

FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AROUND BANDITRY PRONE AREAS, OF NORTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The activity of bandits in North western Nigeria has been on the increase by day, many farmers especially rural dwellers were forced to abandoned their farm lands which in return has adversely affected the food security situation among rural households in the region. This study examined set to examine the effect of banditry activities on rural household food security in Northwestern Nigeria. The data for the study was collected from sampled households in some selected banditry prone communities of Zamfara and Katsina States respectively. The findings of the study have revealed that banditry has seriously affected food security of rural households in the area. The bandits' crimes have endangered farming activities, as they rustled livestock, destroyed food storage facilities, attack markets, and disrupts existing food supply chains which adversely affect supply and quality of food in the affected areas. The study recommends the needs for increasing stations of duty post and personals in the affected areas-especially areas where access to farm lands were denied. Also, the study recommends the involvement, training and empowering of vigilant personnel to complement the effort of government in handling the bandits.

Keywords: *Banditry, Food Security, Household, Zamfara State*

INTRODUCTION

Conflict affecting communities, such as banditry, has impacted agriculture and the

rural economy in various ways over the past few decades (FAO et al., 2017). It has led to the loss of livestock, assets, and even

economic depressions. The violence has also resulted in job losses, weakened social protection, and the displacement of populations from their respective homes. The collapse of these social settings has worsened the food security situation through the failure of local staple markets and disrupted food storage mechanisms.

Over the years, banditry attacks have become increasingly uncontrollable in northwestern Nigeria, to the extent that hardly a day passes without reported cases of a banditry attack (Abdullahi et al., 2019). The bandits mostly attack rural households, who mainly rely on subsistence farming practices for their daily meals (farming, rearing of livestock, and other food production activities). The attacks by these bandits have instilled fear in most households, as many are afraid to go to their farms for fear of being attacked. The crimes committed by these mobsters continue to induce fear and widespread displacement, as well as disrupt livelihoods and the optimal functionality of markets, which in turn affects food security in the region and the country as a whole. The worst-hit communities in the region are households residing in rural areas of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara states. Moreover, there is growing concern over bandit attacks in Nigeria and beyond. However, although little is known

about how these mobster attacks affect the lives of individuals living in banditry-prone zones, Weldeegzie (2017) reported that the crimes of these bandits have negative effects on overall development. Yet, there is a dearth of literature on the effects of banditry on agriculture and, by extension, food security in the affected communities.

The experience has rendered a large portion of arable land inaccessible to farmers. These destructive activities by the bandits have left a large number of farmers dead, with huge amounts of property destroyed (Liman & Anka, 2019). The consistency of the attacks on farmers in the region has further degenerated into food insufficiency and nutritional deficiency among many households from the affected communities, as it is one of the pivotal points for the country's meat and cereal production (Liman & Anka, 2019). Aside from food insecurity, banditry-prone communities also face other challenges like poor health, a decline in productivity, and displacement. These encounters often disrupt households' abilities, even in good harvesting years, because they battle chronic health issues that may hinder their full potential in food production (WARN, 2019).

However, despite the high level of banditry crimes in northwestern Nigeria and their

impact on food accessibility, surprisingly, there are few empirical studies on the impact of armed banditry on food security among households in the region. Most prevailing studies have focused on macro-level impacts at either the regional or national level. The suffering and loss of human lives are of primary concern in the context of these bandit attacks, but their impact on agriculture is also significant, as it may result in more medium- to long-term suffering. If banditry leads to increased food insecurity at the household level, then that insecurity can cyclically lead to further conflict. Thus, understanding households' food security situations is crucial for designing agricultural policies in response to food insecurity.

The objective of this paper is to assess the food security of rural households in banditry-prone areas of northwestern Nigeria. The study is intended to fill an important knowledge gap regarding the impact of banditry on food security in the region. It also involves the collection of critical information on food security, which could assist in better understanding and continuously updating the food security situation across banditry-prone communities in northwestern Nigeria and central regions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Food security is a dynamic concept that has constituted new dimensions over the years. It attracts a lot of scholarly research and public policy issues. According to the World Food Summit of 1996, food security is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (WFS, 1996). On the other hand, food insecurity occurs when individuals, households, or nations have neither physical nor economic access to the food they need.

The concept of food security has developed over the years, with its definitions being diversified by different scholars and organizations (Hoddinott, 1999). Approximately, there are over 200 definitions of the subject matter and nearly 450 indicators of food security (Hoddinott, 1999). Thus, food security is so complex that it becomes virtually impossible to measure directly; therefore, different proxies for measuring it have been suggested. Consumption expenditure, nutritional status, and coping strategies are among the most frequently used measures of food security.

Food insecurity, on the other hand, entails a situation in which a nation, household, or

individual has neither economic access nor physical means to obtain the food they require. Thus, a household is said to be food insecure when its consumption falls below 80% of the daily minimum recommended caloric intake required for an individual to be active and healthy (FAO, 1996). More precisely, food insecurity entails poor nutrition, inadequate access to food, and vulnerability to food coping strategies that may provide food in the short term but are not resilient against shocks.

Given the fact that farming is the mainstay of local communities, the disruption of farming due to bandit attacks has affected agricultural productivity, with serious implications for food security. The majority of farming communities have been forced to abandon their farms, especially in areas near the forests, as bandits have subjected these areas to attacks. Moreover, the few farmers who have chosen to stay behind have been subjected to excessive taxation by the bandits before accessing their farms (WARN, 2019). According to Ladan and Matawalli et al. (2020), a bandit is a robber or outlaw belonging to a gang who uses weapons to steal or rob from people and typically operates in an isolated or lawless area of a country. Banditry is also used to refer to acts

of robbery and violence in areas where the rule of law has broken down (Collins, 2000). Banditry consists of the organization of armed bands for the purpose of attacking state or social institutions, enterprises, or individual persons. Participation in such bands and in the attacks committed by them is equally regarded as banditry (Collins, 2000).

The situation is so frightening and risky in northwestern Nigeria, and the facts speak for themselves. More than 1,000 people were murdered in 2018 alone across the seven states of northwestern Nigeria. Over 2,200 were reported dead in 2019, and most recently, over 1,600 were killed between January and June 2020 (ACAPS, 2020; Salkida, 2020). In terms of displacement, nearly 247,000 people were displaced, leading to the creation of refugees numbering more than 41,000 (ACAPS, 2020). In Zamfara alone, more than 8,000 people were lost and over 200,000 displaced, all linked to these bandit attacks (Salkida, 2020), both internally and among those fleeing to neighboring states. According to Liman and Anka (2019), socio-economic deprivation, weak law enforcement, and the proliferation of small arms have played significant roles in exacerbating insecurity in katsina. Similarly,

Okoli and Ugwu (2019) argue that the historical grievances among pastoralists and farmers have fueled violent clashes, creating opportunities for bandit groups to exploit the conflict for criminal gain. The decline in economic opportunities and the increase in youth unemployment have also been highlighted as key drivers of banditry in the region (Muhammad, 2020).

About 30% of agricultural land in Kaduna State was abandoned by affected communities; while farming activities in Zamfara and Katsina States were restricted to a few areas, thus resulting in a decline in food production by 60% (WARN, 2019). In Kebbi State, over 350 rice farmers were affected, with farmlands abandoned as a result of bandit attacks (Punch, 2019). Banditry has had severe socio-economic and humanitarian consequences in Katsina State. The most notable effect has been the displacement of thousands of residents. According to ACAPS (2020), over 247,000 people have been displaced, with more than 41,000 seeking refuge in neighboring states. The economic impact has been particularly devastating, with agricultural activities significantly disrupted. A report by FEWS NET (2019) indicated that approximately 30% of

farmlands in affected areas have been abandoned due to insecurity, leading to a decline in food production and rising food insecurity. Furthermore, bandit attacks have targeted educational institutions, with the most notable case being the abduction of 344 students from Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, in December 2020 (Salkida, 2020). This incident drew national and international attention to the worsening security crisis in Katsina State and northern Nigeria as a whole.

However, the dwindling income of local farmers and other vulnerable groups, especially women, has also affected their capacity to support children's education and household income.

The movement of illicit weapons in communities of the North-West region is also a cause for security concern. Apart from the loss of life recorded, bandits' attacks on communities have increased social risks, discouraged investment, and triggered economic crises for individuals and communities. The conflict is causing a spillover effect on other neighboring communities and local government areas of Niger State in the North-Central region, hindering inter-communal and inter-state trade. Insecurity has had a significant impact on other economic activities in the region, as

a number of major local markets, such as Illela, Dandume, Maidabino, Kankara (Katsina State), and Bardoki, Shinkafi (Zamfara State) markets, have been shut down due to incessant attacks (Punch, 2019).

The strategic nature of these trading locations made them attractive to major merchants from other regions of the country for foodstuffs, including maize, millet, guinea corn, and beans. However, the proximity of these markets to forest reserves made them vulnerable to attacks. This has had an adverse effect on trading activities, as revenue generation and market sales/supplies have declined. According to the 2019 report on food insecurity and markets by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the Shinkafi market, a major cross-border town in Zamfara State, functioned at only 30 to 40 percent within the reviewed period, while the Dandume market in Katsina State operated at a lower level, between 15 to 25% relative to normal trading projections (FEWS NET, 2019).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study involves a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the food security situation in Northwestern Nigeria.

3.1 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on rural communities living in banditry-prone Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Zamfara and Katsina States. The LGAs identified in Zamfara include Shinkafi, Zurmi, Maradun, Maru, Anka, and Tsafe. Additionally, Batsari, Dan Musa, Faskari, Jibiya, Kankara, Safana, and Sabuwa from Katsina State were also included. The communities are located in varying environments, providing detailed and comprehensive insight into the incidence of armed banditry and its effects on household livelihoods.

3.2 TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA

Data for the study is primarily primary, collected using a well-structured questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaire was administered to households randomly selected from the 13 identified armed banditry-prone local governments in the selected states.

3.3 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data obtained from the survey was analyzed using descriptive analysis, inferential statistics, and econometric techniques. Qualitative data generated from in-depth interviews was analyzed through discourse analysis using transcribed information.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE SIZE

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. In the first stage, Local Government Areas (LGAs) with high reported cases of armed banditry from the states were identified. In the second stage, five communities with high reported cases of armed banditry were purposively selected from each LGA. Lastly, individual

households were randomly selected from each of the selected communities in proportion to the number of households in the community. The total number of households from the communities was 1,118, which represents the sample size of the population.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLES OF 6 LGA'S AND THE 379 SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS

No.	LGA	Selected Banditry Prone Communities			Sample Size (Households)
1.	Anka				65
2.	Maradun				62
3.	Maru				60
4.	Shinkafi				65
5.	Tsafe				63
6	Zurmi				64
7	Batsari				102
	Kankara				104
	Faskari				108
	Safana				106
	Jibiya				104
	Sabuwa				106
	Danmusa				109
	Total Sample of Respondents				1,118

Source National Research Fund Field survey, May, 2020.

a. Data Analysis

3.5.1 CALCULATING FOOD SECURITY STATUS OF THE

SAMPLE HOUSEHOLD: The food consumption score or the weight of dietary diversity score is calculated by summing the total of food consumed which comprises different basket of food groups by a household within a period of 7days before the

commencement of the survey. The calculation follows the following steps.1, using the Vulnerability Analysis Mapping (VAM) 7- days food frequency; the data for all the food items were classified into groups see Table 2.

TABLE 2: COMPUTATION OF HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY INDICES

S/No	Food group	Food items	Food group	weight
1	Cereals	Maize, Rice Sorghum, Millet, Bread and other cereals	Rice & other cereals	2
	Root & Tubers	Cassava Potatoes, Yam and other tubers		
2	Leguminous/ nuts	Beans, peanuts, soya and others	Pulse	3
3	Vegetables and	Pumpkin, Pepper, Spinach,	Vegetables	1
	Green leafy a	Broccoli green beans, Onion Tomatoes, and others		
4	Fruits	Mango, Orange, Papaya, and others	Fruits	1
5	Meat, Fish, Liver, Heart and other organs	goat, beef, chicken, pork (meat in large quantities and not as a condiment)	Meat and Fish	4
6	Milk & Dairy	Milk, dairy product and others		
			Milk & Dairy	4
7	Fat & Oil	Fat & Oil	Oil	0.5
8	Sugar & Sweets	Sugar, Honey, Cakes, sweet (sugary drinks)	Sugar	0.5
9	Condiment/ Spices	tea, coffee / cocoa, salt, garlic, spices, yeast / baking powder, tomato / sauce,	Condiments	0
			Total	16

Source: WFP VAM technical guidance sheet (2008)

Table 3 FCS STANDARD PROFILE

0 – 21	Categorized as food insecure
21.5 – 34.5	Borderline or moderate
35 & above	Acceptable

The table 3 indicates the standard profile for categorizing household into different classes depending on the score of the household. The score of 0-21 represent food insecure while that of 21.5-34.5 represent the moderate level

of food security and 35 and above is the food secured household.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION.

The descriptive statistical representation of the socio-demographic characteristics of households from the selected banditry-prone communities in the selected households is presented in Table 2.

The consequences of the conflict have not only resulted in the loss of lives and

properties but have also affected all aspects of socio-economic and political development in the state. It has also led to the forced migration of hundreds of Fulani herders with their cattle and other livestock out of Zamfara due to uncertainty in security and the future ahead. According to Tukur (2014), Zamfara has lost many Fulani settlements to this conflict, numbering over one hundred.

TABLE 4: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	MEAN
AGE (YEARS)			42.59
20 and 18	14	1.25	
21-40	510	45.62	
41-60	548	49.02	
61 and above	46	4.11	
Total			
HOUSEHOLD HEAD GENDER			
Male	870	77.82	
Female	248	22.18	
MARITAL SATUS			
Married	870	86.74	
Widowed	226	12.68	
Divorced	22	0.68	
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION			
No Formal Education	751	67.17	
Primary	121	10.82	
Secondary	169	15.12	
Diploma and Equivalent	72	6.44	
Degree and Equivalent	5	0.45	
MAJOR OCCUPATION			
Unemployed	129	11.54	
Crop Rain Farming	583	52.15	
Petty Trading	198	17.71	
Livestock Farming	58	5.19	
Civil Servants	44	3.94	
Transportation	52	4.65	

Waving	22	1.97	
Mining	7	0.63	
General Service	25	2.24	
HOUSEHOLD SIZE			10
Less than 5	254	20.43	
6-10	436	38.70	
11-20	407	40.05	
More than 20	23	0.81	

Source National Research Fund Field survey, May, 2020.

Approximately 144,000 herds of cattle have been moved out of the state. By implication, the exit of the herders and their cattle from Zamfara has led to a shortage of animals and a corresponding increase in the general price of meat in the market. On average, the price at which cattle can be bought and slaughtered for meat has nearly doubled in the market. Instead of visiting the usual markets in Talatar-Mafara, Shinkafi, or Gummi to procure cattle at cheaper and more affordable rates, one now has to travel as far as Adamawa and Niger States to purchase them (Muhammad, 2018).

These crises have also led to a shortage of food, increased hunger, and food insecurity, as the majority of those affected are rural households predominantly engaged in farming. Over the last decade, victims have voiced their grievances as bandits have continuously harassed and prevented them from engaging in their annual farming activities. Many have been reported shot dead

by these bandits either on their way to or within their farms. In his work, Wadatau (2018) stated that about 80% of farmers around Dagulbi and Dankurmi communities, along with their neighboring townships, have been unable to participate in their usual farming activities for nearly five years due to warnings from the bandits. Failure to comply with these warnings has resulted in many deaths, as several farmers were killed by the bandits.

This development has led to a severe shortage of food and increasing hunger, as people can hardly afford food rich in the necessary nutritional value. People are dying of hunger, as neither the government nor wealthy individuals in the cities have been able to bring these hoodlums to justice, leaving the affected individuals to their own fate (Umar, 2018).

The representation of food security status among households in this study from the sampled areas in Katsina and Zamfara is

presented in Table 4. The results indicate that the majority of households in the area are food insecure roughly 85.6% while 12.08% are moderately food secure, and only 2.33% are food secure. This clearly demonstrates a

high degree of food insecurity among households in the banditry-prone communities included in the study.

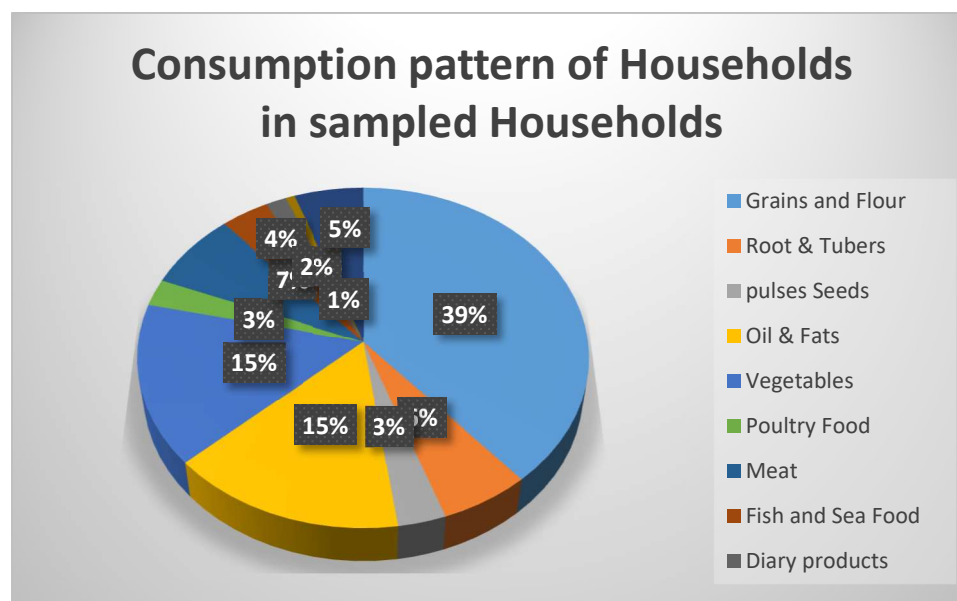
TABLE 4: FOOD SECURITY STATUS IN BANDITRY PRONE COMMUNITIES FROM THE SAMPLED STATES (KATSINA AND ZAMFARA)

		Food Consumption Score	
Threshold of Food Consumption Score	Food security status	No. of Households	Percentage
0-21	Food insecure	957	85.60
21.5- 35	Moderately food secured	135	12.08
Above 35	Food secured	26	2.33
Total		1,118	100

Source National Research Fund Field survey, May, 2020.

To further established the reason why majority of the households from the sampled household are food insecure can be

expressed by a close look at the food consumption pattern of the households as indicated in the figure 1 below.



Source National Research Fund Field survey, May, 2020.

Figure 1 Consumption pattern of Households in sampled area

Figure 1 indicates that the majority of households rely on grains and flour,

complemented by vegetables and oil fats. Thus, according to the score sheet from Table 2 above, foods that attract higher scores, such

as protein and dairy products, are consumed in lesser quantities. This largely explains why most households are food insecure. As shown, nearly 40% of the food consumed comes from grains and flour, with 15% from vegetables and another 15% from oil and fats, bringing the total to about 70% of overall consumption. This significantly explains the poor consumption scores among most households, as the score of a food group is linked to its nutritional requirement for the body.

Another instrument that helps describe food insecurity in the affected communities is the choice of coping strategies available to households during food shortages. Many strategies are readily available, but for this study, 10 strategies were selected as the most commonly practiced by the sampled households to understand their coping mechanisms during food crises. As shown in Table 5, the highest percentage weight was recorded for "Consuming foods that are cheap and not preferred" (79.83% on average), followed by "Cutting down the quantity of meals consumed by adults" (36.02%), "Reducing the frequency of meals consumed by adults" (28.98%), and "Selling household assets" (32.13%). Other strategies, such as household heads and other adults

traveling out of the area in search of jobs, also showed a high percentage (28.07%).

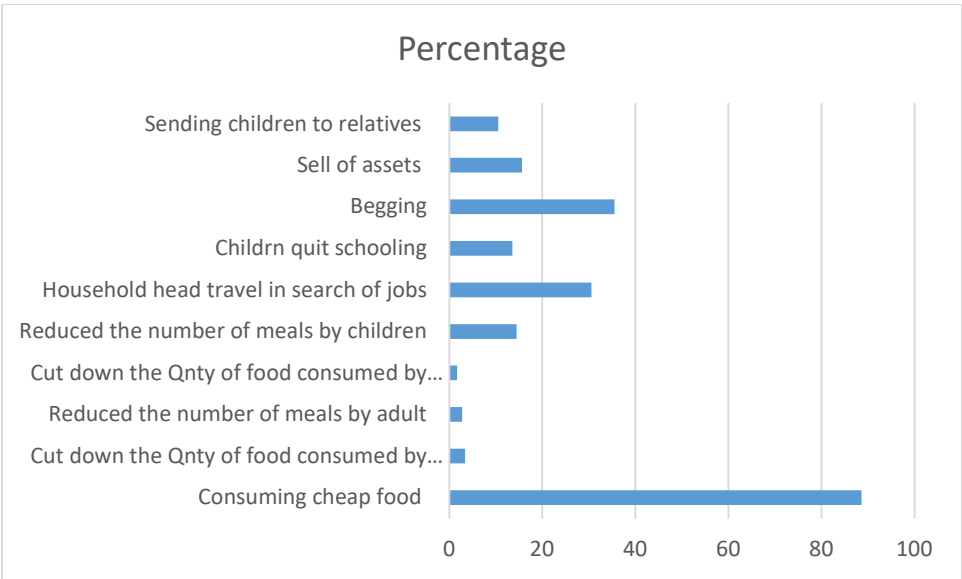
Table 5 coping strategy adopted by household in banditry prone communities of the selected households

Coping Strategy	Zamfara						Katsina							Mean
Coping Strategy	Anka	Maru	Maradun	Shinkafi	Tsafe	Zurmi	Batsari	Danmusa	Kankara	Jibiya	Sabuwa	Safana	Faskari	
Consuming foods that are cheap and not preferred	81.87	100	73.33	97.14	100	50.37	88	100	95	97.1	95.8	59	97.3	79.83
Cut down the quantity of meal consumed by adults	23.48	97.00	20.00	2.85	75.00	44.50	23.14	32.32	49.54	60	10	5.63	24.76	36.02
Reduced the frequency of eating by adults	13.42	64.70	6.66	11.42	69.23	43.10	6.48	32.32	47.74	46.67	7.86	4.23	22.86	28.98
Cut down the quantity of meal consumed by children	9.39	14.70	26.66	0.00	6.25	35.41	14.8	30.30	33.33	2.85	5.71	1.41	0	13.91
Reduced the frequency of eating by children	6.04	11.76	13.33	5.71	54.80	35.41	0	30.30	30.63	1.90	10	1.41	0.95	15.56
Household head and other adult traveling out of the area in search for jobs	38.25	17.64	6.67	54.28	58.65	35.41	0.92	30.30	12.61	6.67	7.86	4.23	91.42	28.07
Children stop attending school	1.34	29.41	26.67	0.00	38.46	21.55	8.33	27.27	19.82	11.43	16.43	16.43	1.41	16.81
Sell assets to buy food	11.40	32.35	6.67	14.28	69.23	46.79	65.74	33.33	36.94	45.71	47.14	1.40	6.67	32.13
Begging	10.73	2.94	80.00	8.57	17.30	35.41	12.04	13.13	21.62	20.95	15	19.72	21.90	21.49
Sending Children to relatives	8.05	0.00	13.33	8.57	20.19	41.52	11.15	13.26	19.38	19.95	10.71	27.77	20.86	16.52

Source National Research Fund Field survey, May, 2020.

To further demonstrate the selection of coping mechanism from among different choices available to the households it can be seen from the Figure that consuming cheap food against the most desired ones is what attract the highest selection in other word

household in most cases used their little income to purchase cheap food stuff as against the more preferred food varieties at the time of food crises the choice constitutes around 88% of the total number of the households.



Source National Research Fund field research 2020.

Figure 2 percentage number of sampled households and their choice of coping strategy

Then the idea of travelling out of the community with hope of securing better job opportunities or at least alternative job to raise money for food as well as sell off assets and sometimes resorting to begging or sending children away, children stopping school among others. reducing meals or cutting the size of it for adult, then children attract lesser consideration This clearly demonstrate how willing the parent are to

take control of the prevailing situation unless thing got out of hands which may result to complete displacement.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To make considerable improvement on food security situation in Nigeria, the following measures and actions should be taken by government of Nigeria, it should consider increasing the security stations (duty post)

close to the banditry prone communities to facilitate easy access between the affected communities and the security operative this is backed by the reports from many of the affected households that failure to reach the security personnel for reasons attached to distance or poor network greatly affect the need for quick response in the event of attack or rescue mission. The households and productive aged members of the household should participate in different income generating activities and diversify their livelihood strategies that may help them to escape from wider state of food insecurity and undernourishments; the government of Nigeria should have to invest more on pro-poor development programs such as safety-

net programs and improve also social accountability to increase the ability of citizens to provide feedback on the services they are receiving from the international NGOs, local organizations, private sector and government. The state government should continue to work together with all stakeholders on strengthening the livelihoods, rural market structures and providing the climate resilience services that improve the ability of poor households to cope with bandits' shocks most especially in this pre-banditry era. Moreover, government can improve on provision of more incentives to the security personnel by acquiring more logistics and welfare.

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