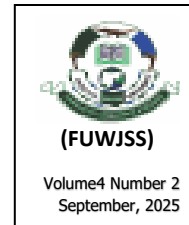


**IMPACT OF RURAL BANDITRY ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LAFIA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NASARAWA
STATE, NIGERIA**



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Abstract

Sustainable development is a kind of development that considers the needs of future generations. However, sustainable development seems unattainable in a society plagued by banditry. This paper examines the relationship between rural banditry and sustainable development in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. Previous researches have focused on the connection between banditry and economic development, but this paper explores the impact of rural banditry on social, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study utilized primary data collected through questionnaires administered to 399 respondents, of which 380 were completed and returned. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The study's results revealed that the destruction of crops, displacement of farmland, disruption of local markets, and increased dependency on food aid were linked to the disputes between Fulani herders and farmers. Additionally, militia attacks resulted in migration, reduced revenue, and loss of human capital, negatively affecting economic development in Lafia Local Government Area. Furthermore, kidnapping for ransom has led to a breakdown of trust, mental health disorders, social stigma, and gender-based violence, including rape. The paper concludes that lack of investments in security measures in Lafia Local Government Area exacerbate rural banditry in the Local Government Area. Thus, the paper recommends that there is need for governments at all levels to work with community stakeholders to invest in security in Lafia Local Government Area.

Keywords: Economic development, kidnapping, rural banditry, security, human capital

Introduction

Banditry refers to the use of violence or intimidation for personal gain, typically conducted by individuals or groups operating outside the law. This includes criminal activities such as robbery, kidnapping, and cattle rustling. These actions affect both individuals and businesses and significantly disrupt the economic and social stability of the impacted areas. According to Adibe (2017), banditry involves using violence or the threat of violence to extort money, resources, or services from individuals or groups for personal gain. On the other hand, sustainable development means balancing economic growth, social development, and environmental protection (Raworth, 2017). The goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is often divided into three main pillars: economic, social, and environmental sustainability. King (2015) argues that the phenomenon of banditry can be traced back to the early modern period, which spanned from around 1500 to 1800. During this time, changes in Europe's economic and political landscape led to the emergence of a large class of marginalized individuals who often resorted to criminal activities for survival.

The connection between banditry and sustainable development is recognized worldwide. Gambetta and Daniele (2018) argue that in Europe, banditry is associated with the rise of capitalism and the emergence of a large, mobile population of landless peasants. These individuals, often referred to as vagrants or vagabonds, posed a threat to social order and were frequently criminalized. In their struggle for survival, many turned to banditry. In Southern Italy, a prevalent form of banditry is known as 'Ndrangheta', which is linked to the Calabrian mafia. This type of organized crime has a negative impact on economic development in the region, leading to corruption and hampering efforts to attract foreign investment and develop new industries.

The Americas have not been exempted from banditry attacks, with countries like Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico being significantly affected. According to the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (2019), a major type of banditry in Brazil is known as 'latrocinio', which refers to organized crime. This form of banditry has contributed to economic instability and social unrest in the country. The violence and instability associated with these conflicts may have led to a loss of food security, as many people have fled in search of safety and better opportunities. Additionally, the destruction of infrastructure and property caused by banditry could hinder economic development.

In Africa, banditry has made noticeable impacts, particularly in Kenya. According to Menkhaus (2019), banditry in Kenya is often linked to cattle

rustling, a practice with a long history in the country. This type of crime typically occurs in remote areas lacking security and is frequently carried out by armed groups motivated by financial gain. In addition to cattle rustling, banditry activities in Kenya also include kidnapping, carjacking, and shop looting. Consequently, it is essential to recognize the potential relationship between these banditry activities and issues such as food security, economic development, and social advancement. Similarly, Botchway and Ahmed (2021) note that banditry is a significant problem in Nigeria, especially in the northwestern region. The groups commonly referred to as "bandits" are often composed of young men from marginalized communities. They engage in various criminal activities, including cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed robbery. Banditry has substantially affected Nigeria's economic development, leading to a decline in agricultural productivity and disrupting livelihoods. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Ndagi (2020) discuss the conflict between Fulani herders and farmers in Nigeria, which has seriously impacted human capital and development, with both direct and indirect consequences for food security and economic progress. This conflict has resulted in numerous deaths and injuries, contributing to a loss of human capital. Additionally, it has hindered farming activities, as farmers fear working in their fields, which leads to reduced agricultural production and threatens food security. The overall economy has also suffered, as business operations in the affected areas have decreased due to heightened insecurity and investment hesitance.

Folarin and Koleoso (2021) argue that kidnapping for ransom has a devastating impact on social development in Nigeria. Abducted individuals are often held for extended periods, which hinders their ability to attend school or work. As a result, their opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills are limited, and their chances to participate in social events and socialize with others are significantly affected. Additionally, being held hostage can inflict psychological trauma on victims, leading to long-term effects that can make it challenging for them to function normally even after their release.

Communities, societies, and nations all strive for development in various aspects of life, including social, political, and economic dimensions. Lafia Local Government Area is no exception. However, the ongoing attacks by bandits in the region might have significantly hindered its economic, social, and political development. According to Mohammed (2021), the rise of banditry has destabilized Nigeria, causing considerable damage to social cohesion, political stability, and economic growth. Banditry can have numerous negative effects on sustainable development. Socially, it can increase poverty, unemployment, and displacement of people, as well as cultivate fear and distrust. The impact of banditry activities, such as conflicts

between herders and farmers and incidents of kidnapping, negatively affects sustainable development by limiting access to essential resources like water and pasture, destroying properties, and damaging social cohesion. According to Akilu (2020), past efforts to reduce banditry activities in Nigeria have included economic development programs such as the National Social Investment Programme, the establishment of microfinance institutions, and agricultural assistance to rural communities aimed at creating employment opportunities. Additionally, community-based approaches like community policing programs, youth empowerment initiatives, and peace and reconciliation committees have been initiated to foster trust and cooperation between local communities and the government. However, these efforts have not sufficiently addressed the issue of banditry in Nigeria.

Many studies have examined the relationship between banditry and sustainable development in Nigeria. For example, Umar and Bunza corroborated the findings of Shuaibu, Hassan and Mohammed (2022), which indicated that banditry has a detrimental effect on community development in areas such as infrastructure, economic activities, education, and health. However, previous research has overlooked the connection between the Fulani/herder-farmer conflicts and food security in Lafia Local Government Area. The study conducted by Kazeem and Okunola (2018) focused on banditry and insecurity, revealing that insecurity is a significant barrier to human capital development in Nigeria. Terrorist attacks can lead to a loss of skilled labour and a decrease in investment in education and healthcare. Yet, their research, along with others, did not investigate the relationship between militia attacks on households and economic development in Lafia Local Government Area, nor has the connection between kidnapping for ransom and social development in the region been explored. This study aims to assess the relationship between rural banditry and sustainable development in Lafia Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The conflict theory was developed by Karl Marx in the 19th century and later expanded upon by sociologists such as Max Weber, Lewis Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf (Coser, 1956). This theory posits that conflict is an inevitable part of society, often arising from inequality and competition for scarce resources (Marx, Engels & Jones, 2008). In the context of banditry and sustainable development, the theory provides insights into how the unequal distribution of resources, such as education and healthcare, can lead to conflict and violence. The core premise of conflict theory is that society is perpetually in a state of conflict due to competing interests and needs. According to this theory, conflict is not only normal but also necessary for

social change and progress. It suggests that the distribution of resources such as wealth, power, and prestige is a significant source of societal conflict. This inequality can result in groups feeling marginalized and oppressed, which may lead to violence and crime. For example, the conflict theory can help explain the ongoing tensions between the Fulani herders and farmers in Nigeria.

In this situation, conflict arises from the unequal distribution of resources like land and water. The herders require access to grazing land for their cattle, while farmers need water for their crops. This competition for resources can escalate into violent conflict, disrupting community development and progress. The consequences can be dire for both groups, including loss of life and property, displacement, and destruction of livelihoods. Overall, the conflict theory is relevant for studying banditry and community development because it provides a framework for understanding the root causes of banditry and its disruptive effects on community growth. It highlights how unequal resource distribution can drive banditry, hindering access to essential services such as education and healthcare. This theoretical perspective can assist researchers in comprehending the dynamics of banditry and community development, ultimately leading to potential solutions to mitigate the issue.

Research Methodology

The survey method was employed in this study, utilizing a simple random sampling procedure to select a sample of 399 participants from the total population of citizens in Lafia Local Government. Respondents were chosen from all council wards within the local government area. In each ward, researchers administered questionnaires to any adult they encountered. The data collection involved a combination of structured and semi-structured questionnaires, which included closed-ended questions designed to gather information regarding corruption and sustainable development. According to the 2022 population projection from the National Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of Lafia is 509,300. Yamane (1967) offers a reliable method for determining sample size, suggesting that the appropriate sample size can be calculated using the following formula for a known population.

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Universe = 509, 300.

1 = Constant

e = Level of significance = 0.05

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{509,300}{1+509,300(0.05)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{509,300}{1+509,300(0.0025)} \\
 n &= \frac{509,300}{1+1273.25} \\
 n &= \frac{509,300}{1274.25} \\
 \mathbf{n} &= \mathbf{399}
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the established formula, we sampled 399 respondents. Given that corruption is a significant social issue, the researchers distributed questionnaires across all areas of local government. For individuals who were non-literate, we conducted verbal interviews, documenting their responses on the questionnaire directly. This approach was aimed at reducing the non-response rate and was completed over a two-week period. Data collected from the fieldwork were analysed using version 27 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and regression analysis. Ultimately, data from 380 respondents were analysed, as only 380 properly completed questionnaires were retrieved from those administered. The data were examined in relation to the research objectives, and the findings were presented in a narrative format.

Results and Discussions**Table 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of the Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age Range of the Respondents		
18-25	41	10.8
26-33	69	18.2
34-41	40	10.5
42-49	71	18.7
50-57	109	28.7
58 Yrs and above	50	13.2
Total	380	100.0
Sex		
Male	160	42.1
Female	220	57.9
Total	380	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	76	20.0
Married	90	23.7
Separated	68	17.9
Divorced	70	18.4
Widowed	76	20.0
Total	380	100.0
Educational Level		
None Formal	90	23.7
Primary	152	40.0
Secondary	76	20.0
Tertiary	62	16.3
Total	380	100.0
Occupation		
Traders	136	35.7
Civil Servants	115	30.2
Students	74	19.4
Farmer	55	14.4
Total	380	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024

The table one above presents the age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study. Among them, 10.8% fall within the 18-25 age

range, 18.2% are aged 26-33 years, 10.5% are between 34-41 years, 18.7% are in the 42-49 age range, while 28.7% fall within 50-57 years. Lastly, 13.2% of the respondents are between 58 years and above. The descriptive analysis indicates that the highest percentage of respondents are from the 50-57 age group.

Regarding gender, 42.1% of the respondents are male, while 57.1% are female. This analysis shows that females comprise most of the participants in the study. The frequency distribution of marital status reveals that 20.0% of the respondents are single, 23.7% are married, 17.9% are separated, 18.4% are divorced, and 20.0% are widowed. Thus, the data indicates that most respondents are married.

In terms of religious affiliation, the demographic information shows that 84.2% of respondents are Christians, 9.1% are Muslims, and 6.1% practice African Traditional Religion. This suggests that Christians make up most of the respondents. The frequency distribution of educational levels indicates that 23.7% of the respondents have no formal education, 40.0% have completed primary education, 20.0% have secondary school qualifications, and 16.3% have attained tertiary education. This data further confirms that a significant portion of the respondents have primary education. Finally, the data on the occupations of respondents indicates that traders constitute 35.7% of the sample, civil servants make up 30.2%, students account for 19.4%, and farmers represent 14.4%. This implies that traders dominate the study population

Table 2 Fulani/Herders Farmers Conflict and Food Security in Lafia Local Government Area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Destruction of crops	81	21.3
Displacement	100	26.3
Damage storage	72	18.9
Decreased livestock Production	127	33.4
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data presented in Table 2 above examines the impact of conflicts between farmers and herders on food security in Lafia Local Government Area. The findings indicate that 21% of the respondents reported that the conflict has led to the destruction of crops. Additionally, 26.3% agreed that the conflict has caused the displacement of farmers. Furthermore, 18.9% stated that the conflict has damaged storage facilities, while 33.4% reported a decline in livestock numbers

Table 3 Militia Household Attack and Economic Development in Lafia Local Government Area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Damage Trade and commence	130	34.2
Undermine investment	201	52.8
Damage assert	49	12.8
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data presented in table 3 above discusses the impact of militia attacks on households and their effects on economic development in Lafia Local Government. According to the findings, 34.2% of respondents agreed that militia attacks on households' harm trade and commerce. Additionally, 52.8% indicated that these attacks undermine investment, while 12.8% believed that they damage assets

Table 4: Kidnapping For Ransom and Social Development in Lafia Local Government Area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Creates Fear	89	23.4
Psychological Trauma	190	50
Stigmatization	78	20.5
Disruption of social Institutions	23	6.0
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data presented table 4 above examines the impact of kidnapping for ransom on social development in Lafia Local Government Area. The findings indicate that 23.4% of respondents believe that kidnapping creates fear, while 50% report that it results in psychological trauma. Additionally, 20.5% of respondents stated that kidnapping leads to stigmatization, and 6.0% agreed that it negatively affects social institutions.

Table 5: Ways people can be Prevented from Banditry Attacks in Lafia Local Government Area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Target Hardening	113	29.7
Community policing	180	47.3
Government to improve Security Infrastructure	87	22.8
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 5 above presents data on strategies to prevent banditry attacks in Lafia Local Government. The data shows that 29.7% of respondents believe that target hardening is an effective approach. Additionally, 47% of respondents highlighted the need for community policing in the area, while 22.8% indicated that the government should enhance security infrastructure.

Table 6: There is no significant relationship between Fulani/Herders and Farmers Conflict and Food Security in Lafia Local Government Area

Variables	N	Means	S.D	Df	R-table	P-value
Fulani Herders and Farmer conflict	380	1.29	.455	1	.528	.000
Food Security	380	1.18	.384	1	.528	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

RESULT INTERPRETATION: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) $r = .528$; $df = 1$; $P > 0.05$.

The results of the statistical analysis presented in the table above indicate that a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted with 380 respondents. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.528, with a degree of freedom (Df) of 1 and a p-value greater than 0.05 (2-tailed), which is significantly greater than the threshold value of 0.000. Based on these findings, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we conclude that the conflict between Fulani herders and farmers significantly affects food security in Lafia Local Government

Table 7 There is no significant relationship between Militia Household Attack and Economic Development in Lafia Local Government Area

Variables	N	Means	S.D	Df	R-table	P-value
Militia household attack	380	1.18	.382	1	.528	.000
Economic development	380	1.18	.384	1	.528	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

RESULT INTERPRETATION: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) $r = .528$; $df = 1$; $P > 0.05$.

The results of the statistical analysis presented in the table above show that a Pearson Correlation was conducted with 380 respondents. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.528, with degrees of freedom (Df) equal to 1 and a p-value greater than 0.05 (2-tailed). This p-value is significantly

greater than the threshold of 0.000. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Based on these findings, we conclude that militia attacks on households have an impact on economic development.

Fulani/Herders Farmers Conflict Food Security in Lafia Local Government Area

The study on the conflict between Fulani herders and farmers in Lafia Local Government has revealed that the movement of cattle through farmlands is causing significant damage to crops. This destruction has led to reduced yields and decreased food production. Cattle trample, eat, and damage crops, often leaving behind droppings that further harm the farmland. As a result, farmers who lose their crops struggle to provide for themselves and their families, leading to food insecurity. Moreover, the destruction of crops has had a broader impact on the food system: it has reduced the availability of produce in local markets, driving up food prices and making it harder for other community members to access food. The conflict has also disrupted agricultural supply chains, forcing farmers to abandon their crops and leading to shortages of certain food items. This situation increases prices and limits access to nutritious food. These findings align with Nwajiuba's (2020) research on the herder-farmer conflict in Nigeria, which suggests that the ongoing conflict has diminished crop production and livestock rearing, contributing to food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition among the affected communities. The destruction of farmlands and grazing fields, coupled with persistent insecurity, has discouraged farmers from planting crops and investing in their farms, ultimately resulting in reduced agricultural output.

The conflict between Fulani herders and farmers in Lafia Local Government has led to significant damage to food storage systems, negatively impacting food security. As a result of the conflict, storage facilities have become targets and have been destroyed by the Fulani herdsmen. This is a major concern, as these facilities are vital for preserving food and maintaining food security. The destruction of storage facilities can disrupt the entire food production cycle, leading to losses in harvests and an inability to store excess food for use during lean periods. Consequently, communities in Lafia have experienced reduced food availability and heightened vulnerability to food insecurity. Additionally, the conflict has disrupted livestock management. When Fulani herders clash with farmers over grazing lands, livestock—particularly cattle—can be killed or stolen, resulting in significant losses of wealth and livelihood for the herders. Some Fulani herders have also been displaced by the conflict, forcing them to leave their animals behind or sell them for a fraction of their worth. Furthermore,

the conflict has disrupted livestock markets, as farmers are reluctant to sell their animals to Fulani herders out of fear of reprisals. This reluctance has led to a shortage of livestock, causing higher prices and reduced access to meat and dairy products, which are vital sources of nutrition and income for many communities. The conflict diverts resources away from livestock production, as farmers often prioritize rebuilding damaged infrastructure or securing their lands over investing in the health and productivity of their animals. The stress caused by the conflict, along with increased risks of animal diseases and disrupted grazing patterns, can further reduce livestock productivity and worsen food insecurity. This situation aligns with the findings of Nelson, Shefiu, and Ibrahim (2021), whose study noted that the conflict has significantly impacted livestock, with incidences of cattle being stolen, slaughtered, or sold at a loss by Fulani herders.

Militia Household Attack and Economic Development in Lafia Local Government Area

Militia attacks on households have had a significant negative impact on trade and investment, ultimately hindering economic development. The destruction of businesses, such as shops and markets, has disrupted economic activity and trade. This destruction has made investors hesitant to invest in affected areas due to perceived instability and unsafe conditions. Consequently, such attacks can lead to a reduction in foreign direct investment (FDI), as investors typically avoid areas with high-risk factors. As a result, economic growth and development may slow down. Additionally, governments may need to allocate resources to enhance security measures, such as hiring more security personnel, which diverts funds from critical economic development projects like infrastructure and education. Attacks on transportation networks, including roads and railways, have further disrupted the flow of goods and services, exacerbating the economic damage.

Furthermore, essential infrastructure, including power plants, water treatment facilities, and telecommunications networks, has been destroyed by militia attacks, further hindering economic development and complicating business operations. This study finds that militia attacks on households undermine the economy by creating a sense of insecurity and instability, making the country less attractive to potential investors. Consequently, foreign direct investment, which is crucial for fostering economic growth, can decrease. Existing investors may choose to leave or relocate their operations to safer areas in response to the violence. Moreover, financial institutions might become reluctant to lend to local businesses, reducing the availability of credit and financing, which impedes economic growth. Additionally, foreign investors may be discouraged from investing

in regions plagued by militia attacks as they struggle to assess the inherent risks and potential returns of their investments. This uncertainty can lead to a decline in foreign trade investment. These findings align with the research of Nwajiuba & Amos (2022), who similarly noted that kidnapping and militancy have significantly affected business operations in Nigeria. Businesses have been compelled to limit their activities, hire security, and incur additional costs to safeguard their staff and operations, diverting resources that would otherwise be invested in capital projects and growth towards security measures. This redirection of resources is negatively impacting economic growth.

Kidnapping for Ransom and Social Development in Lafia Local Government Area

Kidnapping for ransom in Lafia has significantly impacted social development. It has created fear among residents, eroding trust within the community. This loss of trust can lead to the breakdown of social networks and institutions, hindering overall development. The fear of kidnapping has caused individuals to limit their movements, avoiding social gatherings and even keeping their children from attending school. As a result, participation in community life has declined, negatively affecting social development. Furthermore, kidnapping victims often endure severe psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This has increased the demand for mental health services, which are already limited, putting additional strain on the existing social security system. The disruption caused by kidnapping also adversely affects family life. Victims' psychological trauma can create stress and interpersonal conflicts within families, leading to an increased need for social services.

Additionally, kidnapping has been linked to stigmatization of both individuals and their families. This stigma makes it more challenging for those affected to access social services and opportunities. Women and girls who are kidnapped for sexual exploitation often face gender-based stigma and discrimination, being regarded as "damaged goods" and experiencing rejection from their communities. Cultural beliefs and superstitions can further exacerbate the stigma surrounding kidnapping victims, leading some to view them as cursed or responsible for bringing misfortune upon themselves and their communities. The consequences of kidnapping in the area have created numerous problems. It has undermined trust and cooperation among residents, disrupted social services and institutions, and fostered fear and distrust among various groups. Consequently, the social structure of the community has been compromised, leading to increased insecurity, poverty, and marginalization. These issues can have long-lasting effects, diminishing civic engagement and participation in local government.

People are now less likely to attend community meetings, vote, or engage in other forms of civic activism for fear of being targeted by kidnappers. These findings align with those of Sallah (2021), who also noted that kidnapping damages the fabric of social cohesion in society.

Ways People Could be prevented from Banditry Attacks in Lafia Local Government Area

According to our findings, target hardening is a crucial strategy for preventing banditry. Implementing physical barriers, such as walls, fences, or moats, can make it more difficult for bandits to reach potential targets. This approach is particularly effective in securing homes, businesses, and other assets. Additionally, installing security measures like CCTV cameras, motion-activated lights, and alarms can deter bandits and make it more challenging for them to operate undetected. Target hardening is most effective when part of a layered defense strategy, which combines physical barriers with security measures and community watch programs. Regular maintenance of these measures is essential; this includes checking and repairing fences, testing alarms and cameras, and ensuring that community watch programs are well-coordinated and adequately resourced. This research aligns with the findings of Adekunle, Olagunju, & Arowolo (2021), who suggest that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools can enhance security and mitigate the impact of banditry in Nigeria. They specifically recommend using ICT to improve target hardening measures, such as integrating CCTV cameras, drones, and facial recognition technology.

Additionally, community policing plays a crucial role in preventing banditry attacks. By fostering a shared sense of responsibility for community safety, community policing can help discourage potential bandits. When community members know that their neighbors and law enforcement are working collaboratively to prevent banditry, it may deter potential attackers from targeting the area. Community policing also aids law enforcement in gathering valuable local intelligence on bandit activity and patterns, such as the routes they take or the locations they choose to target. This information can be instrumental in developing more effective strategies for prevention.

Moreover, by collaborating with communities, law enforcement can identify and address local vulnerabilities that may make them more susceptible to bandit attacks, such as poor lighting or inadequate security infrastructure. These combined efforts can enhance resilience against banditry. Furthermore, the government has a crucial role in improving security infrastructure to prevent bandit attacks. By investing in assets like police stations, surveillance cameras, and checkpoints, the government can increase the physical presence of law enforcement in communities, deterring

potential bandits. Upgrading communication systems, including radio networks, can enable law enforcement agencies to coordinate and respond more effectively to bandit incidents, potentially mitigating their impact and reducing the likelihood of further attacks. Finally, enhancing border security and cooperating with neighboring countries can help prevent bandits from crossing borders and launching attacks. This may involve increasing patrols, improving fencing, and utilizing biometric identification systems.

Conclusion and Recommendations

After conducting this study, we found that food security is linked to the Fulani herders and the ongoing conflict in Lafia Local Government Area. The crises in this region damage crops, food storage facilities, and livestock, leading to a decline in food security. The activities of militia groups further harm trade and investment, stifling economic growth and intensifying the connection between militia attacks and overall development in Lafia Local Government Area. Additionally, we concluded that kidnapping, a form of banditry, significantly impacts social development in Lafia. The psychological well-being of residents is affected, leading to stigmatization of those who become victims of banditry. These attacks foster fear and disrupt social institutions such as clubs, schools, and other community activities. The effects of banditry on sustainable development are profound, making it essential to seek solutions to mitigate these activities. Our study suggests that improving security measures referred to as target hardening can be effective. Furthermore, community policing and proactive government initiatives are crucial in preventing residents of Lafia from becoming victims of banditry attacks. Based on the conclusion of this study, the paper recommends that there is a need to develop community policing as this can help prevent the recurrence of banditry attack in Lafia local Government. Also, there is a need to improve security infrastructure to cushion the reoccurrence of banditry attacks.

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