

IMPACTS OF BANDITRY ON FARMING ACTIVITIES, AGRI-BUSINESS AND FOOD SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

The article reviewed the impacts of banditry on farming activities , Agricultural business and food security. Consequently literature materials on the subject matter were assembled from Journals , conference papers, bulletins, books etc, they were thereafter collated reviewed and discussed. the concepts of banditry and food security, were elucidated. The theoretical frame work was the theory of aggression- Frustration. Causes of banditry and effects on crop and livestock farming , Agricultural business and food security were highlighted. The implications of food scarcity, insecurity , hunger and poverty on national security were also highlighted. It was concluded that banditry activities have had a severe negative effects on farming activities, food prices and food security .It was recommended that Government should show more sincerity of purpose and pro activeness in curbing the menace of banditry .Overhauling the Nigerian security architecture and network for better results. Stepping up of strategies towards provision of job opportunities and climate change mitigation were also recommended

Keywords: Banditry, Crime, Farming Activities, Agri-Business, Food Security

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Banditry is one of the major forms of insecurity in Nigeria today, banditry activities have severe negative implications on all facets of human life including crop and livestock farming, Agricultural business and food scarcity in Nigeria. One of the cardinal objectives of agricultural development policy in Nigeria is to ensure that the nation produces enough food and depend less on importation for adequate and affordable food for all. This laudable policy has come under threat as a result of increasing incidents of herdsmen banditry activities. Banditry is one of the

most pervasive and intractable violent crimes against humanity in. Hardly a day passes without gory tales of reckless massacre of innocent peasants in their farmlands, cattle rustling, kidnapping, rape, torching of entire villages, and looting of valuables in different parts of the country.

According to Otaha (2018) most farm lands have been deserted due to herdsmen banditry activities in Nigeria which has created fear in the farmers. If this menace is unchecked, farmers will prefer to stay at home in fear, while hunger and poverty have its way in the homes of helpless farmers. Any country that fails to prepare or plan for its future, by making provision for the needed resources, food inclusive for development, that country is bound to remain in perpetual conflict in particular social, emotional as well as economic conflict. The survival and development of any nation in any aspect of life is associated with the strength and ability of that nation to handle issues and challenges with much ease, and this can only be achieved when food is available and accessible not on how much weapons of destruction is available. The greatest weapon that has kept and built nations is sufficient food supply. The challenges in Nigeria has affected farm produce as many farmers are chased out of their farm lands; some are forced to relocate to urban areas where they depend on what people can offer them. Eme *et al* (2018) posited that clashes between farmers and herdsmen have left in its trail heavy loses of lives and property. These loses of lives have adversely affected farming activities, Agricultural business and food security. This has resulted in drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has increased hunger. The disastrous consequence of herdsmen banditry activities is characterized by violent attacks and raids perpetrated by armed herdsmen, has emerged as a critical security challenge in Nigeria, posing a significant threat to food security.

Many farmers have abandoned their farms for fear of being attacked by bandit. For the predominantly farming communities of Nasarawa and Taraba States, farming is no longer business as usual. Several farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed men believed to be herdsmen bandits. In the North West, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara States have been experiencing such activities of bandits which have crippled farming activities in some parts of these states (Masara, 2019). Without food lives will be wasted that is why many developing countries and Nigeria in particular face food scarcity. Plateau

The implication of herdsmen banditry on food security is multifaceted and far-reaching. The direct loss of crops and livestock due to raids and theft has severely impacted agricultural productivity, leading to a decline in food availability and exacerbating existing food shortages.

The displacement of farmers has further disrupted agricultural production cycles, hindering their ability to access and cultivate their lands. According to Food and

Herdsmen banditry activities have triggered a food emergency across Nigeria, with over 950,000 people fleeing farms and rural markets. The US government's Famine Early Warning Systems Network, known as FEWS NET, has predicted "catastrophic" levels of hunger in parts of the region which means famine for some households (Hassan, 2021). More so, the attacks on rural villagers and farmers, and the consequent displacement of many more, have made farming, cultivation, and harvest impossible. These developments increase the chances of food insufficiency, food scarcity, poverty, hunger, and malnutrition (Igbini, 2020). Crop and livestock farming is the major means of livelihood of rural dwellers in Nigeria; the disruption of farming activities due to the menace of herdsmen banditry attacks would certainly affect agricultural productivity with serious consequences for food scarcity.

Nigeria is a nation with rich agricultural potential, but has been grappling with the dire consequences of herdsmen banditry activities. The incessant herdsmen banditry activities have become a source of concern and worry to the host communities, farmers, rural dwellers and Nigerians at large. Herdsmen banditry activities have taken center stage terrorising villages and disrupting agricultural activities. These disruptions have truncated agricultural supply creating food scarcity leading to inflated prices of agricultural produce (Daphne, 2022).

This review examines the implications of banditry on farming activities, agricultural business and food security in Nigeria, given that this problem has assumed a very dangerous dimension and requires urgent solution

2.0 **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

2.1 **Concept of Banditry**

Banditry is derived from the word bandit, which means an unlawful armed group terrorizing people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang or groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. According to Egwu (2016), banditry is a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. However, when banditry is construed from a myopic point of *view*, it is regarded as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding of cattle from their ranches (Abdullahi, 2019). Uche and Iwuamadi (2018) asserted that banditry has become criminal escapade like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and the brazen and gruesome massacre of people of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by

suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims, a development that has been brought to the front burner of national security.

In this sense, banditry is a national security threat whereby the leaders and the led could become victims at any time. Shalangwa (2018) posited that 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-organized 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. Put differently, bandits are gang groups terrorizing and dispossessing local people or travelers of their valuable items or properties such as merchandise, money, cattle, camel, and sheep, among others. Abdullahi (2019) observed that bandits operate within and along rural borders with the assistance of their local collaborators including in some cases, state agents deployed to work for the safety and security of the people. That is, bandits usually have syndicate in form of informants who provides them with information about their target victims before or after attacking the victims.

Contrary to the views above, banditry may involve incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) reiterated that banditry is the use of force, or threat to intimate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill. Although every bandit attack is motivated in one way or the other, but herdsmen-farmers conflicts are also considered as likely factor that promulgated unlawful possession of firearms. Perhaps this explains why herdsmen banditry is closely linked to the conflicts between herdsmen and farmers with unceasing massacres, cattle rustling, and displacement of residents (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019)

2.2 Concept of Food Scarcity/ Food Security

There is no doubt that food security is an essential issue that concerns every human- old and young, man and woman. Food security involves adequate production and distribution of food items to those who desire it (Eme *et al* 2014). However, when food availability is not sufficient for those who desire it, then there is food scarcity. On the other hand, food scarcity is used to replace food insecurity because it involves inaccessibility and non-availability of food stuff, stability of supplies and the quality of the diet (Honfoga, 2018).

Austin (2015) opined that food security is the availability of food and access to it whereas non-availability and inaccessibility of food items for everyone amount to scarcity of food. There

is no food scarcity or insecurity when people are not hungry or in fear of starvation. That is, food scarcity occur when majority of the population do not have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food scarcity is not only about having insufficient and inadequate quantities of various food items at affordable prices, it further means that there is need for mass food production, and the need to ensure that majority of the population have sufficient purchasing power to acquire food items that guarantee good feeding and nutrition.

Talibah (2018) observed that food scarcity affects purchasing power of many people since scarcity of food brings about inflation in food prices thereby hindering good feeding habit and better diet. Adebayo (2017) revealed that food scarcity situation prevalent in the Nation's households. The components of food scarcity are availability, stability, accessibility and utilization (Adebayo, 2017). Food availability is the sufficient quantity and quality of food supply for households through production or through purchase from market given sufficient purchasing power. Stability of food is the supply of food without any fluctuations or shortages from season to season and from year to year. This requires improvement on storage facilities to reduce to the barest minimum food loses. Access to food is dependent on affordability which is assured when households obtain appropriate food for nutritious diet, and the key determinants of food access are economic, physical, political and socio-cultural factors which may likely stand as a barrier for accessing food when it is needed. Utilisation of food deal with taking the right food that is adequately and nutritionally balanced especially to children, pregnant and nursing mothers as well as the elderly who need adequate diet for their well-being (Adebayo, 2017). Food scarcity is a serious plight that could lead to hunger and starvation with resultant effects such as sickness and diseases, stealing, robbery, banditry and kidnapping to mention but a few.

USAID (2019) identified positive effects of non-scarcity of food in the steady development in secured human dignity; real opportunities to explore available resources; ensure justice; ensure security at the highest level; unlock a vast resource of human innovation; stronger and a healthier nation; uplift economy and at the same time improve household income; guarantee better future for children where their brains are developed for better educational activities; experience less hunger and focus on other important things that will bring development in the area of science and technology; and it ensures a better place for all. Evidently, ensuring non-scarcity of food is essential to peaceful coexistence of Nigerians irrespective of tribe, religion and region.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Theory of Frustration-aggression

This theory was put forward by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears in 1939 to explain the reason why people behave aggressively especially when their expected goals are thwarted. The theory was further developed by Miller and his other colleagues in 1941 and by Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. The principal hypothesis which was proposed by Dollard and his colleagues argued that aggressive behaviour often leads to aggression. This implies that frustration possibly leads to aggressive behaviour which in turn leads to resistance or rather an attempt to block the source of frustration. This is what they interpreted as responses to vices thwarting ones expected goal.

This was further interpreted by Dennen (2015) when he sees the term frustration not only as a process of blocking one's attainment of a re-enforcer but also as a reaction to such blockage. Dollard (1999) in their hypothesis see the motivational strength of aggression as a function: the reinforcement value of the frustrated goal response, the degree of frustration of this response, and the number of frustrated response sequences. Apparently, aggressive drive resulting from frustration, in one way or the other, is maintained within the individual or group of individuals and may lead to intolerable frustration which may provoke aggressive behaviours. They argued that the strength of any hostile or aggressive reaction against the source of frustration depends on the level, extent or amount of the residual instigation. The above theory, therefore explain the reason or otherwise principal cases of herdsmen banditry activities in Nigeria, in which the people are frustrated. This was further interpreted by Dennen (2015) when he sees the term frustration not only as a process of blocking one's attainment of a re-enforcer but also as a reaction to such blockage.

This theory is relevant to the study because food scarcity exists when people lack sustainable physical or economic access to enough safe, nutritious, and socially acceptable food for a healthy and productive life.' This may also result in severe social, psychological, and behavioural consequences. On the other hand, scarcity of food may manifest feelings of alienation, powerlessness, anxiety, stress, and reduced productivity, reduced work, social performance, and reduced income earnings, and this has direct effects on the economic development of the individuals. Frustration is the condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference, while aggression is defined as an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism.

The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. This theory is also used to

explain riots and revolutions, which both are believed to be caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence. The herdsmen banditry activities are traceable to the desertification that has caused depletion in grazing opportunities or scarcity of feeds and water for their animals which in the long run affects their economic wellbeing. If a herdsmen loses his flock to drought and water scarcity, he may be frustrated because of the loss of livelihood. From this reality, he may be aggressive and since, he cannot channel it to the natural causes, he may in the long-run channel it to any person or group that obstructs his migration to a safe area. On the side of farmers and host communities in Nigeria frustration also occurs whenever animals of the herdsmen trample on their farmlands to eat up their crops. And because they are frustrated too, they become aggressive and channel their aggression to the herdsmen and their cattle.

It was too general to assume that frustration must always lead to aggression or that aggression is always propelled by frustration. The increasing herdsmen banditry activities across the country are largely driven by frustrations and struggles to generate economic assets. The alarming acts of banditry such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, physical attacks and encroachments on farms are bred by frustrations. The aggression is as a result of frustration which results from herdsmen inability to attain their goals. Accordingly, herdsmen banditry activities are the product of aggressive behaviour which results from issues such as poverty and unemployment, among others.

2.4 Causes of Banditry in Nigeria

The causes of banditry activities have been linked to the policy gap, poor grazing lands, land ownership system and utilization, increase in production due to the increase in population, climate change, induced competition for resources, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage and environmental degradation (Fasona *et al.*, 2016). Accordingly, Adoji, (2018) corroboratively asserts that the main cause of herdsmen banditry activities has been the change in climate occasioned by the absence of adequate rainfall, poor grazing land for their animals and lack of coping mechanisms by the herdsmen.

There are speculations about some politicians and government officials sponsoring banditry, insurgency and other violent crimes, for political and selfish reasons, there are stories of mercenaries brought in from some neighbouring countries for purpose of voting, intimidation and causing violence, most of them are dumped by their politician sponsors after the election and consequently become bandits, insurgents, armed robbers

2.5 Effects of Herdsmen Banditry Activities on Food Scarcity

Banditry activities have contributed to food scarcity , high cost of food items and have hindered agricultural business transactions. Okoli (2016) asserted that herdsmen banditry has increased astronomically in terms of scale and intensity with the use of sophisticated weapons in perpetrating armed robbery, assassination, cattle rustling and kidnapping. In other words, herdsmen bandit groups have metamorphosed to armed robbers who raid villages, households, shops and markets for the purpose of looting. Besides, the bandits involve in highway robbery and kidnapping, which is a common experience in Nigeria today. In fact, there is a continual interception of farmers, motorists with travelers on the various highways along Abuja-Kaduna, Kaduna-Zaria, Ibadan-Lagos, Ondo-Okene, and Onisha-Ore axes (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019) This has negatively affected agricultural business , since the transportation of food from one place to another is hindered. Kidnapping is a crime committed for the purpose of ransom; the rich and the poor, male and female, as well as old and young are now victims of this crime.

Okoli and Ugwu (2019) stated that apart from mass kidnapping of farmers, kidnapping in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States involves highway-armed abduction whereby travellers conveying farm produce are ambushed and abducted by bandits and then taken to a hideout in the forest where their relatives or associates are contacted for ransom payment. Yaro and Tobias (2019) observed that sometimes, bandit attacks are reprisals attack on a rivalry village or group. Also, Gadzama, *et al* (2018) maintained that a reasonable number of bandits engage in cattle rustling. It is a form of organized cattle theft driven by allied accumulative or profiteering inclinations. Herdsmen bandits are criminal gangs engaging in organized herdsmen banditry to profit from livestock theft (Asmau & Abdurashied, 2020). Herdsmen banditry activities have reached alarming rates with unbearable destructions across the nooks and crannies of the Nigerian society. Evidently, herdsmen banditry is a new monster in Nigeria now as reports confirmed series of killings, maiming, lootings in towns and villages. According to the Nigeria Watch Project's (2016) report on fatality trends, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau account for the majority of incidents of violent deaths. Suleiman (2017) found that there were 55 separate Fulani attacks in 14 different States resulting in over one thousand deaths. In most recent years Plateau State has been witnessing bandits attacks , especiaaly in Bokkos ,Barkin Ladi, Jos town and other parts of the state

The herdsmen banditry activities have covered all Nigerian regions with records of losses by different social classes. In fact, the frequency, intensity and sophisticated weapons employed in the attacks were in a scale never witnessed before. Blench (2016) found that the attendant number

of farmers casualties and population displacement across farming communities are worrisome. Herdsmen banditry activities involves acts of robbery and violence on the people, especially rural dwellers who mainly engaged in farming, cattle rearing and other food production activities; it is bound to have negative effects on food scarcity.

It is evident that one of the most challenging issues in Nigeria today is food scarcity and how to provide sufficient food to over two hundred million citizens in Nigeria. World Data Lab (2020) revealed that Nigeria has an estimated population 205,323,520 people and has 102,407,327 people living below poverty line (50% of the total population). By implication, about 50% cannot feed adequately due to economic standpoint of the nation whereby food items are being stricken with hyper inflation. Food scarcity in Nigeria is currently at alarming rate demanding urgent and immediate intervention of the relevant stakeholders. In fact, the reports of Global Food Security Index (GFSI) had continued to rank and score Nigeria low since 2012 till date.

According to Idris *et al* (2020), Nigeria's ranking in Global Food Security Index (GFSI) has continued to increase since 2018 (ranked 86 among 107 countries with 33/100 score) and reached a disturbing rank of 94 (with 48.4/100 score) 2019 among 113 countries behind Ethiopia, Niger and Cameroon in 2020 GFSI overall ranking table (the closer to 100 score the better). The above shows that Nigeria is having shortfall in food production. The sorry state of food scarcity in Nigeria is occasioned by chronic and hidden hunger, extreme poverty, corruption, communal conflicts, banditry and insurgency as well as climate change. This is supported by the Global Hunger Index (GHI) (2019) reports where Nigeria has a GHI score of 27.9%, which falls in the serious category of nations with food problem.

By implication, these data confirmed that Nigeria is not yet on the track in attaining the SDG2 target of ending all forms of hunger, achieve food sufficiency and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. The reports further lend credence to increased rates of undernourished from 9.3% in 2000 to 13.4% in 2019 while a slight decrease was reported in low-purchasing power from 39.7% to 37% in 2019 (GHI, 2019; Centre for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2019). This explains why chronic and seasonal food scarcity persist in every part of Nigeria, escalated by frequent high food prices, impact of conflict related to bandits attacks and insurgency, communal pastoralist farmer crises, kidnapping, cattle rustling and climate change (FEWS NET, 2020).

There is no doubt that most of the farm produces are done in the northern part of Nigeria, and this same region is bedeviled with herdsmen banditry and terrorism at about 73% in recent

times (World Bank, 2018). Agriculture, a major source of livelihood for people in these areas, and other income generating activities were disrupted leading to reduced household income and low food production (USAID, 2019). The trajectory of the phenomenon of herdsmen banditry in Nigeria can be explained from the overall decline in the capacity of the nation to regulate, extract and distribute farm produce to meet the yearnings of the people.

2.6 Implications of Banditry Activities on the Price of Agricultural Farm Produce/ Agricultural Business

Since 2019, Nigeria as a country has been experiencing series of Security threats starting from herdsmen activities, kidnapping and terrorism to abduction for ransom. These problems continue to increase daily in Nigeria, especially in the rural areas, domiciled by farmers (Hamza, 2021). Killing of Farmers, cattle theft, and destruction of farmers farms are all compounding the distresses of Nigerian farmers whose efforts produces a greater percentage of food consumed in the country (Hamza, 2021). Recently, the herdsmen banditry activities has worsened the risks of severe food crisis in Nigeria, as majority of the farmers now stay away from their farms due to fear. According to Luminous (2021), besides farmer displacement, insecurity has hindered agricultural activities which heightened the risk of serious food price hike in Nigeria.

Wole (2021) discovered that many farmers with large farm lands, with different crops such as yam, Maize, millet, and others had to abandon their farm and the product due to the invasion of the community by bandits, which caused the loss of everything including foodstuffs, domestic animals, houses, barns and valuables for the farmers. Additionally, the activities of the herdsmen banditry in most rural settlements across the country has a significant effect on the farming system, and banditry attacks on farmers have a significant impact on food security and these had increased the prices of food items in Nigeria due to the scarcity of food production.

Without an iota of doubt, Nigeria is already enmeshed in food price hike crisis; the virtual war situation across the nation is at the root of the rising food scarcity leading to higher food prices. The petroleum products subsidy removal by the Tinubus regime in 2023 and subsequent increases in the pump price of petrol and other petroleum products in 2024 has further worsened matters. Herdsmen banditry activities have dealt a massive blow to food production (Global Report on Food Crisis, 2021). Even in parts of the south, villagers are being rendered homeless, seeking protection and safety in smaller neighbouring communities around them. Farmers have turned to beggars in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps. This, alone, create more despair among the populace as the attacks from the criminals persist and succor is not in sight. It is such

a desperate situation; they concluded that there is, no doubt, that the spate of insecurity is dealing a big blow on food production in the country (Kah, 2017).

2.7 Impact of Food Scarcity on Socio-Economic Activities

Socio-economic development is a very wide and interesting concept because of its centrality to nations among other reasons. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere, mostly of an economic nature (Chojnicki, 2020). Okoli (2016) posited that the socio-economic activities in Nigeria and Northern states of Nigeria have experienced a significant decline. Agricultural productivity has been severely affected, as farmers are reluctant to go to their farms due to the herdsmen banditry activities. Farming activities have been repeatedly disrupted, leading to scarcity of food in Nigeria. Additionally, economic activities have been heavily impacted, as farmers and traders are compelled to pay taxes to the bandits before conducting their daily economic activities, causing economic losses.

The herdsmen banditry activities in Nigeria has reduced the rate of food production in the country, thereby making farmers not to produce food in surplus as a result of fear of being killed on their various farmlands by the herdsmen. This has negative effects on the moral of farmers to plant more crops. Abdullahi (2019) argued that family farming play a crucial role in the fight against food insecurity in developing countries. They observed that this type of agriculture helps to meet the subsistence needs and generate income for the poor and, on the other hand, contributes to a healthy and balanced diet.

Women also participate in various socio-economic activities and play critical roles in the economic development of Nigeria. Raji, Olumoh, and Ajibade (2018), women in the northern region, including the Northwest, are involved in various social and economic activities that are of great benefit to the country, such as weaving and dyeing, bead and jewellery making, iron smelting, agriculture, handicrafts, food processing, pottery, and livestock production. Some agricultural activities such as fishing, livestock production, animal rearing, and cattle breeding also involve the role of women. In addition, cultural activities also receive appropriate attention, with festivals being organised to promote culture and deepen peace and unity among the community.

Folarin (2017), the Argungu Culture and Fisheries Festival in the North West is an annual social activity that predates Nigeria's independence. The festival is an annual social event where communities come together to participate in Fisheries and Cultural exercises near the Matan Fada River. The above progress and many more others recorded in the socio-economic activities of the North-west have apparently been eroded by herdsmen banditry activities that have

bedeviled the people of the region for years. The bandits are moved by quest for economic accumulation while the victims are individuals and communities with material valuables. Herdsmen banditry activities in Nigeria involve armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, sexual violence and village raids (Abubakar & Ibrahim (2020). There is a devastating effect of banditry on food security especially in Kastina state where farmers are kidnapped, taken to the forest and huge amount of money paid before they are released. This dreadful condition impoverishes farmers by forcing them to sell their assets, including their fields, in order to obtain money for ransom (Suleiman & Bilkisu, 2020).

2.8 Measures to Curb Banditry in Nigeria

Agriculture is the mainstay of livelihood of farmers with over 70% of the source of food supply in Nigeria. Moreover, food is seen as very vital to all human life and its provision is indeed one of the basic functions of the state through its agency all over the globe. Every reasonable government ensures that its citizenry is well feed by creating an enabling environment for adequate and affordable food for its people (Bamisaga, 2015). The government of Nigeria over the years has employed various strategies in tackling the effect of herdsmen banditry activities on food scarcity. The recent escalation of herdsmen banditry activities in Nigeria and its negative implication on food scarcity raises a fundamental question about the government readiness (Emmanuel, 2020).

The federal government and various state governments embarked on several measures to address the issue of banditry and insecurity in the country. The initial reaction was the bombardments of the various abodes of the bandits by the military and police under different code names, but this did not yield much significant result (Emmanuel, 2020). The state governments have also tried to negotiate and give amnesty to repentant bandits. While this initially worked, the result did not last (Emmanuel, 2020). For instance, the Nigerian government has launched multiple military operations in the northern region to curtail the banditry menace from 2019 to the present, including Operation Harbin Kunama and Exercise Sahel Sanity (Mohammed, 2021). A new military offensive was launched in Zamfara in September 2021, combined with a telecommunications blackout, and bans on the sale of fuel in jerry cans to try to blunt the bandits' mobility. But the measures have simply pushed the bandits into neighbouring states (Hassan, 2021). Thus, the Nigeria state has employed numerous strategies to put an end to banditry through its security agencies, by establishing several operations leading to the arrest of many culprits and seizure of numerous weapons from

armed bandits, yet the problem continued to spread like wildfire which poses threat to Nigeria's national security (Usman & Singh, 2021).

The state security machinery has so far failed to tackle the scourge of herdsmen banditry. This failure stems from a lack of political will and operational challenges (Okoli, 2016). As banditry attacks have continued, the affected population has expressed a lack of trust in the army and police and their ability to prevent the reoccurrence of this ugly development. Residents and survivors in affected states have complained that responses from the police and army were slow, and sometimes non-existent when they are attacked (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Consequently, numerous victims of the civilian populations believed that the military are complicit, unwilling, or unable to secure them. They distrust the military and are unwilling to share information or collaborate with them (Musa, 2021). In some communities /towns it was the local vigilante groups and or hunters that repelled and kept the bandits at bay, this was the case in Mubi, Adamawa state in 2019

Declaring the herdsmen bandits as terrorists is necessary to ensure that the requisite level of force, tactical and operational assets, and resources are deployed against the groups (Musa, 2021). But the designation of bandits as terrorists has barely changed anything. Days after the announcement of bandits as terrorists, an estimated 200 farmers were killed and 10,000 displaced in attacks by bandits (Egbejule, 2022). Thus, in its bid to contain the herdsmen bandits, the government has declared them terrorists. However, bandits have continued to wax stronger and bolder in their fight against farming activities and farmers (Gimba, 2022)

4.0 DISCUSSION

It is being speculated that politicians have a hand in the current banditry/insecurity in Nigeria and some have put it succinctly that politicians are the sponsors of banditry and other forms of security challenges in Nigeria. Some political thugs used during elections by politicians and dumped, end up using the weapons given to them for banditry activities, armed robberies , insurgencies etc, Banditry and insurgency may be viewed as cross border crimes of which curbing will require international cooperation, given that the bandits and insurgents have wide networks . Some of the bandit groups have collaborators in other countries, some are arms or branches of larger terrorist groups like Boko Haram, Al Shaba, Al Queada etc. . Curbing banditry and indeed terrorist activities will require a multi national approach

Food insecurity, hunger and poverty are national security issues that must be taken seriously.

Food supply or starvation has been used as a weapon of war. Dependence on food importation by any country is potentially dangerous, because it can be used against such countries when things gets sour.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Banditry has had a severe negative effects on Agriculture, agricultural business and food security. It has led to loss of lives , properties , food scarcity and food inflation and hence poverty and low standard of living

5.2 Recommendations

Government should show more sincerity of purpose and pro activeness in curbing the menace of banditry .

Overhauling the Nigerian security architecture and network for better results.

Stepping up of strategies towards provision of job opportunities and climate change mitigation

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