

**BANDITRY AN IMPEDIMENT TO SOCIO –ECONOMIC DVELOPMENT OF
RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA. A STUDY OF MARADUN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF ZAMFARA STATE.NIGERIA**

By

WALTER O. OGAR

Department of Sociology
Federal University, Birnin Kebbi
Kebbi State, Nigeria
Ogarwalter @gmail.com 08134716334

BASHAR HAMISU

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, BIRNIN KEBBI.

&

KABIR AHMED SA'AD

Registry Department
Federal University, Birnin Kebbi
Kabirahmadsaad@gmail.com 08060430904

ABSTRACT

In recent times, banditry as an organized crime committed by outlaws which involved threat, violence, robbery, murder, rape, cattle rustling and extortion have become a regular feature of social life in Nigeria. These conflicts result from different value system, aggressive competition for land and grazing reserve. There is hardly a day when there is no major attack especially in Northern parts of the country, whereby, leaving many dead, maimed and numerous other displaced. To this end, this study examined the extent to which the banditry has affected the socio-economic development of rural communities especially Maradum local Government Area of Zamfara state This paper focused on Maradun, where many villages are rendered homeless, leaving their ancestral home to a more secured destinations whereby affecting their socio-economic activities, such as farming, livestock, fishery and educational activities. Methodology used in the study was both quantitative and qualitative methods (questionnaire and in-depth interview). Through mutlti-stage cluster and purposive sampling techniques. The conflict theory was adopted as theoretical framework. The findings show that there is significant relationship between banditry and socio- economic instabilities in North. The paper recommended among others there is urgent need for tight security in our international borders by the combined efforts of Nigerian security agents.

Keywords: Banditry, Impediment, Development, Rural, and Communities

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, Nigerian has witnessed unprecedented insecurity which is combing virtually nook and crannies of the country. Banditry is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. It's started with the Boko Haram insurgency in the north east; then the farmers-herders conflict in the north central; and subsequently cattle rustling, armed banditry and kidnapping in the north west and some parts of north central. The southern parts of the country also engulf with armed militancy, secessionist movement by the IPOB, and the communal violent or conflicts among others. Nigeria's security situation is becoming worrisome and deteriorating to the extent that it has become a " National Disaster" be delving all parts of the country. However, northern part of the country is worse affected with increasing poverty, hunger, increasing number of school dropout, food sacristy due to growing insecurity in the region which has defied all solution (Obi,2015:p17) Of recent, northern Nigeria and Zamfara in particular has recorded

an increased number of banditry and kidnapping .Other associated terrorist activities are rooted in the North-East, other similar crime activities were also most prevalent in the North Western and some parts of the North central states like Kaduna, Katsina Niger and the study area(Obi,2015:p14;Ajadi,2021).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Rural insecurity, otherwise known as rural banditry started in Zamfara around 2011, as a traditional farmer-herder conflict or insignificant rural unrest, changing into full-blow conflict, engulfing most parts of the North West. Rufa'i (2021). Many reasons accounted for the transformation of this conflict. The traditional rulers, politicians, security agencies, gold miners are among the notable actors in the conflict. According to the history, the first criminal gangs were formed by Kundu, whose parents migrated from unknown village in katsina and settled in a village around Katsina- Zamfara border. These gangs grew from a small cell, mainly operating in Zamfara in 2011, to over one hundred and twenty (120) gangs across six states namely Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna and Niger in the North-central part of Nigeria in 2021 Rufa'i (2021)

These gangs then are basically associated with mass killing of innocent people, cattle resulting, kidnapping, gender based and sexual violence (GBSV) and other related human rights abuses. At the beginning they lived in the woods and mountainous areas, from where they unleashed terror on the rural and urban areas in the states. Some of the bandits have become very alarming to the extent of operating from their respective villages'. Approximately, there are over 10,000, armed bandits operating across different parts of Zamfara. These gangs have so far killed over 12,000 people and stole about 25,000 livestock from 2011 to 2021, about 120 villages destroyed while 50,000 people were either internally displaced or made refugees in neighboring Niger Republic (Daily Trust Newspaper, Sunday December, 25, 2016).

Armed banditry was an organized cross-border crime. According to the key informant Fulani and Gobirawa formed the major culprits. Communities from Mada, Chaf and Dansadau were direct accomplice to the crime. The hills and terrain from these areas, provided shelter to the criminal activities, from where they organized and executed their activities, which often resulted into serious casualties. The difficult nature of terrain, contributed to this development by making the perpetrators untraceable. The presence of this, gave the people an opportunity to carry out their raids and banditry, an informant confirmed that the hills covers a large area and accommodate the criminals where a considerable part of the rustled livestock and stolen goods were usually taken to Niger Republic and Mali during this period. (Rufa'l, 2021).

This trend continued to surface and resurface in the post colonial period, rearing its ugly head in different dimensions especially with the constant outbreak of intra-state conflicts in West Africa which began with Liberia in 1989. In fact, constant civil wars and insecurity across the sub- region have provided a fertile ground for recruitment into rural and urban conflict in Nigeria. Evidence I support of this assertion is the discovery of about 1,497 illegal routes across different Nigerian borders which the criminals used in the smuggling of small and light weapons (SALWS) which the bandits used in perpetuating their criminal acts.

The (SALW) are often conveyed on caramels, horses, donkey and other related livestock in the pretext of legal or legitimate goods.

(Ogar2021) asserted that in 2005 an estimated of 4 million of illicit arms were circulating in West Africa, out of which 1.5 could be seen or found in Nigeria.

FACTORS AND ACTORS THAT AIDED BANDITRY IN ZAMFARA

The banditry first emerged around Dan-Sadau District in Maru local government area in Zamfara state and spread to covered other LGAS in the state notably Maradun the study area. Several reasons were advanced to show-case as to reasons for the rise of criminal gangs in the area. One of the first speculations was that the politicians in the affected state or LGAS sponsored and armed some youth as political thugs to achieve their political ambition. These groups of youths were later abandoned after

winning the election, who then went into drug abuse, cattle stealing, robbery and later transformed into armed gangs or banditry harassing or attacking villages using motorbikes. Evidence showed that the first of motorbikes used in the attacks were those donated from politicians during the election campaign (Rufari2021)

The second version emphasized social grievances arising from the perceived deep-rooted injustice against the pastorals communities. According to the key informant, the first armed group emerged with the name Kungiyar Gaya in Zamfara towards the end of 2001. Its initial aim as claimed by the founding fathers was to ensure the unity of the pastoralists, and the struggle for social justice.

Their assumption was that pastoral communities in the state were subjected to all kinds of extortion, exploitation and deprivation from different agencies. According to them; they were denied justice mostly in the lower courts. Whenever, the pastoralist was involved in any conflict with the farmers their cases were usually delayed unnecessarily. The accused Fulani's were known to developed a phobia for court cases and their unwarranted justice delayed would preferred or ready to bribe his way out of court. According to the informant, case or cases involving the police were the worst, who said that both the judges and police were "birds of the same feathers".

The Fulani man, according to the informant, had become the sources of income for the Law Enforcement agents. Allegations of extortion extended to hospitals, where access to health care is often accompanied by extortion and exorbitant charges. Added to these, according to the informant, is lack of access to education, veterinary services and animal feeds, Grazing routes and reserves which were mostly shared amongst politicians and traditional rulers in the state. (Rufai 2021)

Rufai (2021) asserts that the third version is the illicit mining argument which sees the rise of the conflict from the perspective of the struggle amongst the miners each with the aim of getting an upper hand in the competition. Zamfara state is one of the few states in the North West blessed with huge gold deposits mostly exploited by foreign illicit miners, Chinese, Russians and South Africans in collaboration with local miners. The foreign firms were accused of supplying arms to the locals against their rival group. These atrocities were allegedly committed with support of some traditional and political leaders within and outside the state.

Going by this argument, the first set of armed groups according to the informant interviewed said that young boys from the forest of Dan- Sadua, Dan-Gulbi and Bagega, areas the major mining areas of Zamfara, helicopter were often seen in the areas exchanging weapons for gold. He went further to say that whenever and wherever these helicopters are spotted in an area, in no short time, there could be bloodshed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

These following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To identify the nature of banditry in Maradun Local Govt. Area of Zamfara state.
- ii. To examine the Socio-Economic impact of banditry on rural development
- iii. To proffer possible solutions to the banditry

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on economic theory or theories of conflict which examine the causes of conflict and analyze the interest of perpetrators of conflict in terms of material benefit. Fundamental questions such as in whose interest is conflict? Who gains and who loses? These are questions that have been asked by theoretical perspectives. The theories assume that material interest is the motivating factor and the most important issue at stake in conflict situation. In his analysis of conflict, Collier (in Ademola 2005) point out that conflicts are perpetrated by those who benefit from chaos. Perpetrators of this such are referred to as conflict entrepreneurs' who not only steer conflict, but also invest resources at their disposal to ensure that conflict lingers on for maximization of material benefits. For instance, during the

first world war of 1914-1918, U.S made lot of money from the sales of arms and ammunitions, uniforms, foods and other assorted materials for the warring triple alliance and triple Entate.

Using a cost benefit analysis, this theory identifies two categories of forces in conflict situation viz; those who benefit from conflict, that is leaders of armed bandits as perpetrators of conflict or armed dealers who supply the conflicting parties with arms, and the overwhelming majority of the population who are affected by the negative impact of conflict. Several flash points of conflict in Nigeria, particularly where bandits' forces and their leaders are the fighters, are typified by this scenario. In most cases, conflict and its prolongation have become a private business making enterprise where the sole aim of perpetrators is profit making or its maximization. The economic theory of conflict also posits that although the causes of conflict may be hidden and perpetrated in the guise of ideological, nationalism or political liberation or even religions differences. Their underlying motive is mainly a context for control over economic values; assets, resources (e.g. a gold mine or oil) systems.

METHODOLOGY

This section briefly explains the method used in the study, both quantitative and qualitative methods (Questionnaire and in-depth interview were applied, through multi-stage cluster and purposive sampling techniques were employed.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents the questionnaire was administered through the interview method. Respondents were asked the questions and their answers were recorded by the researcher. Questions were translated to Hausa language for respondents who could not communicate in English language.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage %
SEX		
MALE	189	73.5
FEMALE	68	26.5
TOTAL	257	100
AGE		
18-28	57	22.2
29-39	148	57.6
40-50	34	13.2
50 and above	18	7.0
TOTAL	257	100
Marital Status		
Single	45	17.5
Married	121	47.1
Separated	7	2.7
Divorce	36	14
Widow	48	18.7
Total	257	100
Religion		
Islam	257	100
Christianity	0	0

Traditional religion	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	257	100
Ethnic group		
Hausa	176	68.5
Fulani	60	23.3
Buzu	21	8.2
Others	0	0
Total	257	100
Education		
Qur'anic	104	40.5
Primary	57	22.2
Secondary	73	28.4
Tertiary	23	8.9
Others	0	0
Total	257	100
Occupation		
Farming	75	29.2
Rearing of domestic Animal	91	35.4
Trading	48	18.7
Others	43	16.7
Total	257	100
Average monthly income (₦)		
1,000–5,000	96	37.4
5001 – 10,000	107	41.6
10,001 – 15,000	42	16.3
15,001 – 20,000	5	2
20,001 – 25,000	7	2.7
25,001 – and above	0	0
Total	257	100

Research survey, 2021.

From the table above, it is clearly shown that, 73.5% seventy three percent of the respondents were male and 26.5% were female. It also revealed that 57.6% were between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-nine years. The implication of this is that, majority of the respondents were within their youthful ages of active involvement in rural occupations which are mostly farming and rearing of domestic animals and became victims or affected by the problem of rural banditry. 47.1 % of respondent were married and 18.7% were widow, this implies that a sizeable number of women are widows which could be as a result of attack by bandit. 100% of respondent were subscribed to Islam as their religion. Of all the respondents 68.5% were Hausas, while 23.3% were Fulanis and 8.2% were Buzu, it equally demonstrated that the study area is heterogeneous population. Regarding the educational status of respondents 40.5% had no formal education; this implies that almost half of the respondents are illiterate in western education. In addition, 35.4% were involved in animal rearing, 29.2% were predominantly farmers, and 18.7% were engaged in trading in their rural market, while 16.7% of the respondent engaged in traditional works like fishing, black smith, wood cutting etc. It implies that all respondents engaged in one economic activities or another. Therefore, majority of the respondents were directly affected by the negative impacts of banditry in the area under study.

Table 2: The nature of banditry in Maradun local government area of Zamfara state

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Nature of armed banditry		
Kidnapping	41	15.9
Burning of hamlet and settlement by rustlers.	16	6.2
Indiscriminate killings of rural people by rustlers.	40	15.6
Theft of livestock by violent means.	37	14.4
All of the above.	123	47.9
Total	257	100
Years at which armed banditry start in large scale		
20015- 2017	128	49.8
2018- 2020	52	20.2
2021 to date	0	0
Others	77	30
Total	257	100
Identity of people involved in armed banditry		
Fulani	147	57
Hausa	26	10
Buzu	63	25
Yoruba	0	
Igbo	0	
Foreigners	21	8
Others	0	0
Total	257	100
Various methods through which bandits move away the rustled cows		
Through the use of vehicles	53	20.6
Through the use of thick forest	46	17.9
Use of cattle route in the bush	74	28.8
All of the above	84	32.7
Total	257	100
Reasons for the sudden rise of armed banditry		
Absence or lack of security personnel in the affected community	21	8.2
Spread of violent culture by foreign nomad	12	4.7
Proliferation of lethal weapons among Fulani nomads	31	12.0
Arbitrary use of power or Instant killing of any Fulani herders by vigilante (Yan sakai)	42	16.3
Political elite	47	18.3
Mining activities	36	14.0
All of the above	68	26.5
Total	257	100

Research survey, 2021.

Table 2 From the table above it is shown that, 47.9% of the respondents' perceived banditry to includes kidnapping, indiscriminate killings of rural people by bandit, theft of livestock and burning of hamlet or villages. This has shown that, the problem is not only limited to theft but also other violent acts

perpetrated by the various gangs of bandits on the innocent people in rural areas of Maradun Local Government Area. From the data above, it is clearly shown that, 49.8% of the respondents were of the view that banditry and its activities started in a large scale between 20015 to 2017 in Maradun while 30% of the respondents argued that the rural banditry begin between 2011 to date in Maradun local government area of Zamfara State, while 20.2% revealed that banditry activities started in Maradun LGA between 2018 to 2020.

The table above shows the identity of people involve in banditry, it indicated that, 57% of the respondents attributed the recent banditry activities in Maradun local government area of Zamfara state to the criminal activities of indigenous Fulani people who engaged in the acts for economic gains. 25% were of the view that, Buzaye was mostly involved in rural banditry as their life style. 8% of the respondents were of the view that, foreigners were also involved in cattle rural banditry. The table above also shown that, 28.7% of the respondents were of the view that, most of the rustled livestock were taken away from the area through the use of cattle routes in the bush without much obstruction. 20.6% of the respondents argued that, the bandits usually move away the stolen cows through the use of vehicles like trucks for easy disappearance. 17.9% of the respondents were of the opinion that, the stolen livestock were usually take away through the nearby thick forest to concealed their movement in case of follow up by cattle owners, vigilante or security personnel. While 32.7% percent of the respondents opined that, bandits utilized the entire listed alternative to move away the rustled cows or livestock in the area.

When questions asked on the reasons for the sudden rise of banditry the table above indicated that, 12% of the respondents were of the view that, proliferation of lethal weapons like guns (AK 47/49), rifles, machine guns, General purpose machine gun (GPMG) and other assault rifles in the hands of potential bandits were responsible for the upsurge in banditry in the areas affected by this heinous crime. 16.3% of the respondents attributed the sudden rise in banditry in recent years to the problem of arbitrary use of power or Instant killing of any Fulani herders by vigilante (Yan Sakai). 8.2% percent of the respondents were of the view that, the sudden rise in banditry in the area was as a result of absence or lack of security personnel in the affected community. 4.7% of the respondents attribute the rise of bandits to the spread of violent culture in the area. 18.3% argued that the upsurges of banditry activities in the area are a result of political elite or politicians. Of all the respondents 14% asserted that banditry increase due to mining activities in the area. While 26.5% of the respondents were of the view that, the sudden raised in banditry activities or rural bandit in Maradun local government area is as a result of an interplay of different factors such as political elite, arbitrary use of power by local vigilante, mining activities, proliferation of lethal weapons among Fulani nomads, absence or lack of security personnel in the affected community and spread of violent culture by foreign nomad.

During the in-depth interview, the respondents stated that,

“Mostly the Fulani were largely responsible for large scale theft of livestock in the areas. This was predicated on the fact that they travelled across the borders of so many countries in the sub-region armed with sophisticated weapons and escape after perpetrating their nefarious acts without any possible attempt to trace them by security agency”.

Another respondents also were of the views that,

“You see when talking on reasons for the rise of banditry in this area it goes beyond one reason it is a combinations of many factors, first is the arbitrary use of power by vigilante (Yan sakai) to intimidate and kill any suspected bandit especially Fulani herders this help adversely in the sudden rise in banditry and cattle rustling, politicians in the state also use insecurity in the region to their advantage, they used these conditions(insecurity) to castigate their opponent, Proliferation of dangerous weapons among the Fulani nomads help adversely in the spread of this dangerous weapon to other potential criminal gangs in the region. Vulnerability of the affected areas and lack of adequate security was largely responsible for the upsurge in banditry in recent years in Maradun local government area. The affected area where largely situated at the boundary of the forest with no access road and no proper communication facilities and also the security personnel are not stationed in the affected

areas, these has gave the bandits and rustlers an ample opportunities to operate freely in the affected areas without any fear”.

Table 3: Impact of banditry on socio-economic development

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Socio-economic impacts of banditry		
Loss of live and property	23	9
Force migration	13	5.1
Poverty	24	9.3
Abduction and rape	26	10.1
Local market and trading activities not feasible	18	7.0
Farming become impracticable	22	8.6
All of the above	131	50.9
Total	257	100

Research survey, 2021.

Table 3 the table above shown that, 9% of the respondents were of the view that, loss of life and property was as result of banditry in the area, 5.1% of the respondents consider migration to be a socio-economic impact of rural banditry. 9.3% of the respondents see banditry as been responsible for poverty especially in the rural areas. 10.1% of the respondents believed that, banditry activities triggers abduction, kidnapping and raping of innocent women and children in the area, and 7% of the respondents consider banditry to be the monster that bedeviling their socio economic activities in the area, to the extent that it has affected their local market and trading activities in their rural market. While 8.6% of the respondents are of the view that farming become impracticable as a result of bandits and their nefarious act in the area. Of all the respondents 50.9% (more than half) were of the view that, the socio-economic impacts of banditry in Maradun local government area has been very devastating to the people living in these areas. Some families have lost the entire herds to the bandits. People migrated out of most vulnerable areas of Maradun as a result of constant attacks and theft of livestock by criminal gangs of bandits. Abduction and rape of young girls, married women has been a daily occurrence in those areas devastated by the activities of the bandits. Farming not feasible in most farms which were far from the settlements or bordering the forest areas. Trading and small businesses which hitherto flourished in most local markets in the affects area has been undermined due to frequent ambush and robberies by the rustlers on commuters travelling to rural markets in the areas. This and many more threats have invariably affected the socio-economy of the local government area.

During in-depth interview with the respondents, they stated that,

“Banditry activities have a devastating effect on the socio-economic life of not only the rural people in Maradun local government area but the entire Zamfara state. The bandit have prevented important and viable economic activities like farming, trading, rearing of domestic animals due indiscriminate attacks at farmlands, cattle grazing areas, and blocking of local roads leading to other villages and settlements by the bandits. It is also important to know that the recent closure of local market was as a result of Banditry activities in the area”.

In response to this also the respondents involved in in-depth interview stated that,

“Due to fear of indiscriminate attacks and reprisal killing by the rustlers, majority of the herdsmen living in the affected areas were forced to migrate from the district to safer places thereby losing ties with their local community completely and became internally displaced. They usually encountered problem of integration and invariably treated with contempt as alien in the new environment”.

Section D: Possible solutions to the problem of banditry in Maradun LGA Zamfara state

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possible solutions		
Protection from government law enforcement agencies	12	4.7
Use of local vigilante (Yansakai) group	06	2.3
Self defence by the communities	16	6.2
Joint operation of government law enforcement agencies and Yansakai	181	70.4
Youth and women empowerment	09	3.5
Dialogue	13	5.1
All of the above	20	7.8
Total	257	100

Research survey, 2021.

Table 4 from the table above it is clearly indicated that, 4.7% of the respondents were of the view that, adequate provision of government law enforcement agents in the vulnerable areas would be a solution to the banditry. 2.3% of the respondents argued that, banditry could only be solved by the use of local vigilante (Yansakai) group. Some respondents 6.2% asserted that, self defence is the only way to deal with bandits and their heinous act and those local communities need to be encourage to organized local patrols to prevent incursion of cattle rustlers in to their areas. 70.4% of the total respondents favored Joint operation of government law enforcement agencies and Yan Sakai (local vigilante) to be most effective way of solving the act of bandits in Maradun Local Government Area. While 3.5% of respondents reacted that, youth and women empowerment as a solution to banditry in Maradun and its environs, 5.1% of respondents viewed dialogue as means to resolve the criminality of bandits in the area and 7.8% of respondents were of the views that, the above enumerated proactive measures be utilized to prevent banditry in the areas.

For the in-depth interview the respondents stated that,

“Due to incessant attacks and destroying of life and property of innocent people by the bandit, there is a need for a joint operation of government law enforcement agencies and local vigilantes (Yansakai) of various villages/settlements mainly to protect the areas from eminent attack from the bandits”.

Discussion

This study examined the Banditry as an impediment to socio-economic development of rural communities in Nigeria: A study of Maradun Local Government Area of Zamfara State. The emphasis includes: to examine the nature of armed banditry in the study area, to determine the impact f banditry on socio-economic development in the study area, to identify possible solutions to the problems of banditry in Maradun Local Government Area. Thus, the following findings were arrived at:

It was discovered that, majority (49.8%) of the respondents in this study were of the opinion that, banditry in the affected areas of Maradun local government area started in a large scale between 20015 to 2017 as indicated table 2. This heinous act was characterized by indiscriminate attacks which resulted t kidnapping, raping and killing of cattle owners, vigilante members, and other innocent rural dwellers by the various gangs of bandits. The most terrible and devastating moment of these activities was when the bandits decided to embark on reprisal killings in the affected areas. It is also posited by the majority (57%) of the respondents in table 2 that, significant number of the those involved in banditry and other violent crimes in the affected areas under study were mostly of Fulani decent who have a vast knowledge and skills on how to quietly move in the forest. Again, majority of the respondents were of the views that, the sudden raised in banditry activities or rural bandit in Maradun local government area is as a result of an interplay of different factors such as political elite, arbitrary use of power by local vigilante, mining activities, proliferation of lethal weapons among Fulani nomads, absence or lack of security personnel in the affected community and spread of violent culture by foreign nomad.

It was also observed from the findings that, respondents Viewed banditry as a monster affecting their socio-economic development in the area, where 50.9% (more than half) of the respondents as indicated in table 3, were of the view that, the socio-economic impacts of banditry in Maradun local government area has been very devastating to the people living in these areas. Some families have lost the entire herds to the bandits. People migrated from most vulnerable areas of Maradun as a result of constant attacks and theft of livestock by criminal gangs of bandits. Abduction and rape of young girls and married women has been a daily occurrence in those areas, devastated by the activities of the bandits. Farming not feasible in most farms which were far from the settlements or bordering the forest areas. Trading and small businesses which hitherto flourished in most local markets in the affects area has been undermined due to frequent ambush and robberies by the bandits on commuters travelling to rural markets in the areas. This and many more threats have invariably affected the socio-economy of the local government area. It is imperative to state that rural banditry causes massive economic downfall in the study area

It is also pertinent to state that, majority (70.4%) of the respondents as indicated in table 4, favored Joint operation of government law enforcement agencies (military, police, and other agencies) and Yan Sakai (local vigilante) to be most effective way of solving the problem of bandits and banditry activities in Maradun Local Government Area. While 3.5% of respondents reacted that, youth and women empowerment as a solution to banditry in Maradun and its environs, 5.1% of respondents viewed dialogue as means to resolve the criminality of bandits in the area and 7.8% of respondents were of the views that, the above enumerated proactive measures be utilized to prevent banditry in the areas.

The Impact of Banditry on Rural Development

Development entails providing infrastructure facilities, increasing the people's opportunity for education, health care system resulting in low birth, death, literacy and infant mortality rates, political participation, individual and ethnic freedom, employment and equal justice. It is also requires investing in people; and people contributing to GNP growth. To achieve the goals and conditions associated with development, mankind must exploit nature or the environment in a sustainable manner. In other words, Development must be sustainable; "meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs".

The presence of insecurity in any environment constitutes threat to achieving this development as lives and properties are in endanger, hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifles and retards socio- economic development of a country. In Nigeria, there is evidence that there has been rising wave or cases of insecurity since the country attained independence in 1960. This rising wave has not abated but rather has assumed a dangerous dimension which is even threatening the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity. The elimination of these threats should be the number one goal of governments in Nigeria at all levels as the country cannot achieve any significant development amidst of insecurity and violence.

Impact of Banditry on Economic Activity / Market Operations:

Socio- economic development is the primary goals of every well -meaning government, and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in the country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence by the people. In the absence of security socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic human and social capital. The insurgence and other Armed banditry in northern Nigeria has almost crippled economic activities in that region, as shutting down of markets due to armed banditry has implications for the economic both at communities and local governments levels. A set proportion of communities and local council earning come from these markets and closing them means losing a huge amount of income for the period. This can worsen the poverty levels of households operating in the attacked communities. One of the household interviewed in the community explained "that for period of one to two months following bandit attacks people refused to patronize the markets for the fear of recurrence". This adversely affects GDP of the country, which is being assessed as one of the indices for the development. The security crises in different parts of Nigeria is destroying existing infrastructure and preventing a peaceful environment for

the development of further infrastructures, and safe environment for economic activities by individuals to give them economic empowerment that will enable household not only to cater for their present generation, create wealth, but also to provide for future generations. But, if there is constant increase in violence; it will virtually serve as a detriment in achieving development.

Besides, foreign investors are scared to invest in the country. Global investors who are business oriented may not want to invest in these states or community affected by armed banditry due to crises may lead to massive destruction of their investment. This may also lead to refugee problems of one indigene from another area that had settled for long and had established their business to another area or their cultural settlement to lose their business and thus leading to weakening of Global partnership as well as serve as an impediment to achieving sustainable development in these areas of in banditry attacks.

Impact of Banditry on Farming / Agricultural Activity:

Agriculture is the bed-rock of any nation. The farmer's contribution to all over progress and growth of the economy is large. As banditry primarily displaces farmers it has an accordingly negative impact on farming and other associated economic activities. Most of the affected communities in the northern part of the country led to the stoppage of agricultural activities for some years. The key informant (K1) interviewed reported that "once the bandits attacked the agricultural activities ceased, the farmers abandoned the farming activities for the fear of being kill". He said that "fears and tensions created by the attackers drove people from farming activities for some months or years". For instance, one of the key informant (K1) when asked if the activities of banditry has any implications on farming activities in the areas, he responded that "of course, the issue of the rising increase in the banditry has posed a serious threat to poor masses, the issue of Boko Haram and other armed banditry activities has immensely affect the farming activities, taking my village for example (Damboa), whenever, we cultivate crop and it's time for harvesting, the Boko Haram terrorist would come and harvest it for us leaving us in extreme hunger so even if we want to have a face-up with them, we couldn't because they are in possession of small arms and weapon and if this should continue, our people will continue to live in extreme hunger thus affecting achieving the development goal of ending hunger and to achieve food security is not guaranteed, he lamented".

On the same vein, he went further to state that "my people are in extreme poverty because money meant for development projects have been diverted to curtail armed banditry, therefore, the development of our communities becomes mirage". Considering the importance of farming, its disruption will certainly affect the livelihood of the families, the income of local government, the state and federal government at large. This has implication for food security, nutrition, health and food price stability both locally and internationally. Disruption of farming also leads to rising unemployment and increased rural-urban migration.

Impact of Banditry on Education & Health

Education is the life wire of any nation who aspires to develop, it is a vital instrument for both physical and mental development, and be it social, political and economic. Education is the building-rock of the nation, without which the development cannot be achieved. For example, Oxford Research Group states that National Statistical Bureau (NSBs) that in 2002/2010 perception index of households living in poverty had risen to 92.5 %. The effect of poverty on health and education in Borno State where BokoHaram had it origin shows that only 2% of children fewer than 25 months have been vaccinated, 83% of young people are not literate, 48.5% of children do not go to school (Oxford Research Group 2012).

Boko Harams activities particularly in Northern Nigeria have constituted a serious challenge to development of the region and the entire country. Banbitry activities are accompanied by destruction of lives and properties and insecurity. This does not go down well for investment but results in unemployment and illiteracy. Oxford Research Group (2012) for example, noted that government Statistic show that the Northern States have the highest proportion of uneducated persons.

Therefore, close of school in the affected states of Borno, Taraba, Kaduna, Zamfara, Plateau, Benue and Nassarawa due to armed banditry attacks, has a negative effect on the implementation of Universal Basic education, and may in the long-run contribute to the higher level of illiteracy in the country. The students may develop phobias of school attendance; this may lead to increase in school dropout, where by leading to poor or decline in school enrolment. No meaningful development can strive in the midst of insecurity, armed banditry, Boko Haram, political violence, corruption and many more.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research found out that in the villages affected by the menace of banditry in the area under study, the significant number of those involved in banditry and other violent crimes were mostly of Fulani decent. Moreover, the research also discovered that, the sudden raised in banditry activities in Maradun local government area is as a result of an interplay of different factors such as political elite, arbitrary use of power by local vigilante, mining activities, proliferation of lethal weapons among Fulani nomads, absence or lack of security personnel in the affected community and spread of violent culture by foreign nomad.

It also revealed that, the socio-economic impacts of banditry in study area has been very devastating to the people living in these areas. So it affects the whole society in different ways ranging from migration, constant attacks and theft of livestock by criminal gangs of bandits, abduction and rape of young girls and married women, Farming not feasible, trading and small businesses which hitherto flourished in most local markets in the affects area has been undermined due to frequent ambush and robberies by the bandits. The research further discovered that, Joint operation of government law enforcement agencies and Yan Sakai (local vigilante) is most effective means of solving the problem of banditry in Maradun Local Government Area.

It is in the light of this that, this research therefore, makes the following recommendations as ways or means of addressing the effects of banditry on socio-economic development in Maradun Local Government Areas of Zamfara state, Nigeria.

1. Government should constantly and effectively deploy adequate security personnel to the affected communities to checkmates the illegal activities of the rural bandits as well as stopping the unethical and nonprofessional activities of the Yan Sakai (local vigilante) groups which consistently aggravated the problem in the study area.
2. State governors of North West (Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger) should collaborate efforts to check and prevent the fleeing bandits from residing in their forest areas. This became necessary since the bandits moves from the extended forest of one state with their loots to other state or other side of the forest to sale or safe keep the rustled livestock and kidnapped victims. The collaborating could be in planning, intelligence sharing and joint operation etc.
3. The Government should create an enabling environment for local jobs creation at the village level for the unemployed youths. Rural poverty has been pervasive in recent years; youths that supposed to be engaged in different aspects of rural economy are now left wandering about in the rural community without doing anything, this and many more has contributed in the sudden rise in rural banditry as they are striving to make a livelihood out of the criminal loots due to non-availability of opportunity for rural employment.
4. Both state and national assembly should make new laws to deal decisively with the problem relating to all forms of rural banditry. This can serve as deterrence to the actual and potential bandits.

References:

- Ajadi, A.(2021,March27). Insecurity in Nigeria:trends, patterns and warnings (2),by Adewale Ajadi.Retrieved from <http://www.premiumtimeng.com/opinion/451524-insecurity-in-nigeria-trends-patterns-and-warnings-2-by-adewale-ajadi.html>.
- Daily Trust Newspaper, Sunday, December, 25, 2016: Armed Banditry: Mixed Reactions trail Peace dialogue in Zamfara.

- Rufa'I,M.A(2019) The Phenomenon of farmer-Herder Conflict in Sabon Birni District of Sokoto State; Nigeria International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development Online ISSN:2349-4182,printISSN:2349-5979;Impact Factor:RJIF5.72 Received:16-11-2019
- Rufa'I, M.A,(2020), 'Inter and Intra-bandit Camps Rivalry in Zamfara Region 'Being a paper presented at Fourth National Conference Organized by the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies on the theme Zamfara Kingdom Past and Present. Venue FIAS, 25th-28th.
- Rufa'I, M.A (2021) 'I am a Bandit''. A decade of Research in Zamfara State, Bandit 'Den, the 15th University Seminar Series Organized Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, on 9th Sept, 2021
- Obi. K. (2015),Challenges of Insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria: Implications for National Development. International Journal of Sustainable Development,8(2):11-18
- Ogar,W.O (2020) The implication of Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons on Armed Banditry and Sustainable Development in Northern Nigeria. A paper presented at the First National Conference, Department of Political Science, Federal University, Gusau. 1st- 3rd February,2020