

BANDITRY ATTACKS ON RUMINANT ANIMAL FARMERS KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA: CAUSES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to investigate the causes of banditry attacks on ruminant animal farmers in Katsina State and proffer solutions. A Two-stage sampling method was used to select the farmers. Cattle markets were purposively selected from each of the three agricultural zones namely: Maiadua livestock market from Ajiwa zone, Charanchi livestock market from Dutsin-Ma zone and Sheme livestock market in Funtua zone. From each market, a random sample of twenty ruminant animal producers were taken to get a total of sixty respondents. Sixty one per cent (61%) of the respondents assert that joblessness/unemployment was the major reason of this vice. Other reasons worthy of note are lack of formal education and fear of God according to 27% and 23% of the respondents respectively. The study concluded that joblessness/unemployment and extreme poverty are the major causes of banditry in the study area. It is recommended that “stick and carrot” approach should be employed in tackling the menace of banditry. However, there should be increased presence of the military forces in the local areas where the attacks are frequent. More job opportunities and health facilities should be provided in the affected communities.

Key Words: Banditry, Ruminant farmers, Cause, Security

INTRODUCTION

Ruminant production plays significant role in provision of animal products and its byproducts in Nigeria in addition to being a veritable source of employment at every strata of the society. They are also recognized to be a major player in the economic activities in the country. Ruminant production has been recognised for its contribution to livestock production in Nigeria (Yusuf *et al.*, 2018). Ruminants form a significant proportion of the livestock production in Nigeria and possess obvious advantage over other livestock such as playing significant roles in the life of rural households (Aruwayo, *et al.*, 2015). The production of these nationally recognized animals of economic value have been threatened by severe shortage of feeds and feeding stuff over time. Among the challenges of production, feed shortage constitutes the greatest of them (Aruwayo, 2019). However, the myriads of the challenges faced by ruminant animal producers have been further heightened by the upsurge in banditry in the Northwestern Nigeria. Gadzama *et al.* (2018) reported that criminal gangs engage in banditry in North Western Nigeria rural areas by stealing cattle and other livestock resulting in the displacement of the rural dwellers and consequent loss of their animals and source of economic livelihood. This study therefore investigated the causes of incidence of banditry in Katsina State and tried to proffer solutions.

METHODOLOGY

A Two-stage sampling method was used for this study. In the first stage, a cattle market was purposively selected from each of the three agricultural zones based on the number of ruminant animal farmers that congregate in the markets. The markets are: Maiadua livestock market from Ajiwa zone, Charanchi livestock market from Dutsin-Ma zone and Sheme livestock market in Funtua zone. Livestock markets were used because it further boosted the confidence of the respondents on anonymity since they were to answer sensitive questions on banditry attack. Meeting them in the markets rather than their homes/settlements made them to shed the fear that their answers might lead to attacks. From each market, a random sample of twenty livestock was taken from each market to get a total of sixty respondents. However, only forty-four respondents that gave complete information were used for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the information elicited from the respondents using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Perceived Causes of Banditry in the Study Area

The table 1 below shows that the people in the communities where banditry attacks have taken place feel that the major reason why people go into the vice is joblessness/unemployment. This was the assertion of 61% of the respondents. Statistics has it that the unemployment rate in Katsina is about 25.28% in 2020 (statistica.com, 2021). Because majority of the able-bodied men are not gainfully engaged, it is easy for them to join the attackers for survival. According to Adesina (2013), the rising level of unemployment in the country can be attributed for the increase in security challenges in the country. The author further argues that the high rate of unemployment in the country is directly responsible for the increasing security challenges in Nigeria. Similarly, Ayegba (2015) further iterated that unemployment and extreme poverty are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Although these may not be genuine reasons, they are the reality. Closely related to this opinion is those that believed that there are no enough government presence in the area as opined by 32% of the respondents. Other reasons worthy of note are lack of formal education and lack of the fear of God according to 27% and 23% of the respondents respectively. The respondents hold the belief that adequate quality formal education with the fear of God are enough to deter a man from inflicting hurt on fellow humans (Ishaq, Musa, T and Abdulhafiz, 2015).

Table 1. Reasons for Banditry

Reasons	Frequency	percentages
Joblessness/Unemployment	27	61
Inadequate Government presence	14	32
Hunger	03	7
Lack of the fear of God	10	23
Lack of formal education	12	27
Poor parenting	03	7

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Interventions against Banditry attacks in the Study Areas

The reality is that banditry attacks have become incessant in the study areas. The study tried to investigate the efforts that have been put in place to end or reduce the occurrences. For some reasons alluded to the sensitivity of the study, only 18 of the respondents attended to this question. According to table 2a below, three promoters of such interventions were identified. These are the Government (44%), the communities (44%) and Non-Governmental Organizations (11%). One of the reasons for the low account for the non-governmental organizations might be due to the jeopardy that some staff of the NGOs have gone through in the course of rendering

humanitarian assistance to affected areas (bbc.com, 2020). The government has a duty to protect lives and properties so it is not surprising to see that it occupied a strategic place in the efforts against banditry while the communities, left with no choice, have to put their lives in their hands to defend themselves. Furthermore, the responses on the nature of interventions by the promoters of interventions are presented in table 2b. Beefing up security and loan to victims were mentioned by 27% and 11% of the respondents respectively. The Government and communities mostly try to provide security (Preventive) while most NGOs try to make available measures that cushion the effect of the attacks meted on the victims. However, it is worthy of note that the respondents reported that no health facilities to take care of the injured in many of the affected communities. This is a gap that the Government and the NGOs need to close.

Table 2a: Promoters of Intervention

Promoters of intervention [n=18]	Frequency	Percentage
Government	08	44
Non-Governmental Organization	02	11
Community	08	44

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2b: Nature of interventions

Nature of intervention	Frequency	Percentage
Beefing Up Security	12	27
Provision of relief materials	01	02
Health care to the injured	0	0
Cash provision	0	0
Loan to the victims	5	11

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The reactions of the respondents on the adequacy of the interventions promoted by the various actors are presented in table 3 below. The table shows that the community efforts earned more confidence of the people in terms of timeliness and adequacy of the intervention (35%). This might be because community *vigilantes* are normally the first response to banditry attacks especially in communities where there are no police stations (international crisis group, 2017). It will be observed that those who were disappointed in the different categories of promoters of interventions are more in each group. This simply means that the security and responses to challenges are overwhelmed and there is need for more security in the study areas.

Proposed Solution to Banditry in the Study areas.

The victims of the attacks and those who have witnessed attacks have a few suggestions to curbing banditry attacks to the minimum. Surprisingly, the most prominent of their suggestions is for the government to have a discussion with the bandits. They believe that some of them are aggrieved with the government and should therefore be appeased especially that the government could not overcome them. This however is contrary to what the government has promised not to do. Some northern governors have vowed never to negotiate with bandits because they feel that will make more of such groups to spring up and thereby make situation worse (Bello, 2021; Elrufai, 2021). Only 5% think that job provision can be a solution while 7% voted for increase of the military forces in the local areas where the attacks have been frequent.

Table3: Perception of Ruminant Animal Farmers on the nature of intervention

Perception	Frequency	Percentages
Intervention from Government n=32		
Adequate and timely	10	31
Inadequate but timely	02	6
Adequate but not timely	04	13
Disappointed	16	50
Intervention from Non-Governmental Organizations n=28		
Adequate and timely	07	25
Inadequate but timely	01	4
Adequate but not timely	01	4
Disappointed	19	67
Intervention from Communities n=32		
Adequate and timely	11	35
Inadequate but timely	03	9
Adequate but not timely	01	3
Disappointed	17	53

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4. Suggested Solutions to the problem of banditry.

Suggested solutions to the problem of banditry	Frequency	Percentage
Government should do more on security (More military and police	03	07
Provision of Job opportunities	02	05
Finding a way of discussing with the various groups of bandits to see if they can be appeased	39	88

Source: Field Survey, 2021

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified joblessness/unemployment and extreme poverty as the major causes of banditry in the study area. Lack of formal education and fear of God are the other causes. It is recommended that “stick and carrot” approach should be employed in tackling the menace of banditry with increased presence of the military forces in the local areas where the attacks have been frequent. More job opportunities and health facilities should be made available in many of the affected communities.

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