



Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria

Abstract

Banditry have in most recent times in Niger State become a major hindrance to the socio-economic development especially in rural communities which intensifies poverty and affect rural infrastructural development. The study investigated banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state, Nigeria. The state fragility theory by Robert I. Rotberg was adopted to explain the pattern and magnitude of banditry and its attendant effects on poverty and infrastructural development. The study subscribed to primary sources of data collection where self-administered questionnaire buttressed with secondary source dominate the instruments for data collection while descriptive statistics was utilized as techniques for data analysis. Deducing from the data generated, the study discovered that bandits in Niger State heavily rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape and they often carry out their attacks more frequently during dry seasons when access roads are usable. It was further found that banditry operations in Niger State results in high rate of displacement as well as increase in poverty headcount ratio in Niger State's rural communities of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai which are considered the hotspots of banditry operations in Niger state. It concluded that the crisis of banditry threatens every sphere of socio-economic development indices and if security is not assured, myriad of challenges which affects the people's socio-economic development will arise. In concordance to the above findings, the study recommended that Federal Government of Nigeria and Niger State Government should jointly work assiduously towards intensifying anti-banditry security operations especially during dry seasons in order to nip in the bud all forms of operational nature of banditry as well as to pave way for socio-economic development in the state. Furthermore, there is need for grassroots inclusive poverty alleviation programme to enhance infrastructural development in the rural areas affected by banditry in Niger state.

Keywords: Bandits, Niger, Poverty, Infrastructure, Development.

Introduction

Banditry, as widely understood in contemporary security discourse, refers to violent acts carried out by armed non-state actors operating outside legal frameworks to exert control or extract resources. It includes armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, livestock theft, and destruction of farmlands, often perpetrated in rural or semi-urban areas

where state presence is weak. Historically considered a form of localised criminality, banditry has evolved into a more organized and militarized activity, increasingly overlapping with insurgency and terrorism (Hoffman and Burch, 2016). Additionally, modern manifestations of banditry disrupt social stability and hinder access to markets, educational

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facilities, and healthcare services, particularly in developing regions (Ero and Ndung'u, 2021). Previous research has shown that such violent acts not only inflict physical harm but also drive mass displacement, increase food insecurity, and deter domestic and foreign investment (LeBas, 2020). In many regions of the world, particularly in parts of Latin America, Central Africa, and South Asia, banditry has disrupted transport routes, paralysed agricultural activities, and fostered illicit economies (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2019). These outcomes erode institutional trust and reduce the capacity of government institutions to implement public programmes (de Vries and Schomerus, 2022). As such, there is growing scholarly consensus that persistent banditry significantly undermines the conditions necessary for sustained economic development.

Insecurity in the form of organised banditry has been found to severely undermine economic development, both theoretically and empirically. Economic theories posit that secure environments are essential for attracting investment, ensuring stable production systems, and enabling efficient labor allocation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2016). Empirical studies further reveal that persistent violence deteriorates infrastructure, escalates public expenditure on security, and erodes investor confidence (Arezki and Bruckner, 2018; Kimenyi *et al.*, 2019). In regions experiencing recurrent bandit attacks, such as rural communities and semi-urban settlements, agricultural productivity declines significantly as farmers abandon their fields (Justino,

2021). It has also been found that industrial growth slows due to looted supply chains and disrupted logistics (Arias & Restrepo, 2018). In addition, labour displacement reduces productivity while stalling market activities (Fengler *et al.*, 2020). As governments are compelled to reallocate fiscal resources to counterinsurgency operations, investments in public services decline, causing long-term developmental setbacks (Kishi & Raleigh, 2019). Banditry, therefore, not only endangers lives but also deepens poverty, increases inequality, and reverses gains in national development trajectories.

The economic implications of banditry have been profound, ranging from the destruction of productive infrastructure to the displacement of communities and obstruction of trade. As observed in regions of Central Asia and the Sahel, continuous attacks on transport systems and agricultural hubs have severely undermined market access and food security (Aliyev, 2016; Shurson, 2022). These disruptions not only destabilise local economies but also erode investor confidence and halt long-term development initiatives.

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed a distressing transformation of banditry from isolated rural crimes into a pervasive national development threat, especially across the North West and North Central regions. Initially characterised by cattle rustling and farm invasions, banditry has evolved into large-scale armed violence, mass abductions, and coordinated attacks on

villages and transportation routes (Okoli & Ugwu, 2022). This escalation has severely impacted agricultural production, with farming activities in Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, and Katsina states frequently disrupted, leading to widespread food insecurity and internal displacement.

Niger State which is the focus of this study and it has recorded a significant rise in incidents of abduction, particularly of school children and rural dwellers, which has led to the closure of over 400 schools between 2020 and 2023 (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). The notorious abduction of 136 pupils from the Salihu Tanko Islamiyya School in Tegna in 2021 remains a stark indicator of the insecurity crisis. Armed groups operating from dense forest reserves such as the Allawa and Kamuku forests have also capitalised on weak surveillance and poor law enforcement in border areas with Kaduna and Zamfara (Usman & Okoli, 2020). Reports from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) indicate that more than 20,000 people were displaced in Niger State between 2021 and 2022 due to armed violence. Banditry-related kidnappings and cattle rustling have surged, with over 500 abduction incidents reported in Shiroro LGA alone within a span of 18 months (Amzat & Abubakar, 2023). Rural markets have shut down due to insecurity, school closures have disrupted learning in more than 300 public schools in affected LGAs, and road transport networks in hinterland communities are now unsafe

for movement (Olaniyan, Adebayo, & Musa, 2024).

It is against this backdrop of problem that this study is positioned systematically investigating the way and manner banditry dynamics has socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In Niger State, the persistent escalation of banditry has disrupted the state's economic progression by threatening its key development sectors and aggravating poverty. Attacks on farming communities have forced thousands to abandon agricultural activities, resulting in sharp declines in food production, rising inflation, and deepening food insecurity, with cereal production alone dropping by 27 per cent between 2018 and 2022 (NBS, 2023). Educational and healthcare services have equally been targeted, leading to school closures and the destruction of health facilities, thereby worsening human capital development. Similarly, the threat of violence has deterred private sector investors and stalled infrastructure and tourism projects across affected areas. These disruptions have weakened the state's ability to generate revenue internally, as evidenced by a reported 35 per cent decline in IGR across banditry-affected local governments between 2019 and 2023 (Niger State Internal Revenue Service, 2024).

Consequently, the inability of local governments in Niger State to finance

counter-banditry interventions further deepens insecurity, creating a recurring cycle of economic stagnation and social dislocation. Empirical accounts from Adamu and Ibrahim (2018), Bello et al. (2020), and Lawal and Gimba (2023) underscore the correlation between rural violence and economic decline across Northern Nigeria, affirming that prolonged insecurity severely undercuts productivity, employment, and state resilience.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill that critical void by systematically analysing how banditry alters the state's economic development trajectory. By so doing, it intends to contribute robust knowledge that informs context-responsive as well as multi-sectoral policy approaches for rebuilding economic viability and reinforcing peace in affected communities in Niger State.

Research Questions

It is against the backdrop of the problem, the study has attempted to pose the following questions:

5. What is the nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State?
6. What are the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria. Whereas the

specific objectives of the study are to examine:

- i. The nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State.
- ii. The socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State.

Research Propositions

- i. The nature and trend of banditry has been worrisome with devastating effect on economic development in Niger State.
- ii. Banditry has devastating socio-economic consequences on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State.

Conceptual Review

Banditry

The concept of banditry has been examined from different perspectives by scholars, researchers and governments. Extant literature on the nature and incidence of banditry has yielded a number of thematic perspectives. Foremost among these perspectives is the narrative that situates the phenomenon as a necessary complication of farmer-herder crisis in a volatile security context characterised by the declining state's capacity to govern (n & Tar, 2008). The second perspective characterises the occurrence as a disguised terrorism that bears the trappings of neo-jihadism (IEP, 2015).

According to Shalangwa (2013) banditry is the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group,

whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defense, especially in semi-organised groups for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested.

Development

Development as a concept has myriad of definitions. For Rodney (1972), it is a many-sided process. At the level of individual it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. One thing which could be deduced from this definition is that development goes beyond economic growth and man is at the center of development. In other words, development is about the improvement of people's lives and not solely about increment in things.

In his contributions to the debate on the meaning of development, Dudley Seers (1969) observed that the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt, there has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems have been growing worse,

especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development, even if per capital income doubled. Seers' definition is important for the understanding of development because it is concerned with the improvement in the living condition of the people. The implication of his argument is that the economy could grow without development.

Economic Development

Economic development has been defined in different ways and as such, it is difficult to choose any single definition which may be regarded as entirely satisfactory. However, below are a few of the different definitions of economic development. Jhingan (2007), defines development as economic growth plus change. The author sees development as being related to qualitative changes in economic wants, goods, incentives, institutions, productivity and knowledge or upward movement of the entire social system. This definition sees development as growth and qualitative changes in the entire social system. This means development brings about desirable changes that improve the lives of the people.

According to Kindleberger (1965), it implies both more output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced and distributed. In the same vein, Friedman and Hansen (1972), defined it as an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of social system. Innovation and transformation

of social system are the key points in this definition. The definitions above imply that development is about growth and change.

Poverty

Poverty is a complicated social problem. Because poverty can take many various forms, there is no one definition for it. As a result, poverty is more acknowledged than defined (Aboyade, 1995). Nonetheless, poverty is described by a number of writers and organizations. According to the UN (UN 2015), poverty is defined as the absence of a means of subsistence, the prevalence of hunger, malnutrition, social exclusion, marginalization, and segregation, as well as the lack of access to basic amenities such as adequate health and education and decision-making. Goulden & D'Arcy (2014:3) define poverty as a situation in which a person's resources, especially their material resources, are insufficient to meet their basic needs, such as social engagement. Lack of resources, unmet needs, and inadequacy are the hallmarks of poverty.

According to Ahmed, Muhammad, and Ibrahim (2019), while defining poverty, it is necessary to consider the various variables associated with the term "poor." Because, at both the individual and national levels, the concept of poverty is defined in terms of the concerns, causes, and repercussions that surround it. However, it was described as a condition characterized by a lack of sufficient income to meet some of the

most basic human needs, such as access to food, drinkable water, clothing, sanitation, and housing, among others.

Despite the diverse issue of defining poverty, most researchers view the term in terms of income and include it in their definition. Arose from the idea that income is easily related with comprehending the poor condition, and income has both economic and social implications.

Rural Development

Rural development is a means of bringing about enduring changes in the structure of the rural sector in a manner that productivity and output are increased, the technology and techniques of production are radically revolutionized with enhanced standard of living (Izeogu, 1987; Nkorn, 2000). The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 1972) defined rural development as "The outcome of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes occurring among rural population". It is a process "by which a set of technical, social, cultural and institutional measures are implemented, for the inhabitants of rural areas with the aim of improving socio-economic conditions of rural populace (ECA 1972). From the foregoing therefore, rural development constitutes a development effort to raise the level of awareness and living conditions of rural dwellers. Thus rural development encompasses radical improvement in social relationship governing land tenure, access to land, technology, labour, physical

infrastructures, access to services and political organization of society.

Infrastructural Development

According to the Oxford dictionary, Infrastructure is defined as a network of roads, railways, ports, airports, water ways and telecommunications. This has been taken to include the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities for example, buildings, roads, and power supplies, which are necessary or needed for the functioning of a country or society properly. To Mawere & Mubaya (2019), infrastructural development refers to the process of constructing, maintaining, and improving physical structures and facilities that support economic activities, social well-being, and sustainable development within a region or country. They emphasize the importance of infrastructure in enhancing connectivity, promoting industrialization, and improving living standards for the population. In a study by Ghebreyesus & Gebreegziabher (2018), infrastructural development is defined as the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of physical assets such as roads, bridges, water supply systems, and energy networks to support economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. They highlight the role of infrastructure in creating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, and improving overall quality of life.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Nature and Trend of Banditry and Economic Development in Niger State.

Mohammed, Liman, Yusuf, and Oyinloye (2023), in their study on armed banditry's nature and character on human security in Niger state, Nigeria utilized mixed method of data collection and content method of analysis. The Queer Ladder Theory was adopted. The study revealed that armed banditry in Niger State is not ideologically driven but sheer means of material and financial acquisitions through outlawry. While the character of banditry is executed through violence and weapon amassment of which porous border and neighbouring State mining activities serve as a purveyor. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that tackling corruption at all tiers of government could mitigate the get-rich-quick syndrome, as tackling corruption could lead to equitable distribution of wealth. The study also recommended among others that government reinforce the country's border patrol system, particularly against gun-running and illegal immigrants whose activities aggravate banditry in the Niger State. The reviewed study used Niger as a case study in investigating banditry with focus on human security. The current study aimed at interrogating banditry in Niger state with a departure on the second variable whose direction is economic development.

Symon, John, and Joshia (2024), *Genesis and Evolution of the Bandit Economy in Baringo Lowland, Kenya*. The study employed in-depth interviews with elders, youths and organized focus group discussions in Loruk, Mukutani

and Kinyach areas of the lowland which is the theatre of constant attack and counter attacks by the Pokot, Tugen and Il Chamus communities. The oral evidence complements archival and documented evidence. The data was qualitatively analysed and Human Needs Theory was adopted for this study. The study revealed that the socio-economic factors contributed to the bandit economy in the lowland from 1900. They include: increased population, demands for bride wealth payment, pressure to prove their masculinity after initiation, and infiltration of small arms. These were noted as the main factors that have continued to fuel banditry. The study, recommended among others a paradigm shift in social economic culturalisation and government, Non-Government and other development partners to focus on engaging the local communities and creating alternative sources of livelihoods that will combat the banditry menace.

The study by Symon, John, and Joshia (2024), is limited to the genesis and evolution of the bandit economy in Baringo Lowland, Kenya. The difference is that this study seeks to ascertain the extent which banditry has affected the economy of Niger State. By so doing, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of banditry and economic development.

Rufus & Ogbe (2025), did a study on the rise of banditry in northwest Nigeria: examining the security implications and pathways to stability. The study utilized qualitative and thematic method of data

collection and analysis respectively. Findings of the study revealed that the weakening of state authority and poor law enforcement have further exacerbated the problem, allowing armed groups to operate with impunity. The security implications are profound, ranging from violent attacks on villages and kidnappings for ransom to the displacement of thousands of people, creating a humanitarian crisis. The study advocated for holistic approach, combining security measures with long-term investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure to address the root causes of violence. Ultimately, the study argued that a comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy is key to mitigating the threat of banditry and restoring peace and security in Northwest Nigeria. This study centered on interrogating data on the rise of banditry in northwest thereby neglecting north-central whose state is the focus of this study. Hence the need to interrogate the rise of banditry in Niger state.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Banditry on Poverty Levels and Rural infrastructural development in Niger State

Abdussalam, Olayiwola, and Akinniyi-Duyile (2022), investigated the impact of banditry on rural development in Kaduna State (2016-2021). The study employed a mixed-method approach. Hence, primary data were sourced from questionnaires, while secondary data were from journal publications, periodic reports, and newspapers. Simple percentage tables and Linear regression

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was used in analysing responses generated from the primary source. Content analysis was used in analysing secondary sources. The study revealed that banditry significantly impacts rural development in Kaduna State. The study, therefore, recommended that there is a need to tackle the ongoing banditry and kidnapping activities in Kaduna State. Also, the rural economy has been significantly impacted due to the suspension of weekly markets and attacks on farmers. There is a need to provide better security for farmers and the local communities. Basic social amenities and unemployment should be tackled holistically. Banditry is becoming a severe problem in Nigeria due to massive unemployment, weak security, poverty, and the porousness of the country's borders.

This study has three gaps identified by the researcher which are; geographically, the study focused on Kaduna state, temporally, it focus only covered the period 2016-2021, and contextually it limited its focus on rural development. In bridging such gaps, the current study will be conducted in Niger State with special focus on the period between 2015 to 2025 and will contextually looked into socio-economic effects of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state which is a clear departure from the standpoint of the reviewed study.

In the same vein, Mohammed, Umar, Olaleye, Pelemo, Ahmad, Mohammed, and Umar (2021) conducted a study on the effects of banditry on income and livelihoods of yam marketers in Shiroro

Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 197 of yam marketers. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview scheduled. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequency, count and mean), multiple regression and livelihoods status index. The results revealed that majority of respondents were male with long year of experience in yam marketing. The coefficient of low participation on weekly contribution (Adashi) (1.9823.93) was negatively significant at 10% level of probability. Also, 84.8% of the respondents in the study area were of very low livelihood status. Displacement of yam marketers from their native markets to nearby markets ($x = 2.42$) and rising of the price of yam stead ($x = 2.20$) were the major constraints faced by yam marketers. It was recommended that yam marketers should diversify into other income generating activities in order to improve their livelihood status and government should collaborate with village heads for provision of security for yam marketers. This study is conducted in Niger state but limited to Shiroro local government and yam farmers alone whereas the current study will explore local governments in the three senatorial districts in order to gather opinion from them on the impact of banditry on economic development and not yam farmers alone who are just a fraction of the economy.

Chemase & Muhindi (2024), carried out a study on banditry's implications on socio-economic development in Baringo

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South Sub-County, Kenya. In this study, purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used. The sample size was 364 residents. Mixed research methods of quantitative and qualitative were used in the study, with instruments for data collection being closed-ended question questionnaires and open-ended structured interview schedules. The study found that banditry negatively affects the average income levels of locals through its outstanding effects on aspects such as poverty, destruction of business activities, displacements from homes, creating an unfavorable climate for investors, unemployment, and professionals' avoidance of banditry-prone areas due to insecurity. Further, the findings of this study demonstrated that banditry has notable implications on literacy levels through its serious impact on the closure of schools, instilling fear in learners and teachers besides being one of the causes of school dropouts. The study recommended among others that the national government should, therefore, ensure that full disarmament operations target all banditry-affected areas. The study was conducted in Baringo South Sub-County, Kenya whereas the current study will be conducted in Niger state, Nigeria.

Ojetola, Akpaneno and Ayuba (2023), investigated banditry and income-generation activities of rural women in Katsina State, Nigeria. The study was investigated using survey design approach. Multistage sampling technique was adopted to select 558

respondents. Data on respondents' socio-economic characteristics, banditry forms, income-generation activities, causes and effect of banditry were collected using structured interview schedule. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, Chi-square, PPMC and ANOVA were employed in data analysis. Results indicate that majority had mean age of 37 years, household size of 9 people and less or equal ₦154877.20 annual income. Gun shooting, theft and burglary, cattle rustling and kidnapping were most frequent forms of banditry. Livestock farming/poultry, trading, food processing, and crop farming were major income-generation activities while connivance of bandits with locals, weak security architecture and extreme poverty were main causes. Level of effect across the state was high as gathering non-fish aquatic products, processing of fish, pot making, basket making, and crop farming activities were greatly reduced. PPMC result shows that household size significantly correlated with level of effect in the state ($r = 0.093$, $p = 0.029$) and in Batsari ($r = 0.146$, $p = 0.047$) LGA. Also, educational status ($\chi^2 = 12.511$, $p = 0.006$) showed significant association with level of effect. The test of difference using ANOVA showed that effect level was higher in Batsari (mean = 52.44) than in Safana (mean = 51.11) and Jibiya (mean = 51.11) LGAs. The study recommended among others that rural women should initiate a collaborative effort with other community members to expose those that connive with bandits to perpetrate the heinous acts. The study limited its

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focus on rural women in Katsina state thereby making it a gender based study and the current study will encompass both genders affected by banditry in Niger state.

Theoretical Framework

State Fragility Theory

The State Fragility Theory was originally advanced by Robert I. Rotberg in 2003 and gained wider attention through subsequent contributions by scholars such as Call (2008) and Carment, Prest, and Samy (2010), who developed systematic frameworks for measuring and understanding fragility. These scholars built upon the foundational premise that fragile states are characterised by an inability to deliver core public goods, maintain legitimate authority, or manage internal conflict. According to the theory, fragility arises when institutions are weak, governance structures are ineffective, and security is compromised, resulting in conditions that enable violence and undermine development (Call 2011, 304). Scholars such as Menkhaus (2014) and Stewart and Brown (2017) expanded the theory's scope by examining how political exclusion, historical marginalisation, and chronic insecurity deepen state fragility in Africa and beyond.

At the heart of the State Fragility Theory lie key assumptions that help to interpret recurring governance failures and persistent insecurity. First, fragile states often lack monopoly over the legitimate use of force, allowing armed non-state actors to operate freely.

Second, they struggle to provide basic services, including security, healthcare, education, and economic infrastructure, thus weakening citizen trust. Third, their legitimacy is often contested, either due to corrupt leadership, exclusionary politics, or dysfunctional institutions. Fourth, fragility is considered both a cause and consequence of violent conflict, often creating cycles of instability. Lastly, weak governance impedes sustainable economic growth by deterring investment, disrupting markets, and heightening social tensions (Carment et al. 2013, 695). It could be surmised from the foregoing that the inability of fragile states to control ungoverned spaces enables the rise of criminal enterprises, including armed banditry, especially in regions with porous borders and high poverty rates, such as parts of northern Nigeria.

Furthermore, this theory provides a clear linkage between fragility and insecurity, illustrating how the absence of effective governance structures fuels violence and economic regression. In the African context, countries such as South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and parts of Nigeria exhibit patterns of fragility that correlate with frequent armed attacks, banditry, and displacement (Bertocchi and Guerzoni 2017, 211). As highlighted by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED, 2024), Niger State has experienced more than 950 reported violent events involving bandits since 2015, with over 6,300 fatalities and thousands displaced. Such threats disrupt agricultural productivity, reduce

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human capital development, and deter both foreign and local investment. Thus, curtailing banditry becomes imperative for fostering inclusive development. The connection between state fragility and economic underperformance is further demonstrated by the African Development Bank (2023), which ranks fragile states as having average GDP growth rates of 2.4 per cent, well below the continental average of 3.8 per cent.

Nonetheless, the State Fragility Theory has received considerable scholarly criticisms. First, critics such as Chandler (2010) as well as Englebert & Tull (2019) argued that the theory tends to universalise Western state-building templates, ignoring local governance norms and adaptive resilience mechanisms. Second, some contend that the theory risks oversimplifying complex socio-political contexts by reducing them to indicators of failure, without acknowledging the agency of communities operating within fragile systems. In addition, scholars such as Olaniyan (2020) and Ezeoha (2019) argue that while fragility is evident in conflict-prone areas, localised governance structures often sustain basic order and economic activity. Likewise, Meagher (2021) notes that applying fragility labels can justify external intervention and mask the underlying economic policies that exacerbate inequality and exclusion. However, such criticisms do not diminish the explanatory value of the theory in regions where the state's inability to control violence correlates

with pervasive poverty and halted economic progress.

Pertinently, the State Fragility Theory is especially relevant in assessing the impact of banditry on economic development in Niger State, where bandit groups exploit weak security structures to extort farmers, kidnap travelers, and destroy livelihoods. Local economic activities such as farming, trading, and education have been significantly disrupted, particularly in Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya LGAs, where frequent attacks have forced the closure of over 300 schools and displacement of more than 50,000 residents. Thus, the inability of formal institutions to guarantee security reinforces informal coping mechanisms, including community vigilantes and ransom payments. These developments underscore the suitability of the State Fragility Theory for this study, as it helps in unpacking how institutional weakness fuels insecurity and, in turn, hampers economic growth. The theory also provides an analytical framework for assessing how governance failures at both state and federal levels have allowed banditry to thrive, making it apt for evaluating conditions between 2015 and 2024.

Furthermore, the theory aligns with the application of the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for measuring economic development and institutional performance. Indicators such as control of corruption, government effectiveness, and rule of law are critical for assessing whether states can address insecurity

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and foster investment. In the case of Niger State, where state capacity remains low, the indicators reflect how weak governance exacerbates conflict and stalls development. Between 2015 and 2023, Nigeria's WGI rankings in these areas have shown persistent stagnation, reflecting the difficulties in curbing insecurity and achieving inclusive growth. The theory is, therefore, adopted for this study to critically evaluate how fragility in governance has shaped the trends in banditry and economic development in Niger State from 2015 to 2024, offering a structured approach to examine the intersections of insecurity, institutional weakness, and economic stagnation.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed-method research design. The targeted population of the study is 103,712 which comprises of individuals drawn from both civil and military institutions actively involved in addressing banditry, as well as agencies responsible for coordinating economic development in Niger State. Additionally, traditional institutions and community-based organisations in selected high-risk LGAs, namely: Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai; form a vital part of the population. These groups were carefully chosen because they are positioned at the intersection of security response, community engagement, and socio-economic planning, offering crucial perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. Yammane's (1967) statistical formula was employed to

reduced the population of the study to a manageable standard of 400.

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are oral interview questionnaires and secondary sources. Stratified and Random Sampling Techniques were used in selecting the respondents among different categories for the administration of questionnaire. This study made use of tables and charts as platforms to present the research data and also analyze the data collected from the field on the subject matter using simple percentage and graphs as the case may be for the descriptive analysis. The version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 367 copies were retrieved. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 367 retrieved copies of questionnaire. The pattern of presentation was based on the objectives of the study using frequency table (frequency, count and percentage) as well as chats. The discussion of findings then followed. This was supported with information from extant literature.

Analysis on Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria.

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on banditry dynamic and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria. The responses were guided by the research

questions and objectives and presented in Figures and Tables.

Nature and Trend of Banditry and Economic Development in Niger State.

The first research question examined the nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at table 1-3 below.

Table 1: Respondent View on Determining Whether the Following Statements Describe the Operational Nature of Banditry in Niger State since 2015.

Statement	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
Armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts.	87	23.7	194	52.9	23	6.3	43	11.7	20	5.4
Bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape.	75	20.4	224	61.0	15	4.1	39	10.6	14	3.8
There has been an observable increase in locally recruited youths into bandit groups.	56	15.3	48	13.1	50	13.6	135	36.8	78	21.3
Host communities are sometimes coerced into offering temporary shelter or supplies.	87	23.7	115	31.3	23	6.3	85	23.2	57	15.5
Ransom collection after abductions funds further operations.	75	20.4	197	53.7	23	6.3	38	10.4	34	9.3
Bandit attacks are more frequent during dry seasons when access roads are usable.	105	28.6	188	51.2	17	4.6	25	6.8	32	8.7
Bandits often operate in loose networks without a	47	12.8	62	16.9	28	7.6	143	39.0	87	23.7

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Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria.

central command.										
Banditry thrives in districts with limited presence of security infrastructure.	142	38.7	178	48.5	5	1.4	22	6.0	20	5.4

Source: Author’s Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in Table 1, majority of respondents (76.6 per cent) cumulatively agreed that one of the operational nature of banditry in Niger state since 2015 is that the armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts. This aligns with recent observations that "ungoverned spaces" and remote areas with limited state presence allow organized armed groups to expand their territorial reach significantly (ACAPS, 2025). While 81.4 per cent noted that bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape a tactic confirmed by reports describing these groups as "highly mobile, armed, and largely forest-based units" that utilize motorbikes for quick-strike maneuvers (UNIDIR, 2024). In addition, the analysis shows that 58.1 per cent of the respondents cumulatively disagreed with the assertion that there has been an observable increase in locally recruited youths into bandit groups. This "intelligence gathering" by local collaborators is a noted challenge, complicating military efforts to neutralize bandit cells (Izom & Iliyasu, 2024). This implies that, bandits do not recruit from the local youths. However, some of the youths sometimes act as informant in aiding the bandits to carry-out their activities with ease. 55 per cent of the respondents cumulatively observed that the host communities are

sometimes coerced into offering temporary shelter or supplies to bandits in order to protect their lives and safeguard their communities from incessant bandit attack, while 74.1 per cent cumulatively view the nature of banditry in Niger state from the standpoint that ransom collection after abductions funds further operations.

Also, the analysis depicts that bandit attacks are more frequent during dry seasons when access roads are usable as affirmed by 79.8 per cent of respondents. Ongoing security monitoring confirms that dry season conditions facilitate the movement of armed groups, whereas the rainy season often restricts their mobility to specific forest corridors (FEWS NET, 2026). While 62.7 per cent cumulatively disagreed with the assertion that bandits often operate in loose networks without a central command. This implies that bandits operates with central command thereby making their activities somewhat organized and coordinated. A significant 87.2 per cent of respondents observed that banditry in Niger state thrives in districts with limited presence of security infrastructure. Research supports this, noting that while groups may seem fragmented, they often operate under hierarchies based on "bandit capital," such as access to weapons and followers (DIIS, 2024). This lack of a "robust and

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coordinated security framework" in rural spaces into safe havens for criminal gangs Niger State has turned vast ungoverned (IJSMPCR, 2026).

Table 2: Respondents Rating of the Following Indicators of Economic Development in their Area of Niger State amidst Banditry Attacks from 2015 to 2025.

Indicator	Significantly Improved	%	Improved	%	No Change	%	Declined	%	Significantly Declined	%
Employment-to-population ratio across rural communities	36	9.8	58	15.8	123	33.5	87	23.7	63	17.2
Access to road networks and transportation in rural LGAs	32	8.7	73	19.9	59	16.1	108	29.4	95	25.9
Access to education and vocational training for young people	31	8.4	49	13.4	85	23.2	138	37.6	64	17.4
Availability of local health services	46	12.5	82	22.3	135	36.8	68	18.5	36	9.8
Reduction in household poverty levels based on visible livelihoods improvement	38	10.4	36	9.8	87	23.7	93	25.3	113	30.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in Table 2 above, a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 40.9 per cent noted that employment-to-population ratio across rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state has significantly declined. However, a cumulative 33.5 per cent of respondents opined that employment-to-population ratio across rural communities bedeviled by banditry in Niger state, Nigeria has not change despite the bandits' mayhem; 55.3 per cent cumulatively indicated that access to road networks and transportation in rural LGAs affected by banditry in Niger State has significantly declined; while

55.0 per cent cumulatively noted that access to education and vocational training for young people has equally significantly declined.

On the other hand, 34.8 per cent of the respondents cumulatively opined that despite bandits' attacks in rural areas in Niger state, the availability of local health services has significantly improved. However, 36.8 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the posed question by asserting that there has been no recorded change in the availability of local health services in Niger state. Hence the need for government to be proactive in providing

necessary health care facilities in rural area in order to upgrade the standard of living of the people and boost economic development in Niger state. Table 2 also reveals a high number of respondents (56.1 percent) emphasizing that there is no reduction in household poverty level based on visible livelihoods improvement in Niger state due to banditry operations in the rural areas.

It could be deduced from the analysis that the socio-economic development indicators amidst banditry attacks in Niger state from 2015 to 2024 are generally perceived to be unsatisfactory and significantly declining in all dimensions. This underscores the need for the FGN and Niger state government to address the challenges of poverty and rural infrastructural development posed by banditry in order to boost the socio-economic development of Niger state towards enhancing security of lives and properties against banditry.

Richard (2024) noted in line with the foregoing analysis that the economic repercussions of kidnapping and banditry, which are loss of livelihood and investments, affect the human security of individuals and communities in Niger State which has long-term effects such as increased security measures and restrictions on daily activities that affect overall socio-economic development of individuals and communities in Niger State.

In a similar vein, recent economic assessments emphasize that Nigeria's persistent youth unemployment which

climbed to an estimated 14.2% in late 2025 among those aged 15–24 under the revised labor force framework (National Bureau of Statistics, 2025) acts as a primary driver for regional insecurity. The UNDP Nigeria Security Report (2026) further asserts that this "economic exclusion" has created a desperate labor pool for criminal franchises, where the lack of formal jobs directly correlates with the surge in banditry and kidnapping in the North Central zone. Consequently, without targeted intervention in 2026, the high rate of "NEET" youths (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) in states like Niger will continue to provide a steady supply of recruits for organized armed groups (World Bank, 2026).

The World Bank (2025) warns that this "youth bulge," characterized by millions of young Nigerians trapped in the informal economy or without prospects, has created a fertile ground for "situational criminality" including banditry and kidnapping. In Niger State specifically, the absence of viable livelihoods has fostered a "political economy of violence" where disillusioned youths are increasingly susceptible to recruitment as foot soldiers, informants, or logistical aides (Danjuma & Caleb, 2025). Consequently, if the underlying economic disenfranchisement is not addressed, the security vacuum in Niger State will continue to offer an enabling environment for the forced or voluntary integration of vulnerable youths into organized bandit groups (ActionAid Nigeria, 2026).

Table 3: Respondents Opinion on the Extent to Which the Following Economic Conditions Have Changed in Areas Affected by Recurring Bandit Attacks in Niger State between 2015 and 2025.

Statement	Greatly Increased	%	Increased	%	Remained the Same	%	Decreased	%	Greatly Decreased	%
Closure of local weekly markets and trade centers	104	28.3	175	47.7	33	9.0	29	7.9	26	7.1
Youth unemployment or withdrawal from productive engagement	97	26.4	141	38.4	46	12.5	45	12.3	38	10.4
Travel time and distance to access functional schools and clinics	133	36.2	169	46.0	23	6.3	28	7.6	14	3.8
Informal taxation or illegal levies imposed by non-state armed actors	176	48.0	137	37.3	23	6.3	20	5.4	11	3.0
Livelihood shifts from agriculture to unsafe or non-traditional survival means	135	36.8	158	43.1	34	9.3	25	6.8	15	4.1

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

The analysis on Table 3 above shows that majority of the respondents gave high ratings to all the posed indices or challenges. However, the three most highly rated of the five economic conditions that have changed in areas affected by recurring bandit attacks in Niger state between 2015 and 2024 include the following; informal taxation or illegal levies imposed by non-state armed actors (85.3 per cent), travel time and distance to access functional schools and clinics (82.2 per cent), livelihood shifts from agriculture to unsafe or non-traditional survival means (79.9 per cent). These economic conditions are considered to have significantly worsened as a result of banditry activities in Niger state, Nigeria.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Banditry on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State.

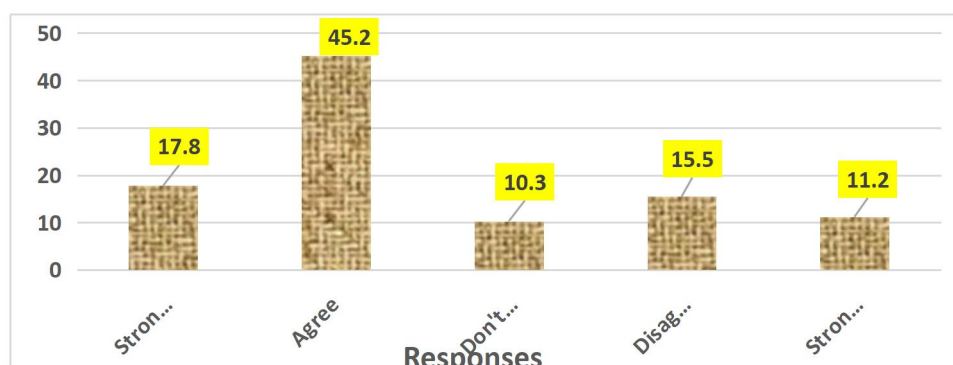
The second research question explored the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented from figure 1 to 2 and table 4 and 5 respectively.

Assessing Whether the High Rate of Displacement Due to Bandit Attacks Increased the Poverty Headcount Ratio in Niger State's Rural Communities.

The study sought the opinion of respondents on whether the high rate of

displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities. The responses are contained in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Respondents Assessment on Whether the High Rate of Displacement Due to Bandit Attacks Increased the Poverty Headcount Ratio in Niger State's Rural Communities.



Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

Figure1 depicts that a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 63 per cent hold the view that the high rate of displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities. This is more prevalent and glaring in rural areas of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai. In addition, a cumulative 26.7 per cent of respondents disagreed to the posed question. It is evident from the analysis that the recurring incidence of banditry in rural Niger State has resulted in wanton displacement of rural populace thereby exacerbating the poverty rate in the state and the country at large.

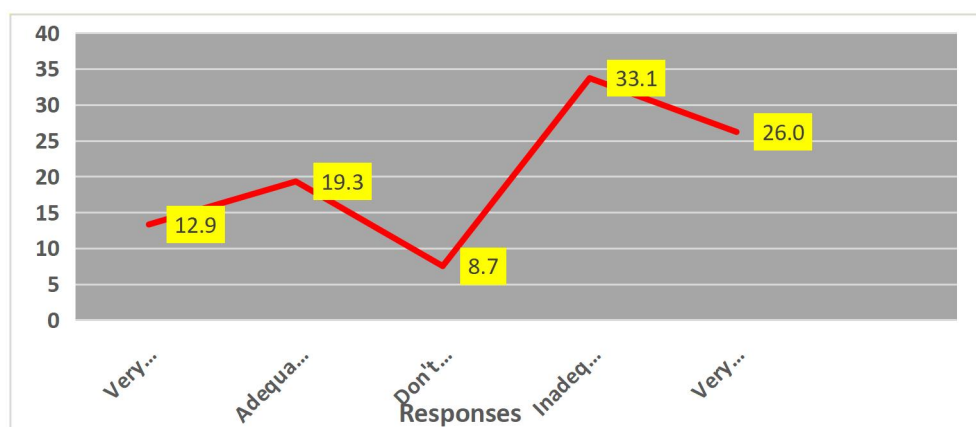
In line with the findings of the study, PwC Nigeria (2026) observes that

poverty has reached a critical threshold, with the national poverty rate projected to climb to 62%, affecting approximately 141 million Nigerians. This systemic deprivation acts as a primary catalyst for insecurity; as noted by the World Bank (2025), when individuals face a total collapse of purchasing power and cannot meet basic nutritional needs, they are increasingly pushed toward the "illicit economy" as a survival strategy. This "poverty-insecurity nexus" has directly fueled the rising wave of banditry and kidnapping across the North Central region, where criminal activity is often a desperate response to chronic economic exclusion and the absence of viable livelihoods (UNDP, 2026).

Describing the Adequacy of Existing Infrastructure in Conflict-Prone Areas of Niger State Affected by Banditry.

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of existing infrastructure like roads, power, and markets in conflict-prone areas of Niger state affected by banditry.

Figure 2: Respondents Opinion on Describing the Adequacy of Existing Infrastructure in Conflict-Prone Areas of Niger State Affected by Banditry.



Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

Figure 2 depicts that 217 (59.1 per cent) respondents cumulatively opined that the current infrastructure like roads, power and markets in conflict-prone areas of Niger state affected by banditry has been inadequate in meeting the needs of the people in banditry affected areas in the state. In addition, a cumulative 118 (32. per cent) respondents indicated that the existing infrastructure in conflict-prone areas of Niger state affected by banditry has been adequate in this regard.

In buttressing the above finding, the Niger State Ministry of Homeland Security (2025) and current sectoral analyses emphasize that the persistent deficit in rural social services and infrastructure remains the primary enabler of kidnapping and banditry. This is evidenced by the state's

2026 "Budget of Consolidation", which allocated over N761 billion (73.81% of the total budget) to capital projects specifically aimed at road construction, water supply, and electricity in underserved districts to eliminate the "ungoverned spaces" used as bandit enclaves (Niger State Government, 2026). Furthermore, UNICEF (2025) reports that in Niger State alone, approximately 71.7% of rural residents link the prevalence of kidnapping to the lack of secure social infrastructure, such as fenced schools and accessible healthcare. Consequently, there is an urgent need for the ongoing up-scaling of rural social services to bridge the "security-development gap," thereby reducing the economic vulnerability of the rural populace and curbing the recruitment potential of armed groups (Danjuma & Caleb, 2025; Bago, 2026).

Table 4: Assessing Whether the Following are Poverty-Related Consequences of Banditry in Niger State Rural Communities.

Consequences	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
Destruction of household income and savings	89	24.3	198	54.0	43	11.7	37	10.1
Increased cost of food and basic necessities	89	24.3	171	46.6	64	17.4	43	11.7
Worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty	87	23.7	185	50.4	63	17.2	32	8.7
Inaccessibility to health services due to insecurity	112	30.5	146	39.8	68	18.5	41	11.2
Overstretching of IDP camps and relief services	142	38.7	178	48.5	35	9.5	12	3.3
Loss of economic assets such as land and shops	126	34.3	165	45.0	42	11.4	34	9.3
Abandonment of housing and property	148	40.3	188	51.2	21	5.7	10	2.7
Increase in child labour and street begging	135	36.8	162	44.1	48	13.1	22	6.0

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in table 4, majority of respondents ranking 78.3 per cent were of the view that one of the poverty-related consequences of banditry in Niger state rural communities is destruction of household income and savings which arises as a result of bandits attacks on means of livelihood of the rural populace. On the other hand, 70.9 per cent noted that the consequences of banditry on rural communities in Niger state is increase in cost of food and basic necessities which is caused by the bandits nefarious activities that prevents the locals from farming for the fear of being kidnapped or killed. This without iota of doubt or contradiction has given rise to the cost of living in rural communities that were known to have cheap and affordable lifestyle prior to bandits operations in Niger state.

In addition, the analysis shows that 74.1 per cent of respondents indicated that

the worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty is another consequences of banditry activities in Niger state rural communities, while 70.3 per cent rated the banditry related consequences in Niger state to be inaccessibility to health services due to insecurity. This is because bandits sometimes destroy the healthcare facilities and other infrastructures in the rural communities. Also, the analysis depicts that the current trend of bandits attacks in rural communities of Niger state results in overstretching of IDP camps and relief services due to displacements as affirmed by 87.2 per cent of respondents, while 79.3 per cent opined that Poverty-related consequences of banditry in Niger state rural communities include loss of economic assets such as land and shops.

Furthermore, 91.5 per cent of respondents rated the consequences of

banditry related activities in Niger state to be inextricably linked to abandonment of housing and property for the fear of loss of lives emanating from banditry attacks. More so, a significant 80.9 per cent of respondents indicated that banditry in rural communities of Niger state has gave rise to increase in child labour and street begging as a result of

displacement and loss of means of livelihood orchestrated by banditry attacks.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the poverty related consequences of banditry in Niger state is overwhelming because it has defiled and retrogressed all the socio-economic indicators that would point towards development in the state.

Table 5: Respondents assessment of How Banditry has Severely Affected the Following Indicators of Economic Development in Niger State.

Indicator	Very Severe	%	Severe	%	Mild	%	Not at All	%
Employment-to-Population Ratio	155	42.2	111	30.2	58	15.8	43	11.7
Access to Basic Infrastructure (e.g., roads, electricity)	183	49.9	128	34.9	34	9.3	22	6.0
Investment Levels in Conflict-Affected LGAs	192	52.3	138	37.6	22	6.0	15	4.1
Education Access in Displacement-Affected Areas	143	39.0	135	36.8	69	18.8	20	5.4
Poverty Headcount Ratio	156	42.5	122	33.2	53	14.4	36	9.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

The analysis on Table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents gave high ratings to most of the indices or affected economic indicators. In 2025, reports indicated that insecurity in the North Central region, including Niger State, led to a significant drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as the perceived corporate risk and the "cost of doing business" skyrocketed due to the need for private security and high insurance premiums (Gbenga, 2025). Investors have increasingly refrained from capital-intensive projects in Local Government Areas (LGAs) like Shiroro and Rafi, viewing them as "red zones" where asset protection cannot be guaranteed by the state (Mustapha, 2026).

Pertinently, 89.9 per cent of respondents each cumulatively affirmed that the

investment levels in bandits conflict-affected LGAs in Niger state has been severely affected as investors lost confidence in the security of their investment thereby refrained from investing. Additionally, a cumulative 84.8 per cent of respondents gave a high rating to the assertion that access to basic infrastructure (such as roads and electricity) in rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state has been very severely affected thereby leading to a decline in standard of living among the rural populace. This aligns with the current "infrastructure-security gap." In 2025, bandit attacks on critical communal assets, including the burning of markets and destruction of rural electrification projects, were widely reported in districts such as Borgu and Rafi

(Champion Newspapers, 2026). This physical destruction has led to what researchers call "economic rural-stagnation," where the inability to transport agricultural produce to urban markets has caused a sharp decline in the standard of living for over 70% of the rural populace in the state (IOM, 2025).

More so, 75.8 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that education access in displacement-affected areas in Niger state. This is because so many school children have been abducted by bandits in Niger state and elsewhere thereby leading to the closure of schools for the safety of children and teachers in bandit affected areas in Niger state. This has tremendously hike the number of out-of-school children in the state. In line with the above finding, a major incident in November 2025 saw the kidnapping of approximately 315 students and 12 staff from St. Mary's Catholic School in Niger State, which remains one of the largest school abductions in recent years (ACAPS, 2026). Such incidents have forced the Niger State government to temporarily close over 400 schools across volatile LGAs as a precautionary measure (UNICEF, 2025). This has contributed to a "tremendous hike" in the number of out-of-school children, with current 2026 estimates indicating that thousands of learners in the state have been out of the classroom for more than two academic cycles due to the "kidnapping-for-ransom" industry (Al Jazeera, 2025; UNICEF, 2026).

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data collected in the course of the research on the socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria the following findings were arrived at:

i. Finding shows that the operational nature of banditry in Niger state since 2015 is that the armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts, this is to enable them carryout their operations and go scot-free before the arrival of security personnel whom may likely annihilate them. Bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape and they often carry out their attacks more frequently during dry seasons when access roads are usable. During raining seasons, the spate of attacks from bandits in rural communities in Niger state has been discovered to have reduced drastically. These actions by bandits in Niger state has affected and undermined and violated every socio-economic indicators of growth and development. Rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state have experienced closure of markets, imposition of illegal taxes on farmers which have made a lot of them to abandon their indigenous means of livelihood (farming) and venture into other areas of endeavors against their will. Therefore, Niger state government in collaboration with FGN must work assiduously in order to combat banditry, alleviate poverty and build infrastructure in rural communities.

ii. The findings of this study further revealed that the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State is that high

Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria.

rate of displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai which are considered the hotspots of banditry operations in Niger state. The consequences of unchecked banditry activities in Niger state are destruction of household income and savings, increase in cost of food and basic necessities, worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty, overstretching of IDP camps and relief services, abandonment of housing and property. These compounding issues resulted in the loss of investment opportunities in banditry affected areas and worsening of poverty headcount ratio. These are indeed substantial problems which collective efforts of governments, nongovernmental organization and individual philanthropy have not adequately addressed.

Conclusion

The study is an examination of banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state, Nigeria. The crisis of banditry is a big challenge in Niger state's effort at enhancing socio-economic development in bandit affected areas in the state. It is evident that the crisis of banditry threatens every sphere of socio-economic development indices and if security is not assured, myriad of challenges which affects the people's socio-economic development will arise. The absence of infrastructural development in Niger state has continue to undermine the

economic development of the state. It is therefore the duty of the government at both state and federal level to combat banditry and make the rural populace feel more secured and boost the overall economy of the state. Hence for Niger state to fully attain high level of socio-economic development, the government must take into recognition the challenges of poverty and infrastructural development posed by banditry. There is an emerging understanding that states will not be secured and cannot be secured until the people feel secured as well. The study found out among others that the frequency and trends of banditry attacks has undermined the socio-economic development of Niger state which has resulted in the destruction of household income and savings, increase in cost of food and basic necessities, worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty, overstretching of IDP camps and relief services as well as abandonment of housing and property.

Recommendations

- i. There is need for the FGN in collaboration with Niger state government to be proactive in intensifying anti-banditry security operations especially during dry seasons in order to nip in the bud all forms of operational nature of banditry as well as to pave way for socio-economic development in the state.
- ii. Government should introduce grassroots inclusive poverty alleviation programme and enhance infrastructural development in the rural areas affected by banditry in Niger state. This would enable them to recover the socio-economic loss that has been recorder as a result of

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banditry operations over a decade in the state.

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