



FORMS OF BANDITRY AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE PEOPLE OF ZAMFARA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA.

¹Yusuf Alhasan Muhammad and ²Mohammed Buba Hassan

^{1&2}Department of Geography, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State Nigeria
mohammedbubahassan@fugusau.edu.ng

Abstract

Banditry, especially in Northwestern Nigeria, is one of the major setbacks hindering the progress of the region and the country at large. The menace of banditry has posed serious security challenges to Zamfara state in general and the central senatorial district in particular. This study, therefore, analyzed the forms and impact of banditry on the socioeconomic activities of Zamfara central senatorial zone, Zamfara state, Nigeria. The study also employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches including questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews, as instruments for data collection. A total of 400 respondents were purposively sampled for the study. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, the relative importance index and time series analyses. Findings also showed that, cattle rustling (mean = 4.5), murder (mean = 4.48), and kidnapping (mean = 4.47) are among the major forms of banditry in the study area. The results also revealed that, unemployment (mean = 4.30), mass poverty (mean = 4.38), drug abuse (mean = 4.35) and available ungoverned spaces (mean = 4.40) are some of the causes of banditry in the area. Some of the effects of banditry discovered during the study include increased poverty (RII = 0.85). Based on the findings, the study recommends among others the need for government to deploy modern technology such as geospatial technology in combating banditry and other crime activities as well as the introduction of policies that would bring about the social-inclusiveness of members of the various people and communities on issues relating to security of the area.

Keywords: Banditry, Impact, Socio-economic, Activities, Zamfara Central

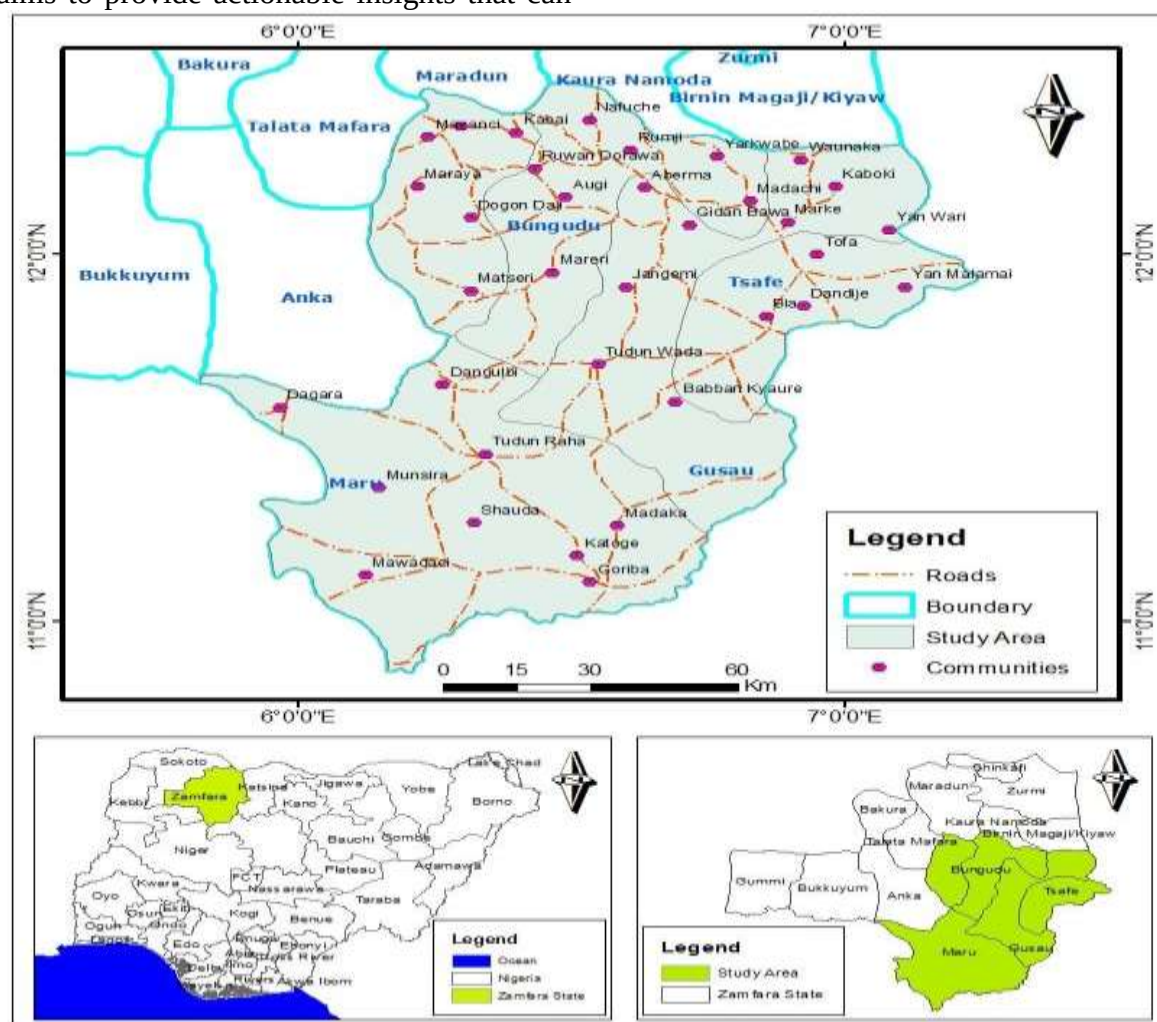
1.0 Introduction

Banditry has emerged as one of the most pressing security challenges in Nigeria, particularly in the northwestern region. In Zamfara Central Senatorial District of Zamfara State, this phenomenon has significantly disrupted the socio-economic fabric of the local communities. Banditry, which encompasses armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, and other violent criminal activities, has not only threatened lives but also undermined

livelihoods, thereby exacerbating poverty and inequality in the region. The district, predominantly agrarian, relies heavily on farming, animal husbandry, and trade as its primary economic activities. However, the pervasive insecurity caused by banditry has displaced thousands of people, disrupted agricultural activities, and stifled commerce. The socio-economic consequences are far-reaching, affecting food security, education, healthcare access, and overall community well-being. This paper seeks to explore the

various forms of banditry prevalent in Zamfara Central Senatorial District and analyze their impacts on socio-economic activities. It examines the root causes of banditry, including issues of governance, unemployment, and resource conflicts, while also highlighting the coping mechanisms adopted by affected communities. By shedding light on these dynamics, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can

inform policy interventions aimed at restoring security and promoting sustainable development in the region. Understanding the interplay between banditry and socio-economic activities in this context is critical, not only for addressing the immediate challenges but also for fostering long-term stability and prosperity in Zamfara State and beyond.



Source: GIS Laboratory, Department of Geography and Environmental Management, A.B.U. Zaria

Figure 1: The Study Area
2.0 Materials and Methods
2.1 The Study Area

Zamfara Central Senatorial District is one of the three senatorial districts in Zamfara State, located in the northwestern region of Nigeria. This district encompasses several



Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Gusau, the state capital, which serves as a political and economic hub for the region. The area is primarily rural, with a population engaged in agriculture, livestock farming, and small-scale trade, which are the main sources of livelihood for the people. Zamfara Central is marked by a largely agrarian economy, where the majority of households rely on farming for subsistence, growing crops such as millet, sorghum, maize, and groundnut. Livestock farming, particularly cattle, goats, and sheep, is also a significant part of the economy, with pastoralists moving across vast areas of land. The region has historically been a rich source of agricultural produce, contributing significantly to the food supply in the state and beyond. However, in recent years, the district has faced a surge in banditry, characterized by attacks on villages, cattle rustling, kidnappings, and other forms of violent crime. These activities have deeply affected the socio-economic activities of the people, disrupting farming seasons, displacing families, and reducing the availability of goods and services in local markets. The study area also faces challenges related to governance, infrastructural development, and access to social amenities such as healthcare and education. The rise of insecurity has exacerbated these challenges, hindering the population's ability to fully recover from the impacts of banditry. Understanding the socio-economic dynamics of Zamfara Central Senatorial District is essential for assessing the effects of banditry on the livelihoods of the people and for proposing targeted interventions that can restore peace and economic stability in the region.

2.2 Research Design

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and

qualitative data to analyze the spatial distribution of banditry and its impact on agriculture.

2.3 Data Collection

This section shows the types of data used in conducting the study. Basically, the study uses both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.3.1 Primary Data

Structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews were conducted with local farmers, community leaders, security personnel, and government officials. These methods capture firsthand accounts of banditry's impact on agriculture and community livelihoods.

2.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data on banditry incidents obtained from security reports, media coverage, and NGOs publications were utilized. Agricultural production data sourced from state agricultural agencies and statistical bureaus were all incorporated in the research.

2.4 Sampling Technique:

A stratified random sampling method was used to select respondents, ensuring representation across the state's agricultural zones and banditry-affected communities. Sample size was determined based on population distribution and the prevalence of banditry incidents.

2.5 Sample frame and Size

Sample size for the study was determined using the 1991 population data of the study area, that is, Zamfara Central Senatorial District. This is due to the deficiency of the 2006 population census in providing population data for localities (villages). The advantage of 1991 data is its ability to give population figures for each locality in all LGAs of the federation. The population of each ward was therefore, carefully aggregated with the help of INEC's

registration area (polling units) information. Based on the aggregated population, the study area (Zamfara Central Senatorial District) had a total population of 760, 487 (see Table 3.1). This figure was projected to 2023 at growth rate of 2.41% (Worldometer, 2023) using Newman's (2001) method of population projection as follows:

$$P_n = P_0 + \left(\frac{1+R}{100} \times P_0 \right) n$$

Where: P_n = Population in the recent year;

P_0 = Population in the base year;

R = annual growth rate;

n = number of intermediary years.

Therefore, the projected population of the study area (from 1991 to 2023) is 1, 590, 311. Sample size for the study was determined using Yamane (1967) method as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Total population

e = significance level (put at 0.05%)

Since $N = 1, 590, 311$

$$n = \frac{1590311}{1+1590311(0.05)^2}$$

Table 1: Forms of Banditry in the Study Area

Forms of banditry	SD (%)	D (%)	I (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	MEAN	RANK
Kidnapping	8 (2%)	10 (3%)	11 (3%)	121 (31%)	237 (61%)	4.47	3 rd
Rape	12 (3%)	10 (3%)	9 (2%)	112 (29%)	244 (63%)	4.46	4 th
Village/market raids	18 (5%)	15 (4%)	11 (3%)	137 (35%)	206 (53%)	4.27	6 th
Murder	13 (3%)	11 (3%)	10 (3%)	96 (25%)	257 (66%)	4.48	2 nd
Robbery	14 (4%)	16 (4%)	18 (5%)	129 (33%)	210 (54%)	4.29	5 th
Cattle rustling	12 (3%)	9 (2%)	8 (2%)	91 (24%)	267 (69%)	4.54	1 st
Extortion	17	18	14	161	177	4.24	7 th

$$1590311$$

$$n = \frac{1 + 1590311 \times 0.0025}{1590311}$$

$$n = \frac{3976}{1590311} = 399.97.$$

Therefore, the study used 400 respondents as sample size.

2.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to identify trends and correlations while Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey responses was analyzed thematically to extract key insights.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Similarly, Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained to protect respondents' identities.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Forms of Banditry in the Study Area

Banditry is categorized into many forms such as kidnapping, rape, robbery, village/market raids, cattle rustling and murder. This section presents the results of the forms of banditry common in the study area. Table 1 presents the result of the forms of banditry common in the study area.



(4%) (5%) (4%) (42%) (46%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5, Agreed (A) = 4, Indifferent (I) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Table 1 shows that cattle rustling is the most common form of banditry, with a mean value of 4.5 and ranked first among the forms of banditry in the study area. This connotes that there is a high rate of cattle rustling, with massive stealing of cattle being the order of the day in the study area. As a result of this problem, many cattle herdsmen have lost their means of livelihood. As such, study observed that, as a result of unemployment, these cattle herders have also joined cattle rustler gangs, while many others have turned into street beggars, especially in the state's main cities. It is against this backdrop that Abdurashied (2020) in a study submitted that, until all hands are put on deck and good democratic governance is put in place with security agencies well-funded and trained with a modern gazette system, the problem of banditry in the northwestern states of Nigeria cannot be controlled. In relation to this, one of the Fulani traditional leaders who is from Maru LGA, submits that:

"We have been experiencing a serious problem of cattle theft in this area. In fact, it has now reached an extent; no one keeps even a single cow in their house. These rustlers move even in daytime and follow us house to house to seize all our domestic animals, either cows, goats, or sheep"

Table 1 further indicates that the second form of banditry is murder, which is a very common criminal activity in the study area with, a mean value of 4.48 based on the opinion of the respondents. It is obvious that

murder and massacre of hundreds of innocent people is now a daily operation by bandits in the study area. It is an established fact that the Zamfara banditry began in 2011, and since then, many people have been killed. David and Auwal (2022) reported that bandit gangs carry out attacks in several locations of the study area, including mass kidnappings and massacres. Al Jazeera also reported on 9th January, 2022, an estimated 200 people were killed and 10,000 displaced in attacks by armed bandits in the northwestern Nigerian state of Zamfara following military air raids on their hideouts. In relation to mass murder by bandits, an interviewee from Bungudu stated that:

"I have witnessed the burial of over 200 persons killed by bandits in this area. Many other people have also been killed either individually or in groups. These bandits can sometimes purposely come to our communities targeting a particular victim who they suspect has given a clue to security personnel on their modes of operations"

Kidnapping, which is a criminal offense consisting of the unlawful taking and carrying away of a person by force or fraud, or the unlawful seizure and detention of a person against his will, is the third form of banditry common in the study area, which has a significant mean value of 4.47. Kidnapping has become a lucrative business for many criminals in the study area. Olapeju and Peters (2021) rightly stated when they examined the impact of banditry



on Nigeria' security that, kidnapping has made significant negative impact on the economy of Nigeria in general. Zamfara state, generally, has been an epicenter of kidnapping and other criminal activities perpetrated by criminal gangs, often challenging the state and local authorities as if they were a parallel government with powers to unleash death and other hardships on the people. The problem of kidnapping has made many people to panic once the name Zamfara is mentioned. In fact, it is in this vein that an interviewee who is from Gusau LGA made the following remarks:

"It has now reached a stage in this state where virtually everybody is affected by the menace of kidnapping. It affected all members of our community. It's either your son or daughter who is being kidnapped, your nephew or niece, or even yourself."

Rape, which is a sexual assault and unlawful sexual intercourse or any other sexual penetration, of another person, with or without force, by a sex organ, other body part, or foreign object, without the consent of the person subjected to such penetration is the fourth form of banditry in the study area. The mean value of 4.6, it means that rape is a serious criminal activity perpetrated by bandits in the study area. Rape is one of the common practices of bandits as they attack communities in the study area. This is the reason why Igbini (2021) stated in a study on banditry and security threats in Nigeria states that kidnapping, rape, and village raids are some of the major operations of bandits in Nigeria. In relation to this, a resident from Tsafe LGA made the following comment in an interview:

"We have, over the years, been experiencing serious

attacks from bandits. In the past, the bandits came to this area and humiliated us. They also rustle our animals and abduct people for ransom. However, these days, the bandits would come in broad daylight and remain as they wish without any fear. These criminals are usually dressed in military uniforms and fully armed with all sorts of sophisticated weapons. They would now enter people's houses and rape any woman they like. I swear, any woman who refuses their advances, they would abduct her and take her to the bush and do whatsoever they wish"

Findings also revealed that robbery is the 5th form of banditry in the study area. The mean value of 4.29 means that, robbery is also a serious type of criminal activity that is common in the study area. It is observed by the study that bandits sometimes block the main roads of the area to forcefully snatch travelers' belongings and sometimes, kidnap others. This is the reason why David and Auwal (2020) rightly stated that armed robbery especially along the major roads of northwestern states, is a serious security threat to the development of the entire region and the country at large, which is one of the food producing areas in west Africa. Related to this is the contribution of an interviewee from Kuncin Kalgo village of Tsafe LGA: *"Armed robbers who also doubled as bandits are now targeting women and children in this community. When these criminals come, they rob and abduct us for ransom. I swear we are now controlled completely by bandits and not the*



government. We pay huge amount of money to them before we cultivate our farmlands, and during the harvest season, they would also ask for money before we collect our farm produce from the farms. For instance, they asked us to give them ₦15 million before we would harvest our farm produce in 2021. We had to follow people to their houses and collect contributions. All households contributed, and we gave them the money. Unfortunately, despite the money they gave them, they stopped us from going to the farm and burnt everything after three (3) days”

Table 1 further showed that extortion which is the crime of obtaining something from someone, especially money, by using force or threats is the 7th form of banditry with a significant mean value of 4.24. It is a growing trend, as observed, where bandits carry-out a new form of extortion by taxing farming activities in the study area as a way of gaining revenue. As mentioned by KII (6):

“The situation of farming activities in Zamfara has reached the point that any farmer cannot easily go to their farms even, one kilometer from the capital, because nobody will tell you when these bandits will strike. The only way possible is to pay large amount of money to these bandits before they allow you access to your farmlands. Even at that, the security of our lives is not certain because some other groups may attack unexpectedly”

3.2 Effects of Banditry on Socioeconomic Development of the Study Area

Table 2: Effects of Banditry on the Socioeconomic Activities in the Study Area

It is an established fact that, wherever insecurity like banditry prevails, there is high possibility of the socioeconomic activities of the people being hampered. Banditry in the study area has already lasted for more than a decade, and during this period, many people are injured, while others have been killed and, properties worth millions of Naira have been destroyed. Banditry therefore, poses significant risks to the well-being of the people in the study area. Table 2 presents the perceived effects of banditry on the socioeconomic activities of the people in the study area.

From Table 2, it is clear that banditry has fueled poverty with an RII value of 0.85, which connotes the 8th rank of the significant effect in the study area. Zamfara is already established as one of the states whose population lives under extreme poverty in Nigeria. Many people are living on less than 1 US dollar per day, which is an indication of poverty in the area. This problem is further compounded by the challenges posed by banditry, which has rendered many people unemployed, prevented them from farming activities, which is their major occupation, and forced them out of their native communities. For example, the National Social Safety Net has stated that Zamfara State has the highest number of poor and vulnerable people in Nigeria, with a record of 3, 836, 484 people from 825, 337 (The Punch, 2021). It is in relation to this that, Nahuche (2020) revealed in their study on the causes and effects of banditry in northwestern Nigeria that the problem of banditry in the area has exacerbated the already challenges of poverty among people. An interview with a community leader from Tsafe LGA has made the following comment:



Effects of banditry	SD (%)	D (%)	I (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	RII	RANK
Increased poverty	23 (6%)	31 (8%)	8 (2%)	86 (22%)	239 (62%)	0.85	8 th
Renders many unemployed	12 (3%)	18 (5%)	11 (3%)	97 (25%)	249 (64%)	0.88	5 th
Food security challenges	21 (5%)	19 (5%)	9 (2%)	45 (12%)	293 (76%)	0.90	3 rd
Poor educational development	13 (3%)	17 (4%)	10 (3%)	89 (23%)	258 (67%)	0.89	4 th
Health challenges	18 (5%)	21 (5%)	14 (4%)	80 (21%)	254 (66%)	0.88	5 th
Leads to poor standards of living	13 (3%)	42 (11%)	11 (3%)	69 (18%)	252 (65%)	0.68	10 th
Disruption of businesses	21 (5%)	15 (4%)	9 (2%)	87 (22%)	255 (67%)	0.88	5 th
Disruption of farming activities	10 (3%)	9 (2%)	6 (2%)	45 (12%)	317 (81%)	0.93	1 st
Loss of lives and property	8 (2%)	9 (2%)	7 (2%)	68 (18%)	295 (76%)	0.93	1 st
Create suspicion, hatred and lack of trust among community members	33 (9%)	67 (17%)	11 (3%)	89 (23%)	187 (48%)	0.77	9 th

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5, Agreed (A) = 4, Indifferent (I) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

“Banditry has created a large number of destitute orphans and widows, especially in the rural areas. The constant raiding, theft, raping, kidnapping, and payment of ransom for kidnapped victims have caused many people to become very poor. Many of us have sold everything we have and paid ransom to free one or more of our loved ones who are kidnapped by bandits in this community”

Table 2 further showed that kidnapping has rendered many people unemployed (RII = 0.88), ranked 5th based on the perception of

the respondents in the study area. This result agrees with the argument of Ifedi and Agu (2020), who state that there is a high level of unemployment in Zamfara State, especially among the youths in the rural areas. So many youths are staying idle and are left at the mercy of begging. The author also established that there are too many young people in the villages who are jobless and without any means of livelihood. The frustration that results from this and the need for survival make the youths vulnerable to manipulation into committing various crimes even for a little pay. In relation to this, heads of farmers from Maru LGA have the following comments:



“Most people’s businesses, such as farming, trading, fishing, blacksmithing, civil service, especially teaching, and hunting, are totally halted due to constant attacks and kidnapping by bandits in this community. The means of livelihood of the people are completely distorted, and so they are rendered unemployed. The disturbing issue now is that most of our youth are now into all sorts of social vices because of idleness”

Food insecurity is a threat to national sustainable development and is one of the serious global concerns for everyone. Hunger and poverty are characterized among other threats to sustainable development, especially in the North-West Geo-political zone of Nigeria (Tume, 2015). According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2010) and reported by Tume (2015), about 70% of Nigeria’s population lives in poverty with incomes of less than one dollar a day. Furthermore, the highest proportion of poor people is found in the Northwest States of Nigeria especially, Zamfara state (Tume, 2015). This issue has raised a concern with reference to Zamfara State where hunger and poverty are ravaging the people despite their popular slogan “farming is our pride. Table 2 shows that the existing food security challenge facing the study area is aggravated by banditry operations as perceived by the respondents. The RII value of 0.90, ranked, 3rd which connotes that food security challenge is a very significant effect of banditry in the study area. It is obvious that all components of food security, ranging from food availability, access, utilization, and stability, are all being affected by banditry in the study area. For example, the

Daily Trust Newspaper of September 29th, 2023 has reported that food prices in Zamfara State, Nigeria, have surged in recent months due to a combination of factors, including the ongoing activities of bandits in the state. According to the report, dealers of food items have stopped going to rural areas to purchase foodstuffs, fearing attacks from bandits.

It is also observed that one important sector that banditry has destroyed in Zamfara State is education. It is obvious that the state can be classified as educationally backward since its creation in 1996. This study has also observed that, successive governments have tried their best to ameliorate this fundamental challenge. However, instead of what seemed to be a positive development, the sector kept declining, leaving children in the state going out of school and moving farther from the schools. In relation to this, Table 2 shows that, banditry have led to poor educational development in the study area based on the perception of the respondents. The RII value of 0.89, ranked 4th which means that banditry has a significant negative effect on educational development in the study area. It is quite unfortunate that banditry has chased almost every contributor of educational development away from the state and even the indigenous people; equally find it traumatizing, challenging, and unbearable, especially considering children’s future without education. The study has observed that, at the moment, reports from the federal government and the Zamfara State government have classified the state as one with the most out-of-school children. In relation to this, one of the interviews had made the following valuable comment:

“I cannot recall the number of children who are directly



kidnapped from schools. This situation has made many parents withdraw their children from schools for fear of being attacked by bandits. These criminals have forced many people away from their homes, and so, the education of the affected communities is directly hampered. Bandits have destroyed many schools, and so, where do you expect the children to go and obtain the required education”

Closely related to the educational problem is the health challenges induced by banditry in the study area. Owing to a lack of organized and accessible healthcare facilities across the state, life is becoming more unbearable to many citizens by the day. Table 2 indicates that, banditry has significantly triggered health challenges in the study with, an RII value of 0.88, ranked 5th according to the table. This can be confirmed as even the Zamfara State government has agreed that the security of the people is in danger. More so, Saminu *et al.* (2023) noted that, many non-governmental organizations have rolled out multiple reports indicating the multifaceted and severe humanitarian conditions afflicting the people, with more tendencies to deteriorate in the future. Many school children have been abducted and others are killed by these bandits in the study area. This situation had made many parents withdrew their children from the school. For example, just recently, the Punch Newspaper of September 25th 2023, has reported that an unspecified number of students had been abducted from the Federal University, Gusau by these bandits. The newspaper reported that:

“On September 22, 2023, at about 0250hrs, suspected bandits, riding on about 50 motorcycles, armed with sophisticated weapons invaded three students’ rented apartments in Sabongida Village near the Federal University Gusau and kidnapped an unspecified number of students, taking them to an unknown destination”– Punch, 2023.

Table 2 further showed that banditry in the study area has led to a reduced standard of living among people. The RII value of 0.68 is the least significant and ranked 10th, which connotes that the effect of banditry on people’s standard of living is significant based on the perception of the respondents. The standard of living, which refers to the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class or geographic area, is significantly affected due to increased poverty, unemployment, food security, and health challenges as well as poor educational development induced by bandits’ operation over the years in the study area. The table also showed that, the activities of bandits has led to disruption of many business activities (RII = 0.88), ranked 5th in the study area. It is obvious that, the village and markets raided by these bandits have led to the halting of many business activities in the area. The major business activity of the people in the study area, have been found to be buying and selling of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and other chemicals as well as buying and selling of agricultural products such as food crops and domestic animals such as cattle, sheep and goats. However, with the arrival of severe bandits’ operation



and attacks, many of these businesses have been observed to be stopped completely. This situation has created serious problem of unemployment and the resultant poverty in the study area. The table also shows that bandits' activities have led to the disruption of farming activities. The RII value 0.93 is the most significant ranked 1st which means that, there is a very significant effect of banditry on farming activities in the study area. It has been observed by the study that, farmers no longer go to their farms because they could be abducted or killed. The situation has forced many farmers out of the area which made farming activities almost impossible. This result agrees with that of Meer *et al.*, (2022), who reported that bandits' operation in Benue state has led to obstruction in farming and other economic activities. In relation to this, an interviewee with a leader from Bungudu LGA made the following comment:

"Bandits have destroyed our markets, homes, and farm produce both on the farm and in our store. They have prevented us from attending the weekly periodic markets in this area. We used to have different businesses in this community such as trading, farming, blacksmithing, fishing, and so on. However, since the beginning of the bandits' operations in this area, virtually all businesses have stopped. They have snatched all our belongings including clothes"

Table 2 also indicates that banditry has led to loss of lives and property (RII = 0.93), ranked 1st in the study area. The killing of innocent people by bandits has gradually become a recurring event in the study area.

Bandits in numbers used to move from one village to another and in the process, they kill anyone in sight and set all properties ablaze. As a result of this, many people have lost their lives and properties worth millions of Naira have been observed to be destroyed by these bandits. For example, Business Day Newspaper of January 18th, 2024 reported that bandits have killed many residents of nine communities in the Bungudu Local Government Area of Zamfara State. Many other residents also find themselves gripped by fear, fleeing their homes over threats of attack by a notorious bandit leader, known as Dan Nagala. Similarly, in another report by Punch Newspaper of 20th February, 2024 noted that bandits in large numbers have killed nine people and abducted 27 others in some villages of Zamfara State (Altine, 2024). An interview conducted with one of the interviewees from Bungudu LGA made the following comment:

"We have suffered a lot at the hands of bandits. Just recently, they have abducted 17 people in RuwanDoruwa village; many women were assaulted in six other villages in Mutunji district. These bandits still exert pressure on us, where they demand a hefty ransom from the families of those in captivity, and any failure to pay within their stipulated deadline, they kill the victim. There is one bandit leader called Dangala, he strikes is anytime, very heartless and does not value human life. In fact, as I am talking to you, I am not sure whether two wives and eight children are death or alive"



because they have been kidnapped by these bandits”

Table 2 also shows that banditry has a significant negative effect (0.77) 9th ranked as it creates suspicion, hatred and lack of trusts among community members in the study area. It is obvious that these bandits are mostly people who originated from the same communities in the study area. Bandits’ informants are not easily identified in the midst of community members. These lead to a lack of trust between people. However, security operatives used to arrest these informants. For example, it has been reported that, on 7th October, 2022, Police Tactical Operatives attached to CP’s Monitoring Unit State headquarters acted on intelligence information and arrested eight (8) bandits’ informants in Zamfara state. In an interview during the study, one of the key informants made the following comment:

“Bandits’ informants used to remain within us we eat, sleep, and pray together, but they still connive with criminals to cheat us. It has now reached an extent where we do not trust ourselves any longer. We cannot detect who is with us or against us, even though we live together in the same community”

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that there were many bandits’ hotspots such as Kuyanbana, Magami, and Bingi south, among others. It is also clear that there was tremendous decrease in the rate of banditry in the study area, especially in recent times due to improvement in national security. A significant number of people in the study area were males, mostly between the ages of 41 years and above and

had either primary or no formal education. Major forms of banditry include cattle rustling, murder, kidnapping, robbery and rape, among others. Unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, availability of ungoverned spaces, and fragile leadership are some of the causes of banditry in the area. It is also concluded that, increased poverty, unemployment, poor educational development and health challenge are some of the major effects of banditry on the socioeconomic activities of the people in the study area. It is also concluded that, the presence of bandit’s informants within communities, poor community involvement, poor cooperation from neighboring countries/states and bandits’ connivance with traditional institutions are some of the factors militating against the control of banditry in the study area.

5.0 Recommendations

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Since the study found many hotspots and trending occurrence of banditry in the area, there is need for government to deploy modern technology such as geospatial technology among others in combating banditry and other criminal activities in the area. Since the study found that many people have been forced to flee from their home, adequate security is first required to ensure the security and safety of all concerned stakeholders in the area and beyond.
- ii. Since the study found many forms of banditry and its causes, there is need for government to rise to the occasion by taming and ending banditry in the state. This can be achieved through introducing policies that would bring about the



social-inclusiveness of members of the various groups and communities that made up the state.

References

- Abdullahi, A. (2019). Rural Banditry, Regional Security, and Integration in West Africa. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 2(3), 644-654.
- Altine, M. (2024). Bandits' Commander Preaches Peace in Zamfara. Available at <https://punchng.com/bandits-commander-preaches-peace-in-zamfara/> Retrieved on 12 June, 2024.
- David, O.M. and Auwal, I. (2022). Analysis of the Nature and Patterns of Banditry in Northwest Nigeria. *LASU Journal of History and International Studies*, 1(1), 10 - 22.
- Ifedi, E.F. and Agu, C.F. (2020). Migration and Security Challenges in Zamfara State Nigeria, 20 11-2020. *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*, 11(2), 462-479.
- Igbini, D.M. (2021). Banditry and Security Threats: An Analysis of Insecurity in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 1(2), 1 – 12.
- Meer, B. B., Japheth, H. D. and Manyam, H. I. (2022). Effects of banditry activities on forest ecosystems and the host communities in north-east guinea savanna ecological zone of sankera axis, Benue state, Nigeria. *Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Conference of the Forests and Forest Products Society, Held at the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Ibadan, Nigeria. 14th - 20th August, 2022.*
- Nahuche, L.B. (2022). The Nature and Consequences of Armed Banditry in Nigeria: (A Case Study of Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara and Katsina States. *Bakolori Journal of General Studies*, 12(2), 3726 – 3732.
- Newman, J. F. (2001). Population Projection for Research and Development. Retrieved from <http://www.educationforallindia.com/New%20population-projection.pdf>, 21/09/2023.
- Olapeju, R.M. and Peter, A.O. (2021). The Impact of Banditry on Nigeria's Security in the Fourth Republic: An Evaluation of Nigeria's North-west. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 1(1), 12 – 22.
- Saminu, I., Che, M.A. and Shazwanis, B.S. (2023). Bandits' Struggle for Survival and its Humanitarian Impacts in Zamfara State, Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 2(2), 22 – 30.
- The Punch (2021). Zamfara Home to Highest Number of Poor Nigerians. Available at <https://punchng.com/zamfara-home-to-highest-number-of-poor-nigerians-nsr/> retrieved on 12 June, 2024.
- Tume, A. (2015). Food Insecurity and Sustainable Development in Zamfara State, North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 3(4), 515 – 524
- Worldometer (2023). Nigeria's Population, 2023. Available and retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/> on 12th September, 2023