

EFFECTS OF BANDITRY ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF FUNTUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF KATSINA STATE 2018-2022

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the effects of banditry on women and children education. Some parts of Katsina State in the last few years have witnessed a frequent attack by bandits. Women and children are the most vulnerable since they are left with additional burden to provide for their children domestic need and their education. The human need theory propounded by Maslow, Burton and Marshal is adopted as the framework of analysis. The theory argues that people need to meet their needs and unavailability of the means to meet the needs of individuals or group is what lead to violence. The qualitative method of data collection was used through in-depth interview and result indicates that banditry has certainly affect the women and children education; husbands were killed and some were displaced, some young Fulani girls were forced to marry bandits in exchange of protection, many commercial farmers could longer afford their children education because banditry drained their economy. It is recommended that government should initiate intelligent community policing so that the perpetrators could be fished out easily.

Keywords: Banditry, children, education, Funtua, women.

Introduction

Nigeria is witnessing a rise in the incidents of kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery and cattle rustling. For several years, the crimes have become a problem in Nigeria occurring almost on daily basis in both urban and rural areas. It takes place in various places such as highways, residential houses, commercial centres, forest and any place where there is weak security operations. As a result of the lawlessness people began loss confidence in the State entire. Banditry in Northern Nigeria becomes daily occurrences incidence particularly in States like Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. In those States there are some communities that have completely taken over by the Bandits. According to International Crisis Group (2020) these include miners and traders in the mostly unregulated gold mining sector. The activities of these bandits range from Kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, killing, raping among others. Women and Children are mostly affected by this incidence. The UNICEF report of 2019 revealed that 39 percent of children in Northwest, except Kaduna, are out of school (Premium August, 2019). These negative human security index including the high number of out-of-school youth population provided the drive for banditry to thrive in the region.

However, it has long term effects on women and their nursing children through displacement, raping and killing. Many women in the Northwest geopolitical zone became widows and are suffering the brunt since they are left with additional burden despite the fact that their domestic services are too demanding. Mothers may end up being the sole provider for their children and eventually face serious financial burden which will make them vulnerable to abuse (Taft, Blyth & Murphy 2016). Women are also being subjected to inhuman treatment in the hands these bandits through sexual slavery in the form of constant harassment and rape by gang members regardless of the pain, tiredness mental disturbance which it may cause them.

The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, defined peace to mean access to education, health and essential services-especially girls and women; giving every young woman and man the chance to live, to indicate, developing sustainably and defending the planet's biodiversity (Dopamu, 2006).

In Katsina State various communities suffered series of attacks by the bandits. It was reported that Farfaru and Kwari communities were attacked in June, 2022 abducting many Children and Women. Many of them relocated to headquarter of the council (Jibia). Meanwhile, in Shema quarters in Dutsin-ma Local government four housewives and five Children were abducted. In Faskari Local government 39 children working farm in Mairuwa were kidnapped. It was alleged that the owner of the farm had to pay a levy of 1million to the bandits.

This paper seeks to find out how banditry affects the women and children education in Funtua Local government area from 2018-2022. The paper examined at lower class women and Children with low level of education and economic status.

The paper is divided into four sections. In section one, is the introduction. Section two, conceptual review, section three focused on the development of banditry in Nigeria. Section Four concludes the paper. It is important at the onset to note that the paper adopts qualitative method of data collection. It also uses a descriptive analysis to methodically analyze propositions. Thus, data collected through interviews with Key informants in the selected wards outside Funtua Metropolis (Dukke, Makera, Goya, Maigamji, Tudun-iya and Maska) were analyzed

Conceptual Clarification

Banditry

Bandits usually operate in the shadows, in geographically isolated areas and or in the fringes of society. Banditry is a crime against humanities. According to Slatta, 1987, Banditry is the taking away of property by force or the threat of force, often by a group mostly Men. To Abdullahi and Mustapha, 2021, it is defined as an organized crime by weapon (s) to threaten, force and injure a person and include armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, insecurity, militancy, gang rape, farmers-pastoralists conflict and violent demonstration among others (Abdullahi and Mustapha, 2021). Egwu (2015) argues that armed banditry is a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders. In other word, he defined as the process of raiding of cattle from ranches. He further argued that these activities were as a result of several factors which he regarded as economically based form of criminality perpetuated through an informal network.

Meanwhile, women in rural areas engages in some economic activities such as agricultural activities, rearing of animals and petty trading which make them to support their spouses in daily expenditure of the houses including education of their Children but rural banditry had disrupted these economic activities which affects the education of children in rural communities.

Women

Women by definition refers to an adult female person. They represent about half of Nigeria's population. Women plays a significant role to human well-being and global Community (Ennemu, 1999). In Nigerian context, women have been playing various important roles such as motherhood, producer, home manager, community organizer, and social, cultural and political activism (UNDP, 1997). Despite these important functions, they still suffering from various forms of violence for instance, kidnapping, war victim, sexual slavery or harassment while on captivity, rape discrimination to the access to education etc. women, children and relations are predominantly victims of domestic violence and conflicts.

Women Education

Education is generally argued is an instrument for national development, the only powerful shield against poverty, and a fundamental human right to which all human being is entitled. According to Ogbonna (2000:50) "Education is a systematic and dynamic process of equipping individuals with knowledge and skills to enable them solve the complex problems of living usefully for themselves, their families and make worthwhile contribution to the overall progress and development of the society".

Women education is every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge and skill of women and girl. Educated woman bring socio-economic change in the society which will contribute to its peace and stability. The constitution of almost all democratic countries in which Nigeria is inclusive provides for rights of both men and women. Education becomes necessity to any human being girl and boy child. It teaches wrong and right, justice and injustice. In fact, human being without education is worse than animal.

Children

Children is a concept which implies the plural of child. There is no universally acceptable definition of a child. However, a child in this context refers to a person who has not reached adulthood or every human being below the age of eighteen years.

There are various laws both at National and international level that protect the rights of children. In November 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the convention on the Rights of the child. In Nigeria, former president Olusegun Obasanjo domesticated the Child Rights Act in 2003. The act provides protections and cares for child survival, well-being and his/her development. The act further stated among others that No Nigerian child shall be Subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse or neglect, maltreatment, torture, inhuman or degrading punishment or attack on his/her honour or reputation. According to the minister of Women Affairs Mrs. Pauline Tallen 34 out of the 36 of the Federation Katsina state inclusive have so far domesticated the Child Rights Act which is a law that deals with issues of Child abuse, Child labour and forced marriage among others in Nigeria (this day live, 2023).

In Katsina State, Governor Aminu Bello Masari assented the bill in December, 2020 which was passed by House of Assembly in November, 2020. The law protects children from abuse which include Child rape and labour but on condition that it will not protect underage persons from being married off.

Although there are several researches on Kidnapping, Cattle rustling and Banditry, but they have not specifically focused on the effects of banditry on women and children education. This paper therefore will contribute to existing knowledge.

Evolution of banditry in Nigeria

Security threat becomes a global phenomenon, as many countries are facing one or two forms of insecurity. About thousands of years ago, banditry has been in existence. It has been given different interpretation overtime, space and circumstances. While in the 19th century in Europe and America a bandit was perceived to be freedom fighter whose main aim was partly to emancipate the oppressed from the oppressor (Warto, 1994). Bandit in primitive Africa society specialized in armed robbery and other related crimes (currott and fink, 2008).

Moreover, in Mexico, despite the fact that, State regarded bandits as hoodlums, miscreant, nuisance and outlaws that need to be abolished, Mexicans consider people like Chucho el Roto, Herachia Bernel and Santanon as Heroes (watts, 1987).

In Nigeria's context, Ja'afar (2018) argues that banditry was in existence, as far back as the 1930s, when the wayfarers and merchants were travelling faced the threats and dangers of ambush from nondescript bandits. These bandits only targeted at goods ferried on the back of Donkeys, Camels and Ox carts not the traders. He further argued that, in other instances, the bandits' raids farming communities and villages destroy valuables properties and farm produce (Ja'afar, 2018,2).

Northwestern region of Nigeria encompasses seven states namely Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi. Three of these states, which are Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara have been mostly affected by the blight of banditry. In Northwest, the rural banditry began as localized disputes between herders and farmers over access to land and water resources, but because of the poor handling of the conflict it degenerated to deadly conflict posing a major threat to the entire security of the nation.

Furthermore, connected to the above is the gradual disappearance of grazing land and cattle routes as a result of the indiscriminate allocation of lands and poor implementation of urban and regional development plan across the northwest (Abdullahi, 2019).

In Katsina State, Governor Masari in his effort to bring a lasting peace which will affect women and children, initiated amnesty policy in the State. It was started in the last quarter of 2016 through a dialogue with some suspected cattle rustlers. Later in 2019, Masari went to the forest in order to discuss with some leaders of the Armed Bandits and Kidnappers. Some of the agreement reached was that state government would release the armed bandits arrested by the security. On the part of the bandits, they would lay down their weapons and stop launching attacks and kidnapping people for ransom as well as release people in their custody (Maigari, Dantani and Arafat, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

To provide a focus to this paper, human need theory developed by Abraham Maslow (1954), John W. Burton (1990), Marshal Rosenberg (1984) is adopted as the framework of analysis. The theory postulates that conflict arises whenever peoples’ need to meet their needs which could be on an individual, group or societal level. These needs are basic and must be met. The central arguments of the theory is that unavailability of the means to meet the needs of individuals or groups are actually what lead to violence. The theory further asserted that violence often occurs when humans require understanding, respect and consideration for their needs.

The theory posits that humans by their nature, needs a number of essential things in life to survive which are beyond Food, water and shelter. Maslow and Burton further argue that physical and non-physical elements are required for successful human growth and development. Those things humans innately driven to achieve. Maslow arranged these human needs in a hierarchical order and in pyramid shape. Each need has a specific ranking or order of attainment. His pyramids of human needs start with the basic items of food, water and shelter, followed by a sense of belonging or love, self-esteem and finally personal fulfillment.

Having discussed some of the basic arguments of the human need theory, attempt has been made to analyze the correlation between the theory and our topic of discussion. Funtua Local government is among the local governments that are currently battling with menace of armed banditry which thrown many people into abject poverty to extent that they cannot meet their basic needs of food and shelter. People in the affected communities can longer sleep in their house. Education which is necessity of life that teaches right and wrong, Justice and Injustice becomes inaccessible. People in the affected communities lack basic education, health care and poverty are almost in every house.

In line with the theory of human need, are some of the basic needs of individuals that once they are denied can lead to violence. Even though there is poor governance but armed banditry contributed to destruction and denial of these things in some communities under study.

Study Area

Funtua Local Government was created in 1976. It is one of the seven old local government when Katsina State was created in 1987 by Babangida’s Administration. It has a landmass of two hundred and ninety-two square KM² and a population census. Funtua is located at longitude 7⁰ and 12⁰ north of the Equator. The total rainfall per annum is around 900m.

The local government area shares common border with about five local government areas. Faskari local government in the north, Dandume local government in the west, Danja and Bakori local governments in the east as well as Giwa local government in Kaduna State in the south. The LGA has eleven political wards namely; Nasarawa, Dandutse, Sabon gari, Unguwar Musa, Unguwar Ibrahim, Makera, Dukke , Maigamji, Goya, Tudun-iyia and Maska.

The principal Agricultural crops grown in the area include maize, guinea-corn, rice, beans, and cocoa-yam. The predominant language spoken is Hausa, but there are other residents from other part of the country. Funtua local government has ninety-one (91) public primary schools under the supervision of Local government Education Authority (LGEA). For Administrative convenience, they are divided into six zones.

S/NO.	ZONES	SCHOOLS
1.	Funtua Central ‘A’	10
2.	Funtua Central ‘B’	12
3.	Funtua East	20
4.	Funtua North	13
5.	Funtua South	21
6.	Funtua West	15
TOTAL	SIX ZONES	91

Source: Funtua LGEA 2023

Discussion of the Findings

One of the residents in the affected communities stressed that the incident started with the regular stay in some primary schools this made the pupils to be absconding from the schools while the teachers are mostly outsiders to the communities became scared of been kidnapped this resulted irregular teaching and learning activities in the areas. He further argued that both teachers and pupils come to school whenever they feel secured. This has indeed negatively affected the teaching and learning in the rural areas.

Similarly, according to a staff of local government education Authority, Kaliyawa primary school and its surrounding villages have completely been displaced. This School is no longer in existence. The communities around flee to other places where there is less security challenge.

Moreover, another resident in the affected communities argues that the armed banditry affected the women and girls' images because once a women or girl is kidnapped some of them are raped and harassed sexually. This made them to become stigmatized in the society. Most of the girls kidnapped stop going to school, this negatively affect their education. He further asserted that most of the beautiful girls who are between the age of thirteen (13) to fifteen (15) years were forced to migrate to other areas or States like Lagos, Kano, Kaduna because of fear of been kidnapped. Eventually they became house girl in the cities thereby abandoned their education.

Similarly, in another instance young Fulani girl who are in Nomadic primary schools were allured with money by these bandits and parents had no option than to succumb to their demand otherwise their lives and cattle were in danger. This incidence had actually disrupted their education both western and Islamic.

However, one of the school inspectors in Local government education Authority (LGEA) interviewed maintained that, armed banditry disrupted the farmland, commercial activities were totally paralyzed and social life disorganized. He added that farming is the main source of income of most parent in the rural communities, majority of them could not farm their due to this security challenge and those who were able to do it must pay a heavy levy to the bandit as a precondition to harvest their output. Most of the commercial farmers have either paid ransom directly for themselves or indirectly for their relatives. This had adversely affected the surplus for the next season farming, eventually the education of their children. Many cannot afford taking care of their children to post primary school education.

Similarly, a victim of bandits' attack claimed that there are some communities in the local government who were forced to pay compulsory levies to the bandits as royalty to salvage themselves from the attack if not they would not escape frequent attack from these bandits. Therefore, communities in those areas seems to be paying dual allegiance. These levies paid to the bandits eroded the economy of the rural populace with children and women bearing heat.

On the part of the Authority charged with the responsibility of supervising teaching and learning process, lamented on this armed banditry. One among the school inspector, asserted that "we the school inspectors are afraid of supervising those schools where there are security challenges of these bandits because our colleagues in Sabuwa, Faskari and Dandume Local governments areas were kidnapped in the course of discharging their duties". He further argued that "we cannot also force any staff to go to work regularly in those areas because once he is kidnapped you cannot for this ransom and government is not paying ransom to its employee".

Another, school inspector maintained that "we the supervisors and supervisee (teachers) work in those areas whenever, we feel we are safe". He further lamented that you cannot query teachers working in those security challenged areas for dereliction of duty because you know his predicament. Therefore, there was low quality of teaching and learning in those schools for two years.

A report from Zonal education Quality Assurance (ZEQA) Funtua Zonal office, shows that Funtua Local government has eleven (11) public Secondary Schools both Junior and Senior Sections. Within the period under study, there were noticeable low enrolment in schools like GDSS Dukke, GDSS Maska, GDSS Tudun-iyaa and GDSS Goya while Schools in Funtua metropolis witnessed high influx of students who migrated from rural areas where there is high incident banditry.

On Islamic education, Islamiyya Schools where Islamic education is being thought were seriously affected. Coordinators from both Izala and Darika sect lamented that most of the qualified teachers teaching in these

rural Islamiyya schools are from Funtua metropolis, Dukke, Maska, with the prevalence of this menace these teachers can no longer go there to teach because they are alien to the communities. This affects the quality of education given to students especially Qur'anic education. The schools were left with indigenous people who are less qualified. They further maintained that there is low enrolment of the students because it is when their peace and stability that teaching can take place. Meanwhile there was noticeable influx of Almajirai in most traditional Qur'anic Schools (Slates' Schools) in Funtua metropolitan area. Most of them were from Funtua local government rural areas and neighbouring rural Local government.

Findings

From the relevant information generated through face to face and telephone interviews on the effects of Banditry on women and children education in Funtua Local government, the following crucial observations were generated. The education of children both western and Islamic education were seriously affected.

The finding reveals that so many parents displaced migrated to other areas outside the local government whereas some even outside State, this had certainly disrupted the education of their Children. However, villages and Primary schools were displaced this had affected the enrolment pupils as well as students in the area.

The findings also indicated that most of the commercial farmers have either paid ransom directly for themselves or indirectly for their relatives. This had adversely affected the surplus for the next season farming, eventually the education of their children. Many cannot afford taking care of their children to post primary school education.

Furthermore, it has been observed that many parents lost their farms, their grains, their Harvest and savings just pay ransom for their Husbands, wives and children, therefore this actually drained their economy in which most of them were unable to take care of them in primary and post primary education.

Moreover, girls' education has seriously been affected because girls who are of school age were forced to marry bandits this made them to abandon their education, likewise some beautiful girls who are between the age of thirteen (13) to fifteen (15) years were forced to migrate to other areas because of fear of being kidnapped. Eventually they became house girls in the cities thereby abandoning their education.

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part in any educational system, this enables the government to assess the performance of both teachers and students as well as progress of the system entirely, this aspect is seriously affected as supervisors and teachers afraid of discharging their duty effectively as a result of this menace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Women and children as a result of their biological make-up are the groups who bear the effects of violent conflict in different parts of the world. Displacement caused by the rural banditry has forced children who were in their formative ages, that is school going ages to flee their communities as a result of the attacks. This implies that their education or learning is interrupted in future affects their cognitive and educational development. This will have future implications on the development of the affected children in their adulthood.

Furthermore, the destruction of communities and villages migration of women both married and unmarried has further worsened the poor educational status of women in Northern Nigeria. Girls are seen on the streets begging on behalf of their displaced parents. These Girl-children have no time to go to school because they are looking for what to eat and survive on the streets. This exacerbated the population of out-of-school children and low literacy rates in Northern Nigeria.

Armed banditry remains the most disastrous incident that claimed people's life. It has drained the economy of rural populace. Women and children bear the heat, since they end up becoming widows and orphans. This made them to be helpless which eventually affects their education both western and Islamic.

There is need to strengthen the operations of our security agencies such as police, Department of State Services (DSS) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) through modern equipment, training and retraining, increased manpower to enable discharge their duties effectively and promptly.

State police need to be introduced and our local vigilante should be reorganized because unitary security approach will help matters. Moreover, education need to be giving more priority because bandits have wrecked education especially in the rural areas.

Furthermore, women and children who are victims of armed banditry should be giving special consideration in governmental policies. Philanthropies and civil society organizations domestic and international should step in to support women and children who are victims of armed banditry, this should be done in form of resettlement of communities displaced and the scholarship.

Meanwhile, agricultural policy which would empower rural communities need to be encouraged. This will a long way in alleviating poverty among the rural dwellers since rural economy is really deserted.

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