

BANDITRY AND FOOD SECURITY: AN INSIGHT FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA**OYEGUN GBENGA Ph. D**Wellspring University,
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of armed banditry on food security in Nigeria, particularly in the northern regions. This research aims to inform policymakers about the complex relationship between insecurity and food security and guide the development of effective interventions to mitigate banditry's impact and enhance food security in northern Nigeria. Banditry has severely affected agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods through the killing and kidnapping of farmers, theft of livestock, crop destruction, and disruption of local trade routes. Utilizing focus group discussions and secondary data analysis from empirical studies, the research highlights significant farmer displacement to urban areas and Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps, resulting in decreased food production, shortages, and increased prices. Specific impacts in Jigawa and Zamfara States illustrate severe disruptions in food supply chains. Despite ongoing efforts by Federal and State Governments, the desired outcomes have not been achieved, perpetuating a cycle of violence, joblessness, and further insecurity, especially among the youth. The study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies addressing poverty, unemployment, and governance weaknesses, recommending enhanced security measures, support for displaced farmers, revival of agricultural activities, and policies ensuring access to affordable, nutritious food.

Keywords: Banditry, Insecurity, Food Security

1.0 Introduction**1.1 Background to the Study**

In Nigeria today, banditry and food security continue to be the most divisive socioeconomic policy issues. The complex concerns that greatly impact Northern Nigeria, a region that has long struggled with socioeconomic and security issues, cannot be disregarded. Nigeria has seen several critical moments since gaining independence in 1960. These include the North-East insurgency, the South-South militant activities, and the North-West and North-Central regions' widespread livestock rustling and rural banditry (Hill, 2012). In particular, the North-West has become a hotbed of violence as rural banditry has grown from small-scale conflicts between herders and farmers to a widespread problem that threatens both regional and national stability. The surge in banditry that occurred between 2014 and 2019, especially in

states like Jigawa, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Kebbi, has sparked ongoing political and social anxiety due to the significant consequences for the security and food production capacities of the region (Emmanuelar, 2015).

In Northern Nigeria, armed groups that commit violent crimes for financial gain, like kidnapping, armed robbery, and cattle rustling, are referred to as rural banditry. The targets are frequently rural communities with significant heritage of farming and raising cattle. The prevailing instability brought about by this illegal flurry has had a significant effect on agricultural productivity and, consequently, food security in the region (Emmanuelar, 2015). Food security is defined by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) as the availability, usability, and fulfillment of dietary demands through adequate, safe, and nutritious food. All of these are disrupted by banditry, which forces farmers off their land, ruins crops, and makes rural areas unfit for farming operations. Simon (2012)

The fundamental causes of banditry in Northern Nigeria are multifaceted and include prior resource-based conflicts, particularly between farmers and herders, as well as extreme poverty and unemployment. Due to their lack of economic opportunities, many young people in the area are susceptible to being recruited by bandit groups who promise quick financial gains (Aina, 2019). In addition, the reduction of arable land due to climate change has made herder-farmer conflicts more intense, which has led to an uptick in violence and banditry. Nigeria's porous borders have made tiny firearms widely available, which has exacerbated the lethality of these illegal operations.

Mostly ineffective military operations like "Operation Puff Adder," the government has responded to banditry with force. Critics contend that these initiatives fall short in addressing the fundamental socioeconomic issues that encourage banditry. Moreover, allegations of collusion and corruption involving specific security personnel and criminal groups have undermined the effectiveness of these campaigns. As a result, banditry continues to have a devastating humanitarian impact, resulting in millions of people being displaced, thousands of deaths, and significant disruptions to agricultural output, all of which raise food insecurity (Akanwa et al., 2023)

Considering banditry poses a threat to food security, the Nigerian government has taken action. One such initiative is the Agro-Rangers Corps, which was established with the intention of protecting farmers and their assets. Nonetheless, ongoing attacks threaten to undo these gains, necessitating a multipronged strategy that addresses socioeconomic development as well as security. The core reasons of banditry must be addressed by greater education, job creation, and the mediation of disputes based on resources in order to maintain food security in Northern Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

According to data, over a billion people lack access to a sufficient diet and enough food, making food security a significant global issue (World Health Organization, 2020). Food security in Northern Nigeria is seriously threatened by the ongoing issues of banditry and the Boko Haram conflict (Emmanuelar, 2015). The region, notably the North-West, has been plagued by armed group violence, including kidnapping, armed robbery, cattle rustling, and insurgency. Along with uprooting rural communities, destroying crops and cattle, and reducing agricultural production, these actions have significantly jeopardized these people's capacity to produce and obtain nutritious food. The region's predominantly agrarian economy, in which a sizeable portion of the population earns a living through farming and cattle husbandry, exacerbates this problem (Emmanuelar, 2015).

The connections between banditry, insurgency, and food security are intricate and multifaceted. Banditry and insurgency operations, which are driven by economic motivations and made easier by the availability of small weaponry, have created an atmosphere of dread

and instability. This has made farming more difficult. Farmers are often forced to abandon their land, which disrupts the food supply chains and lowers agricultural production. In addition, the dislocation of communities and the theft and devastation of food sources immediately reduce the quantity of food that is available, drive up its price, and make it unaffordable for a large number of people. Despite actions such as the deployment of the Agro-Rangers Corps to protect farmers, initiatives aimed at ensuring food security continue to face obstacles. In order to end the cycle of violence and ensure food security in Northern Nigeria, socioeconomic development, improved governance, and regional collaboration are necessary to address the root causes of banditry and insurgency.

1.3 Research Objectives

Examining the dynamic forces of banditry and insurgency on food security in Northern Nigeria is the study's main aim. To be more precise, this study will:

- i. Examine how banditry and insurgency have unsettled agrarian production and displaced rural publics, leading to amplified food insecurity and
- ii. Assess the contemporary efforts by the government to address these challenges and recommend operational actions to wrestle banditry and insurgency, so as to improving food security in the states.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Banditry

Banditry and violent crimes committed by armed organizations in regions with lax or ineffectual legal systems are referred to as banditry. Throughout history, banditry has been linked to social and economic disruptions, usually emerging in situations where disadvantaged groups turn to criminality as a method of surviving (Mohammed & Alimba, 2016). Bandits commit a variety of crimes, such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and cattle rustling. They are more common in areas that are experiencing economic decline, poor governance, and insufficient law enforcement. Bandit groups are resilient to different environments, demonstrating both their adaptability and the difficulties authorities face in putting an end to these types of crimes. This resilience highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that address both immediate security concerns and underlying socio-economic factors. Knowledge of the history and global context of banditry helps frame its modern manifestations, especially in places like Northern Nigeria, where similar patterns of violence and instability are evident.

2.1.2 Economic Implications of Banditry in Northern Nigeria

Banditry in Northern Nigeria has become a major issue due to unsolved conflicts between nomadic herders and settled agricultural populations, especially in the North-West and North-Central regions. The problem is made worse by environmental deterioration and climate change, which drives herders southward in pursuit of pasture (Mohammed & Baba, 2018). Bandit organizations carry out kidnappings, livestock rustling, and village raids in states including Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna. These illegal operations greatly impair regional economies and increase the level of insecurity in the community. Deeper socioeconomic problems, such as poverty, unemployment, and resource scarcity, which feed a vicious cycle of violence and instability, are reflected in the region's continued banditry (Mohammed & Baba, 2018).

The socio-economic effects of banditry go far beyond the immediate violence and have a profound impact on the economy of the region. For many people in Northern Nigeria, agriculture is their primary source of income, and when farmers are forced to abandon their fields due to the constant threat of bandit attacks, crop production is reduced and livestock losses are increased (Mohammed & Alimba, 2016). This disruption not only exacerbates

poverty and social unrest but also affects local markets and food distribution systems, further exacerbating the region's problems and making it more difficult to effectively address both short-term and long-term needs (Mohammed & Baba, 2018).

Furthermore, the widespread insecurity brought forth by banditry discourages investment and stifles commercial activity, both of which impede economic growth. Fear of violence causes economic activity to decline, which raises the rates of unemployment and poverty. More people turn to banditry as a result of this cycle of violence and economic instability, which undermines development initiatives and prolongs the crisis (Ojo et al., 2023). A comprehensive approach is required to handle these issues; it must combine security measures with programs that support development, encourage economic resilience, and establish sustainable livelihoods in the impacted areas.

2.1.3 The Concept of Food Security

Food security is defined as a condition where all individuals, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life (UNICEF, 2021). Food availability, accessibility, use, and stability are some of the elements that this idea incorporates. The production, trade, and distribution of food all work together to ensure that there is a sufficient supply to meet the demands of the people. This is known as food availability. Accessibility encompasses the ability to receive food both physically and economically, taking into account variables like access to markets and income. The right use of food is referred to as utilization, and it is aided by access to clean water and sanitary facilities as well as nutritional knowledge. Stability denotes the consistent ability to access adequate food without risk of losing access due to economic or environmental shocks (UNICEF, 2021).

The fact that food security is multifaceted emphasizes how difficult it is to guarantee that everyone can achieve their nutritional needs. Food insecurity can come from any disturbance in one of these categories, which can then cause malnutrition, health issues, and a lower standard of living. Food security is especially susceptible to disruption in conflict-affected areas, like Northern Nigeria, because of the interplay between environmental issues, economic instability, and violence. A comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure food security, one that takes into account the larger socioeconomic and environmental variables that affect food access and utilization in addition to the immediate availability of food (UNICEF, 2021).

2.1.4 Relationship between Banditry and Food Security in Northern Nigeria

In Northern Nigeria, the ability of the region to maintain food security is directly impacted by banditry, creating a complex relationship between the two. Bandit groups' violent actions reduce agricultural output, drive farmers from their fields, and result in the theft and destruction of livestock and crops (Agency Report, 2018). Food shortages and price increases are exacerbated by this disruption, which also reduces food availability and accessibility. Food insecurity is exacerbated in displaced communities by the loss of their primary source of income, which makes it more difficult for them to obtain enough nourishment (FRCN, 2020).

Furthermore, the instability brought forth by banditry creates a vicious cycle in which food shortages feeds more unrest and conflict. Competition for resources increases when food becomes scarcer and prices rise, which could result in more social instability and violence. It is difficult to establish long-term stability in the region because of the cycle of violence and food shortages, which impedes efforts towards sustainable development and peace (FRCN, 2020). The relationship between banditry and food security calls for integrated approaches that address the underlying socioeconomic and environmental issues that contribute to insecurity in addition to the acute concerns provided by bandit groups.

2.2 Empirical Review

Mashi and Husaini (2024) examined how food security in Northwest Nigeria is affected by armed banditry. They maintained that social disputes between farmers and herders had given rise to rampant banditry, which has resulted in a large number of fatalities, evictions, and food poverty. According to their research, enhancing socioeconomic circumstances may lessen security risks and increase food security.

Olaoye and Ojo (2023), In their research, examined how food security in Igangan, Ibarapa North, Oyo State, was affected by armed banditry. According to their assessment, food shortages and a poor food supply were caused by banditry. They determined that issues with unemployment, poverty, and government were the main contributors to banditry. In order to reduce banditry and increase food security, the study made clear that more robust security measures and improved governance are required.

With an emphasis on the effects of banditry, Abraham and Muazu (2023) evaluated the difficulties with food security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. To analyze the state's role in the rise in banditry, they employed the Neo-Marxist theory. Their conclusions showed that rising banditry has impacted food security as a result of the state's failure to solve socioeconomic problems. As strategies against banditry, they suggested intelligence collection, technological development, and economic stimulus.

Lekan et al. (2022) emphasized on the economic ramifications of rural banditry in Nigeria's North-West. Their research revealed that rural banditry affects agricultural activity, produces food crises, and distorts local economy. To provide a steady supply and access to food, they suggested a number of measures, such as waging war on bandits, bolstering security, and putting in place a national food policy.

Dennis et al. (2022) investigated the wider effects of rural banditry on food security in Northwest Nigeria. According to their research, banditry has impeded sustainable agricultural output, impacting the livestock and crop industries alike. They contended that local food shortages are the result of a sharp decline in food production caused by the assassinations and kidnappings of farmers. To safeguard farmers and guarantee food security, the report suggested implementing stronger security measures.

Matawalli (2021). reiterated the harmful impacts of banditry on food security in Katsina State. They emphasized comparable problems, such as farmer displacement, robbery, and devastation of agricultural resources. In order to increase food security, the report suggested taking firm action against banditry. It also emphasized the necessity of ongoing government efforts to guarantee farmers' safety and support.

In a follow-up study, Ladan, Audu, and Adamu (2021) used the failed state theory as their analytical framework to examine how armed banditry affected food security in Katsina State. The primary economic activities in the region, large-scale farming and animal husbandry, had been severely weakened by banditry, they discovered. Millions more people were forced to relocate as a result of food shortages and price increases, as they were unable to purchase or produce essential foods.

Ladan and Matawalli (2020) investigated the effects of banditry on food security In Katsina State. Focus groups with members from the most impacted local government areas (LGAs), including Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Faskari, and Dandume, were employed. According to their research, banditry has resulted in the murder and kidnapping of farmers, the confiscation of agricultural land, the rustling of cattle, and the collapse of grain silos. Trade routes and local food production have been seriously impacted by this. The intended results have not yet been attained, despite the Federal and State Governments' best efforts to resolve these problems.

These empirical studies show how seriously armed banditry affects food security in Nigeria's northern regions. Disruption of local economies, loss of agricultural resources, and farmer displacement are among the recurrent themes. The findings highlight the necessity of all-

encompassing plans to increase food security in Nigeria, including bolstering displaced farmers, strengthening security, and tackling the underlying causes of banditry.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Using a qualitative research design, this study will concentrate on a thorough examination of previously published works, reports, and case studies (Hennink et al., 2020). The study aims to investigate the effects of banditry and insurgency on food security and agricultural productivity in Northern Nigeria. It will be grounded in a thorough examination of secondary data sources. This architecture will make it easier to examine in detail the disruptions brought about by insurgency and banditry, as well as the effectiveness of government interventions and suggested remedies.

3.2 Data Sources and Collection

Literature Review: Utilizing scholarly articles, official reports, publications from non-governmental organizations, and news sources, a comprehensive literature assessment will be carried out. The review will be centered on recording the level of insurgency and banditry in Northern Nigeria, as well as how it affects agricultural output and ultimately causes food insecurity. A number of important sources that shed light on the socioeconomic and environmental repercussions of insurgency and banditry will be policy documents, research studies, and historical narratives.

Case Studies: The research will encompass comprehensive case studies of particular incidences and Northern Nigerian regions, including Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara. To demonstrate the actual effects of banditry and insurgency on local people and agricultural systems, these case studies will draw from secondary sources, such as reports from government and humanitarian groups.

Government Reports and Policy Documents: The government's recent initiatives to combat banditry and enhance food security will be examined. An examination of official comments, program assessments, and policy documents will be required for this. The review will concentrate on finding weaknesses in the current approaches and evaluating the efficacy of these interventions.

3.3 Data Analysis

The process of analysis will entail compiling data from government publications, case studies, and the literature review. To comprehend the connection between banditry, insurgency, and food security, important themes and patterns will be found. To demonstrate the effects of these problems on agricultural output and community displacement, the findings will be assessed. In addition, a review of the government's measures will be carried out in order to determine their efficacy and offer suggestions for enhancing regional food security.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Impact of Banditry on Food Security

Banditry has disrupted agricultural activities and uprooted rural communities throughout Northern Nigeria, having a substantial and complex impact on food security. The following illustrations highlight the detrimental effects of banditry on food production and availability:

4.1.1 Killing of Farmers

The killing of farmers by bandits has a direct and significant impact on food security. The agricultural sector relies heavily on farmers, and their departure would cause a significant disruption in the food supply. Food shortages and financial issues must be addressed immediately by families who have lost their primary breadwinner. For example, on July 6,

2020, in Yargamji Village, Batsari Local Government Area (LGA), 15 farmers were killed by bandits. Likewise, on September 10, 2020, three farmers in Dandume LGA perished. These attacks not only result in a horrendous death toll but also diminish local agricultural capacity, which exacerbates food insecurity in the affected areas (Aminu, 2020; Erezi, 2020).

4.1.2 Abduction of Farmers

The economy and society have been negatively impacted by the kidnapping of farmers. After being forced to pay ransom, a lot of farmers have sold significant assets, including their crops, to ensure the release of loved ones. This financial strain makes it impossible for them to farm, which makes the food scarcity worse. For instance, on October 4, 2020, twenty-two farmers from the Mallamawa hamlet in Jibia LGA were abducted. Food insecurity has worsened and agricultural output has diminished as a result of many farmers being forced to abandon their lands due to the enormous ransom demands (Ibrahim, 2020).

4.1.3 Chasing Farmers from Farms

Using intimidation tactics, bandits have driven farmers off their land, leading to crop abandonment and a drop in agricultural output. On May 3, 2020, bandits drove farmers from their farms in the Faskari LGA communities of Maigora, Sabon Layin Galadima, and Unguwar Tsamiya. The resultant unharvested crops and reduced agricultural activities have severely damaged food production, reducing the amount of food available in local markets and increasing reliance on foreign food sources (Ladan, 2020).

4.1.4 Confiscation of agricultural land

Bandits taking over or destroying farmlands has exacerbated the food situation. Farmlands have been destroyed or turned over to bandits' cattle for grazing, therefore forbidding their use for agricultural purposes. The farmlands surrounding Gauren Dutse and Shekewa villages sustained damage from cattle driven by robbers between May 10 and May 12, 2020. A local food shortage is directly impacted by this interfering with agricultural land, which also exacerbates the global food crisis by lowering crop yields and impeding food production (Ladan, 2020).

4.1.5 Theft of Livestock

Cattle rustling has resulted in the loss of animals for farmers who rely on them for agricultural labor and manure supplies. Theft of cattle reduces the availability of natural fertilizers and lowers the productivity of farming. In July 2020, 110 cows and 350 goats and sheep were lost in Safana LGA. Cattle are vital to the farming environment, therefore losing them has an impact on both the long-term viability of farming practices and the agricultural output produced in the short term (Ladan, 2020).

4.1.6 Raiding and Burning of Grain Silos

Bandits have also targeted grain silos, destroying food supplies and creating severe shortages. Grain storage facility destruction results in lost food stocks and disruptions to food supply networks. Two noteworthy events in 2020 are the attacks on the villages of Dankar and Tsauwa on February 14, 2020, and the destruction of grain storage in Unguwar Gizo, Faskari LGA, on May 29, 2020. These violent acts put local food security at risk by demolishing essential food stocks and disrupting the local food supply (Ladan, 2020).

4.1.7 Blockage of Local Trade Routes

Due to bandits' obstruction of local trade routes, disruption of market operations, and theft of both money and food from customers, there is a rise in food insecurity. Bandit attacks on trade routes obstruct the movement of goods and services, making it harder for communities to obtain the supplies they need. Two notable incidents are the attack on the Gurbi weekly market on October 17, 2020, and the blockage on the Jibia to Batsari road on January 5, 2020.

These disruptions put additional strain on the region's food security because they affect the availability of food and also lead to shortages and inflation in the local markets (Ladan, 2020).

4.2 Displacement and Impact on Food Security

Food security in Nigeria has been severely disrupted by armed banditry, especially for rural farmers who grow most of the nation's food crops. Farmers have been killed by this violence, along with cattle rustling, crop theft, and vandalism (Innocent et al., 2017). This has raised the possibility of a severe food production shortfall in the nation, as farmers have been forced to relocate to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and urban areas, which has led to food shortages and increased food prices. Between 2018 and 2020, bandit attacks killed an estimated 4,900 people, with 309,000 IDPs and 60,000 refugees reported (ACAPS, 2020). These disruptions have made agricultural producers already difficult to deal with.

Fish supplies and sales in Borno State's Baga area have suffered as a result of the armed bandits' frequent incursions (Mukhtar & Gazali 2000). By attacking them, burning farming equipment, and setting cattle and crops on fire, bandit attacks hinder farmers from growing food crops in dangerous locations (Beetseh, Abubakar, & Nongo, 2021). Nigeria's food security is seriously threatened by this, driving farmers to leave their land and move to safer metropolitan regions. Many people—especially young people—now lack employment as a result of this displacement, which has also led to an uptick in violent and criminal activities and a vicious cycle of insecurity that makes food poverty worse.

Additionally, there are reports that armed bandits have worked out a deal with farmers that allows them to pay levies in exchange for the right to continue farming on their land; farmers who have disregarded this agreement have been attacked and, if they survive, have been forced to leave their lands (Ewing-Chow, 2022). The continuous threat of attacks has caused farmers to fear engaging in agricultural activities, which has significantly reduced food production (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). This decrease in agricultural output exacerbates food shortages and drives up food prices, making it harder for communities to get the food they need.

Numerous locals in Northern Nigeria have been internally displaced (IDPs) as a result of the continuous banditry in the area. As of October 10, 2020, 1,123 individuals from eight communities were living in the Faskari IDP camp. Many of these IDPs are forced to rely on the support of friends and family because the arrangements made for them by the local and state governments are sometimes insufficient. This dependence puts additional burdens on the limited resources and exacerbates food shortages, creating new difficulties for the displaced individuals as well as their hosts. There has been a marked decline in agricultural output and an exacerbation of food insecurity as a result of large-scale farmers fleeing their operations to more secure locations like Funtua town due to the ongoing danger of violence.

These problems show how banditry has a devastating effect on agricultural production and food security in Northern Nigeria. It disrupts not only individual farms but the entire food supply chain, including livestock rearing and food distribution networks. The scope of the issue emphasizes the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to combat banditry, one that improves security, helps displaced people, and revives agricultural activities to restore food security in the region. Comprehensive strategies that improve security, help displaced farmers, and increase agricultural output in affected areas are necessary to mitigate the negative impact of armed banditry on food security.

4.3 Efforts to Address Banditry and Enhance Food Security in Northern Nigeria

Several measures have been taken by the government at different levels to address banditry and enhance food security in Northern Nigeria. Northern state governments began talking to bandits in September 2019, and some governors even visited villages close to their hideouts. This engagement resulted in a temporary amnesty program, which brought a brief

period of relative peace. However, by December 2019, banditry had returned with greater ferocity, resulting in almost daily attacks, especially in the Dutsinma Local Government Area (LGA), severely disrupting local agricultural activities and food security.

With the intention of improving agricultural security, Katsina State and eighteen other states asked the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to send out agro-rangers. The purpose of these specialised staff members was to protect cattle producers, fisherman, and ranchers. Although Borno State received agro-rangers with success, Katsina only received six, which is not enough to adequately cover even one LGA. The difficulties local farmers faced were made worse by this restricted deployment, which impeded efforts to protect rural communities.

Notable have been the police and military's combined efforts. In the impacted local government areas (LGAs), coordinated operations have targeted bandit hideouts in the forested areas, resulting in direct encounters and the recovery of some stolen animals. Furthermore, victims who had been kidnapped from the Rugu Forest were rescued as a consequence of a joint military operation including the states of Katsina and Zamfara, which included airstrikes against bandit camps. Although obstacles still need to be overcome to achieve long-lasting effects, this operation demonstrated the possibility of coordinated efforts in reducing the effects of banditry. Local responses have included both security and community support measures. Following widespread protests against the rising insecurity, the federal government dispatched top national security officials to Katsina on 16th July 2020. This high-level visit aimed to develop comprehensive strategies to combat banditry. Additionally, on 2nd July 2020, the State Government organised a mass prayer session at Banu Coomassie Mosque, seeking divine intervention. This was followed by local councils increasing the frequency of prayer sessions to appeal for an end to the violence.

In terms of operations, the Nigerian Army's establishment of Super Camp 4 at Faskari, also referred to as "Operation Sahel Sanity," on July 6, 2020, marked a significant uptick in military efforts. The camp's operations resulted in the neutralization of 80 bandits, the rescue of 17 kidnapped victims, and the recovery of 943 cattle and 632 sheep and goats. In addition, local government councils have supported vigilante groups in order to fortify community security. Additionally, the Nigerian Air Force planned to augment aerial surveillance capabilities in early November 2020 by building a runway for unmanned aerial combat vehicles in Gusau, with the goal of enhancing operational effectiveness throughout the North-West.

5.1 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Food security in Northern Nigeria has suffered greatly as a result of banditry, which has displaced farming communities and disrupted agricultural operations. In addition to reducing food production, the ongoing violence in the area—which includes the murder and kidnapping of farmers, the forced abandonment of farmlands, and the theft of livestock—has made food scarcity worse. The issue has been made worse by the destruction of vital infrastructure, such as grain silos, and the blockage of trade routes. These factors have conspired to significantly reduce food supply and increase reliance on outside aid, putting tremendous strain on both national and local resources.

Communities and farmers face significant obstacles that call for quick action as well as constant assistance. The complexity of the banditry situation and the ensuing food insecurity have not been adequately addressed by the present methods, notwithstanding their praiseworthy nature. The necessity for a more thorough and coordinated strategy is highlighted by the failure to maintain long-lasting calm and resume regular agricultural operations.

5.2. Recommendations

In order to successfully address the effects of banditry on food security in Northern Nigeria, we advocate the following strategies based on the findings of this research:

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- i. **Enhanced Security Measures:** It is essential to bolster security in all impacted locations. This entails stepping up security personnel' presence in high-risk areas and using modern surveillance tools, including drones, to keep an eye on and discourage bandit activity. Protecting agricultural operations and preventing attacks can both be aided by working with local populations to enhance intelligence reporting and collection.
- ii. **Support for Displaced Farmers:** It is crucial to give internally displaced people (IDPs) focused support. In order to allow them to resume farming, this help should include cash support, food assistance, and access to temporary housing. Restoring farmers' productivity can be facilitated by establishing agricultural recovery programs that provide training, tools, and seeds to displaced farmers.
- iii. **Investment in Agricultural Infrastructure:** It is essential to secure and rebuild agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and grain silos. Investing in contemporary farming methods and infrastructure can increase productivity and fortify against banditry. Further contributing to the upkeep of food distribution networks are safeguarding trade routes and guaranteeing the security of market operations.
- iv. **Strengthening Community Engagement:** More efficient methods may result from involving local communities in the battle against banditry. Formal security measures can be supplemented by providing community-based vigilante organizations with tools, instruction, and legal support. Cooperation can be increased and tensions can be decreased by supporting community-led efforts for conversation and conflict resolution.

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