



ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF BANDITRY ON MAIZE FARMERS IN LERE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Effects of banditry on maize farmers in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State. One of the major threats to the agricultural sector in Nigeria is insecurity from bandits. The sustained terrorist and banditry activities have had negative impacts on agricultural activities and farming system which led to loss of lives and economic losses. Descriptive survey design was used to collect and analyzed data which consists maize farmers in Lere Local Government Area, questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. Based on the result, most of the respondents are male. Most of the respondent (60 %) strongly agreed that bandits often target farms to steal valuable crops leading to significant financial losses which is positive. 51 % respondents strongly agreed that bandit attacks often result in the destruction of farm infrastructure, including barns, storage facilities, and equipment. Majority (65 %) of the respondents strongly agreed that presence of banditry forces farmers to invest in security measures such as hiring guards, installing fencing, and using surveillance equipment. 74 % of the respondents strongly agreed that frequent bandit attacks disrupt the supply chain, making it difficult for farmers to transport their goods to market. 48 respondents representing 48 % strongly agreed that banditry fosters an atmosphere of fear and mistrust within rural communities. Bases on the study it was recommended that community or people of the area should try as much as possible to assist in strengthen the security system in the area, the community leader should also try to organize indigenous means of ensuring the safety of the maize farmers in the farm and empower their youth to reduce the unemployment rate in the area. The farmers should also engage in cooperate with farming to be able to combat the activities of the bandit.

Keywords: Effects, Banditry, Maize farmers, Surveillance equipment

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of Nigeria's economy providing employment, food security and income. Farmers play important role in society, providing the backbone of the food supply chain in the country. They cultivate crops and raise livestock, ensuring that communities have access to fresh and nutritious food for growth and healthy living (Sabo, Isah, Chamo and Rabi, 2017; Maina and Agofure, 2021).

The major threat to the agricultural sector in Nigeria is insecurity from Boko haram and bandits. In Nigeria, the sustained terrorist and banditry activities of the Boko Haram have had negative impact on agricultural activities and farming system. Not only are farming activities incapable of being carried out under an insecure environment, but domestic agricultural production is also stifled, farming communities are displaced and access to regional market is blocked (Eigege and Cooke, 2016).

Bandits are criminal gangs that terrorize and rob locals and visitors of their precious possessions, including farm produce, goods, cash, livestock, and other valuables (Abdullahi, 2019). They are typically viewed as desperate, lawless marauder who traverse the mountains and forests in order to avoid being recognized, apprehended, and identified as outlaws. Egwu (2016) revealed that armed banditry is a form of robbing herders of their cattle and other livestock or the process of attacking ranches for livestock. Furthermore, he observed that these operations were typically motivated by a variety of other strategies and elements.

Agriculture in Nigeria is seriously threatened by banditry-related insecurity. In Northwest Nigeria, terrorist and banditry activities have negative impacts on agriculture, disrupting the farming operations of farmers. Farmers in these locations are unable to visit their farms to plant, control weeds, or harvest their crops due to the banditry attacks. In addition to the

physical assault, the bandits' devastation exacerbates the suffering of the helpless farmers. Most often, the farmers are defeated, hurt, or murdered, while others are forced out of their homes and this continue to be one of the biggest risks to food production in the nation (Ofem and Bassey, 2014 and Bilis, 2018).

According to Idris (2021), security threats in Nigeria, most especially kidnapping and abduction, has reached its peak to the extent no Nigeria newspaper in a day will go without one or two cases of abduction. Killing of Farmers, cattle whirled, and destruction of farmers farms are all compounding the distresses of Nigerian farmers whose efforts produces a greater percentage of food consumed in the country (Idris, 2021). Recently, the herders' attacks worsened the risks for severe food crisis in Nigeria, as majority of the farmers now stay away from their farms due to the fear of bandits and kidnappers.

Based on the views of Luminous Janna mike (2021), besides farmer displacement, insecurity has hindered agricultural activities which heightened the risk of serious food scarcity in the country", this banditry has negative effects on Nigeria's sustainable development considering public safety, capital and investment flights, as well as its negative consequences on trade, tourism and Foreign Direct. In fact, Foreign and local media reports established the loss of so many lives, which is the outcome of the farmers-herders clash.

Farmers-herders clash is one of the substantial bases of food insecurity in the country. The targeted attacks on farmers and farming communities by Bandit and Herders have aggravated the cadence of threats to Nigeria's food insecurity. The death of farmers because of farmers-herders clash/banditry is a consequence of the food insecurity in the country. This continued struggle between farmers and herders has resulted in population dislodgment, low agricultural output, and

consequently increase the rate of unemployment (Bello and Abdullahi, 2021).

Rural banditry, which is commonly occurring between Fulani herders and farmers has been an age-long phenomenon defining the economic survival of people in West Africa with dire consequences on both human and animal lives, properties, orderliness and peaceful co-existence (Nwozor *et al.*, 2021).

Banditry, a term often associated with armed robbery and violent criminal activity, has been a significant concern in many rural areas worldwide. Its impacts are particularly devastating for farmers, who rely on stability and security to cultivate their lands and support their families. This essay explores the various effects of banditry on farmers, examining the economic, social, and psychological repercussions of this menace. However, it has been found that a significant difference in income level of the farmers exists. Therefore, cattle rustling/banditry could further deepen the vicious cycle of poverty in rural areas of Katsina State (Abdulrashid, Saifullahi and Amir, 2018)

The effects of banditry on farmers are profound and multifaceted, impacting their economic stability, social cohesion, and psychological well-being. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving security measures, providing economic support to affected farmers, and fostering community resilience. Only through coordinated efforts can the devastating cycle of banditry and its impacts on the agricultural sector be broken, ensuring that farmers can work in safety and contribute to the prosperity of their communities. Banditry, particularly in rural areas, presents a significant challenge to farmers. The activities of bandits not only threaten the lives and properties of farmers but also disrupt agricultural activities, leading to food insecurity and economic instability (Madu, 2019). However, this study is aimed at identifying the effects of banditry on maize farmers in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State, and possible recommendations on how to tackle this menace.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research work was conducted at Lere Local Area of Kaduna State. Its headquarters located Saminaka geographically between latitude 9° N and 12° N and longitude 6° E and 9° E of prime meridian. The total land area is about of 21,158 km² and an estimated population of about 553,290 (2016) (Kaduna State of Nigeria, 2020).

It shares boundary with Kano State in the northern part and Bauchi and Plateau States towards the eastern part. It bordered by commercial town of Kafanchan down South. The climate is divided into two seasons, raining season from March to October, dry season from November to February. Crops commonly grown in the area includes maize, millet, rice, beans, soya beans, groundnut, tomato, onions, yam, sugarcane, cucumber, cabbage and others (Yahaya *et al.*, 2020).

Samples of some farmers were selected from Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State using Simple random sampling was to select 100 maize farmers to represent the total population. One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to maize farmers selected with the consent of the head of community. Data collected were analyzed with the use of frequency counts and simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effect of banditry on Maize farmers in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State

Table 1 shows that 60 respondents representing 60 % of the respondent strongly agreed that bandits often target farms to steal valuable crops leading to significant financial losses, 30 % agreed to the statement, 0% undecided, 6 % strongly disagreed while 4 % disagreed with the statement that bandits often target farms to steal valuable crops leading to significant financial losses. This is in consonant with views of Abdullahi (2021), the stealing of crops and death of farmers as a result of farmers-herders' clash/banditry is a consequence of the food insecurity in the country. This continued struggle between farmers and bandits has resulted in population dislodgment, low agricultural output which led to financial losses, and consequently increase the rate of unemployment. Cattle rustling/banditry could further deepen the vicious cycle of poverty in rural areas of Katsina State (Abdulrashid *et al.*, 2018)

51 % respondents strongly agreed that bandit attacks often result in the destruction of farm infrastructure, including barns, storage facilities, and equipment, 29 % agreed, 3 % respondent's undecided on the assertion whereas 15 % strongly disagreed while 2 % disagreed with the statement that bandit attacks often result in the destruction of farm infrastructure, including barns, storage facilities, and equipment. This agrees with the assertion of Ofem and Basse (2014) and Bilis (2018) which state that, bandits' devastation exacerbates the suffering of the helpless farmers. Most often, the farmers are defeated, hurt, or murdered, while others are forced out of their homes, properties destroyed and this continue to be one of the biggest risks to food production in the nation.

65 % of the respondents strongly agreed that presence of banditry forces farmers to invest in security measures such as hiring guards, installing fencing, and using surveillance equipment, 30 % of the respondents also agreed with the statement, 0 % are undecided on the issue, 5 % strongly disagreed while 0 % disagreed with the statement that presence of banditry forces farmers to invest in security measures such as hiring guards, installing fencing, and using surveillance equipment.

74 % of the respondents strongly agreed that frequent bandit attacks disrupt the supply chain, making it difficult for farmers to transport their goods to market, 15 % also agreed with the statement, 1 % undecided, 6 % strongly disagreed while 4 % disagreed with the statement that frequent bandit attacks disrupt the supply chain, making it difficult for farmers to transport their goods to market. This is in agreement with the opinion of Madu (2019), banditry, particularly in rural areas, presents a significant challenge to farmers. The activities of bandits not only threaten the lives and properties of farmers but also disrupt agricultural activities, leading to food insecurity and economic instability. Not only are farming activities incapable of being carried out under an insecure environment, but domestic agricultural production is also stifled, farming communities are displaced and access to regional market is blocked (Eigege and Cooke, 2016).

48 respondents representing 48 % strongly agreed that banditry fosters an atmosphere of fear and mistrust within rural communities, 39 respondents representing 39 % agreed with the statement representing 0% undecided, 8 respondents representing 8 strongly disagreed, 5 respondents representing 5 % disagreed. This is in line with the views of Nwozor *et al.* (2021) which revealed that banditry affects orderliness and peaceful co-existence of rural communities.

Table 1: Effect of Banditry on Maize Farmers in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State

S/No		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Total (%)
1	Bandits often target farms to steal valuable crops leading to significant financial losses	60	30	0	6	4	100
		60 %	30	0	6	4	100
2	Bandit attacks often result in the destruction of farm infrastructure, including barns, storage facilities, and equipment	51	29	3	15	2	100
		51 %	29	3	15	2	100
3	Presence of banditry forces farmers to invest in security measures such as hiring guards, installing fencing, and using surveillance equipment	65	30	0	5	0	100
		65 %	30	0	5	0	100
4	Frequent bandit attacks disrupt the supply chain, making it difficult for farmers to transport their goods to market	74	15	1	6	4	100
		74 %	15	1	6	4	100
5	Banditry fosters an atmosphere of fear and mistrust within rural communities	48	39	0	8	5	100
		48 %	39	0	8	5	100

CONCLUSION

Various forms of insecurity such as insurgency and banditry have negative impacts on food security in the country. One of the most recent was the fatal attacks by Bandit insurgents on farmers. This attack portends danger to food security as many Maize farmers are very scared to go to their farms to engage in irrigation farming among other food producing activities. Banditry, particularly in the study area has also negatively impacted food security in states such as Kaduna. The implications means that there is reduction in the number of Maize farmers due to their killings, there is impoverishment of farmers due to kidnappings, farmers are not willing to go to their farmlands as they will be chased out, cattle rearing has become difficult, there is reduction in the quantity of crops stored in grain silos, there are risks of attacks when maize farmers visit local weekly markets and many farmers have become dependent on food provided. These clearly indicate the negative effect of banditry on maize farmers in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna state. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that: (i) the Community or people of the area should try as much as possible to assist in strengthen the security system in the area by providing vital information about the bandits, (ii) the community leader should also try to organize indigenous means of ensuring the safety of the maize farmers in the farm and empower their youth to reduce the unemployment rate in the area, (iii) the farmers should also engage in cooperate farming to be able to combat the activities of the bandit also learn to safe guide them self in case of any attack

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