



# The Role of Banditry on Education in Federal Government College Kwali Abuja



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**Abstract:** *The Study examines the impact of banditry on the educational development of Federal Government College Kwali Abuja. In the course of this study, data were sourced from two major sources; the Secondary and the Primary Sources. The Secondary sources were from existing literature on Banditry and Education while Interview method, Focus Group Discussion were adopted as the main primary source of data. In addition, Qualitative method of analysis was adopted to present and analyse data based on the objectives of the study, within the theoretical framework of frustration-aggression theory. The Study concludes that banditry in the study area has become so alarming as it caused the school closure due to the threat and warning from the bandits. A situation that forced the suspension of school activities. Based on the findings, the study suggests that certain measures need to be taken in order to reduce the incidences of banditry in the study area, some of which are: acquiring adequate security presence in the school premises and its surroundings, adequate surveillance within and outside the school premises, enhancing people-centred approach in tackling banditry, prompt response from the security agencies, adequate and quick intervention from the Federal Governments.*

**Keywords:** Banditry, Development, Education, Insecurity, School, Kwali.  
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## **Introduction**

One of the contemporary problems that has engulfed the Nigerian state is security challenges ranging from the alarming Niger-Delta militancy, the Boko-Haram insurgency which has been rebirth most recently, and the current banditry activities which have caused a lot of humanitarian crisis in both the rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Security is the state or condition of being free from danger or threat in the daily activities of human beings (Imam,

2014). It is the freedom to move freely and participate in social, cultural, economic, and political activities without any threat to life and property from any individual or group. Security also encapsulates a peaceful engagement of persons and communities in their daily activities without being subjected to fear of danger, destruction of their properties, injuries. Ensuring the security of lives and properties is the primary responsibility of the state. It is because of this that the government has established several security forces to ensure and maintain security within the country and even to respond to external aggressions and threats. Within the context of the above argument, it is imperative to understand that the overall wellbeing of citizens within a particular geographical area and the stability of the political system that is driven by competency, commitment, sacrifice, absence of corruption and complacency and ensuring the accomplishment of fundamental human rights of the citizens, entails the security architecture of the state. The presence of security therefore, should guarantee the prevention of breakdown of law and order in the state. But it is puzzling that insecurity has degenerated into a violent crisis that led to the loss of lives, properties, livestock, displacement of people, disruption of education, and other socio-economic activities. A situation like this, if left unresolved, is capable of seriously threatening peaceful co-existence, access to education, and worsening the unemployment situation and economic meltdown in the entire country.

Banditry as a violent situation unleashed on rural communities which reorganized armed violence through plunder, extortions, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, raping of women and children, village raids and setting them ablaze, terrorism, illegal mining, the rustling of cattle, and murder as a means of fluid occupation by criminals. Banditry, as one of the insecurity challenges affecting the North-Western region of Nigeria, has recently, been affecting the educational development of the affected areas. The impacts of armed banditry have led to the total collapsed of political, religious, economic, cultural, agricultural and educational activities in the areas affected. In the area of education, banditry is responsible for the abduction and kidnapping of students and teachers, killing of students and teachers, destruction of educational facilities, disruption of academic activities and closure of schools in the affected areas.

Just as in the North-Western region of Nigeria where banditry has become one of the major problems bedeviling the region. Banditry has also become a security challenge in the North-Central States including Federal Capital Territory Abuja. This has become a problem that led to the kidnapping of residents for ransom, killing of victims in some instance and threat to education which led to closure of some schools in the capital. The activities of bandits in the Federal Capital have continued to scared parents, teachers and all stake holders that are saddled with the responsibilities for the effective functional management of schools in Abuja. Federal Government College Kwali fall under the bandit's threat that led to the closure of the school.

Despite trends that suggest entrenchment of democratic elections and peaceful regime change at both national and sub-national levels, the democratic institutions of parliament, the judiciary, political parties, and civil society organizations, all have remained weak and fragile in tackling the scourge of banditry in Kwali LGA, and it has been affecting access to education most especially in the Federal College of Education Kwali which led to the unfortunate closure of the school as a result of the threats and warning from the bandits that are operating freely in the ungoverned forest areas. It is on this background that the study examines the role of banditry on education in Federal Government College Kwali, Abuja.

## **Literature Review**

### **Banditry**

Banditry has existed and operated in different parts of the world since the 19th century, when bandits riding mostly on horse backs moved from their hideouts to attack villages and then retreated to their hideouts. In Europe, bandits have existed in mainly mountainous areas of Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey (Cassia, 1993). In Asia, bandits have existed in several countries such as Iran, Philippines and India (Bankoff, 1998). In India, bandits are called Daku in Hindi language which the British colonialist coined as "dacoity" during the colonial period. Thus, dacoity has become a term for banditry in the Indian subcontinent where bandits have operated for many years in North and North Central India.

One of the notable dacoits was Gabbar Singh who inspired the famous 1975 Bollywood film-Sholay (Flames), a motion picture that was dramatically acted to depict the activities of his life and time. Therefore, banditry has a rich and lucrative history throughout the south of Asia and despite continued anti-banditry efforts, the problem of banditry persists in India presently (Dmella, 2018). There have been several cases where traditional praise singers and oral historians narrated how the activities of such bandits affected trade and other economic pursuits in the pre-colonial period. Historically, armed banditry was an organized cross-border crime. The Asebenawa, Tuaregs, Fulani and Gobirawa from both British and French territories formed the major culprits (Rufai, 2021). This is to say that banditry is not a new phenomenon, just as in the case of Europe and Asia, it also has a long history of occurrence in Nigeria with a lot of consequential effect.

In some pre-industrial societies, peasants see bandits differently from the State, not as outlaws, hoodlums and miscreants, but as avengers and bread winners. However, a bandit in traditional African setting is entirely an opposite to that of America and Europe, the former specialized in armed robbery and other related crimes (Currot & Fink, 2008). The most common feature of banditry in Africa has been maiming, killing and wanton destruction of properties and hence, it has a direct relationship with cattle rustling (Rufai, 2017). But what are the circumstances on ground that trigger this act of criminality that is entirely different from that of Europe and Asia?

Rufai (2021) says bandits are simply shepherds who formally lived in a settlement but suddenly converted into gangs. It has therefore been said that bandits are refined money launderers whose mode of operation is to steal cows, sell them and buy more well-fed cows and take them to neighboring countries for sale after which the proceeds are invested among others in obtaining firearms and ammunition. They use drones, CCTV for surveillance (Rufai, 2021). To Anka (2017), "banditry is the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not it was planned, using weapons of offense or defense, especially in semi-organized groups, with the goal of overpowering the victim and getting loot or achieving some political goals." (Anka, 2017).

The intriguing thing about these bandits is that even though they come together for the same cause, they are surprisingly divided along diverse camps. The desire and pursuit for more refined weapons was not greatly inspired by the fashion for killings, but largely against other rival groups. Acquisition of firearms and inter-gang rivalry are common forms of banditry (Rufai, 2021). It has been noted that in the North-Western region of Nigeria, the sub region has been carefully divided into camps of bandits with each and every area/zone earmarked to a certain leader.

In the light of the above, Abubakar Abdallah (alias Dogo Gide) controls Niger and Kaduna States as his territories. As expected, he has smaller camps under him with leaders who pledge allegiance to him. Katsina State was controlled by the late Auwalun Daudawa and Dangote Bazamfare, while the Eastern flank of Sokoto State falls under the jurisdiction of Bello Turji (Rufai, 2021). There is more and more evidence that terrorists and bandits are working together in the North-Western region of Nigeria. This is explicitly obvious from the ways and manners they operate, like in the recruitment of people and sharing of logistics and weapons, as well as the fact that the area is a good place to carry out attacks because of its location and the fact that both groups are very good at the political economy of "kidnap for ransom," which is used to fund criminal enterprises (Anka, 2017).

With the globalization syndrome, the manifestation of banditry has turned into a global phenomenon. Without a doubt, bandits of this era are more lethal. Slatta (1994) observes how bandits operate in the shadows in uninhabited areas. And such people are seen by the society as bad and worthless. Since banditry has changed drastically within the years, with greater enlargement in Africa, this, therefore, has a lot of effect on the agricultural and economic development of the rural area in terms of productivity and sustenance. The rural area is so isolated that the presence of security agency is limited and therefore permits the bandits to carry out attacks on communities, farmlands, rustle cattle at will and audaciously.

### **Education**

Basic education plays a leading role in both personal and societal development. It provides individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in their communities and lead fulfilling lives. Simultaneously, a well-educated population is essential to a country's economic and social progress. One of the most important benefits of basic education is its ability to empower individuals and give them the confidence and skills needed for success (UNESCO 1994). Basic quality education gives people the knowledge and skills to understand their rights and responsibilities as well as the tools to transform their own lives and those of their families and communities. This includes ideals such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills as well as knowledge about health and the environment (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2022).

Basic education is also closely linked to economic development. Studies have shown that countries with higher educational levels tend to have stronger economies and lower poverty rates. For example, China's two-decade aggressive spending to reduce illiteracy has increased productivity. Moreover, basic education helps reduce hunger and poverty through feeding programs initiated in schools. It is believed that increasing primary school enrolment will reduce poverty by 12 per cent (Grant, 2017). Education can lead to technological and scientific advances that drive economic growth because educated individuals are more likely to find good jobs and contribute to their communities. Basic education can have positive social and cultural effects. It can help promote social cohesion and reduce inequality as it provides opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to come together and learn from each other. Education can help preserve cultural traditions and values as it provides a way for communities to pass on important knowledge and skills to future generations (Amadioha & Akor, 2020).

### **Nigeria's Security Challenges**

Security is the protection of assets including people against damage, injury, or loss from internal or external causes (Abolurin, 2011). Albert (2013) also defines security as the survival of the state and the protection of individuals and groups within the state (Abolurin, 2011). Thus, we can infer from the above definitions that the sovereignty of a nation-state may be

determined by its ability to safeguard citizens and their resources against any attack, being from within or outside the state territory (Abolurin, 2011).

There are rising insecurity in many developing countries especially those in the continent of Africa. This is manifested in civil wars (Central African Republic, Libya and South Sudan), attack by terrorist groups (Cameroon, Kenya and Somalia), political upheavals (Guinea Bissau and Sudan), and militants attacks (DR Congo and Egypt). The insecurity is beyond the capability of some nations to the extent that foreign troops are invited to assist in tackling the insecurity. Examples include the presence of United States troops in Niger Republic and French troops in Mali. In order to form a common front against the rising insecurity, countries have been organizing a conference of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA) whose 16<sup>th</sup> edition was hosted at Abuja, Nigeria in July 2019 (Ladan & Iguda, 2019). This justifies the fact that insecurity is now a global pandemic with all the affected countries having their own peculiar narratives and experiences. Therefore, it requires a collective effort of State and non-State actors in order to overcome the security challenges affecting many modern nations of the world.

From a national security perspective, it is possible to make several deductions on Nigeria's threat analysis in the last decade. Communities, especially those living in Nigeria's Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina states in the North-West and the North-Central have been at the receiving end of armed banditry for several years now (Saddique, 2021 in Dially Trust, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2021).

### **Banditry and Educational Development**

Basic education in Nigeria has long been fraught with numerous challenges such as widespread poverty, inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, low enrollment, and high dropout rates (Jokodola, 2021). Recent threats to education in northern Nigeria include banditry. An example of the impact of banditry on education in Nigeria occurred in 2019, when armed bandits abducted several teachers and students from the Government Girls Secondary School in Moriki, Zamfara State (Obiejesi, 2019).

School abductions have become recurring phenomena occurring in succession. Between April 2014 and June 2021, militants and bandits abducted 1548 pupils in 11 consecutive events in Northern Nigeria (Okafor, 2021). These mass kidnappings took place in primary, secondary, and higher institutions of learning in the Zamfara, Niger, Katsina, and Kaduna States. The majority of the instances occur at night, with the victims being carried into the forests (Onuoha & Akogwa, 2022). Table 1 presents selected incidents of bandit attacks on schools in Northern Nigeria.

**Table 1. Selected incidents of bandit attacks on schools 2020-2023**

SN	Date	Location	Incident
1	January, 20 2023	Doma, Nasarawa	6 primary school pupils of Alwaza Community School
2	April 13, 2022	Tsafe, Zamfara State	Five female students were abducted from College of Health Science and Technology
3	September 1, 2021	Maradun, Zamfara State	73 Students were abducted from Government Day Secondary school,
4	August 18, 2021	Faskari, Katsina	9 pupils and 1 staff were abducted from an Islamic school in Sakkai village
5	July 5, 2021	Chikun, Kaduna	121 students were abducted from Bethel Baptist High School
6	June 17,	Birnin Yauri, Kebbi State	80 students and 5 staff were abducted from Federal Government College

7	April 20, 2021	Chikun, Kaduna	20 students and 2 staff were kidnapped from Greenfield University
8	March 15, 2021	Birnin Gwari, Kaduna	Several pupils and teachers were abducted in LEA Primary School in Rama
9	March 11, 2021	Afaka, Kaduna	39 students were kidnapped from College of Forestry
10	February 26, 2021	Jangebe, Zamfara State,	317 girls were abducted from the Government Girls Secondary School
11	February 17, 2021	Kagara, Niger State	27 students and 15 staff were abducted from Government Science College
12	December 11, 2020	Kankara, Katsina State	344 boys were abducted from Government Science Secondary School

**Source:** Authors compilation from dailies

The consequences of these attacks go beyond the immediate trauma experienced by the students and staff. The closure of schools due to banditry can have long-term effects on children's education and their future prospects. Research has shown that even a short period of disruption to schooling can negatively impact children's cognitive development and future academic achievement (Miller & Hui, 2022). Furthermore, fear of attack can prevent parents from sending their children to school, further exacerbating the problem.

### **Destruction of Schools and other Educational Facilities**

The impact of banditry on educational infrastructure has been extensively studied and documented (Miller and Hui 2022). In a report by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack [GCPEA] (2022), more than 5,000 recorded incidents of attacks on education and military usage of schools and colleges in 2020 and 2021 injured more than 9,000 students and teachers in at least 85 different nations (including Nigeria) and destroyed the infrastructure. The proliferation of armed groups and criminal organizations, including bandits, has had a devastating impact on education systems in conflict-affected areas. In many cases, schools have been destroyed or used as military bases, teachers have been targeted for attacks or recruitment, and students have been kidnapped or recruited as soldiers.

This has resulted in the widespread disruption of education, with many children being unable to attend school or receive inadequate education due to the lack of trained teachers and resources. The GCPEA report estimates that, in conflict-affected countries, over 75% of schools are closed or only partially functioning, leading to a significant gap in education for children in these areas (GCPEA, 2022). The impact of banditry on educational infrastructure is not limited to conflict-affected countries. In areas with high levels of criminal activity, schools may also be targeted for theft or extortion, leading to similar disruptions in education.

The Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria notes that between 2009 and 2022, attacks on education by bandits and insurgent groups in northeast Nigeria led to the death of 2,295 teachers, closure of 1,500 schools, denial of 600,000 children's access to education, and the destruction of over 910 schools (Tyessi, 2022). This was substantiated by Salim Musa Umar, the chairman of Farmers Herders Initiative for Peace and Development Africa (FHIPD – AFRICA) in a report presented by Tribune Online (2022a), between 2014 and 2022, bandits destroyed 1,500 schools, killed over 2,000 teachers and displaced 19,000 school children in Nigeria.

### **Disruption of School Schedules and Attendance due to Security Concerns**

Due to attacks on schools, student attendance and enrolment has been dismal (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). Between 2017 and 2020, the enrolment of students in secondary schools was drastically reduced in Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina (Rosenje et al., 2022). To curtail such attacks, some state governments in Nigeria have shut down all schools. At some

point, Borno State closed all the schools. In Tegna, Niger State, 136 students were abducted from Salihu Tanko Islamic School on May 30, 2021. Eleven students were later released, because they were too young to walk long distances. As a result of this attack, several primary, technical, and high schools were closed in neighboring communities, including Wushishi, where bandits were reportedly planning an attack on a secondary school and polytechnic (Sevencan, 2021). In Kaduna, many primary and secondary school students have refused to resume school for fear of bandit attacks (Gabriel, 2022). In Katsina, over 19 primary schools were closed in 2022. It was reported that closure affected the learning activities of over 9,113 pupils made up of 4,294 girls and 4,819 boys. In most cases, pupils have been moved to neighboring communities such as Kankara to continue their studies (Enna, 2022).

Children's education is compromised when schools are closed. Covering work and syllabus is impossible due to insecurity and school closures. Many schools have closed because of security concerns. Secondary schools prone to crises have been closed for several months. Many state authorities have mandated the closure of boarding schools in response to the recent wave of kidnappings by criminal organizations demanding ransom. To maintain security, the governors of six states in the area—Niger, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Yobe in the North East—have shuttered some or all of the boarding schools in the most hazardous local government areas (Sancha et al., 2022).

Measures such as lockdowns and evacuations have disrupted traditional school schedules and attendance patterns, leading to negative effects on students' learning and development. School disruptions affect students' academic performance. Due to school closures, public schools in Zamfara and Sokoto states could not present candidates for the May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) 2022, setting a bad precedent.

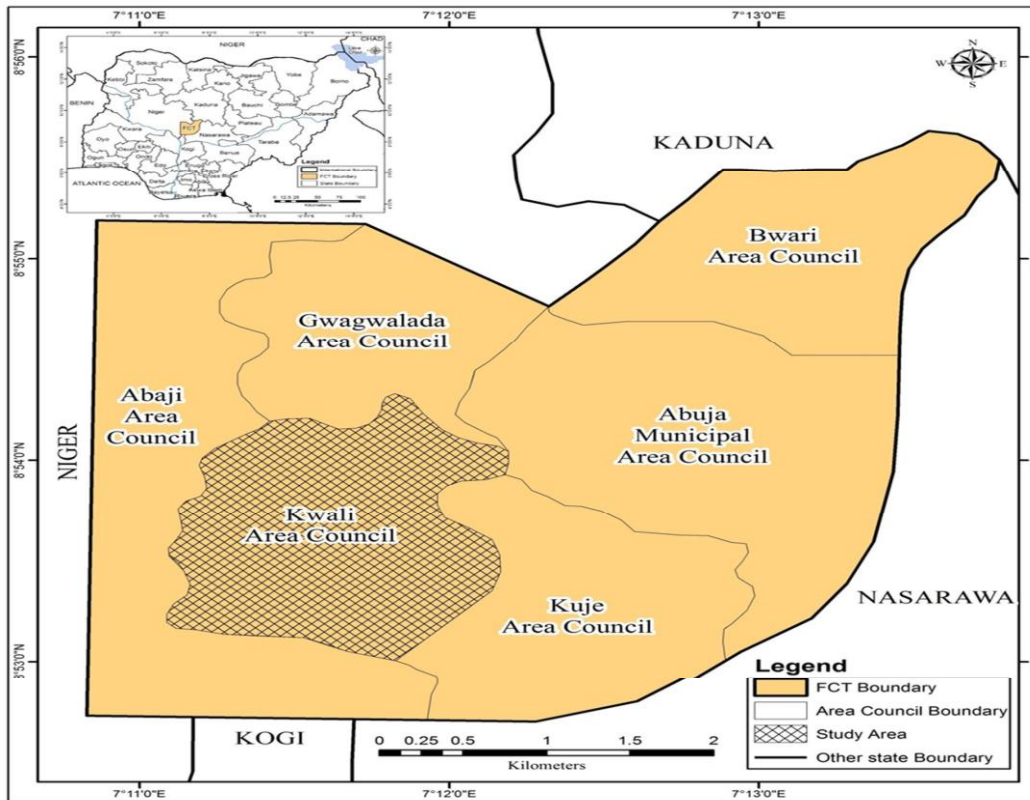
### **Description of the Study Area**

Kwali was created on October 1, 1996 by the military administration of General Sani Abacha. Kwali has an area of 1,206 km and a population of 85, 837 as at the 2006 census. The study area is located between Latitude 8°28' - 8° 54' North of the Equator and Longitude 6°50' -7° 13' East of the Green Witch Meridian. It is among the six area councils that make up the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (see Figure 2). The area council is situated at the South-Western part of the FCT. It is bordered to the north by Gwagwalada, to the east by Kuje and to the west by Abaji area councils respectively. The area comprises of eight districts (See Figure 3) and has a total land area of 1,700,400 Km<sup>2</sup>.

### **Relief and drainage**

The FCT is an area made up of hills with dissected terrains and undulating plains. It has the lowest elevations 70 metres above sea level particularly in the flood plain of River Gurara. It is from this floodplain that the land rises irregularly in the eastern, northern as well as northwestern directions. The relief occupies about 48 percent of the total land area of the FCT. The Gawu hills found in the area consist of a complex of massively dissected rock outcrops that rise between 230 metres and 610 meters above sea level. The summit of this massif is an undulating surface and it is bounded in all sides by ridges and scarps that descend into the surrounding plains. There are many streams that radiate from it in all directions notably Rivers Usuma and Gurara (Balogun, 2001). The study area is drained by River Usuma which is an important tributary of River Gurara and is the largest and major river within the study area.

**Figure 1:**  
**Map of Abuja, Showing the Area Council**



### **Result and Discussion of Findings**

The major findings of the study after conducting extensive research on the subject matter have come up with the following findings on the role of banditry on the educational in Federal Government College Kwali. The study discovers that there is increase in the level of security threat in Federal Government College Kwali during the study period as a result of the activities of bandits which brought the major activities of the school to a standstill. Education root of societal development which provide the society with the need expert that can gear the wheels of development. This situation has caused many to lose their jobs and lives and has resulted to hunger and starvation.

The study finds out that there is less presence of security personnel in the study areas before the threats warning from the bandits and this has given the bandits the opportunity to attack various communities around the school at will. Considering the extent to which banditry has affected the education of the study area, it has been discovered that the activities of bandits in Federal Government College Kwali have affects school calendar, following the closure of the school in 2019.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, banditry which started with cattle rustling has metamorphosed into an economically based form of criminality; incorporating into it kidnapping, arson, rape, armed robbery, killing of innocent citizens and other forms of vileness. The incidence has succeeded in the closure of many schools and kidnapping of students. Banditry has seriously affected the educational development of Federal Government College Kwali, Abuja, and other schools across the country. This can be seen in the way many schools are closed and abandoned for

several academic sessions. The threats of bandits in the Federal Government College Kwali have caused the closure of the school which affected the school calendar and also increase the fear of uncertainty among the students, parents and the school administrators.

Given the foregoing, this study after putting various views into consideration came up with the following recommendations that will serve as a guide and also an instrument for policy action that must be taken in order to reduce the incidence of banditry in Federal Government College Kwali, Abuja and Nigeria at large. Below are the recommendations:

- i. The Government at all levels should properly create awareness on the implication of banditry, and also how to quickly respond to incidence of banditry through prompt reporting of the movement of strangers within and outside the schools. This will help in reducing the activities of bandits that is affecting the schools in Abuja.
- ii. The government must incorporate the traditional rulers at various levels, the vigilante groups and other members of the communities around the school into the fight against banditry. This is because the traditional rulers are closer to the people and can effectively contribute by providing the security agencies with information on the influx of strangers in their various communities. This will go a long way in reducing the threats by bandits.
- iii. There should be adequate support and intervention of the Federal, State, and Local Government authorities in the fight against banditry. Through that, the security can be easily mobilized for quick response to emergencies.
- iv. Adequate security personnel and logistics should be provided in the flashpoint areas where the bandits have turned into their hideouts. This will help the security to confront the bandits that are coming in many to attack schools.
- v. There should be synergy among various security networks that are saddled with the responsibility of providing the citizens of this area with the protection of lives and properties. Lack of synergy among the security agencies will make the fight against banditry a difficult one.

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