

**RESOURCES CONTROL AND THE UPRaise OF BANDITRY ACTIVITIES CUM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
STUDY OF ZAMFARA STATE**

ORJI FELIX CHUKWUDI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES

FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC OKO, ANAMBRA STATE

Email; orjifelix09@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria state has witnessed different social vices in this recent time and the most recent one is the activities of bandits in the seven Northwestern states includes Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Kaduna, and Sokoto states. Rationally, social vices are often linked with resource control in almost states across the federation but Zamfara state is the most affected in this recent time. An increase in bandit activities, kidnapping, cattle rustling, illegal gold mining, massive movement of light weapons, hard drugs cum illicit activities in the state with no practical solution to contain these vices gradually overpowering the security architectures. On this note, the research aimed to investigate resources control and the upraise of banditry activities cum sustainable development in Nigeria regarding Zamfara state. A qualitative research technique (documented approach) was employed to gather the needed information about the research objective. The implications of banditry upraise were documented and vital recommendations like massive education and sensitization programs, provision of social amenities in the rural communities, genuine dialogue with bandits. A total ban on gold mining and other mineral resources, and fiscal federalism (restructuring), were made to help both the government and non-governmental organizations to end banditry activities in the study area. These shall enable Zamfara state to attain its sustainable national development goals like other states across the federation.

Key Terms: Resource, Control, Banditry, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Resource control is one of the main events that breed conflicts not only among ethnic groups but among nations. Nigeria state characterized by agitation for resource control after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807; local traders engaged in resource control struggles to participate actively in the business of palm oil (Ako and Okonmah, 2009 in Atoyebi, 2013). It is believed, that Nigeria from the onset, had the issue of majority and minority groups characterized with one resource control agitation to another. Nigeria state has witnessed different social vices in this recent time. These social vices are linked with resource control, and there is no practical solution yet to contain this tension that is gradually overpowering the security architectures of the country. The most recent are bandit's activities in the seven Northwestern states include Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Kaduna, and Sokoto states.

Zamfara state is the most affected in recent time and the conflicts in resource-rich but developmentally-starved Zamfara state has been in existence for at least a decade in the making, some analysis, warns the window is rapidly closing to finding a solution (Sani and Maina, 2021). The victims of banditry are individuals and communities with material valuables. The most common examples of banditry in Zamfara state include armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, sexual abuse, and village raids (Okoli, 2019). These activities of bandits in Zamfara state have got to an alarming state with no tangible solution from the government, academics, religious bodies, NGOs, and the local communities where these activities are perpetuated.

In this light, the research aimed to carry out an in-depth investigation on resource control and upraises of banditry activities cum sustainable development in Nigeria with Zamfara state as a reference point. This research work will be into sections. Section one is the

introduction and conceptualization of terms. While section two, bring out the research methodology employed in the research, section three center on review of related works of literature, while section four outline causes of banditry activities in Zamfara state, the next section draw round the implications of bandit activities in the study area and the last section center on recommendations and conclusion.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Resources; when we talk about resources, many things came to mind from the socio-cultural perspective. We have organic and inorganic cultural resources, from the physical or naturalistic perspective, we have mineral resources which should be the center of our interest as it relates to this research work. A mineral is a naturally occurring substance represented by a chemical formula that is usually solid and inorganic and has a crystal structure (www.byjus.com, 2021).

Mineral resources are the material basis for socio-economic transformation. Studies have shown that more than 95% of energy is used, by mankind 80% industrial raw material, and 70% raw material for an agricultural product from mineral resources. A mineral is a pure inorganic substance that occurs naturally in the earth's crust. More than two thousand minerals have been identified, and most of these are inorganic, which is formed, by the various combinations of elements. However, a small proportion of the earth's crust contains organic materials; consists of a single element such as gold, silver, diamond, and sulfur (www.byjus.com, 2021).

Control: Control of an organization, place, or system is the power to make all the vital decisions about the way that a firm or entity can be run without interference from external bodies. It is from this deduction that we now get Resource Control. According to Ifedayo (2010), Atoyebi (2013) involves the access of communities and state government to natural resources located within their domains and the freedom to develop and utilize these resources without interference from the federal government. Resource control can be broadly defined, as the way and manner the government revenue is shared among the various tiers of government. On the other hand, how the resources available are harnessed and determined by the state actors (Atoyebi, 2013).

Banditry- Banditry is a type of organized crime committed by outlaws typically, involving the threat or use of violence. A person who engages in banditry is known as a bandit and primarily commits crimes such as extortion, robbery, and murder, either as an individual or in groups. Banditry is a vague concept of criminality and in modern usage can be synonymous with gangsterism, brigandage marauding, and thievery (www.wikipedia.com, 2021).

Sustainable development- Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present inhabitants without compromising the capability of the future generations to meet their own needs from any available cultural and natural resources. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia (2004) in Eze-Uzomaka (2006:96) defined sustainable development as a process that allows developers to take place without degrading or depleting the resources which made the development possible.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method was employed to gather maximum information needed in this research work. The qualitative technique is a type of research inquiry that got to do with explanatory, historical, or case study research of any given phenomenon under investigation. In qualitative research: the research instrument used to gather data is documented approach that comes in the forms of textbooks, newspapers, and magazines, journals, and other archive materials that have relevant information to this research work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Banditry is one of the causes of insecurity in Zamfara state and other Northwestern states. Rural banditry refers to armed violence driven principally by the criminal intent to steal and plunder. It is motivated by the quest for economic accumulation. The victims are individuals and communities with material valuables. The most common examples of rural banditry in Zamfara state are armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, sexual abuse, and village raids (Okoli, 2019). Rural banditry in the Zamfara has reached an alarming height in recent years- bandits terrorize villages with impunity. They have made Zamfara state their settlement area by setting up fortified enclaves in the hinterland and on the frontiers from where they plot and carry out their operations in the region (www.aljazeera-new.com, 2020).

According to Okoli (2019), rural banditry in the Northwest drives their impetus from the poorly governed mining and small arms sector. Bandit has been drawn to the region by illicit and artisanal mining in the states like Zamfara where bandits have been raiding mining sites for gold and cash for decades. In addition, the movement of cattle is poorly regulated, in the region, which made them infiltrated by criminals who have led to the intensification of cattle rustling. In states such as Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, and Kebbi states there is existence a clan of livestock bandits who specialize in mass cattle raids. Some of these cattle rustling gang up with local and international syndicates. Some of them are mercenaries of Boko Haram and ISWAP. Cattle rustling constitute a valuable source of funding for these terror groups (Nwagboso, 2019).

Banditry and other forms of insecurity in Zamfara have been allowed to degenerate into a complex national emergency with dire territorial implications; Boko Haram began launching systematic attacks targeted at individuals, communities, and eventually the state. The violence has soared in Northern Nigeria in recent years, as criminal gangs involved in cattle rustling and kidnapping have carried out bloody raids in the village. Armed groups attack from hideouts nearly forest, exploring a lack of security across the region to perpetrate evil. The upsurge in banditry, kidnapping, and bloody letting across the region is quite freighting at least fifty person killed and multiple attacks by armed bandits in villages in Zamfara state rife with cattle thief and kidnapping (www.aljazeera-news.com, 2020).

The general insecurity is worrisome from Zamfara state to Katsina and other Northwestern states. Bandits are wreaking havoc on helpless citizens. In Zamfara state, about 8,000 women had been made widows by the bandits and, 16,000 children had become orphans since 2009. The bandits had injured more than 9,000 others. Also, over 10,000 houses and silos were destroyed by the activity of bandits. Recently the government has recognized the apparent linkage between rural bandits and illicit mining, and it has suspended all forms of mining activities in Zamfara state in early April 2019 (Okoli, 2019). Outside that, there are competing viewpoints by some schools of thought regarding the causes of and nature of the problem of armed banditry in Zamfara state.

Thus, one of the schools of thought pointed that the conflict was the result of climatic change, particularly decreasing amount of rainfall, on the scarcity of arable land and pasture. The drop in rain over the years translated into the shortage of water, which is the context of rapid population growth rate places pressure on land and fuels intense conflicts between pastoralists and farmers whose livelihood and survival based on access to land (Suleiman, 2019). Another school of thought associated the growing insecurity with the state failure due to corruption, the collapse of institutions of governance, de-industrialization, growing poverty, and a culture of impunity that pervades state and local government in Zamfara state (Adeola and Oluwemi, 2012).

While, some observers explain that instability in the Northwest region in term of porous borders and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, they argued that arms have found their way into the region from the Maghrah following an uprising in North Africa countries of the Sahel, including post-Ghaddafi Libya (Dan, et al 2020). On the other hand, the protagonists of the natural resources trace the conflict to competition over gold deposits pitching those engaged in illicit gold mining against local communities as well as certain big-time mine owners believing to have a strong link with the people in government (Chidi, 2018), yet some believed that the conflict is spiritual, and the problem facing the state is the result of a test from God which will face off in a space of time (Sulieman, 2019). The Discovery of gold mines and other activities of illegal miners competing for the control of gold reserves have served to further intensify the existence of the activities of armed groups in the Northwest region (Financial Time, 2020).

According to former Minister of Defense, Mansur Dan-Ali complained the issue of (sic) drug abuse, unemployment, and governance among others contribute to the deplorable security situation in the Northern region (Chidi, 2018). Historically, it started as a small armed group in the Niger Delta region fighting economic deprivation against the oil companies and government; it spread to the West and Eastern region with kidnapping and now snowballed to the Northern region in multiple dimensions (Edeko, 2004). Banditry (insecurity) in Zamfara state is like Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic which started in Wuhan China but was neglected by most countries of the world including our (Nigeria), but today has killed hundreds of thousands and many keep testing positive for the dreaded pandemic. Unless something is urgently done to strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of state institutions and non-state actors including the traditional authority to address issues of corruption and widespread poverty and inequalities in the society, the security situation may likely continue to deteriorate in the Northern region and Nigeria at large (Adeleke, 2013).

CAUSES OF BANDITRY ACTIVITIES IN ZAMFARA STATE

The causes of bandit activities in the study area can be attributed to many factors that include;

Resources Control; there is also a nexus between the banditry and illegal gold mining in Zamfara state with miners accused of being a collaborator with a bandit who exchanges gold with other small armed and light weapons. Secondly, big-time miners who want to control the gold sites also contribute to the causes of banditry in the state in the sense that they normally do anything within their power to be in control of the gold site and equip rural youths with weapons to guide the sites against invasion by other gang members or competitors in the business.

Climatic change; some school of thought attributed the rise of banditry in Zamfara state due to climatic change which resulted to scarcity of grass in the Sahel region as a result of a shortage of rainfall cum movement of pastoral herders to other regions where they can have access to water and grass for their animals. This movement by the herders now porch them with the indigenous people who believe that the pastoral and their animals are destroying their farm crops or products. This has degenerated into a tribal crisis between the indigenous people in Zamfara state and pastoral herders in the state and has extended to Northwestern, North central states and recently snowballed to Southwest and Southeastern states respectively.

Corruption; Corruption it's dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. It is the illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris, 1991). Corruption affects all aspects of public life, continues to undermine the social, economic, and political development of any given country involve, and is the major obstacle to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (UNODC, 2011). For decades now, corruption has been one of the major setbacks to the whole nation not only Zamfara state is affected by this epidemic (corruption). Subsequent government in the state has not shown the courage to utilize the state allocation for the betterment of the populace in the state but rather the state resources normally end up at the pocket of few powerful individuals who control and prey over the state resources for decades now.

Porous Border; Over the years Nigeria had had an issue with border monitoring with the neighboring countries. According to Achumba et al. (2013), porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of porous borders, there is an unchecked inflow of small arms and light weapons in the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007). Available information shows that Nigeria host over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). The level of porous borders in Nigeria has contributed to the uncontrollable entry of emigrants, predominantly young men, from neighboring countries like the Republic of Chad, Cameroon, Benin, and Niger republic (Adeola and Oluayemi, 2012), and Zamfara state share bordered in the north by the Niger Republic. A porous border could also be one of the major causes of banditry in the state.

Poverty/unemployment; Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and it comprises many dimensions. It includes low income and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (UNESCO, 2011). Unemployment on the other hand, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (200) unemployment is all those in the labor force that is not in employment during the specific reference period. Within Nigeria context, the unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of person among the labor force (15-65) years excluding students and those medical unfit, available for work but did not work (Central Bank of Nigeria, 1993). Akwara (2013) argue that 80% of conflict-related death occurred in less economic advantage states when been approached, this is the case of many rural communities in Zamfara state where this bandit activities triumph. They have the gold and other mineral resources but lack all the basic things that make life more meaningful and this has led them to carry arms against the state actors and the influential people that control the gold sites in the state.

Illiteracy/lack of education and opportunities; There is a strong connection between corruption, illiteracy, poverty, and lack of opportunities in any unrest country across the world, and Zamfara state is not exempted from the aforementioned. From all indications, the uprise of banditry in the study area can be strongly linked with illiteracy, lack of education, and opportunities which are rampant among

the youths in the study area. As a result of this, many youths now result to kidnapping for ransom or against the state actors since they believe that is the only means for survival.

Inequalities/lack of social amenities; Inequalities and lack of social amenities are also believed to be of the major causes of banditry in Zamfara state. Decade's neglect or failure by the subsequent governments to provide affordable social amenities to rural communities within the study area fuels the activities of banditry in the state. On the other hand, the flamboyant lifestyle of politicians and owners of gold sites (gold miners) in the study area contributed to the increase of banditry in Zamfara state.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BANDITRY ACTIVITIES ON SUSTAINABLE STATE

DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMFARA

Social-economic implication; Zamfara state is known to lack social-economic muscle internally generated revenue compare with other states in Nigeria. Zamfara state is one of the poorest states in the country. The recent activities of bandits, kidnapping, cattle rustling, etc in the state have further crippled the fragile economy of the state and yet still rising in a multiple dimension with no practical solution to contain the ugly event. No potential investor will invest where his/her money is not secured thereby, hindering the concept of sustainable development in the state and the nation at large.

Social-cultural implication; Security is paramount to the culturally sustainable development of any nation. Tourism being a sub-sector of culture, cannot triumph in a conflict or disputed zone since culture and tourism are people-oriented that cannot do without one another. But the recent activities of banditry are a setback to tourism and other related development in the state. For instance, places like Kuyambana game reserve, Kwatarkwashi rock shelter, Kanoma Hill, Kiyawa Walls, Namoda's Tomb, Kaura Namoda, Zamfara state Museum, Bakolori Dam, and Ruins of Yargoje's Court are tourist attractions, which bring people from far and near to the state for sightseeing or excursion. But, banditry could not allow potential tourists to access the aforementioned cultural attractions even as we all know the level of revenue or jobs these attractions will inject into the national and state economy in the absence of crisis or conflict in the study area.

Socio-political implication; Banditry cum insecurity is not healthy for the sustainable political development of any nation, Zamfara state not exempted. Zamfara state is known to be one of the states that received less revenue from the monthly allocation from federal allocation. And also generate less revenue to compare with other states across the federation. That is to say that the less revenue allocated to the state monthly automatically channel to insecurity due to insecurity, instead of vital needs, like infrastructural development, health care, education, job creation, tourism, and other social amenities to improve people lives and bring dividends of democracy to the populace. Furthermore, the activity of bandits will also hinder political participation in the state because people will be unwilling to vote and to be voted for, thereby denying the citizen their fundamental human rights as outlined in the 1999 constitution.

Educational implication; education is the key that improves the socio-economic development of any given nation, and whatever affects development affects the brain advancement of the age bracket involve. Recently, banditry activities in Zamfara state have directly affected the education sector in the state complex with the disastrous educational development of the state. Recently, kidnapped female students of Government Girls Science Secondary School, a boarding school in the Jangebe, is a setback and discouragement to educational development in the state. Recently, many nations are clamoring for the eradication of almajiri practice and the right to child education. This act is discouraging to parents and even children that can hinder them from pursuing their dreams and vision in life, thereby short charging the nation the necessary human resources to compete in the global economy.

Agricultural implication; Northwestern region is known to be the agricultural hub of the nation. But with the level of bandit activities in the state, farmers no longer have access to their land and livestock talks more of cultivating the land or rearing their animals. The implication of this trend in the state and the nation at large is food insecurity since the state is one of the food bases in the country. Zamfara state is

the producer of cowpeas, groundnuts, cotton, soybeans, and other livestock farming that are vital aspects of the nation's economy. But these products are scarce due to cattle rustling and kidnapping activities in Zamfara state thereby, causing food insecurity in the state and across the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Massive educational and sensitization programs; massive education and sensitization programs will curb out-of-school children. Furthermore, its success can lead to the end of almajiri practice in the state. Such programs will give them a sense of belonging and better citizens to the society. And also aid toward the human capital development of the state. Besides, such educational programs and sensitization will help the children to accomplish their dreams in life and contribute to the sustainable development of the state and the nation at large.

Provision of social amenities in the rural communities affected by banditry; provision of social amenities in the rural communities affected by the activities of bandits in Zamfara state will go a long way curb inequalities as well as reshape the mindset of the rural dweller to shun banditry in which many now see as a lucrative business in the state

Genuine dialogue; the dialogue should be between the indigenous Hausa farmers and Fulani herders. It should be supervised, by the state government, local government, and the chiefdoms for full compliance from both sides. It will help to avoid the reoccurring crisis cum destruction of agricultural products and cattle rustling in the state.

Total ban of gold mining and other mineral resources; Total ban of gold mining and other related mineral resources in the state as was formally propagated by the federal government in late November 2019. This act demands serious monitoring and full punishment for the offenders regardless of who is involved.

Fiscal federalism/structuring; Fiscal federalism/restructuring will also go a long way in curbing the activities of bandits in the state. It's believed that many of these bandits came into the state because of illegal mining triumphing in the state. For instance, every state across the federation should be allowed to be in charge of whatever they have in their domain, it is obvious that Zamfara state will look inward in developing her various mineral resources that will put the destination on the world map because of her gold deposit, other minerals and agricultural products that scattered all over the state.

In conclusion, the latest ranking interims of human index development Nigeria is the capital poverty of the world because of out-of-school children predominantly in the Northern region. Many states across the nation have forged ahead of Zamfara state via technological advancement, tourism development, infrastructural, educational development, and human capital development but because of decades of banditry activity. It will be a step in the right direction for both the federal, state, local governments, and other NGOs to find a lasting solution that the researcher believes will curb the conflict to some extent and help the state attain sustainable development goals.

REFERENCES

Aluko, S. (2001). Aluko advises States to demand more revenue, not resource control. *The comet*. May 2.

Atoyebi, K.O. (2013). The implications of resource control in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(2): 53.

Aljazeera News (2020). At least 30 killed in northern Nigeria bandit attacks. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/-30-killed.northern-nigeria-bandit-attacks.200302133135648.html>.

Adeola, G.L. and Oluymi, F. (2012). The political and security implications of cross-border migration between Nigeria and her Francophone neighbors. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 2012. Vol. 1(3): 1-9.

- Adeleke, A. (2013). Insecurity: A threat to human existence and economic development in Nigeria. Public policy and administration research: Vol 3, No 6, 8-13.
- Bassey, C. O. (2002). Local governance, resource control and development in the Niger Delta in Okon Edet O Uya et al (eds). Local government administration and grassroots democracy in Nigeria, University of Calabar Press, Calabar.
- Chidi, A.O. (2018). Banditry in Nigeria: A brief history of a long war. Punch newspaper. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/banditry-in-nigeria.brief.history-of-a-long-war>.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (1993). The unemployment rate in Nigeria. Retrieved via ([www. central- bank.com](http://www.central-bank.com), July 20012)
- Dan, D.M., Kaka and Guidan, R. (2020). Nigeria chose another country. Retrieved from <https://www.acaps-org.country/nigeria/crisis/northwest-banditry>.
- Djebah, D. and Aderibigbo, Y. (2001). Resources control not cause of civil war, leaders reply Obasanjo. The Guardian, April 6.
- Edeko, S.E. (2004). The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa: A case study of the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Sacha Journal of Environmental Studies. Vol. 1(2) pp. 55-80.
- Eze-Uzomaka. P. I. (2006) Tourism and Community development in Nigeria; in issues in Tourism Planning and Development; edited by Okpoko P.U. Afro-Orbis publisher, Nigeria.
- Financial Time (2020). Overwhelmed by bandits, Nigeria state offers amnesty. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/4f98f926-e8d3-11-e9-a240-3b065ef5fc55>.
- Mineral Resources-Example, Types, Characteristics and Uses; (<https://byjus.com/chemistry-mineral-resources>)
- National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2011). Socio-economic report. Retrieved from www.national-bureau-of-statistics-socio-economic-report-2011.
- Nwagboso, C. I. (2012). Security challenges and economy of Nigeria state (2007-2011). America International Journal of Contemporary Research Vol. 2, No 6, 244-258.
- Okoli, C.I.A. (2019). What can be done to fight rural banditry in Northern Nigeria? Retrieved from <https://the-conversation-com/what-can-be-done-to-fight-rural-banditry-in-nigeria>-Otto, G. and Ukpere, U. I. (2012). National security and development in Nigeria. African Journal of Business Management Vol. 6 No. 23, 6765-6770.
- Omoyibo, K.U., and Akpomera, E. (2012). Insecurity mantra: The paradox of Nigeria growth and development. European Scientific Journal Vol.8 No 24, 198-211.
- Raphael, B. (2019). Banditry and Nigeria's rising insecurity. The Sun Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.msn.com/enx/africa.nigeria/banditry-and-nigeria-risingInsecurity-aaamzev>.
- Suleiman, S. (2019). Rural banditry in Zamfara State, Northwest Nigeria. Social Science Research Council. Retrieved from <https://ikenga.amari.ssrc.org/2019106/1/13/rural-banditry-in-zamfara.state-northwest-Nigeria/>.
- Uhunmwuango, S.O. and Aluforo, E. (2011) Challenges and Solutions to Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Case Study of the Jos Crises. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Volume 13, No.5, pp 109-124.
- UNESCO (2011). Understanding poverty. www.unesco.org. Retrieved on 21st January 2020. (www.wikipedia.org-wiki-banditry).

(www.byjus.com, 2021).

