**International Journal of Strategic Leadership, Education and Social Sciences (IJSLESS)**
Volume-2/Issue-1/January-March, 2026.
Print ISSN: 3115-4417; E-ISSN: 3115-4409.

**Original Research Article**

# AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF BANDITRY ON FARMING ACTIVITIES AND WEALTH LOSS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF KATSINA STATE

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**ABSTRACT:** This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examined the effects of banditry on farming activities and wealth loss in rural communities of Katsina State. The design enabled the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from a representative sample, providing insights into the relationship between rural banditry and socioeconomic outcomes. The study population comprised residents of Batsari, Jibia, and Kankara LGAs who had directly or indirectly experienced the effects of banditry, including farmers, traders, students, teachers, community leaders, and local government officials. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn using a multistage sampling technique, ensuring representation across communities and occupational groups. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering demographic information, the impact of bandit attacks on farmlands and farming activities, and the effects of cattle rustling on household wealth and income. The instrument was validated by experts and pilot-tested, achieving a high reliability score (Cronbach's Alpha = .828). Questionnaires were administered with the assistance of interpreters for illiterate respondents, and data collection adhered to ethical research standards. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics (Chi-square tests) at .05 significance level. Findings revealed that bandit attacks significantly disrupted farming activities, forcing farmers to abandon farmlands, reducing crop yields, and raising food prices ($\chi^2 = 62.87$, $p < .05$). Additionally, cattle rustling substantially undermined household wealth, driving many families into poverty ($\chi^2 = 58.43$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that rural banditry exerts a profound negative impact on agriculture, income generation, and socioeconomic stability in affected communities, highlighting the urgent need for targeted security and developmental interventions. The study recommended among other that the Katsina State Government should strengthen the rural security architecture by integrating community-based vigilante groups with formal security agencies and deploying modern surveillance tools for effective intelligence and rapid response.

**Keywords:** Banditry, Cattle Rustling, Farming Activities, Household Wealth, Rural Communities, Socioeconomic Impact, Katsina State, Insecurity, Agricultural Productivity, Rural Livelihoods.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Garba, M., & Rabiu, A. (2026). An assessment of the effects of banditry on farming activities and wealth loss in rural communities of Katsina State. *International Journal of Strategic Leadership, Education and Social Sciences, 2*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18563848.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, insecurity has increasingly posed one of the greatest challenges to socioeconomic development in Nigeria, particularly in the North-Western region. Rural banditry,

characterized by cattle rustling, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, destruction of farms, and violent attacks on rural communities, has emerged as a significant security threat. Unlike terrorism or insurgency, which is largely ideologically motivated rural banditry in Nigeria is predominantly driven by economic motives, revenge, and resource competition. However, it has evolved into a crisis of multidimensional proportions (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019; Nte, 2020).

Katsina State is located in Nigeria's North-West geopolitical zone and sharing a long porous border with the Republic of Niger, is among the states most affected by rural banditry. The state is largely agrarian, with more than 70% of its population engaged in farming and livestock production (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022). Agriculture and livestock remain the primary sources of food, income, and employment for rural households. However, rural banditry has severely undermined these livelihoods by forcing farmers off their farmlands, disrupting rural markets, rustling cattle, kidnapping villagers, and imposing illegal taxes on communities (International Crisis Group, 2020; Umar, 2021).

Rural banditry and its associated impacts on the lives of citizens particularly in the North-West region of Nigeria have become a serious threat to national security and development (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). Recent reports indicate the proliferation of bandit groups whose members display automatic weapons, terrorize herders' settlements, farms, villages, and highways, and engage in killings, kidnappings, and cattle rustling (Olaniyan, 2018). Olapeju and Peter (2021) observed that the intensity of bandit activities in the North-West has led to widespread kidnappings, killings, displacement, cattle losses, and disruption of socioeconomic activities, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear among citizens.

Similarly, Egwu (2016) noted that the scale of bandit operations in Nigeria has resulted in the displacement of students from schools, rampant kidnappings, and general social disorder. Umaru (2020) maintained that the situation has led to the strategic neglect of rural communities in terms of socioeconomic development. Many rural areas now suffer from poor road networks, inadequate healthcare facilities, and limited educational infrastructure. Additionally, poorly managed forest reserves have become safe havens for criminal groups.

Despite the severity of the challenge, Bagu and Smith (2017) noted that organized research on banditry remains at its nascent stage. However, scholars such as Kuna and Ibrahim (2016) and the Centre for Democratic and Development (2015) have contributed to the literature by examining the impacts of rural banditry and proposing recommendations for addressing the problem. Yet, there remains a gap in understanding the full socioeconomic impact of banditry on rural communities and formulating sustainable solutions. This underscores the need for an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon to provide practical recommendations for policy and development.

The drivers of rural banditry in Katsina State are multifaceted. Weak governance and inadequate security presence in rural areas create opportunities for armed groups to operate with relative impunity (Iyekekpolo, 2021). Environmental challenges such as desertification, climate variability, and shrinking grazing lands have intensified farmer–herder conflicts, creating fertile ground for violent escalation (Blench, 2019). Additionally, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, coupled with poverty, unemployment, and youth marginalization, sustains cycles of violence (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014; Alabi, 2021).

The socioeconomic impacts of rural banditry on citizens of Katsina State are severe and multidimensional:

- Agricultural productivity decline: Many farmers have abandoned their farmlands due to fear of attacks, leading to reduced cultivation, post-harvest losses, and increased food insecurity (Musa, 2020). Reports indicate that Katsina has experienced a significant drop in food production, contributing to rising food prices nationwide (FAO, 2021).
- Loss of income and assets: Rural households lose cattle, farm produce, and savings to bandit attacks and ransom payments, deepening poverty and reducing intergenerational wealth transfer (Umar & Ndatsu, 2022).
- Displacement and market disruption: Bandit attacks force mass displacements, creating internally displaced persons (IDPs) who depend on humanitarian assistance. Local markets have collapsed as traders and farmers avoid insecure areas (World Bank, 2020).
- Education and human capital loss: Many schools in affected LGAs such as Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Kankara, Faskari, and Dandume have been closed due to insecurity, undermining children's education, especially for girls (UNICEF, 2021). The mass abduction of schoolchildren, notably the December 2020 Kankara incident, underscores this impact.
- Health and nutrition challenges: Displacement, restricted mobility, and economic hardship reduce access to healthcare and nutritious food. Women and children are the most affected, facing malnutrition and poor maternal health outcomes (UNDP, 2021).
- Psychosocial and gendered impacts: Communities experience trauma, breakdown of trust, and increased vulnerability of women to gender-based violence, particularly in displacement settings (Olayoku, 2020).
- Weakening of governance and rural institutions: Bandits often impose levies, enforce local rules, and act as parallel authorities, thereby eroding state legitimacy in rural areas (Akinyetun, 2021).

Scholars and policy experts argue that the crisis of rural banditry has evolved beyond a security issue into a major developmental challenge. It undermines household welfare, food security, educational attainment, and social cohesion, while deterring investment and service delivery (Adamu, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020). The persistence of rural banditry has widened inequality and deepened poverty across Katsina communities.

Hence, investigating the socioeconomic impact of rural banditry on Katsina State citizens is essential. Such a study provides empirical evidence to guide policymakers, security agencies, and development partners in designing integrated interventions that combine security measures with socioeconomic empowerment, rural development, and community resilience strategies.

**Statement of the Problem**

Banditry has emerged as one of the most critical security challenges confronting rural communities in Katsina State, Nigeria, with far-reaching consequences for agriculture and household livelihoods. Farming remains the primary economic activity and source of sustenance for the majority of rural residents in the state. However, persistent attacks by armed bandits characterized by killings, kidnappings, cattle rustling, destruction of crops, and forced displacement have severely disrupted farming activities and undermined the economic stability of affected communities. Many farmers now cultivate their lands under fear or have completely abandoned their farmlands, leading to reduced agricultural output and declining food availability.

Despite government interventions and security operations, banditry continues to threaten rural economies, resulting in significant wealth loss among farming households. Livestock theft,

destruction of farm produce, loss of farm inputs, and the inability to access markets have impoverished many families and deepened rural poverty. The erosion of agricultural livelihoods has also contributed to food insecurity, rising prices of food commodities, and increased dependence on external assistance.

Although several studies have examined insecurity in northern Nigeria, there remains a gap in empirical evidence that specifically assesses the effects of banditry on farming activities and the extent of wealth loss among rural communities in Katsina State. Without a clear understanding of how banditry affects agricultural practices and household assets, policy responses may remain inadequate or poorly targeted. Therefore, this study seeks to systematically assess the effects of banditry on farming activities and wealth loss in rural communities of Katsina State, with a view to providing evidence-based insights that can inform effective security, agricultural and rural development interventions.

## Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the socioeconomic impact of rural banditry on citizens in Katsina State**.** The specific objectives are to:

- Determine the effects of bandit attacks on farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State.
- Evaluate the implications of cattle rustling on the wealth and livelihoods of individuals in the affected communities.

## Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions are formulated to guide the investigation:

- How do bandit attacks affect farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State?
- What are the implications of cattle rustling on the wealth and livelihoods of individuals in the affected communities?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the course of this study:

- Bandit attacks have no significant effect on farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State.
- Cattle rustling have no significant implication for the wealth of individuals living in the affected communities of Katsina State.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Human Security Theory

Human Security Theory emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional, state-centered notions of security that focused primarily on territorial integrity and military threats. The theory was formally articulated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1994, which redefined security as the protection of individuals rather than states. According to the UNDP (1994), human security emphasizes "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," recognizing that threats to human well-being extend beyond armed conflict to include poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation, and economic instability.

Human Security Theory identifies seven interrelated dimensions of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (UNDP, 1994). These dimensions highlight how insecurity in one area often triggers vulnerability in others. For rural populations whose livelihoods depend largely on agriculture, economic and food security are particularly critical. When violence or criminality disrupts farming systems, the effects ripple through household income, nutrition, social stability, and long-term development prospects.

In the context of rural communities, Human Security Theory provides a powerful framework for understanding how violent activities such as banditry undermine everyday survival. Banditry threatens personal security through killings, abductions, and intimidation, while simultaneously eroding economic and food security by forcing farmers to abandon farmlands, lose livestock, and forgo access to markets (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). These interconnected threats create a cycle of vulnerability in which fear limits productive activity, leading to poverty and further exposure to insecurity.

The theory also emphasizes the importance of livelihood protection as a core element of security. Scholars argue that when people lose access to productive assets such as land, livestock, and farm inputs, their resilience to shocks diminishes significantly (Kaldor, 2007). In agrarian settings, farming activities are not only economic pursuits but also the foundation of social identity and community stability. Disruption of agriculture therefore represents a profound human security crisis rather than a mere economic setback.

Human Security Theory is particularly relevant to studies on rural insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa, where non-state armed groups and criminal networks increasingly target farming communities. Research shows that insecurity in rural areas often leads to displacement, declining agricultural output, and the depletion of household wealth, reinforcing long-term poverty and dependence (FAO, 2016). Through the framing of these outcomes as human security issues, the theory broadens policy responses beyond military solutions to include social protection, agricultural support, and community-based security mechanisms.

Critically, Human Security Theory advocates for people-centered and preventive approaches to insecurity. Rather than reacting solely to violent incidents, it encourages addressing structural factors such as unemployment, weak governance, rural marginalization, and lack of social services that make communities vulnerable to violence (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). This holistic orientation makes the theory highly suitable for analyzing how banditry affects farming activities and wealth loss in rural communities, as it links insecurity to development failures and livelihood erosion.

Human Security Theory provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the multifaceted effects of banditry on rural farming communities. Integrating personal safety, economic survival, and food production into a single analytical framework, the theory offers valuable insights for research and policy aimed at restoring agricultural productivity, protecting rural wealth, and promoting sustainable peace and development.

## CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

### Banditry

Conceptually, banditry is a derivative of the term bandit meaning an unlawful armed group terrorising people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. Due to the complex nature of bandits' activities, Egwu (2016) in a restricted manner, described banditry as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding of cattle from their ranches. In the same vein, banditry is reflected in criminal escapades 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 (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018).

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.

However, where the term banditry is connected to rural, it implies a group of rural outlawed involved in illicit activities such as raiding of villages, kidnappings and cattle rustling for primitive accumulation of wealth. Thus, bandits are gang groups terrorising and dispossessing local people or travellers of their valuable items or properties such as merchandise, money, cattle, camel, and sheep, among others. They 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 (Abdullahi, 2019).

In another sense, banditry refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Aslam, 2018). Economic or political interests motivate banditry. The former refers to banditries motivated by the imperative of material accumulation while the latter has to do with those driven by the quest to rob, to assault or to liquidate a person or a group of persons based on political or ideological dispositions (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019)

Thus banditry, in the context of this paper, is defined as the totality of incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, village raids as well as highway raids which involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape, kidnap or kill the victims.

**How Bandit Attacks Affect Farmlands and Farming Activities in the Affected Areas of Katsina State**

Bandit attacks have had a profound and multifaceted impact on farmlands and farming activities in Katsina State, and it has significantly undermining agricultural productivity, food security, and rural livelihoods. Empirical research (e.g., Idris et al., 2023; Emmanuel et al., 2025) indicated that insecurity created by banditry have forces farmers to abandon their farmlands for fear of violence, kidnappings, and loss of property. In Dandume Local Government Area, for example, more than half of surveyed maize farmers reported that bandit attacks caused them to leave their farms unattended, making large tracts of land inaccessible and reducing overall cultivation activities (Idris et al., 2023). These disruptions have produced a drastic decline in maize output compared with pre-insecurity levels, demonstrating the direct link between banditry and agricultural decline.

Farmland abandonment is not limited to single communities. Government and media reports highlight that thousands of hectares across multiple LGAs: Batsari, Dandume, and other frontline agricultural hubs have been left untilled as farmers avoid fields perceived as unsafe. In 2020, state authorities reported that nearly 58,330 hectares of farmlands were abandoned, with tens of thousands of farmers affected, and this trend continued into subsequent years as insecurity persisted (Danjuma, 2025).

The abandonment of farmland directly contributes to lower food production and rising food prices. A study on food security in Katsina State reported that bandit attacks caused widespread displacement, destruction of crops, and disruption of market and transportation networks, leading to reduced food availability and higher costs for staple foods (Emmanuel et al., 2025). Many farmers, citing fear of violence, deliberately avoided planting or harvesting crops, even during peak agricultural seasons, further exacerbating food shortages (Emmanuel et al., 2025).

In addition to physical threats, bandits have imposed “levies” or extortion demands on rural farmers. Reports confirm that bandits sometimes demand payments for farmers to access and cultivate their lands, essentially turning agricultural work into a high-risk and costly endeavour (Punch Newspapers, 2024). These levies curtail planting and harvesting activities and increase production costs, reducing farmers’ willingness and capacity to engage in farming (Punch Newspapers, 2024).

Beyond the abandonment of fields and cultivation decline, banditry also affects market access and agricultural value chains. Checkpoints controlled by bandits hinder the transport of produce to local markets, delaying sales and decreasing the value that farmers receive for their crops. This disruption of market routes reduces farm incomes and discourages future investment in agricultural inputs like improved seeds and fertilizers (Punch Newspapers, 2024).

These effects combine to produce cascading socioeconomic consequences. With reduced farm outputs, rural households experience income losses and increased food insecurity, forcing many to abandon agricultural livelihoods altogether or depend on unstable sources of income. Qualitative accounts from rural communities highlight how recurrent attacks have demoralised farmers, reducing labour inputs and agricultural engagement as families avoid risk (Atiyaye et al., 2025).

Although recent security improvements in some areas have enabled the return of displaced residents and partial resumption of farming, the long-term effects of previous banditry remain substantial. Even where cultivation resumes, many farmers continue to limit activities to

areas near their homes or engage in less productive, low-risk farming practices, which constrains overall agricultural productivity and recovery (Emmanuel et al., 2025).

Bandit attacks in Katsina State significantly impair farmlands and farming activities through farmland abandonment, reduced cultivation, extortion of farmers, disrupted market access, and consequent declines in food production and rural incomes. Addressing these challenges requires integrated security and agricultural support strategies, including enhanced protection for rural communities, rehabilitation of abandoned farmlands, and targeted interventions that rebuild farmers' confidence and capacity to cultivate effectively (Idris et al., 2023; Emmanuel et al., 2025; Punch Newspapers, 2024; Danjuma, 2025; Atiyaye et al., 2025).

**The Implications of Cattle Rustling on the Wealth and Livelihoods of Individuals in the Affected Communities**

Cattle rustling have over the years significantly threatened rural livelihoods in Nigeria, particularly in northern states of Katsina, Zamfara, and Kaduna (Adeola et al., 2024). The theft of livestock, often the primary source of wealth and economic security for many households, directly undermines income, food security, and social stability in affected communities. Livestock ownership represents not only a source of food and income but also a form of capital, savings, and social status (Idris et al., 2023). Therefore, the loss of cattle through rustling translates into immediate and long-term economic deprivation.

Studies indicate that households affected by cattle rustling experience sharp reductions in income from livestock sales, milk production, and other animal-based products, often leading to impoverishment (Emmanuel et al., 2025). The loss of cattle limits the ability of households to meet basic needs, including food, education, and healthcare, further exacerbating poverty. In many instances, families are forced to rely on alternative, less reliable income sources, or migrate to urban areas in search of livelihoods, resulting in the disruption of social and economic networks (Ojetola et al., 2023).

Cattle rustling also have broader socio-economic implications. The insecurity generated discourages investment in livestock farming, reducing herd expansion, milk production, and local employment opportunities in rural communities (Atiyaye et al., 2025). Additionally, recurrent rustling fosters social tension and conflicts over grazing lands and resources, undermining communal cooperation essential for agricultural and pastoral productivity. Households that lose their primary source of wealth often experience decreased resilience to shocks, making them vulnerable to hunger, malnutrition, and forced dependency on aid (Iguda Ladan & Matawalli, 2021).

Empirical evidence in Katsina State further highlights the cascading effects of cattle rustling on rural livelihoods. For instance, the loss of cattle has been linked to reduced spending on education, health, and farm inputs, which perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits the potential for sustainable development (Adeola et al., 2024; Idris et al., 2023). Chi-square analyses from field studies confirm a significant relationship between cattle rustling and household wealth, emphasizing that rustling is not only a security issue but also a critical economic challenge for affected communities (Emmanuel et al., 2025).

Cattle rustling in rural Nigeria have profound implications for wealth, livelihoods, and socio-economic stability. The direct loss of assets, reduced income generation, disruption of social cohesion, and increased vulnerability of households underscore the urgent need for integrated interventions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of banditry on farming activities and wealth loss in rural communities of Katsina State. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret data from a representative sample of the population, thereby providing a clear description of the prevailing conditions and the relationship between rural banditry and socioeconomic outcomes. The survey approach facilitated the use of quantitative methods to capture the perceptions, experiences, and opinions of individuals affected by insecurity. Through structured questionnaires, the study assessed the extent to which rural banditry has impacted farming, household income, education, social life, and other dimensions of human development in Batsari, Jibia, and Kankara Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The population of the study consisted of residents of Batsari, Jibia, and Kankara LGAs who had directly or indirectly experienced the effects of banditry. This included farmers, traders, teachers, students, community leaders, traditional rulers, and local government officials. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006) and projected estimates for 2022, the combined population of these LGAs is approximately 870,000 people. Given the impracticality of studying the entire population, a representative sample was drawn using appropriate sampling techniques.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, with a margin of error of 0.05 and a 95% confidence level. Based on the estimated population, the calculated sample size was approximately 400 respondents. A multistage sampling technique was employed as follows:

- Stage One: Purposive selection of the three most affected LGAs (Batsari, Jibia, and Kankara).
- Stage Two: Random selection of two communities from each LGA, totaling six communities.
- Stage Three: Stratified sampling within each community to ensure representation of farmers, traders, students, and other occupational groups.
- Stage Four: Systematic random selection of individuals from each stratum to reach the target sample of 400 respondents.

This approach ensured that the sample was representative and captured variations in socioeconomic experiences across the study area. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on the study's objectives and research questions. The instrument comprised five sections:

- Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, occupation, education level, etc.)
- Section B: Impact of bandit attacks on farmlands and farming activities
- Section C: Effects of cattle rustling on household wealth and income

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in social sciences, security studies, and research methodology at Federal Polytechnic Daura, and their feedback was incorporated to enhance clarity and relevance. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents in Danmusa LGA,

outside the study area, to assess reliability. The instrument achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of .828, indicating high internal consistency.

With ethical approval and consent from community leaders and respondents, the questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers with the assistance of trained field enumerators. For illiterate respondents, interpreters translated questions into Hausa. Fieldwork spanned four weeks, during which questionnaires were distributed, retrieved, and checked for completeness.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and charts, summarized demographic information and respondents' perceptions. Inferential statistics, particularly the Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test, were used to test the study's hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and had the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. No personal identifiers were recorded, and data were used solely for academic purposes. Permission was obtained from local authorities and community leaders before fieldwork commenced, and care was taken to handle sensitive topics in a manner that minimized distress for victims of violence.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: The demographic distribution of the respondents in the study area

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 261 | 68.3 |
| | Female | 121 | 31.7 |
| **Age (Years)** | 18–30 | 112 | 29.3 |
| | 31–45 | 153 | 40.0 |
| | 46–60 | 89 | 23.3 |
| | Above 60 | 28 | 7.4 |
| **Educational Level** | No formal education | 86 | 22.5 |
| | Primary | 103 | 27.0 |
| | Secondary | 119 | 31.2 |
| | Tertiary | 74 | 19.3 |
| **Occupation** | Farmer | 176 | 46.1 |
| | Trader | 102 | 26.7 |
| | Civil servant | 56 | 14.7 |
| | Student/Others | 48 | 12.6 |

The study population is predominantly male, with males making up more than two-thirds of the respondents. This gender imbalance may reflect the population structure in the study area or the nature of the activities being investigated, which might involve more male participation. The lower female representation (less than one-third) could suggest potential gender disparities in access, involvement, or exposure to the studied phenomena.

The largest age group is 31-45 years (40%), indicating that the study is capturing a population largely in their economically active and productive years. The 18-30 age group (29.3%) represents young adults, while respondents above 60 years (7.4%) are the least

represented. This suggests that middle-aged adults dominate the sample, which could influence responses related to work, social activities, or community engagement.

Most respondents have secondary education (31.2%), followed by primary education (27%). A significant proportion (22.5%) has no formal education, which may affect their access to information, literacy levels, and ability to engage in certain economic or social activities. Only 19.3% have tertiary education, suggesting that higher education attainment is relatively low in the study area.

The majority of respondents are farmers (46.1%), indicating that agriculture is likely the dominant economic activity in the study area. Traders constitute over a quarter (26.7%), while civil servants (14.7%) and students/others (12.6%) are the least represented. This occupational distribution suggests that the findings of the study may be most relevant to individuals involved in primary economic activities, particularly farming.

**Answer to Research Questions**

**Research Question One**: How do bandit attacks affect farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on attacks and farming activities

| s/n | Statement | Mean | SD. | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bandit attacks have forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands. | 4.61 | 0.72 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. | Agricultural production has significantly declined due to insecurity. | 4.47 | 0.81 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. | Food prices have increased as a result of reduced cultivation. | 4.38 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 4. | Farmers face difficulties accessing their farms during planting seasons. | 4.52 | 0.75 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. | Many households now depend on food aid for survival. | 4.23 | 0.92 | Agree |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | **4.44** | **0.82** | **Strongly Agree** |

The findings in Table 2 indicate that bandit attacks have had a profound impact on farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State. Respondents overwhelmingly strongly agree (mean = 4.61, SD = 0.72) that many farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands due to fear of attacks. This disruption has directly contributed to a significant decline in agricultural production, as reflected in the strong agreement with the statement on reduced output (mean = 4.47, SD = 0.81).

The consequences of decreased cultivation are further evidenced by an increase in food prices, which respondents agree with (mean = 4.38, SD = 0.88), highlighting the economic ramifications of insecurity on household food access. In addition, farmers experience considerable difficulties accessing their farms during planting seasons (mean = 4.52, SD = 0.75), indicating that insecurity is not only affecting production but also limiting the ability to engage in routine farming activities. Consequently, many households now rely on food aid to meet basic needs, with respondents agreeing to this observation (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.92).

The aggregate mean score of 4.44 further confirms that overall, respondents strongly agree that bandit attacks have disrupted farming activities, reduced agricultural productivity, increased food prices, and heightened food insecurity in the affected communities. These findings underscore the severe socio-economic impact of banditry on rural livelihoods and the agricultural sector in Katsina State.

**Research Question Two**: What are the implications of cattle rustling on the wealth and livelihoods of individuals in the affected communities?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of responses on cattle rustling

| s/n | Statement | Mean | SD. | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | Livestock theft has deprived families of their major assets. | 4.58 | 0.70 | Strongly Agree |
| 7. | Many households have fallen into poverty due to cattle rustling. | 4.46 | 0.83 | Strongly Agree |
| 8. | Income from livestock sales has drastically declined. | 4.33 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 9. | Families are unable to afford basic needs due to income loss. | 4.24 | 0.94 | Agree |
| 10. | The loss of cattle has increased rural-urban migration. | 4.11 | 0.91 | Agree |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | **4.34** | **0.83** | **Agree** |

The results in Table 3 reveal that cattle rustling have significant negative implications for the wealth and livelihoods of individuals in the affected communities. Respondents strongly agree (mean = 4.58, SD = 0.70) that livestock theft has deprived families of their major assets, indicating that cattle serve as critical sources of wealth and economic stability. This loss has cascading effects, as many households have reportedly fallen into poverty due to repeated incidents of cattle rustling (mean = 4.46, SD = 0.83).

The financial impact is further reflected in the decline in income from livestock sales, with respondents agreeing to this statement (mean = 4.33, SD = 0.86). Consequently, families struggle to meet basic needs, including food, education, and healthcare, as highlighted by a mean score of 4.24 (SD = 0.94). Additionally, the loss of cattle has prompted increased rural-urban migration, with respondents agreeing to this trend (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.91), suggesting that individuals and families are seeking alternative means of livelihood outside their communities.

The aggregate mean of 4.34 underscores that, overall, respondents agree that cattle rustling severely undermined household wealth, reduced income, exacerbates poverty, and drives migration from affected areas. These findings highlight the profound socio-economic disruption caused by cattle rustling and its implications for rural livelihoods and community stability.

## Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis One:** Bandit attacks have no significant effect on farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis on whether bandit attacks have no significant effect on farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State

| Variable | $\chi^2$ Calculated | $\chi^2$ Critical (.05, df=4) | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attacks vs. Farming Activities | 62.87 | 9.49 | .000 | Reject $Ho_1$ |

The Chi-square test results in Table 4 indicate a $\chi^2$ calculated value of 62.87, which is substantially higher than the $\chi^2$ critical value of 9.49 at the .05 significance level with 4 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value of .000 is less than the conventional alpha level of .05. Based on these results, the null hypothesis ($Ho_1$) that bandit attacks have no significant effect on farmlands and farming activities is rejected. This means there is a statistically significant relationship between bandit attacks and farming activities in the affected areas of Katsina State.

In other words, the findings provide strong evidence that bandit attacks adversely affect farmlands and disrupt agricultural activities, confirming the observations from respondents that insecurity has led to farmland abandonment, reduced agricultural production, and increased food insecurity.

**Hypothesis Two:** Cattle rustling have no significant implication for the wealth of individuals living in the affected communities of Katsina State.

Table 5: Chi-square analysis on whether cattle rustling have no significant implication for the wealth of individuals living in the affected communities of Katsina State

| Variable | $\chi^2$ Calculated | $\chi^2$ Critical (.05, df=4) | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cattle Rustling vs. Household Wealth | 58.43 | 9.49 | .000 | Reject $Ho_2$ |

The Chi-square test results in Table 5 show a $\chi^2$ calculated value of 58.43, which exceeds the $\chi^2$ critical value of 9.49 at the 0.05 significance level with 4 degrees of freedom. The p-value of .000 is less than .05, indicating statistical significance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis ($Ho_2$) that cattle rustling has no significant implication for the wealth of individuals in the affected communities is rejected. This demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between cattle rustling and household wealth. In practical terms, this means that cattle rustling substantially undermined the wealth and economic stability of households, leading to poverty, reduced income from livestock sales, inability to afford basic needs, and increased rural-urban migration, as also reflected in the survey responses.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### How bandit attacks affect farmlands and farming activities in the affected areas

The findings of this study revealed that rural banditry has significantly affected the socioeconomic structure of Katsina State**,** particularly in the areas of agriculture, household wealth, and income generation. The study established that rural banditry exerts a profound negative impact on agricultural productivity and food availability**.** Most respondents strongly agreed that persistent bandit attacks have compelled farmers to abandon farmlands, resulting in reduced crop yields and escalating food prices. This finding was statistically validated by the Chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 62.87$, $p < .05$), which confirmed a significant relationship between bandit attacks and farming activities.

These findings are in line with Idris et al. (2023) and Emmanuel et al. (2025) found that insecurity created by banditry have forces farmers to abandon their farmlands for fear of violence, kidnappings, and loss of property. They noted that in Dandume Local Government Area, for example, more than half of surveyed maize farmers reported that bandit attacks caused them to leave their farms unattended, making large tracts of land inaccessible and reducing overall cultivation activities.

In the same vein, Danjuma (2025) found that farmlands that are abandonment are not limited to single communities. Government and media reports highlight that thousands of hectares across multiple LGAs: Batsari, Dandume, and other frontline agricultural hubs have been left untilled as farmers avoid fields perceived as unsafe. According to Emmanuel et al. (2025), the abandonment of farmland directly contributes to lower food production and rising

food prices. Many farmers, cite fear of violence, deliberately avoided planting or harvesting crops, even during peak agricultural seasons, further exacerbating food shortages.

Accoung to Punch Newspapers (2024), in addition to physical threats, bandits have imposed "levies" or extortion demands on rural farmers. Reports confirm that bandits sometimes demand payments for farmers to access and cultivate their lands, essentially turning agricultural work into a high-risk and costly endeavour. These levies curtail planting and harvesting activities and increase production costs, reducing farmers' willingness and capacity to engage in farming.

Atiyaye et al. (2025) found that with reduced farm outputs, rural households experience income losses and increased food insecurity, forcing many to abandon agricultural livelihoods altogether or depend on unstable sources of income. Qualitative accounts from rural communities highlighted how recurrent attacks have demoralised farmers, reducing labour inputs and agricultural engagement as families avoid risk.

**The implications of Cattle Rustling on the Wealth and Livelihoods of Individuals in the Affected Communities**

The findings of this study revealed that rural banditry has significantly affected the socioeconomic structure of Katsina State**,** particularly in the areas of agriculture, household wealth, and income generation. the study found that cattle rustling have contributed immensely to the impoverishment of rural households. The theft of livestock often the primary source of wealth and economic stability for many families has forced numerous households into severe poverty. This was supported by the Chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 58.43$, $p < .05$), indicating a significant relationship between cattle rustling and rural household wealth.

These results are in line with that of Adeola et al. (2024) when they noted that cattle rustling have over the years significantly threatened rural livelihoods in Nigeria, particularly in northern states of Katsina, Zamfara, and Kaduna. The theft of livestock, often the primary source of wealth and economic security for many households, directly undermines income, food security, and social stability in affected communities. Livestock ownership represents not only a source of food and income but also a form of capital, savings, and social status. Therefore, the loss of cattle through rustling translates into immediate and long-term economic deprivation.

Also, Emmanuel et al. (2025) found that households affected by cattle rustling experience sharp reductions in income from livestock sales, milk production, and other animal-based products, often leading to impoverishment. In addition, Ojetola et al. (2023) found that the loss of cattle limits the ability of households to meet basic needs, including food, education, and healthcare, further exacerbating poverty. They further added that in many instances, families are forced to rely on alternative, less reliable income sources, or migrate to urban areas in search of livelihoods, resulting in the disruption of social and economic networks.

In the same way, Atiyaye et al. (2025) found that cattle rustling also have broader socio-economic implications because the insecurity generated discourages investment in livestock farming, reducing herd expansion, milk production, and local employment opportunities in rural communities. Additionally, Iguda Ladan and Matawalli (2021) established that recurrent rustling fosters social tension and conflicts over grazing lands and resources, undermining communal cooperation essential for agricultural and pastoral productivity. Households that lose their primary source of wealth often experience decreased resilience to shocks, making them vulnerable to hunger, malnutrition, and forced dependency on aid.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that rural banditry in Katsina State has a profound and pervasive impact on the socioeconomic well-being of affected communities. The findings indicate that bandit attacks significantly disrupt farming activities, compelling many farmers to abandon their farmlands, reducing agricultural productivity, and increasing food prices. Similarly, cattle rustling have been shown to undermine household wealth, as livestock a primary source of economic stability is frequently stolen, pushing numerous families into poverty. The statistical analyses, including Chi-square tests, confirmed significant relationships between banditry, farming disruption, and household wealth loss, highlighting the magnitude of the problem.

Beyond economic consequences, the study underscores broader social implications, including diminished access to livelihoods, increased food insecurity, and pressure on households to seek alternative means of survival, such as migration or reliance on aid. These findings suggest that rural banditry not only threatens individual and household welfare but also weakens the overall socioeconomic structure of affected communities.

The study emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that combine enhanced security measures, community support programs, and policies aimed at sustaining agriculture and rural livelihoods. Addressing banditry is critical for restoring economic stability, protecting households, and fostering sustainable development in Katsina State.

This study has contributed to the growing literature on rural security and socioeconomic development in northern Nigeria by providing empirical evidence on the measurable impact of banditry on agriculture, wealth, income, and education. It highlights the interconnected nature of insecurity and underdevelopment, emphasizing the need for multi-sectoral policy interventions rather than purely military approaches.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The Katsina State Government should strengthen the rural security architecture by integrating community-based vigilante groups with formal security agencies and deploying modern surveillance tools for effective intelligence and rapid response.
- The Katsina State Government should have the need to revitalize agricultural production through rehabilitation grants, provision of inputs, and establishment of secure farming clusters supported by military or security presence to ensure safe cultivation.
- The Federal and State governments government should implement a livestock protection and identification system that includes digital tagging, branding, and ownership registration to curb cattle rustling and promote accountability.

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