This simply implies that majority of respondents under study are married.

Table 4 Occupation/Profession of the Respondents

Occupation/Profession	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Student	12	12%
Civil servant	18	18%
Farmer	57	57%
Security personnel	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 indicate that out of the100 respondents, 12 respondents representing 12% indicated as students, 18 respondents representing 18% are civil servants, 57 respondents representing 57% indicated as farmers and 13 respondents representing 13% are security personnel. This simply means that majority of the respondents in the area under survey are farmers.

General questions

This section presents and analyzes the views of respondents on the genesis of vigilante groups in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, the nature of banditry in BirninGwari from 2015-2019 and the challenges militating against vigilante groups in BirninGwari from 2015-2019

Table 6 The reasons for establishing vigilante groups in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
High rate of banditry	38	38%
Failure of the government to curb banditry	10	10%
To compliment local authorities	6	6%
All of the above	46	46%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 6 shows that out of the 100 respondents in the area under study, 38 respondents representing 38% indicated that the high rate of banditry is reason for establishing vigilante groups in BirninGwari, 10 respondents representing 10% indicated that the failure of the government to curb banditry was the reason behind the establishment of vigilante groups in BirninGwari, 6 respondents representing 6% indicated that the reason for establishing vigilante groups was to compliment local authorities in BirninGwari ,while the remaining 46 respondents representing 46% indicated that all of the above options are the reasons behind the establishment of vigilante groups in BirninGwari. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in BirninGwar believe that all of the above options were the reasons behind the establishment of vigilante groups in the area.

Table 7 The roles of vigilante groups in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Combating rural banditry	11	11%
Protection of lives and property	16	16%
Arresting and handing over arrested bandits to the police for further investigation	5	5%
All of the above	68	68%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 7 shows that out of the 100 respondents in the area under study, 11 respondents representing 11% indicated that vigilante groups help in combating rural banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 60 respondents representing 15% indicated that vigilante groups gives protection of lives and property in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 40 respondents representing 10% indicated that the vigilante help in arresting and handing over arrested bandits to the police for further investigation in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019,while the remaining 245 respondents representing 62% indicated that all of the above options are the roles of vigilante groups in BirninGwari from 2015-2019. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in BirninGwari LGA of Kaduna State believe that all of the above options are the roles of vigilante groups from 2015-2019 in the area.

Table 8 The nature of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Sacking of villages	11	11%
Cattle rustling	23	23%
Kidnapping for ransom	13	13%
All of the above	53	53%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 8 shows that out of the 395 respondents in the area under study, 10 respondents representing 2.5% indicated that sacking of villages is the nature of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 40 respondents representing 10% indicated that cattle rustling is the nature banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 54 respondents representing 13.7% indicated that kidnapping for ransom is the nature of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, while the remaining 291 respondents representing 73.7% indicated that all of the above options are the nature of banditry in BirninGwari from 2015-2019. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in BirninGwari LGA of Kaduna State believe that all of the above options were the nature of banditry from 2015-2019 in the area.

Table 9 The cause of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Poverty and unemployment	20	20%
Inequality	2	2%
Bad governance	10	10%
All of the above	68	68%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 9 shows that out of the 395 respondents in the area under study, 80 respondents representing 20% indicated that poverty and unemployment is the cause of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 20 respondents representing 5% indicated that inequality is the cause of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 10 respondents representing 2.5% indicated that bad governance is the cause of banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, while the remaining 285 respondents representing 72.2% indicated that all of the above options are the cause in BirninGwari from 2015-2019. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in BirninGwari LGA of Kaduna State believe that all of the above options were the cause of banditry from 2015-2019 in the area.

Table 10 The impact of banditry on the people of BirninGwari from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Loss of lives	7	7%

Loss of livelihood	6	6%
Large number of IDPs	4	4%
All of the above	83	83%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 10 shows that out of the 395 respondents in the area under study, 30 respondents representing 7.6% indicated that the impact of banditry on the people is loss of lives in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 40 respondents representing 10.1% indicated that the impact of banditry on the people is loss of livelihood in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, 15 respondents representing 3.8% indicated that the impact of banditry on the people is large number of IDPs in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019, while the remaining 310 respondents representing 78.5% indicated that the impact of banditry on the people are all the options above in BirninGwari from 2015-2019. This simply mean that majority of the respondents in BirninGwari LGA of Kaduna State believe that the impact of banditry encompasses all the options mention above from 2015-2019 in the area.

Table 11 The major challenges facing the effectiveness of vigilante groups in BirninGwari from 2015-2019

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Lack of proper cooperation from residents of BrininGwari LGA	19	19%
Lack of funds	62	62%
Lack of proper training	11	11%
Activities of formal security agencies	8	8%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 11 explains the challenges that are facing vigilante in their quest to curb the activities of banditry in BirninGwari from 2015-20016. 71 of the participants who constitute 18% of the respondents submitted that lack of proper cooperation from residents of BirninGwari Local Government is a major challenge to vigilante groups in curbing the activities of bandits. 200 of the participants who are 50.6% of the respondents posited that the challenge to vigilante group in being effective as regard to curbing the activities of banditry is the lack of funds. 89 participants of which are 22.5% stated that lack of proper training is the major challenge to the vigilante in BirninGwari Local Government while 8.9% of the respondents which represents 35 of the participants said that activities of formal security agencies are the major challenge to vigilante group quest in curbing banditry in BirninGwari. Lack of funding is considered to be the major challenge to the vigilante group in their quest to provide security to the communities in BirninGwari with 50.6% of the respondents agreeing to that fact. Closely followed by lack of training which is worthy to note with 22.5% of the respondents agreeing to such fact.

Conclusion

The role of Vigilante groups in curbing the activities of banditry in BirninGwari Local Government Area is a study that explore and brought to fore the multifaceted issues that are associated with security of lives and properties of ordinary Nigerians in rural communities. This group of people are at the heart of the Nigerian system as they provide the food and raw materials used by the urban population. Many of Nigerian primary export commodities are produce by this rural population. In the study, there was a submission that

a rural farmer in BirninGwari Local government have the potential of producing 1000 bag of maize and groundnut. Such level of productivity must be protected by the Nigerian state at all cost as failure to do that will plunge farming communities in the hands of bandits and also sway their national conscience to the bandits who hold them ransom. The farmers have been at the receiving end of the activities who tax them and exploit their labour and failure to adhere to their demands usually leads to the deaths and destructions of lives and properties of innocent farmers.

It is for the above reason that the emergence of vigilante is relevant in bridging the gap between conventional forces and the members of the victimized communities. The vigilantes have come as informal security outfit and are drawn from communities that have been affected by the activities of banditry. Suffice to say that the vigilante are also victims of the activities of banditry. The pain that accompanied the loss of a loved one or means of livelihood precipitated the vigilante group to synergize with formal security outfit to identify, spy and also arrest suspected bandits. This has led to other concerns like funding, mode of operation, training and earning of trust for the local security. It is this concern that the study sought to unearth.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. One of the biggest gaps in providing security to most rural communities in BirninGwari Local Government of Nigeria is the political will of the government. The government must show more concern as one of its productive populations are killed and buried in blood by some non-state actors that are inimical to the development of the nation.
- ii. The Vigilante Group should be given basic security training that will equip them to identify and combat the security challenges that are associated with activity of banditry. This group of people should be given adequate compensation by the Nigerian state and light weapons should be given to them, which they should be accountable for every end of the week to the closest police stations in their communities.
- iii. There should be proper orientation for the members of the Vigilante group on the code of conduct and the rules of engagement in identifying and arresting of bandit. They should know that the role of arrest and prosecution is strictly the work of the security agencies. They should be taught the tenets of fundamental human right and the dangers associated with human right violations.
- iv. There should be the policy of know your neighbor. In time past, no stranger comes to any community without the knowledge of the traditional leaders and the people of the community. His host must be known too. This approach of know your neighbor should be adopted in most rural communities of BirninGwari which is communal and won't present any difficulty. Community values needs to be revived. People who are lazy and without jobs but are seen with wealth that they can't account for should be investigated. Any source of unaccounted wealth should be probed.

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