



# Effectiveness of Government Roles in Tackling The Menace of Armed Banditry in North-West Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *The main thrust of this study is to evaluate how well government agencies are doing their part to combat the threat of armed banditry in northwest Nigeria. To direct the study's execution, three research questions and three research hypotheses were developed. The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey. The research was carried out in Nigeria's northwest. The researchers will utilize three states—Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara—as the sample states for the study because to the sheer number of states in North-Western Nigeria. From these three states, they will select a sample of 600 respondents. Around 150 representatives of the government and 450 residents of the armed banditry-affected communities made up the sampled population. The t-test of independent samples method of data analysis was utilized to assess the hypotheses, while the mean and standard deviation methods were employed to address the research issues. That was the paper's conclusion. Armed banditry persists and gets worse despite several attempts by the community and government to reduce the security threat. In light of the aforementioned findings, the study makes the following suggestions: In order to provide security in the ungoverned areas and the nearby communities, the government should also appoint and train forest guards. The government should make sure that appointments and employment decisions are made on the basis of qualifications rather than on personal connections or favoritism. Additionally, the government should strengthen border security by utilizing digital technology like advanced monitoring and detecting tools to stop the flow of illegal weapons.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Effectiveness of Security, Government Roles, Tackling Menace, Armed Banditry, North-west Nigeria.*

## INTRODUCTION

Armed banditry is one of the security issues Nigeria has faced recently (John, Samuel & Folahanmi, 2023). According to Okpaleke and Koli (2014), there seems to have been an

increase in the frequency of banditry in Nigeria over time. Since 2013, there has been an increase in the number of violent incidents in Nigeria caused by armed bandits. These incidents have primarily taken the form of night raids on sleeping villagers by unidentified armed bandits, who are frequently thought to be well-armed Fulani pastoralists. As a result, communities in parts of North-East Adamawa and Taraba state, North-Central Plateau and Benue state, and North-West Kaduna state have been sacked (Ofuoku & Isifie, 2009). By the year 2014, nearly all the states of the federation had a share of farmers/herder's crisis which resulted into many killings by armed bandits, as many states which were hitherto insulated from the crisis have been drawn into it unwittingly (Olayoku, 2014).

By all accounts, Nigeria's security, peace, and development are being undermined by rural banditry. Nigeria faces severe developmental obstacles that seriously jeopardize the country's socioeconomic progress in addition to the country's worsening security conditions (Anyanwu, 2021). The persistent poverty in both rural and urban areas, high unemployment rates, crippling youth unemployment, low industrial production, unstable and declining exchange rates, high inflation rates, inadequate social and physical infrastructure, a sizable amount of domestic debt, and an increasing amount of external debt are some of these developmental obstacles (Ewetan, 2013). The threat of armed banditry in Nigerian society has been addressed on a number of occasions (Luechinger, 2013). The fact that Nigeria continues to rank poorly on the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012) despite these measures indicates that the country's level of insecurity has gotten worse. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficiency of government efforts to combat the threat of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

The researchers used a well-structured, 22-question, closed-ended questionnaire to gather primary data from respondents in the three sampled states of Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather relevant information related to the respondents' perceptions of the efficacy of government actions in addressing the threat of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is to examine the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. Identify the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria
2. Examine the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria
3. Examine the challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The following research questions will guide this study.

1. What are the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria?
2. How effective is government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges militating against Government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government officials and the masses on the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government officials and the masses on the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government officials and the masses on the challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several factors adduced to be the driving forces of banditry in Nigeria. Prominent among these conditions are: failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty (Nwagbosa, 2012, Adebayo, 2018), illegal mining (Onodugo, Ochiaka, Olachi and Odo, 2021), unemployment / Poverty (Adagba, Ugwu, & Eme, 2012), Proliferation of Fire (Egbuta, 2018, Centre for Democracy and Development, 2022), availability of rangelands and farmlands that are susceptible to violent contestations (Gaye, 2018, Nduka, 2020), the migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres (Onuoha, 2011, Adededeji and Eziyi, 2010, Okoro, 2010), Weak security system (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Rabaro, 2013), Porous Borders (Achumba et al. , 2013, Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012), Systemic and Political Corruption (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).

Even though the Nigerian government has taken a while to respond to armed banditry, efforts have undoubtedly been made. The Nigerian government has taken various actions to combat banditry in the country's northwest in cooperation with the willing citizens. These measures include: the police force's establishment of a crack squad stationed in the border towns of Mubi and Ganye along the Nigerian/Cameroonian border (AllAfrica.Com, 2009); the police force's formation of the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime (Yusuf 2015); the improvement of aerial surveillance; and the disarmament program that the Nigeria Police Force started to encourage bandits to give up their weapons and renounce crime (WANEP, 2018), security offensive against the bandits' (Ahmad & Jamilu, 2022), the setting up and funding of joint operation (Binniyat 2015) and the ban on the use of motorcycles within the hinterland and forests of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kano and Niger States (West Africa Network for Peace building, WANEP, 2019).

In spite of the holistic approach that was adopted in curbing armed banditry in North-western Nigeria, the frequency of occurrence of the incidences of the activities of the armed bandits is still visible, this is because of the following challenges militating government roles: Conspiracy (Iwara, 2013), Economic Corruption, the Reactive Nature of the Government (Alao, Atere and Alao, 2013), and underfunding (ICG 2014 & Blanchard 2014), Underpayment of Foot Soldiers (Blanchard, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey. The research was carried out in Nigeria's northwest. The researchers will utilize three states—Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara—as the sample states for the study due to the sheer number of states in North-Western Nigeria. From these three states, they will choose a sample of 600 respondents. Around 150

representatives of the government and 450 residents of the armed banditry-affected communities made up the sampled population. By employing basic and stratified random selection approaches, the researchers were able to choose 600 respondents from each of the three states for their sample.

The researchers used a well-structured, 22-question closed-ended questionnaire to gather primary data from respondents in the three sampled states of Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather relevant information from respondents regarding the efficacy of government roles in addressing the banditry problem in North-West Nigeria. The t-test of independent samples method of data analysis was utilized to assess the hypotheses, while the mean and standard deviation methods were employed to address the research issues.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Answering the Research Questions*

Research Question 1: What are the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Causes of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria**

S/N	ITEMS	Government officials		Community members	
		Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1.	Unemployment / Poverty	3.5	1.20	3.43	0.86
2.	Proliferation of Fire Arms	3.2	1.03	3.28	0.63
3.	Availability of rangelands and farmlands that are susceptible to violent contestations	3.79	0.60	3.71	0.69
4.	The migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres	3.89	0.45	3.46	1.00
5.	Weak security system	3.73	0.60	3.37	0.92
6.	Porous Borders	3.47	0.75	3.71	0.67
7.	Systemic and Political Corruption	3.79	0.60	3.21	1.14
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>0.84</b>

From the analysis in table 1 it is clear that the Causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria are: Unemployment / Poverty, Proliferation of Fire Arms, availability of rangelands and farmlands that are susceptible to violent contestations, The migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres, Weak security system, Porous Borders and Systemic and Political

Corruption. This assertion is supported with calculated mean scores of 3.62 for Government officials and 3.45 for Community members.

Research Question 2: How effective is government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria?

**Table 2: Effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria**

S/N	ITEMS	Government Officials		Community Members	
		Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1.	Setting up of a crack police squad stationed in the border towns	3.66	0.67	3.79	0.60
2.	The launching the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime by the Police force	3.18	0.95	3.89	0.45
3.	Improving aerial surveillance	3.73	0.60	3.73	0.60
4.	the disarmament programme	3.52	0.98	3.47	0.75
5.	Joint task force to monitor and take over the mining sites of Zamfara State	3.35	0.74	3.59	0.78
6.	The setting up and funding of joint operation in order to comb the forests that are believed to be havens for cow thieves in the affected states	3.28	0.63	3.79	0.52
7.	Joint security raids/patrol	3.11	0.92	3.64	0.72
8.	Creation of various operation troops	3.51	1.12	3.47	0.77
9.	Improving socio economic conditions	3.22	1.10	3.71	0.67
10.	Ban on the use of motorcycles within the hinterland and forests of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kano and Niger States	2.83	0.81	3.50	0.75
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>0.66</b>

From the analysis in table 2 it is clear that the Effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria are: setting up of a crack police squad stationed in the border towns, the launching the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime by the Police force, improving aerial surveillance, the disarmament programme initiated by the Nigeria Police Force for bandits to renounce crime and lay down their weapons, joint task force comprising the Nigeria Police Force, National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and State Security Service (SSS) to monitor and take over the mining sites of Zamfara State, the setting up and funding of joint operation involving the military, the police, the state security service, and the Civil Defence Corps in order to comb the forests that are believed to be havens for cow thieves in the affected states, joint security raids/patrol, creation of various operation troops, improving socio economic conditions and Ban on the use of motorcycles within the hinterland and forests of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kano and Niger States. This is supported with calculated mean scores of 3.34 for government officials and 3.66 for community members.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges militating against Government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria**

S/N	ITEMS	Government Officials		Community Members	
		Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1.	Economic Corruption	3.05	0.64	3.73	0.60
2.	The Reactive Nature of the Government	3.18	0.63	3.52	0.98
3.	Underfunding	3.01	0.62	3.35	0.74
4.	Underpayment of Foot Soldiers	3.13	0.76	3.28	0.63
5.	Low Technological Advancement of the Nation	3.00	0.67	3.11	0.92
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>0.77</b>

From the analysis in table 3 it is clear that the Challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria are: Economic Corruption, the Reactive Nature of the Government, Underfunding, Underpayment of Foot Soldiers and Low Technological Advancement of the Nation this is supported with calculated mean scores of 3.07 and 0.66 for government officials and community members respectively.

### TESTING HYPOTHESES

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government officials and the masses on the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria.

From the t-test summary in table 4 above it is clear that at 0.05 and with a degree of freedom of 598 it is clear that the calculate t of 2.2030 is greater than the critical t of 2.0208 therefore hypothesis one is rejected. This means that: there is a significant relationship between the mean

response of government official and the masses on the causes of armed banditry in north-west, Nigeria.

**Table 4: T-test summary analysis for testing Hypothesis One**

Group	Mean	SD	N	Df	Level of sig	Cal t	Crit. T	Decision
Govt. official	3.6200	0.7500	150	598	0.05	2.2030	2.0208	Rejected
Community members	3.4500	0.8400	450					

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government official and the masses on the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

**Table 5: T-test summary analysis for testing Hypothesis Two**

Group	Mean	SD	N	Df	Level of sig	Cal t	Crit. T	Decision
Govt. official	3.3400	0.8500	150	598	0.05	4.7663	2.0208	Rejected
Community members	3.6600	0.6600	450					

From the t-test summary in table 5 above it is clear that at 0.05 and with a degree of freedom of 598 it is clear that the calculate t of 4.7663 is greater than the critical t of 2.0208 therefore hypothesis two is rejected. This means that: there is a significant relationship between the mean response of government official and the masses on the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean response of government official and the masses on the challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

**Table 6: T-test summary analysis for testing Hypothesis Three**

Group	Mean	SD	N	Df	Level of sig	Cal t	Crit. T	Decision
Govt. official	3.0700	0.6600	150	598	0.05	4.7038	2.0208	Rejected
Community members	3.4000	0.7700	450					

From the t-test summary in table 6 above it is clear that at 0.05 and with a degree of freedom of 598 it is clear that the calculate t of 4.7038 is greater than the critical t of 2.0208 therefore hypothesis three is rejected. This means that: there is a significant relationship between the mean response of government official and the masses on the challenges militating against the effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Table 1's analysis makes it evident that the following factors contribute to armed banditry in northwest Nigeria: poverty and unemployment; proliferation of firearms; the presence of rangelands and farmlands that are vulnerable to violent conflicts; the movement of unemployed young people from rural to urban areas; a weak security infrastructure; porous borders; and systemic and political corruption. The results of Adebayo (2018), Nwagbosa (2012), Adagba, Ugwu, & Eme (2012), Gaye (2018), Nduka (2020), and Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) were in agreement with this finding.

From the analysis in table 2 it is clear that the Effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria are: setting up of a crack police squad stationed in the border towns, the launching the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime by the Police force, improving aerial surveillance, the disarmament programme initiated by the Nigeria Police Force for bandits to renounce crime and lay down their weapons, joint task force comprising the Nigeria Police Force, National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and State Security Service (SSS) to monitor and take over the mining sites of Zamfara State, the setting up and funding of joint operation involving the military, the police, the state security service, and the Civil Defence Corps in order to comb the forests that are believed to be havens for cow thieves in the affected states, joint security raids/patrol, creation of various operation troops, improving socio economic conditions and Ban on the use of motorcycles within the hinterland and forests of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kano and Niger States. The results of Yusuf (2015), Ahmad & Jamilu (2022), Binniyat (2015), and the West Africa Network for Peace building, WANEP, (2019) were in agreement with this finding.

Table 3's analysis makes it evident that the following factors work against government efforts to effectively combat the threat of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria: economic corruption, the government's reactive approach, underfunding, underpayment of foot soldiers, and the country's low level of technological advancement. This result was in line with the conclusions of Blanchard (2014), Alao, Atere and Alao (2013), and Iwara (2013).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is growing concern over the security situation in northwest Nigeria. In northwest Nigeria, almost every state is plagued by either real or entangled armed banditry. In northwest Nigeria, as in most other geopolitical zones in the nation, armed banditry is primarily a rural issue. Many rural residents have been forced to relocate or leave their homes as a result of it, turning once peaceful rural areas into dangerous places. Institutional anomalies are the catalyst for armed banditry, and research has linked socioeconomic, political, and geographic variables to the rise in armed banditry. Armed banditry has impacted Nigeria's overall economic health as well as the development of its agricultural sector. It has also resulted in the loss of life and property, heightened fear of crime, and intensified intergroup conflict. Despite several roles by the government and community to curtail the security challenge, armed banditry continues to evolve and become even more devastating.

In light of the aforementioned finding, this study offers the following suggestions:

1. To provide security in the ungoverned areas and the surrounding communities, the government should appoint and train forest guards.
2. The government should make sure that merit, not nepotism or favoritism, is the basis for hiring decisions and appointments.



3. To reduce the flow of illicit weapons, the government should strengthen border security by utilizing digital technology such as advanced monitoring and detecting tools.
4. Governments must take the initiative to handle security concerns and threats by utilizing cutting-edge techniques for obtaining and exchanging intelligence, as well as for planning, organizing logistics, motivating people, and putting cutting-edge technology into practice.
5. Officers must receive ongoing training in order to improve the efficacy of security personnel.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to TETFund Abuja for their generous support and funding of the research project titled “*Effectiveness of government roles in tackling the menace of armed banditry in North-West Nigeria*” from where this paper was extracted. Their financial assistance has been instrumental in enabling the successful execution of this study.

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