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Effect of Armed Banditry on Food Security in Katsina State (2019-2024)

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Abstract		Original Research Article

This study examined the effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the drivers of banditry, its impacts on the four pillars of food security—availability, access, utilization, and stability—and the effectiveness of government interventions. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining cross-sectional survey and qualitative approaches. A sample of 400 respondents was selected from seven highly affected local government areas using multistage sampling techniques, alongside 27 key informant interviews with security officials, community leaders, and agricultural officers. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic content analysis. Findings revealed that armed banditry has significantly reduced agricultural output through farmland abandonment, livestock losses, displacement of farming households, and market disruptions, resulting in higher food prices and widespread household food insecurity. The study further found that although government interventions have yielded limited short-term security gains, they remain largely ineffective in restoring sustainable food security. The study concludes that armed banditry and food insecurity in Katsina State are mutually reinforcing, reflecting deeper failures of governance and rural development. It recommends an integrated strategy combining improved security governance, livelihood restoration, agricultural support, and community-based conflict management to break the cycle of violence and hunger.

Keywords: Armed banditry, Food security, Agricultural disruption, Rural livelihoods, Katsina State Nigeria.

Background to the Study

Armed banditry is a global phenomenon, not only peculiar to Africa but prevalent worldwide, including in developed countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and China, where there are considerable cases of armed banditry. The consequences of this issue are far-reaching and often worse than imagined (Arnold, 2020). According to the Global Terrorism Index [GTI], armed banditry ranks as the fourth deadliest terrorist group in the world, posing a major threat not only to global peace but also to food security (GTI, 2024). Today, armed conflict is one of the primary drivers of acute food insecurity in many of the world's worst food crises from Syria to Sudan, Yemen to the Democratic Republic of the

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Congo, and Mali to Nigeria pushing food and nutrition insecurity to historic levels.

The 2024 Global Report on Food Crises indicates that armed conflict, including armed banditry, has pushed approximately 135 million people across 20 countries into severe food insecurity, up from 117.1 million the previous year (Food Security Information Network [FSGN], 2024). A World Food Programme [WFP] survey further reveals that 65% of the world's acutely food-insecure population lives in fragile and conflict-affected countries (WFP. 2024). In 2018, the United Nations Security Council [UNSC] formally acknowledged the link between armed banditry and hunger. It adopted Resolution 2417 to break the vicious cycle of armed conflict and food insecurity while holding accountable those who weaponize starvation for political or military gain.

Armed banditry is largely concentrated in the African region, accounting for 40 percent of attacks and 50 percent of deaths globally (GTI, 2024). According to the Global Terrorism Index, Africa faces the worst insecurity in the world, with over 49,000 deaths recorded in 2021 alone. For more than a decade, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Sudan, Libya, Chad, Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Côte d'Ivoire have experienced escalating violence, including kidnappings, cattle rustling, insurgencies, vandalism, rape, terrorist attacks, and armed robbery, orchestrated by bandit groups (Saheed, 2019).

Sub-Saharan Africa [SSA] remains one of the most food-insecure regions globally. Armed conflict serves as a significant predictor of food insecurity in Africa, with nine of the ten African countries witnessing the sharpest rises in food insecurity in 2023 also grappling with active armed banditry and other forms of conflict. A 2019 report estimates that one in three people in sub-Saharan Africa suffers from malnutrition (Fraval et al., 2019). More recent data from the World Health Organization [WHO] indicates that 7.2 million people in East Africa were at risk of hunger in 2021, while 26.5 million faced severe food insecurity (WHO, 2019). The World Bank further reported that the share of people experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity in the region increased from 51.5% to 59.5%, with some countries exceeding 80% (World Bank, 2024). East Africa shows the highest levels of food insecurity in terms of total population affected, while two-thirds of Central African countries facing acute food insecurity are simultaneously experiencing conflict (Muriuki, Hudson, & Fuad, 2023).

In Nigeria, the terms "banditry" and "kidnapping" have become commonplace in everyday vocabulary. Banditry now represents Nigeria's gravest security challenge, particularly in the North-West and parts of North-Central Nigeria, including Zamfara, Niger, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, and Sokoto states. This crisis claims more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency, rendering these states unstable, hazardous, and increasingly uninhabitable for effective social and economic activities (Mohammed, 2022). Nigeria has recorded the highest number of banditry-related fatalities, with 2,000 deaths in 2018 and over 1,000 civilian deaths in 2019 in the North-West alone (Musharafa & Adeniyi, 2021). A 2020 report by SBM Intelligence revealed that between 2011 and 2020, over $18 million (₦6.9 billion) was paid in ransom to bandits, making kidnapping a disturbingly lucrative business in Nigeria (Bashir & Mustapha, 2022).

The agricultural sector in North-West Nigeria, once the backbone of the region's economy, has suffered immensely due to armed conflict. Bandit violence has created a climate of fear that has led to widespread farmland destruction, livestock theft, mass displacement of rural populations, and forced abandonment of farmlands, causing a sharp decline in agricultural output. Furthermore, the inaccessibility of farmlands due to insecurity has made it increasingly difficult for both smallholder and commercial farmers to maintain operations. This decline has directly contributed to food shortages, price surges, and worsening food insecurity across the region (Samuel & Utibe, 2024; Sadiq et al., 2024).

Katsina State was once considered one of Nigeria's most peaceful states, where different ethnic and religious groups coexisted harmoniously. However, since 2010, the rise of armed banditry and kidnapping has fundamentally threatened peace and survival, particularly in seven Local Government

Areas (LGAs) bordering Zamfara State: Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, and Sabuwa (Ladan & Matawalli, 2020; Akinyetun, 2022). The conflict originated as competition over natural resources between Hausa farmers and Fulani herders but rapidly escalated due to the involvement of armed militias on both sides. Initially termed "bandits," these groups were later officially designated as terrorists by the Nigerian government in January 2022 (Udosen & Uko, 2023).

As the epicenter of armed banditry, Katsina State has suffered devastating attacks that have severely disrupted agricultural production and food supply chains. According to a 2023 report by the International Organization for Migration [IOM], between 2011 and 2019, armed bandits killed 3,526 people, destroyed nearly 500 villages, ravaged over 13,000 hectares of farmland, and injured 8,219 individuals. The human toll includes 4,983 widowed women, 25,050 orphaned children, and 223,473 displaced persons. The crisis has also led to school closures, destruction of thousands of shops, and left entire communities living in constant fear (IOM, 2023). The long-term ripple effects of this crisis will undoubtedly persist for generations. The situation became so dire that former Katsina Governor Aminu Bello Masari publicly lamented that even he, as governor, felt unsafe (Aminu, 2019).

Despite the catastrophic effect of armed banditry in Katsina State, empirical research examining its causal relationship with food insecurity remains surprisingly limited. The few existing studies tend to focus broadly on North-West Nigeria rather than examining Katsina specifically. Current understanding relies heavily on assumptions and anecdotal evidence, which risks misleading policymakers. This study seeks to address these critical gaps by providing empirical examination of the effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State.

Statement of the Problem

The devastating and destructive tendency of armed banditry in north-western Nigeria is alarming and worrisome. Accordingly, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project [ACLED] indicates that Katsina State experienced a total of 129 attack incidents in 2020, comprising 62 battles, 26 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 39 cases of violence against civilians, and 2 riots, averaging 2.5 attack incidents per week. In 2019 alone, more than 10,000 houses, farmlands, shops and silos in the state were reportedly destroyed due to violent attacks. Incidents of kidnapping and robbery have become increasingly common on major roads across Katsina state (Ishaya, 2021).

Over the years, armed banditry and kidnapping have become major concerns for both federal and state governments. Numerous efforts have been made to curb this menace in North-western Nigeria through various military and non-military measures. Military interventions have included operations such as "Exercise Harbin Kunama," "Diran Mikiya," "Sharan Daji," "Hadarin Daji," "Thunder Strike," "Exercise Harbin Kunama III," and "Operation Puff Adder." Non-military approaches have included dialogue initiatives, amnesty programs, peace deals signed between bandits and governors of affected states in 2016, telecommunications shutdowns in late 2021, the Terrorism Prevention Amendment Act 2021, restrictions on petroleum sales in jerrycans, public awareness campaigns through radio and television jingles, and stakeholder meetings with traditional rulers (Okorie, 2023; Ahmad and Jamilu, 2022). However, these comprehensive measures have produced only mixed results.

Despite the crucial need to understand the link between food insecurity and armed banditry, there remains a significant gap in research specifically addressing this issue. Although considerable literature exists on armed conflict and broader aspects of food security, most of these studies tend to be either descriptive or general in scope. What is notably lacking is a rigorous, empirical investigation into the causal effect of violence particularly armed banditry on household-level food security within this specific context. This gap is especially troubling in light of the severe humanitarian consequences of armed banditry in Katsina State. The absence of localized, evidence-based studies leaves policymakers and development agencies without the necessary data to design targeted and effective interventions.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this critical shortfall by offering a comprehensive analysis of how armed banditry affects food security in Katsina State. The findings aim to provide actionable insights that can guide more effective policy responses and humanitarian strategies in addressing this complex and urgent crisis.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to critically examine the effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State. To achieve this, the study was guided by the following specific objectives:

i. To identify the key drivers of armed banditry in Katsina State;
ii. To evaluate the effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State.

Research Questions

Guided by the objectives above, this study addressed the following research questions:

i. What are the underlying factors responsible for armed banditry that affect food security in Katsina State?
ii. How has armed banditry affected food security in Katsina State?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is specifically concerned with examining the cause-and-effect relationship between armed banditry (independent variable) and food security (dependent variable) in Katsina State, Nigeria, from 2019 to 2024. It focuses on four critical indicators of food security as identified by Samuel and Utibe (2024): food availability, food access, food utilization, and food stability.

Conceptual Clarification

Armed Banditry: In the context of this study, armed banditry refers to organized criminal activities perpetrated by outlaws, often involving the use or threat of violence to commit crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, extortion, and murder. A bandit is an individual who engages in such criminal acts.

Insecurity: Insecurity denotes a condition characterized by fear, anxiety, and the absence of safety. It reflects a lack of protection from crime and violence, where individuals are unable to pursue their daily activities due to persistent threats to their lives and property.

Food Security: Food security, as used in this study, refers to a state in which individuals have consistent physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. It aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2 [SDG 2], which seeks to end hunger and ensure food security and improved nutrition.

Socio-Economic Factors: Socio-economic factors, as used in this study, refer to social and economic characteristics, including poverty, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities, that define an individual or group of individuals and influence their participation and engagement in armed banditry.

Peter & Yakubu (2023) studied the effect armed banditry on food security in North-West Nigeria. The study employed Qualitative method based on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. While the primary source of data collection was obtained through interviews from knowledgeable individuals in areas where banditry is on high rise, the secondary sources include among others scholarly publications, national dailies relevant to the topic. The finding of the study revealed that many years of the failure of the state is essentially responsible for the increasing number of non-state actors unleashing terror. The study concludes that foundational causes of banditry be addressed. The study recommended the stimulation of the economy to trigger production, driven by technology and intelligence gathering to address the spiraling challenges of banditry in Nigeria.

Audu & Adamu (2023) examined the effects of the upsurge in armed banditry on the prospects for food security in Katsina State of North-Western Nigeria from 2015-2019. Both survey and documentary methods were employed. Quantitative data were collected from 400 respondents and analysed descriptive statistical technique, while qualitative data were obtained using in-depth interviews from 9

key informants selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The findings show that the disruption in farming activities due to armed bandit attacks affect agricultural productivity with serious implications for food security in terms of food availability, food accessibility, food sustainability and food utilization. It is therefore recommended among others that the Katsina State government should urgently tackle the problem of unemployment and poverty while at the same time ensuring more security presence at flashpoints of bandit attacks in the State.

In her study, Jummai (2022) examined the socio-cultural challenges to the actualization of SDGs in North Eastern States of Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative research and secondary data were reviewed and analyzed using content analysis. The author identified insecurity posed by Boko Haram sect and ISWAP as the major hindrance to the achievement of SDGs in the North-eastern states of Nigeria. The author further argued that kidnapping, schools burnt-down and vandalized, displacement of communities caused by the insurgents in the region in recent years is unprecedented and its negative effect on child education, teaching and learning is unquantifiable. For effective realization of SDGs, the author recommended that all the three tiers of the government- the federal, state and local government needs to take a proactive and collaborative approach towards resolving the conflict in the region so that school enrolment including the general standard of education in the North-east Nigeria can be improved considerably.

In their empirical study, Bashir and Mustapha (2022) examined the Effect of Armed Banditry and Kidnapping on Socio-Economic Activities in some Selected Local Government Areas in Katsina State, Nigeria using quantitative approach. The study found that armed banditry has significant negative consequences on poverty, unemployment, food security, education, health, income and the general standard of living of the people living in the state; it also affects other socio-economic activities in the region. The study therefore recommends tight border security patrol along the porous borders to prevent the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition as

well as proactive measures from security agencies to secure the lives and property of the residence.

Similarly, Musharafa and Adeniyi (2022) examined the effect of armed banditry on Nigeria's fourth republic using qualitative approach. The study posited that the presence of scarcely governed spaces, the high level of unemployment with the attendant poverty, weak security system, porosity of Nigeria's borders and arms proliferations, among others, are the driving factors accelerating banditry in the Northwest region of Nigeria. The study further contends that the banditry pervading Nigeria's northwest undermines the security; peace and development of the region and that the efforts made by stakeholders to combat the scourge have not yielded the desired result. The study recommended, among others, that government strategies and tactics should be more proactive in prosecuting the war against banditry; create meaningful employment opportunities for the youths with a view to addressing the endemic poverty that pervades the region.

In another empirical study conducted by Ahmad and Jamilu (2022) on armed banditry as the security challenge in the North-west Nigeria using qualitative approach. The finding of the study revealed that armed banditry has worsened the security situation in the North-western Nigeria particularly in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States. The reviewed causes of armed banditry include; proliferation of arms, presence of ungoverned spaces, porous borders and socio economic conditions. Armed banditry has affected security and education in north-western Nigeria, and the overall economy of the country. Despite efforts made by the government and community to curtail the menace, armed banditry continues to become even more devastating.

In his study, Ishaya (2021) examined the effect of armed banditry and abduction on national security in Nigeria using qualitative methods. The finding of the study revealed that Nigeria has witnessed tremendous setbacks in its socio-economic development fuelled by the continuous resurgence of different kinds of banditry, insecurity, threats and dilemma engulfing the society. In conclusion, the study revealed that negligence, lackadaisical or

lukewarm attitude of the government to address such challenges were the forces igniting heinous crime in many societies. Similarly, Unemployment, quick money syndrome, political class division, inequality, and all forms of differentiation has been the major problems in Nigeria. The study recommends that there should be a new strategy and modern technological tools to curb the bad eggs.

In the empirical study conducted by Nwambuko, & Iloh (2021) examined the effect of security challenges in realization of SDGs in Nigeria. The authors adopted a qualitative research using descriptive design. The Secondary data sourced were analyzed using content analysis. The authors identified security challenges in Nigeria such as ISWAP, Boko Haram terrorism, armed banditry, farmer-herder clashes, Niger-Delta militancy; and the nature of politics, multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria and religious rivalries, have adversely affect the actualization of the SDGs in the country. The authors recommended that the need for the government, civil society groups, business organizations and individuals must fight insecurity to create stable, peaceful and secure Nigeria, where the people will feel free and secure to achieve their full potentials and the country will itself be safe to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Also, Udosen and Uko (2021) conducted an empirical survey titled "Armed Banditry and Border Monitoring: Challenges for Nigeria's Security, Peace and Sustainable Development". Using frustration-aggression theory, the paper then revealed that the major criminal activities in Nigeria's borders are smuggling of contraband goods and illegal immigrants, trafficking in weapons and human parts, drug trafficking, vehicle crime, trafficking of illegally exploited natural resources, including the illicit trade in timber, oil and diamond among others. This growth and flourishing entry without proper check or monitoring, has brought about insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping and corruption, etc. The study concludes by recommending among others that the country should evolve a sustainable social security system which will discourage public office holders from engaging in corruption, with good information sharing techniques providing gainful employment opportunities for the citizenry, etc.

Arnold (2020) conducted an empirical study on the Nexus between Banditry and National Security in Nigeria: A Conceptual Discourse using qualitative approach. The finding of the study revealed that banditry is crime perpetrated by either a person or group of persons known as bandit(s). They are described as persons who are outlawed, proscribed or lawless marauders who operate from ungoverned spaces and maraud from place to place. The study concludes that it negates the peaceful living of citizens as well as the much needed national security by nations such as Nigeria. The study observed that the concept of banditry and national security are inversely proportional. This means that when banditry increases, national security is negated. But when national security is elevated, banditry diminishes appropriately.

In another empirical study conducted by Saheed (2019) on relationship between insurgency, armed banditry, corruption and socio-economic underdevelopment in Nigeria using qualitative approach. The findings of the study revealed that banditry has negatively affected the socio-economic development in Nigeria. The study concludes by recommending among others that the country should evolve a sustainable social security system which will discourage public office holders from engaging in corruption, good information sharing techniques providing gainful employment opportunities for the citizenry and so on.

Nadama (2019) has conducted a study titled Armed Banditry and Internal Security in Zamfara State with an objective to assess the effect of armed banditry on the internal security of Zamfara State with a view to proffer a way forward for achieving permanent peace in the state and the region at large. This was achieved through a qualitative and descriptive analysis. The study found out that policies that focus solely on single government agencies, such as security agencies or enactment of laws are unlikely to succeed. Instead, a co-ordinated preventive measure is necessary which shall be championed by the police in addition to military strategies. The submission of this paper was that,the effective implementation of

the aforementioned measures would go a long way in addressing the menace of armed banditry and its attendant crimes in Zamfara State. In addition, there werea need for a robust combination of legislative and judicial intervention with government reforms that would address some of the acute human security challenges confronting a vast majority of the population in the state.

Literature Gaps

Existing studies on armed banditry in Northwestern Nigeria have largely focused on general security and socio-economic effects, with limited empirical attention to household-level food security in Katsina State. While scholars like Audu and Adamu (2023) and Bashir and Mustapha (2022) have discussed agricultural impacts, their works remain largely descriptive and do not adequately measure food security across its four key dimensions: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability.

Moreover, the literature lacks analysis of spatial and temporal patterns, particularly how bandit attacks align with agricultural seasons and disrupt production and pricing. The effects of displacement on host communities' food security also remain underexplored. Although displacement is widely acknowledged (e.g., IOM, 2023), few studies examine its secondary impacts.

This study addresses these gaps by adopting a data-driven approach to assess how banditry affects food security in Katsina State. It emphasizes comprehensive measurement, seasonal and spatial dynamics, and the ripple effects of displacement, aiming to inform more effective humanitarian and policy responses.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, the frustration-aggression theory of conflict is adopted as a theoretical framework of analysis

Frustration-Aggression Theory

The frustration-aggression theory was developed by Neal E. Miller, Robert R. Sears, O. H. Mower,

Leonard W. Doob and John Dollard (1939) published a monograph on aggression in which they presented what has come to be known as the Frustration-Aggression (FA). The theory states that:

> "Frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. The theory suggests that frustrated, and prejudiced individuals should act more aggressively towards the groups they are prejudiced against and can also show more aggression towards everyone"

This assumption proved to have an immense effect and appears to have influence by the current western thinking on aggression more profoundly than any other single publication. It is intended to suggest to the student of humanities that whenever aggression is seen, he should turn a suspicious eye on possibilities that the organism or group is confronted with frustration and that when he views interference with individual or group habits, he should be on the look-out for among other things, aggression.

Dollard et al (1939) posited that:

> "The occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Frustration in this sense was specified as the thwarting of a global response, and a global response in turn, was taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behaviour sequence"

Frustration, according to them, is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a reinforces, but also to the reaction to such blocking. As Selg (1971) observed, the theory tends to provide a justification for behaving aggressively; being frustrated made me do it.

Miller (1941) was quick to retract the latter part of the proposal. For him, quite obviously, frustrations do not cause hostile or aggressive outburst by necessity, potential outburst may be effectively inhibited or may result in alternative actions, such as the pursuit of others, or more readily available reinforcers. For Miller, frustration produces

instigations to a number of different types of responses, one of which is instigation to some form of aggression. Zillmann (1979) averred that frustration instigates behaviour that may or may not be hostile or aggressive. Any hostile or aggressive behaviour that occurs is caused by frustration. In other words, frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary condition for hostility and aggression.

Robert (1970) in his frustration aggression thesis, argues that, the greater the discrepancy, however marginal between what is sought and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result (Ted, 1970). As a result of these social and economic deprivations, Fulani herders live in bushes with no schools, no hospital, no electricity, no roads, no portable water and other social amenities. The socioeconomic destitution of the herders makes them easy prey to conflict entrepreneurs desperate politicians who will stop at nothing in their quest for power and resources who pay them peanuts to execute criminal acts.

It suggests that the failure to obtain a desire or expected need leads to aggressive behaviour. The basic assumption of the theory is that all aggression, whether interpersonal or international, has its root causes in the frustration of one or more actors' goal achievement. That is to say that armed banditry can be traced to the inability to fulfil personal or group objectives and it invariably breeds frustration. Since the demand for basic human needs has always exceeded the supply, all human conflict can be traced to an actor's failure to obtain what it needs.

This theory has been subjected to numerous criticisms. According to the critics, the frustration aggression theorists over-emphasised that frustration is always responsible for aggression, while neglecting the fact that sometimes other factors like religious and ethnic intolerance, politics of identity and ideological differences cause aggressive acts among people or communities. The theory further neglected the fact that sometimes people engage in aggression not for deprivation of socioeconomic needs but because of their selfish interest.

Despite the above criticisms, this theory is more suitable in understanding armed banditry in Nigeria

and it will enable us to shed more light on the issues of banditry and food security in Katsina State.

Methodology

Research Design

The study will utilize a mixed-method design. This approach begins with quantitative data collection through surveys, followed by qualitative exploration through interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative phase provides measurable data on banditry's prevalence and food security indicators, while the qualitative phase offers a deeper understanding of lived experiences and contextual factors. This dual-phase design allows for a comprehensive analysis of both the "what" and "why" aspects of our research problem.

3.5 Sampling Technique

This study will employ a multi-stage sampling strategy aimed at achieving both to ensure both representativeness and deliberate inclusion of key stakeholders relevant to the research questions. The first stage involves geographical stratification, where Katsina State is divided into its three senatorial districts (Katsina Central, Katsina North, and Katsina South) to ensure equitable representation of regions affected by armed banditry. In the second stage, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) will be randomly selected from each senatorial districts, with emphasis on those mostly impacted. The selection will be carried-out using a lottery method to minimize selection bias and improve the overall reliability of the sample. In the third and final stage, purposive Sampling will be applied within each selected LGAs to recruit key informants, including community leaders, local security agents, and farmers directly affected by banditry. These individuals will be selected based on their in-depth knowledge and lived experiences, thereby providing critical insights into the socio-political and economic ramifications of armed banditry in the affected areas.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations.

Applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to Katsina State's estimated population of 10,368,500, the calculated sample size is 400 respondents.

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

n = Sample size

N = Total Population

e = Expected error

$$n = \frac{10,368,500}{1+10,368,500(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10,368,500}{1+10,368,500(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{10,368,500}{1+14583.75}$$

$$n = \frac{10,368,500}{25,922.25}$$

n = 399.98456924

n = 400 approximately

Sample size for quantitative data collection = 400

Table 3.1: Sample Size Distribution of Respondents for Quantitative Data Collection

Senatorial District	Selected LGAs	Population	Questionnaire per LGA
Katsina Central	Jibia	299,200	$\frac{299,200}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 44
	Batasri	371,500	$\frac{371,500}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 55
	Safana	185,207	$\frac{185,207}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 27
Kastina North	Kankia	270,600	$\frac{270,600}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 40
	Kusada	175,800	$\frac{175,800}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 26
	Ingawa	302,300	$\frac{302,300}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 45
Katsina South	Malumfashi	326,900	$\frac{326,900}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 48
	Kankara	434,700	$\frac{434,700}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 64
	Faskari	347,400	$\frac{347,400}{2,713,607}$ x 400 = 51
Total	9 LGAs	2,713,607	400

Sources: Field Survey, (May, 2025)

Table 3.1 illustrates the distribution of 400 questionnaires across nine selected LGAs in Katsina State's three senatorial districts. Each LGA will engage three key informants, while the questionnaires will be distributed across the sample LGAs between the range of 26 and 64 to ensure full coverage. The criteria used in determining sample size distribution is as follows:

Sample Size distribution $= \frac{LGA\ Population}{Total\ population\ of\ the\ target\ LGA}$ x Sample size

For qualitative data collection in this study, sample size of 27 relevant key stakeholders will be interviewed, as recommended by Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007) that sample sizes in qualitative study should not be too small or too large as it may be difficult for the researcher to get insightful and comprehensive data. This substantial number of sample size enabled researcher to get detailed information about the subject matter under investigation.

Table 3.2: Sample Size Distribution of Key informants for Qualitative Data collection

S/N	Informants	Sample Size	Category
1	Farmers	3	KII-i
2	Local Security Agents (CGN)	3	KII-ii
3	Community Leaders	3	KII-iii
4	Military personnel	3	KII-iv
5	Police Officers	3	KII-v
6	NSCDC officers	3	KII-vi
7	Government Officials	3	KII-vii
8	Members of NGOs	3	KII-viii
9	Community-based organization	3	KII-ix
Total		27	

Sources: Field Survey, (May, 2025)

Table 3.2 shows the list of informants to be interviewed in this study. The first category of participants comprises farmers, who are the direct victims of armed banditry, whose insights are significant in understanding how the activities of bandits affected food security in the state. The second category includes local security agents such as the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Hunters Association. The reason for their inclusion is the fact that they engage in direct combat against banditry, whose knowledge are valuable to this study. The third category consists of community leaders of the affected communities, including three district heads and two ward heads. The reason for their inclusion is the fact that community leaders are closer to the people. The four, fifth and sixth categories consist of formal security agencies such as Nigerian police officers, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, and Nigerian Army respectively. To this end, the Police, NSDC, and Nigerian Army Public Relations Officers and the Officers in Charge of Operations (O.C Operations) in Kastina State Command will be interview. The reason for the inclusion of security agencies was borne out of the need to obtain their first-hand information on the prevalence of the incidences of armed banditry and its effect. The seventh category comprises of staff of the Katina State Ministry of Internal Security, including the Head of Department on Internal Security, Director Planning Research and Statistics, and the Director of Social Services in order to ascertain relevant information as to how the programme was initiated and gave their views on the success and challenges of the programme. Finally, the eighth category of the interview includes humanitarian Non-governmental Organizations, who provide humanitarian supports to the victims of the armed banditry. Finally, nine category shall include member of community-based organization. The reason for their inclusion is the fact that, civil society organizations are at the forefront to mount pressure on government to take decisive actions on the phenomenon of armed banditry and food insecurity in the state therefore, their views as to how the programme fared in its effort to stem the armed banditry and its effect on food security is considered as very important.

3.7 Research Instruments

The study will use two main research tools: a 20-item questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire will collect demographic data and measure banditry's effects through structured questions, while the interview guide will explore experiences through open-ended questions. Both instruments will be carefully validated through expert review and pilot testing with a small sample.

To ensure accuracy, the tools will undergo professional translation into Hausa using back-translation methods. This process involves independent translations between English and Hausa to verify meaning remains consistent. The final versions will be culturally appropriate while maintaining research rigor. This approach guarantees reliable data collection from all participants.

3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

To ensure the research instruments will accurately measure the intended constructs, several validity verification methods will be employed. Content validity will be established through expert review by specialists in security studies, agricultural economics, and survey methodology. These experts will evaluate whether the questionnaire items adequately cover all dimensions of armed banditry and food security. Face validity will be assessed through cognitive pre-testing with 20-30 potential respondents to identify any ambiguous or problematic questions. Construct validity will be examined through exploratory factor analysis during pilot testing to confirm the theoretical structure of the measurement scales.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The study will implement multiple strategies to ensure measurement consistency. Internal consistency reliability will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a minimum threshold of 0.70 set for scale acceptance. For qualitative data, inter-rater reliability will be established by having two researchers independently code a subset of interview transcripts, with agreement levels monitored using Cohen's kappa statistic (target $\kappa > 0.75$).

3.8 Data Collection Methods

This study employs a comprehensive primary data collection approach using three complementary methods to ensure robust findings. First, structured questionnaires with 5-point Likert scales will be administered to systematically quantify respondents' experiences with banditry, perceptions of security measures, and effects on food security. These surveys will capture measurable data from 400 randomly selected participants across the study areas.

Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 27 key informants (3 from each of the 9 most affected LGAs) to gather expert insights. The interview pool will include security personnel (police, military, and NSCDC officers), traditional leaders (district and village heads), and NGO workers involved in humanitarian response. These interviews will explore local security dynamics, patterns of bandit activities, community coping strategies, and the effectiveness of existing interventions.

This balanced representation ensures the study captures all critical dimensions of the banditry-food security relationship from stakeholders with direct experience and institutional knowledge of the crisis.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The study will employ SPSS version 26 to analyze data collected through questionnaires. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations will be used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of the effect of banditry on food security. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, will explore relationships between categorical variables, while regression analysis will examine the influence of banditry frequency on levels of food insecurity. Statistical significance will be determined at the 0.05 level. Additionally, thematic analysis will be conducted on qualitative interview data using NVivo 12 to code and organize emerging themes. This

process will involve identifying recurring patterns, contrasting perspectives, and deviant cases to enrich analytical depth. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings will be achieved through triangulation using joint displays, allowing for a comprehensive and corroborated interpretation of the relationship between armed banditry and food security in Katsina State.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected during the fieldwork, aimed at critically examining the impact of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State. The analysis adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating statistical data obtained through structured survey questionnaires with contextual insights derived from key informant interviews involving relevant stakeholders such as community leaders, agricultural officers, and security personnel.

Table 1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

	Number of Copies (N)	Percent (%)
Questionnaire Distributed	400	100
Questionnaire Retrieved	398	99.5
Questionnaire Valid	394	98.5

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the distribution and retrieval rates of the administered questionnaires used for data collection in this study. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed across the selected communities in Katsina State, 398, representing a high retrieval rate of 99.5 percent, were successfully retrieved. However, 394 copies, representing 98.5 percent of the retrieved questionnaire, were deemed valid and fit for statistical analysis after a thorough data screening process. Four (4) questionnaires were invalid and excluded due to issues such as incomplete responses, multiple answers to single-choice questions, and internal inconsistencies. The exclusion of these invalid responses was necessary to maintain the integrity, reliability, and accuracy of the data, as the presence of erroneous entries could distort the statistical outcomes and lead to misleading interpretations. The exceptionally high response rate (98.5%) strengthens the representativeness and reliability of the data collected, minimizing the risk of non-response bias. This level of participation provides a solid empirical foundation for the subsequent quantitative analysis and enhances the generalizability of the findings within the study area.

Analysis of the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2: Socio-Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)

Age Category	18-25	147	37.3
	26-35	105	26.6
	36-45	61	15.5
	46-55	44	11.2
	56+	37	9.4
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
	Mean ± SD = 29.3 ± 7.1		
Gender	Male	244	61.9
	Female	150	38.1
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Marital Status	Single	110	27.9
	Married	215	55
	Divorced	22	5.6
	Widowed	47	11.9
	Total	394	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 presents the analysis of socio-demographic profile of the respondents who participated in the field survey. The demographic distribution provides crucial contextual understanding of the social composition of the population affected by armed banditry and food insecurity in Katsina State.

Age Distribution: The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (37.3%) fall within the 18–25 years category, followed by those aged 26–35 years (26.6%). Together, these two groups constitute nearly two-thirds (63.9%) of the total respondents, suggesting that the sample is dominated by young adults. This pattern is consistent with the general demographic structure of northern Nigeria, where the population is largely youthful. The relatively lower representation of respondents aged 46 years and above (20.6%) may reflect both the declining involvement of older individuals in active agricultural and economic activities and the demographic reality that younger populations are

more accessible and responsive to survey engagements. The average age of 29.3 years (SD ± 7.1) further reinforces the youth-dominated nature of the sample. From a research perspective, this is significant because younger individuals are often more economically active and directly involved in farming, herding, or other livelihood activities most affected by armed banditry. Hence, their responses are likely to provide current and practical insights into the socio-economic implications of insecurity on food production and distribution.

Gender Composition: The gender distribution shows that 244 respondents (61.9%) were male, while 150 respondents (38.1%) were female. This male dominance aligns with cultural and occupational patterns in rural Katsina, where men are typically the household heads and primary participants in agricultural production, marketing, and security-related community interactions. Nevertheless, the inclusion of 38.1 percent female

respondents ensures that women's perspectives—especially on food access, household nutrition, and coping mechanisms—are adequately represented in the dataset. Gender balance in such studies is vital because both men and women experience and respond to the impacts of armed banditry differently, particularly in relation to household food security and livelihood resilience.

Marital Status: The marital status distribution shows that more than half of the respondents (55%) are married, while 27.9 percent are single. A smaller proportion of respondents are widowed (11.9%) and divorced (5.6%). The predominance of married respondents implies that most participants have dependents and household responsibilities, which heightens their vulnerability to the socio-economic disruptions caused by armed banditry. Married individuals, especially those engaged in farming, tend to have greater exposure to the adverse effects of insecurity—such as loss of farmland, displacement, and food shortages—because they are more reliant on local agricultural systems for family sustenance. The presence of widowed and divorced respondents, though smaller in proportion, provides valuable insight into the social consequences of armed violence, as such individuals may have lost spouses due to attacks or displacement. Their inclusion enriches the dataset by highlighting the gendered and familial dimensions of insecurity and its impact on food security.

Analysis of the Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3: Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Highest Educational	Informal Education	81	20.6
Qualification	Primary	97	25
	Secondary	165	41.9
	Tertiary	51	12.9
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Employment Status	Employed	79	20.1
	Self-employed	185	47.0
	Unemployed	130	33.0
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Occupation	Farmer	105	39.8
	Herder	61	23.1
	Trader	19	7.2
	Civil Servant	38	12
	Private Worker	41	15.5
	Total	**264**	**100.0**

Average Income Status (₦)	<50,000	103	26.1
	50,000-99,999	180	45.7
	100,000-149,999	55	14.0
	150,000-199,999	31	7.9
	≥200,000	25	6.3
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
No. of Dependents	None	61	15.5
	1	44	11.2
	2-5	119	30.2
	More than 5	170	43.1
	Total	**394**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of respondents who participated in the field survey. The socio-economic distribution offers critical contextual insight into the living conditions, livelihood patterns, and economic realities of individuals affected by armed banditry in Katsina State. Understanding these variables is essential, as socio-economic status significantly influences household vulnerability, coping strategies, and overall resilience to food insecurity.

Educational Qualification: The educational distribution data shows that the majority of respondents (41.9%) possess a secondary level of education, followed by 25% with primary education and 20.6% with informal education. Only 12.9% of the respondents reported having a tertiary education. This educational pattern reveals that most respondents possess at least basic literacy skills, which may influence their capacity to comprehend and respond meaningfully to survey questions. However, the relatively low proportion of tertiary-educated individuals underscores the limited access to higher education in many rural and semi-urban areas of Katsina State. The dominance of individuals with secondary and primary education also has socio-economic implications. It suggests that while

the population is modestly educated, they may still face challenges in securing formal employment, thereby relying more heavily on agriculture, livestock rearing, and informal trade for sustenance. This level of educational attainment further reflects the structural educational disparities prevalent in northern Nigeria, where insecurity and poverty often hinder higher learning opportunities.

Employment Status: Employment data show that 47.0% of respondents are self-employed, 20.1% are formally employed, and 33.0% are unemployed. The large proportion of self-employed individuals suggests a strong dependence on informal economic activities such as farming, petty trading, and artisanal work, which are often the main sources of livelihood in rural economies. The relatively high unemployment rate (33%) highlights the economic vulnerability of the population and underscores the potential link between joblessness and exposure to the effects of armed banditry. From a socio-economic perspective, self-employment may indicate resilience and adaptive capacity among affected communities, as individuals attempt to sustain livelihoods despite the prevailing insecurity. Nonetheless, the limited opportunities for formal employment point to structural economic

weaknesses, which are further aggravated by banditry-induced disruptions of agricultural and market systems.

Occupation: The occupation data shows that among the 264 respondents who disclosed their occupational status, the majority (39.8%) identified as farmers, followed by herders (23.1%), civil servants (12%), private workers (15.5%), and traders (7.2%). The predominance of farmers and herders reflects the agrarian character of Katsina State's economy. These two groups are among the most directly affected by armed banditry, as attacks often target rural farmlands, grazing areas, and transportation routes. The relatively small number of traders and civil servants suggests that the study area is primarily rural, with limited formal employment structures. The occupational distribution thus provides a critical lens through which to examine the intersection between livelihood vulnerability and food insecurity in conflict-prone regions.

Average Income Status: The income distribution indicates that 45.7% of respondents earn between ₦50,000 and ₦99,999 monthly, while 26.1% earn less than ₦50,000. Only 6.3% of respondents reported earning ₦200,000 or more per month. This income profile points to widespread low-income levels among respondents, which is characteristic of rural households dependent on subsistence agriculture. The low-income brackets also underscore the economic fragility of the affected communities and their limited financial capacity to absorb the shocks associated with armed banditry—such as crop loss, displacement, and market disruptions. The prevalence of low-income earners may further exacerbate food insecurity, as households with constrained earnings have limited access to food purchases during periods of reduced agricultural productivity.

Number of Dependents: The data on household dependents indicate that 43.1% of respondents have more than five dependents, while 30.2% have between two and five. Only 15.5% reported having no dependents. This distribution reflects the prevalence of large household sizes, a common feature in northern Nigerian communities. While large family units can serve as sources of labour for agricultural activities, they also intensify household food demand and increase economic pressure, particularly during periods of insecurity. Households with many dependents are more vulnerable to food shortages when agricultural productivity declines due to banditry, displacement, or restricted access to farmland. This demographic feature, therefore, compounds the socio-economic implications of insecurity, as larger families struggle to sustain consumption levels amid dwindling income sources.

Analysis of the Socio-Economic Factors Responsible for Armed Banditry in Katsina State

Table 4: Socio-Economic Factors Responsible for Armed Banditry in Katsina State

Risk Factors	Category	Frequency (N=394)	Percent (%)
High poverty rates contribute to armed banditry in your community	SA	198	50.3
	A	125	31.7
	D	27	6.9
	SD	44	11.2
	Total	394	100.0

Youth unemployment has significantly led to recruitment into armed banditry in your community	SA	179	45.4
	A	150	38.1
	D	23	5.8
	SD	42	10.7
	Total	394	100.0
Lack of educational opportunities is a major factor in driving people towards armed banditry in your community	SA	193	49.0
	A	119	30.2
	D	59	15.0
	SD	23	5.8
	Total	394	100.0
Corruption among government and security officials contributes to armed banditry	SA	130	33.0
	A	205	52.0
	D	40	10.2
	SD	19	4.8
	Total	394	100.0
Weak policing and law enforcement capacity contribute to armed banditry in your community	SA	181	45.9
	A	155	39.3
	D	31	7.9
	SD	27	6.9
	Total	394	100.0

Note: SA= Strongly Agreed; A= Agreed; D=Disagreed; SD= Strongly Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 shows an analysis of the complex, and multifaceted socio-economic and institutional risk factors that contribute to the prevalence of armed banditry in Katsina State. The result indicates that a vast majority of respondents (82.0%) either *strongly agreed* (50.3%) or *agreed* (31.7%) that high poverty rates are a major driver of armed banditry in Katsina State. Only a small minority (18.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This overwhelming consensus underscores the deep connection between economic

deprivation and the proliferation of banditry in the region. The finding supports the structural strain and relative deprivation theories, which argue that socio-economic marginalization fosters deviant and violent behaviors when legitimate economic opportunities are scarce. Thus, poverty functions both as a push factor (driving individuals into banditry) and as a structural enabler (sustaining the cycle of violence due to weak livelihood alternatives).

With respect to unemployment, the result indicates that a vast majority of respondents (83.5%) acknowledged unemployment as a critical socio-economic catalyst for the recruitment of individuals into armed bandit groups. Specifically, 45.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 38.1% agreed with this assertion. In contrast, only 16.5% expressed disagreement. This overwhelming consensus underscores the deep-seated link between joblessness and the proliferation of armed banditry in Katsina State. The data suggest that the absence of stable and gainful employment opportunities among the youth creates fertile ground for frustration, social discontent, and susceptibility to criminal recruitment. In essence, unemployment not only perpetuates poverty and economic marginalization but also erodes social stability by pushing vulnerable individuals toward illicit means of survival, thereby reinforcing the socio-economic underpinnings of the banditry crisis.

Educational deprivation also emerges as a critical determinant of armed banditry in Katsina State. As indicated in the table, a substantial majority of respondents—approximately four-fifths (79.2%)—either strongly agreed (49.0%) or agreed (30.2%) that the lack of educational opportunities has significantly contributed to the rise and persistence

of armed banditry in their communities. Conversely, only a small proportion (20.8%) of respondents disagreed with this assertion. This finding underscores the pivotal role of education as a protective factor against criminal engagement, suggesting that limited access to formal education deprives young people of viable livelihood alternatives, critical thinking skills, and socio-economic empowerment. Consequently, the absence of educational opportunities not only perpetuates cycles of poverty and unemployment but also heightens susceptibility to recruitment by criminal groups, thereby exacerbating the security crisis in the region.

Corruption equally emerges as a significant factor exacerbating the problem of armed banditry in Katsina State. A substantial majority of respondents (85.0%)—comprising 33.0% who strongly agreed and 52.0% who agreed—identified corruption among government and security officials as a major contributor to the persistence of banditry. In contrast, only 15.0% of respondents disagreed with this assertion. This overwhelming consensus reflects a pervasive public perception of institutional failure and distrust in the agencies responsible for ensuring law and order. Within this context, corruption functions not only as a facilitator of banditry—by enabling impunity, weakening enforcement mechanisms, and diverting security resources—but also as a critical impediment to the successful implementation of anti-banditry strategies. Consequently, the findings highlight that the struggle against armed banditry cannot be effectively addressed without confronting the entrenched culture of corruption that undermines governance, accountability, and the rule of law in the state.

5 Analysis of the Effect of Armed Banditry on Food Security in Katsina State

Table 5: Effect of Armed Banditry on Food Security in Katsina State

Effects	Category	Frequency (N=394)	Percent (%)

|			
Armed banditry has disrupted farming activities in your community	SA	196	49.7
	A	161	40.9
	D	17	1
	SD	20	5.1
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Armed banditry has led to a reduction in agricultural productivity in your community	SA	207	52.5
	A	141	35.8
	D	34	8.6
	SD	12	3.0
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Armed banditry has negatively affected food availability in your community	SA	192	48.7
	A	164	41.6
	D	21	5.3
	SD	17	1
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Armed banditry has reduced food accessibility (i.e., the ability to acquire food) in your community	SA	144	36.5
	A	169	42.9
	D	71	18.0
	SD	10	2.5
	Total	**394**	**100.0**
Prevalence of armed banditry has threatened the sustainability of food production in your community	SA	159	40.4
	A	195	49.5
	D	27	6.9
	SD	13	3.3
	Total	**394**	**100.0**

Note: SA= Strongly Agreed; A= Agreed; D=Disagreed; SD= Strongly Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 shows empirical evidence on the perceived effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State. The result indicates that a striking **90.6%** of respondents (49.7% strongly agreed, 40.9% agreed) affirmed that armed banditry has disrupted farming activities in their communities, while only 9.4% (1% Disagreed and 5.1% strongly disagreed) reported it has not affected farming activities. This overwhelming agreement points to the fact that insecurity has not only displaced farmers but has also deterred cultivation, leading to widespread land abandonment.

Similarly, **88.3%** of respondents (52.5% strongly agreed, 35.8% agreed) believed that armed banditry has reduced agricultural productivity. This perception underscores how persistent violence constrains both labor availability and production inputs, and resulting in decreased yields. This is further supported by the data from National Bureau of Statistics reports, as shown below:
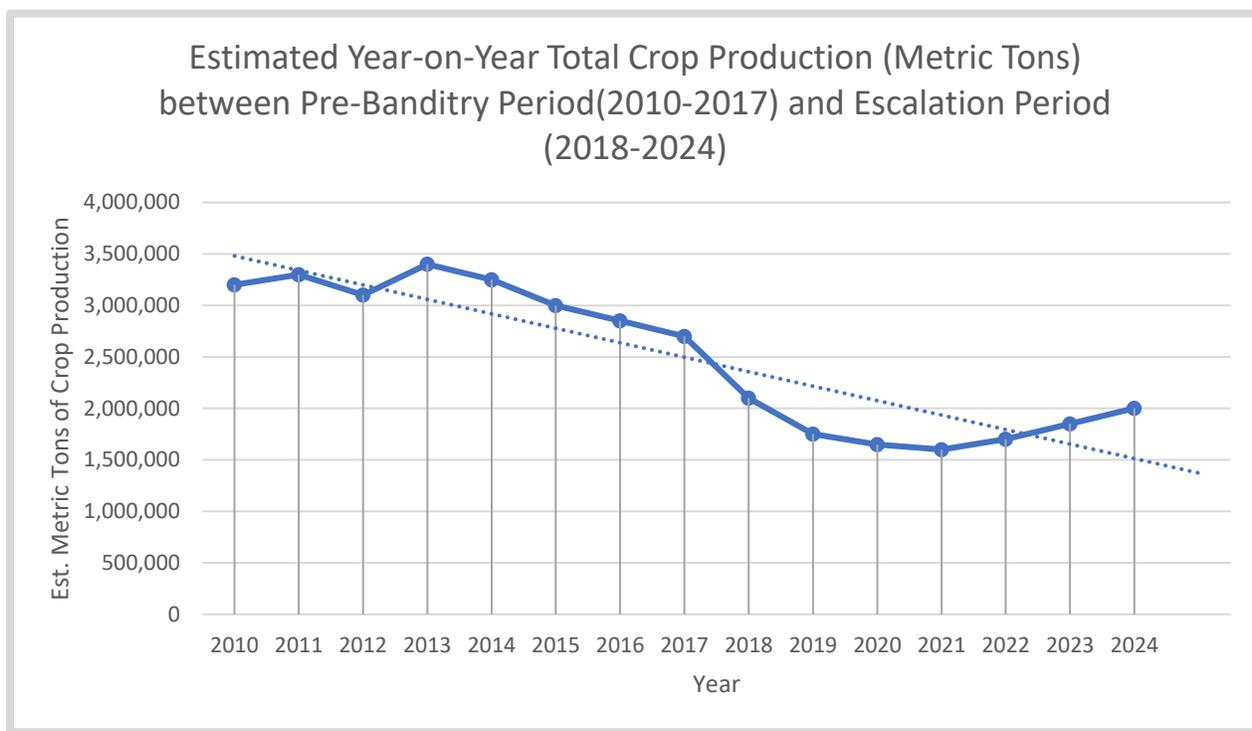
Sources: National Bureau of Statistics reports on Agricultural Production (2010-2025)

Figure 1: Changes in Crop Production between Pre-banditry Period (2010) and Banditry Escalation Period (2018-2024)

Figure 1 shows a significant decline in agricultural output corresponding with the onset and escalation of armed banditry. During the pre-banditry period (2010–2017), crop production levels were relatively stable, averaging between 3.0 and 3.4 million metric tons. Despite fluctuations caused by climatic factors and limited access to modern inputs, farmers could cultivate freely across rural areas, and agriculture remained the backbone of household livelihoods. However, from 2018 onwards, when banditry escalated, production dropped sharply—from 2.1 million MT in 2018 to a low of 1.6 million MT in

2021. This drastic decline reflects widespread insecurity, farm abandonment, destruction of crops, and displacement of farming communities. Many farmlands were left uncultivated due to fear of attacks, while livestock rustling and kidnappings disrupted rural economies. Although there are slight signs of recovery from 2022 to 2025—with production rising modestly to 2.15 million MT (estimated)—the figures remain far below pre-banditry levels, indicating that the agricultural production continues to suffer from the lingering effects of armed banditry in Katsina state.

Furthermore, 90.3% of respondents (48.7% strongly agreed, 41.6% agreed) linked banditry to declining food availability, while 79.4% (36.5% strongly agreed, 42.9% agreed) reported that it has reduced food accessibility. These findings affirm that insecurity not only limits production but also disrupts distribution networks and market linkages, and increases food prices in the state. This is further supported by the data published by the National Bureau of Statistics reports, as shows below:
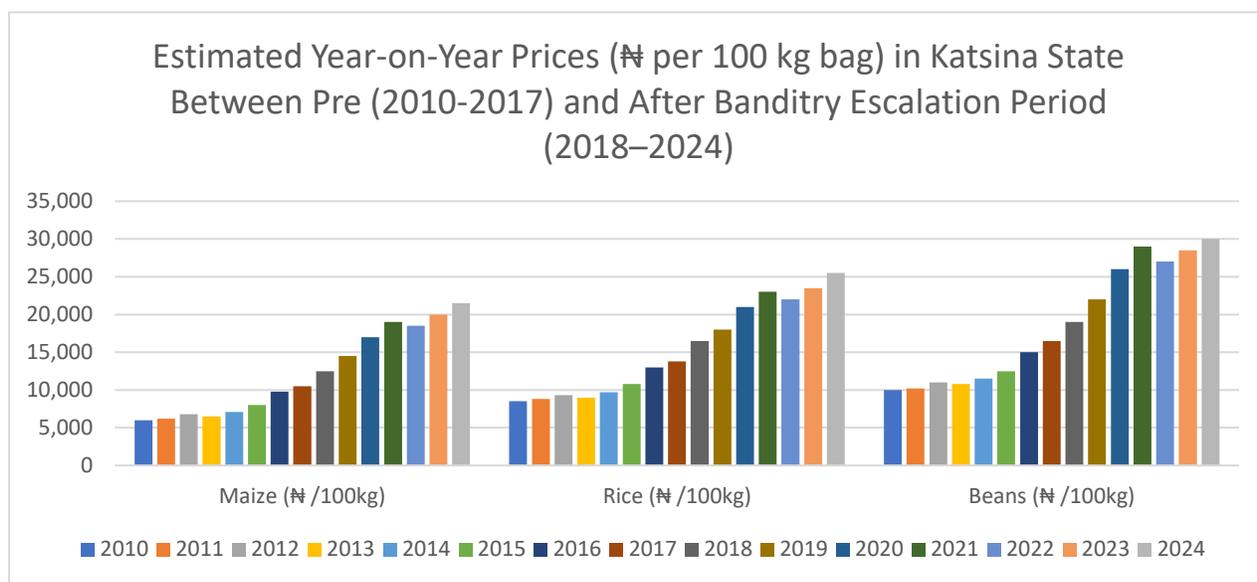
Sources: National Bureau of Statistics Reports (2010-2025)

Figure 2: Armed Banditry and Changes in Prices per 100 Kg Bag of Maize, Rice, and Beans in Katsina State (2010-2024)

Figure 2 illustrates a striking rise in staple food prices, particularly following the escalation of armed banditry from 2018 onward, placing essential grains beyond the reach of many households and aggravating hunger and poverty levels across Katsina State. During the pre-banditry period (2010–2017), food prices increased gradually and moderately — for instance, the price per 100Kg Bag of maize rose from ₦6,000 to ₦10,500, rice from ₦8,500 to ₦13,800, and beans from ₦10,000 to

₦16,500 per 100 kg bag. These increments reflected normal inflationary pressures and market dynamics. However, the banditry escalation period (2018–2025) witnessed a sharp and sustained surge in prices. Maize jumped from ₦12,500 in 2018 to ₦22,000 in 2025, rice from ₦16,500 to ₦27,000, and beans from ₦19,000 to ₦31,000. This steep rise correlates directly with the growing insecurity that disrupted farming, destroyed supply chains, and restricted access to markets.

Finally, **89.9%** of respondents (40.4% strongly agreed, 49.5% agreed) contended that banditry threatens the sustainability of food production in their communities. This widespread perception reveals a growing fear that prolonged insecurity could lead to a systemic collapse of the rural economy. However, a counterargument could posit that sustainability is not only threatened by insecurity but also by the absence of long-term rural development planning and weak institutional capacity to rehabilitate affected agricultural zones. Thus, the persistence of food insecurity may reflect both the direct violence of banditry and the state's chronic inability to implement inclusive recovery mechanisms.
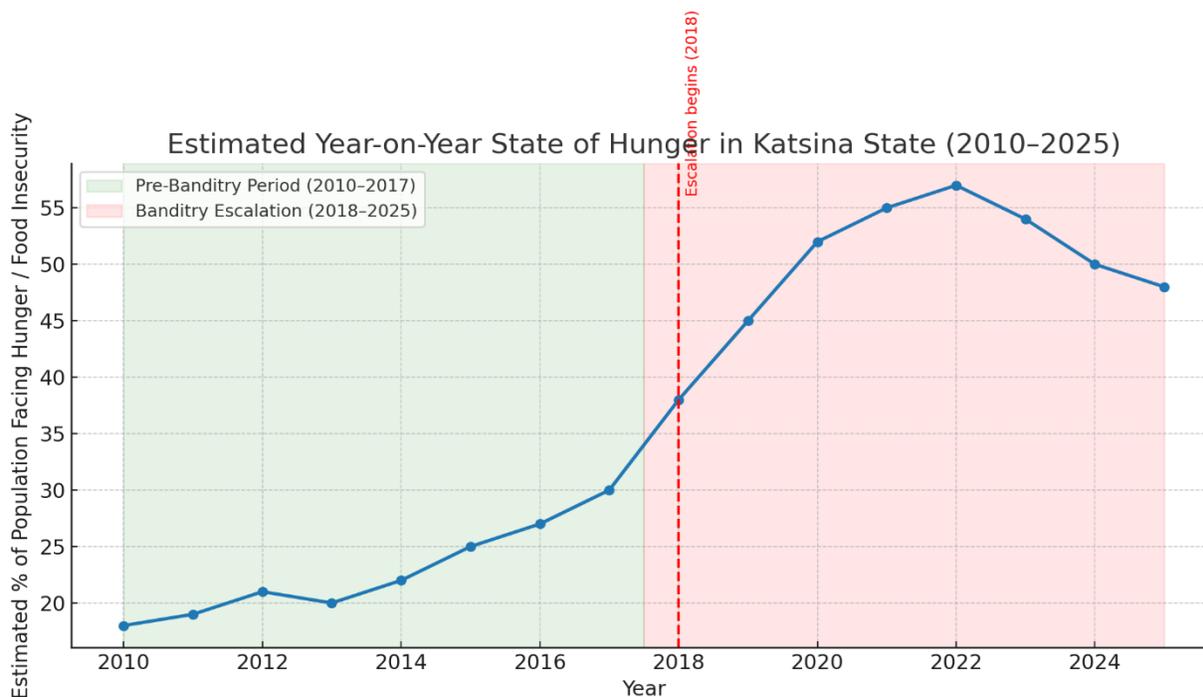

Figure 4.5: Changes in the Estimated Percentage of Households facing Hunger/Food Insecurity between Pre-banditry period (2010-2017) and After Escalation (2018-2024)

Figure 4.5 illustrates a clear shift in the percentage of households facing hunger and food insecurity between the pre-banditry period (2010–2017) and the banditry escalation period (2018–2025). During the pre-banditry years, hunger levels remained relatively moderate and stable, fluctuating between 18% and 30%. This period was marked by limited but manageable food insecurity, largely influenced by poverty and climate-related factors. However, beginning in 2018, when banditry escalated, the situation worsened drastically. The percentage of households facing hunger rose sharply from 38% in 2018 to a peak of about 57% in 2022. This surge reflects the devastating impact of widespread violence, displacement, and farm abandonment caused by persistent attacks and insecurity. Although there has been a slight improvement from 2023 to 2025, with rates falling to around 48–50%, the overall level of hunger remains significantly higher than before 2018. The chart clearly demonstrates that armed banditry has been the critical turning point that transformed Katsina State's food insecurity from a

manageable socio-economic issue into a prolonged humanitarian crisis.

Summary of Findings

This study examined the interrelationship between armed banditry and food security in Katsina State, Nigeria, using both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the complexity of the crisis. The study also explored the effects of armed banditry on food security. The study findings were summarized in line with research questions and objectives, as follows:

The research objective one sought to identify the key drivers of armed banditry in Katsina State. The study found that the roots of armed banditry in Katsina State are deeply entrenched in socio-economic deprivation, institutional failure, and pervasive governance deficits. Quantitative findings show that 82% of respondents identified poverty, 83.5% unemployment, and 85% corruption as the key drivers of the crisis. Qualitative interviews further revealed that widespread youth idleness, inequality, and the erosion of trust in government institutions have pushed many individuals into criminality as a means of survival. The data support the relative deprivation and structural strain theories, which posit that individuals resort to deviant behavior when legitimate means of economic advancement are unavailable.

The second research objective sought to evaluate the effects of armed banditry on food security in Katsina State. Empirical evidence from both survey and interview data demonstrates that armed banditry has had a devastating impact on agricultural productivity, food accessibility, and household welfare in Katsina State. Quantitative data revealed that 90.6% of respondents agreed that banditry disrupted farming activities, while 88.3% affirmed that it reduced agricultural productivity, and 90.3% believed it had led to food scarcity. Between 2018 and 2024, agricultural output declined from 3.2 million metric tons to 1.6 million metric tons, while food prices more than doubled across key staples such as maize, rice, and beans. Qualitative data corroborate these trends, with farmers and victims describing widespread land abandonment, displacement, and the collapse of local markets. Many respondents narrated experiences of extortion, kidnapping, and loss of livestock, leading to deepened hunger and malnutrition.

Conclusion

The study concludes that armed banditry in Katsina State has transcended the realm of criminality to become a structural crisis of governance, security, and development—one that has eroded the state's socio-economic foundations and plunged rural communities into persistent food insecurity. Empirical evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data reveals that the crisis is sustained not merely by violence itself, but by the conditions that enable its reproduction: chronic poverty, mass youth unemployment, institutional corruption, and weak state capacity. The overreliance on military responses, without addressing the socio-economic grievances and governance failures at the root of the problem, has proven largely ineffective.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings, the following recommendations are proposed as both corrective and preventive measures, emphasizing practical implementation strategies to ensure measurable outcomes:

1. **Adopt a Multi-Sectoral Counter-Banditry Framework:** The government should develop an integrated strategy that combines security operations with socio-economic and agricultural development programs. Implementation should involve inter-ministerial coordination between the Ministries of Defence, Agriculture, Interior, and Humanitarian Affairs, with localized task forces to monitor outcomes.
2. **Reform Governance and Strengthen Institutional Accountability:** Since corruption and weak administration were identified as critical enablers of insecurity (as 85% of respondents indicated), anti-corruption units should be embedded within

security and agricultural agencies. An independent *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit* should be established at the state level to audit expenditures and track the impact of counter-banditry funds.

3. **Rehabilitate and Empower Displaced Farmers:** Rehabilitation should include resettlement, access to farmland, agricultural input subsidies, and microcredit programs. Implementation could be coordinated through a *Rural Recovery Initiative (RRI)* involving government agencies, NGOs, and international partners such as FAO and UNDP, ensuring that support reaches the most affected communities directly.

4. **Youth Employment and Skills Development:** Given that 83.5% of respondents linked unemployment to banditry, the government should establish *Youth Agribusiness Hubs* in each senatorial district, providing training, start-up grants, and market access. The implementation strategy should leverage private-sector partnerships and community-based cooperatives for sustainability.

5. **Enhance Community-Based Peacebuilding and Early Warning Systems:** The study recommends institutionalizing *Community Peace and Security Councils (CPSC)* that integrate traditional leaders, local vigilantes, and civil society organizations in intelligence sharing and dispute mediation. This decentralized approach can prevent escalation while rebuilding trust between citizens and the state.

6. **Revitalize Agricultural Value Chains:** To restore food security, the government should implement *Farm-to-Market Security Corridors* with protected routes for transporting goods, establish produce aggregation centers in safe zones, and provide insurance schemes for smallholder farmers vulnerable to attack.

7. **Institutionalize Evidence-Based Policymaking:** Regular data collection and research collaborations with universities should be mandated to continuously assess the socio-economic impacts of insecurity and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

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