



## Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on Girl-Child Education in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** This study examined the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. The study was guided by two (2) research questions. The study reviewed related literature under conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical studies. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study was three hundred and eighty-nine (389) respondents comprising teachers and pupils in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. The sample size of the study totaling two hundred and seventeen (217) was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled: impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education (QEBGCE). Simple percentages, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used in data analysis. The findings indicate that the fear of banditry and kidnapping has led to a drastic decline in girl-child enrollment in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area. And the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education are more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas, the fear of kidnapping has a greater influence on the educational aspirations of girls in rural areas than in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area. The study concluded that frequent disruptions of school academic activities due to the fear of kidnapping was among factors responsible for the decline in girl-child enrollment, hence, there is urgent need to address this critical issue. The study recommended the need for increased security outfit around the schools' premises to protect girls from bandit attacks and ensure a safe environment for learning activities.

**Keywords:** Banditry, Kidnapping, Girl-child, and education

### 1. Introduction

Insecurity in Nigeria has assumed a very frightening dimension following the mindless attacks on schools and subsequent abduction of school children in Northern part of Nigeria. The incessant abductions of school children have kept many Nigerians worried due to the significant role education play in national development. Globally, education is seen as a powerful tool for bringing about and maintaining social change in human cultures as well as determining their future. Education is viewed as being essential to social reconstruction in addition to being a means of promoting upward social and economic mobility (Ifenkwe, 2013). Girl-child education refers to the provision of educational opportunities and empowerment for female child. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that girls have equal access to quality education, promoting their intellectual, social, and economic development. Historically, girls and women have faced significant barriers to education in many parts of the world due to social, cultural, and economic factors. However, the recognition of the importance of education for girls' well-being and the advancement of societies has led to efforts to address these barriers and promote girl-child education (Educational Policy and Data Centre, 2023).

According to UNICEF (2020), about 10.5 million of the children aged 5-14 years are not in school in Nigeria. This statistic is even worse in the Northern part of Nigeria with only 53% net attendance rate, meaning almost half of the children's population especially girl-child were out of school. There have been at least two mass abductions and several other cases of abduction of school girl-child across various states in Nigeria, especially in the north.

The impact of these activities such as banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education are numerous, but worthy of mention is the significant drop-in enrollment rate from the considerable gains that were

made in years before. According to reports, enrollment rate of girl-child in school has declined by a whopping 23% which can be attributed to parents deciding against releasing their wards to school for fear of being abducted or banditry and kidnapped. Many of the parents who defy the odds to send their wards to school now rue their choice. It is in light of the above that Okpaga, et al (2021) observe that Nigeria as a nation must make concerted efforts to raise the educational attainment of all its youths who are the leaders of tomorrow especially those girl-child that are deprived of regular school attendance because of insecurity and conflicts.

Running a school is a huge responsibility, in particular, the safety of pupils and staff is vital. It is important to assure parents that their children are safe at school, and that the school is adhering to its duty of care for everyone on the premises. This includes not only students and staff, but also parents and visitors. In an ideal situation, a school ought to be fenced and secured to prevent any kind of attack on both the pupils and teachers. These is only possible if the security architecture is not compromised. There is need for well-trained security personnel to secure the school from both the frontage (gate) and immediate environment (Bwala, 2021).

Another effective method for monitoring who is in the school premises is through the use of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) camera which enables the school to see exactly who is entering the grounds and also who is leaving. This can help combat truancy and keep accurate records of who is coming and going out of school compound. It is therefore, imperative for school authorities in collaboration with Ministry of Education to ensure proper security system in our schools in order to minimize the impact of insecurity on girl-child education. Recent reports indicate a series of violent attacks by armed bandits, resulting in numerous casualties and abductions. For instance, one incident involved six security operatives who were killed, including five military personnel and an officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence, during an assault on multiple communities including Allawa, Manta, Gurmana, Bassa, and Kokki (eonsintelligence.com, 2021 in Daily time Nigeria, 2023). The attackers, estimated to be around 100 in number, executed their assault over several hours, resulting in the abduction of ten individuals and the theft of military vehicles and motorcycles (eonsintelligence.com, 2021). Ahmed et al. (2024), also viewed kidnapping as the “act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. It involves taking a person from their family forcefully

without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family”. From the foregoing, the definition of kidnapping has no one best way to describe it, but it is clear that for an act to be deemed kidnapping, it shall involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, detention or seizure of that person be it a child or an adult. That is why Inyang and Abraham in EPDC (2023) added that it is legally regarded as a restriction of someone else’s liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from. It was based on the above discourse that this study seeks to examine the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teaching and learning are anchored on peaceful, secured, and enabling environment which are important factors for successful teaching and learning process. In the absence of these basic factors, teaching and learning becomes distorted. The impact of insecurity such as banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Survey by both the print and electronic media indicates that over 85% of the school children especially girl-child in the Northern-Nigeria and some parts of the middle belt are either out of school or do not attend school due to insecurity in the areas (Bwala, 2021).

Apart from negative impact of insecurity on school attendance leading to school dropout of the girl-child as well as economic and social problems, it has caused the nation a lot of human and material resources. These extreme circumstances of fear and uncertainty hinder teachers from imparting knowledge fully and effectively to their students, especially girl-child which cannot learn either with full concentration and attention. The net result is a rapid decline in the quality of education, as performances in internal and external examinations begin to hit the rock.

Another impact of banditry and kidnapping on education in Niger State and Nigeria in general is that, it negatively affects girl-child education as parents are usually scared of enrolling their female children especially when they are considered the most vulnerable to the insecurity challenges.

Although there are several researches conducted to ascertain the impact of banditry and kidnapping on educational system in Nigeria, there however, limited

researches on the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education especially in the study area. Therefore, this study examined the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were raised to guide this study:

- To determine the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State;
- To identify differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the research:

- What is the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State?
- What is the differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State?

## 2. Literature Review and Conceptual Exploration

The concept of girl-child education refers to the provision of educational opportunities and empowerment for girls. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that girls have equal access to quality education, promoting their intellectual, social, and economic development. Historically, girls and women have faced significant barriers to education in many parts of the world due to social, cultural, and economic factors. However, the recognition of the importance of education for girls' well-being and the advancement of societies has led to efforts to address these barriers and promote girl-child education (EPDC, 2023). The concept of girl-child education encompasses several key principles and goals:

**Access to education:** It emphasizes ensuring that girls have equal access to educational opportunities at all levels, from primary to tertiary education. This includes addressing barriers such as discrimination,

gender stereotypes, cultural norms, poverty, and geographic constraints.

**Quality Education:** It emphasizes the importance of providing girls with quality education that meets their specific needs. This includes ensuring that schools have trained teachers, appropriate infrastructure, safe learning environments, and relevant curricula that promote gender equality and address the unique challenges faced by girls.

**Empowerment and skills development:** Girl-child education seeks to empower girls with knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions, pursue their aspirations, and actively participate in social, economic, and political spheres. It promotes the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, and life skills.

**Gender equality and social transformation:** Girl-child education plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and challenging gender norms and stereotypes. It seeks to change societal attitudes and practices that limit girls' opportunities and perpetuate gender-based discrimination and violence.

**Health and well-being:** Girl-child education recognizes the interlinkages between education and health. It emphasizes addressing health-related barriers, including access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, to ensure that girls can stay healthy, safe, and able to fully participate in education (EPDC, 2023).

**Bad Governance and Poor Leadership** are also responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. This has remained as Nigeria's fundamental cause of insecurity from the past till now. Any government anywhere has the primary function of providing basic services such as water, electricity, good road network, quality education, and general infrastructure. Ironically, these basic things are not adequately provided for Nigerians. Nigerian youth are frustrated and demoralized. Demoralization and anger logically provide a strong fertile ground for aggression and general insecurity. Nigeria's current government has been strongly charged with ethnic disparity, and the marginalization of some sections of the country in the provision of basic infrastructure, and these have significantly compounded Nigeria's security issues (Nwadiakor, 2018).

## 3. Empirical Review

Ahmed, Muhammad and Omache (2024) investigated the impact of banditry on the education of girls in Katsina State. The findings indicated that banditry has detrimental impacts in terms of installing fear of

physical attack, abduction, closure of schools, hinders teachers' ability to teach effectively and disrupts students' ability to learn. It also creates an uncondusive environment for teaching and learning leading to decrease enrolment and retention of female students in schools.

Similar review of related investigation by Umar, Ibrahim and Adamu (2024) in Suleiman et al. (2024) investigation is on the whole eight frontline LGAs and focusing on one of the impacts of banditry activities which is students' performance. Bello and Suleiman (2023) examined the effects of banditry in a non-frontline LGA which is Funtua and examined the effects on two of the vulnerable segments of the population which are women and children.

Additionally, Ahmed, Muhammad and Omache (2024) investigation is also on Katsina State as a whole and focusing also only on one vulnerable segment of the population which are girls. Ladan and Abdulfatah (2023) explores the impacts of banditry activities on one of the frontline LGA which is Jibia and focusing on the several impacts of banditry on education.

Abdullahi, et al., (2019) conducted a survey on the impact of insecurity on school attendance of junior secondary school students in Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State. The study found out that students' level of school attendance under the crisis situation in Maiduguri metropolis has been low but that of male students seems to be lower than that of female students. Parents and teachers were willing to send their children back to the affected schools. The impact of insecurity on school attendance was found to be significant.

Ojukwu (2017) investigated the effect of insecurity of school environment on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo state, Nigeria. The findings revealed that insecurity of school environment significantly affects the academic performance of secondary school students while students' gangsterism, smoking of Indian hemp, abusing other hard drugs, cult and related violent activities were some of the factors that constituted insecurity of the school environment which eventually cause boys to leave school and join trading while leading girls to drop out and settle for marriage.

Umaru and Terhemba (2014) examined the effects of insecurity on girl-child school attendance in Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria. The study discovered.

the level of primary school attendance under the crisis situation in Damaturu metropolis was found to be low but that of female pupils were found to be lower than that of male pupils. Parents and teachers were willing to send their children back to the affected primary schools. Male and female significantly differ on the effects of insecurity on primary school attendance.

Suleiman, et al. (2024) surveyed the impacts of banditry activities on quality education in Safana Local Government Area, Katsina State. The results showed that banditry has negatively impacted the quality of primary and secondary school education. This is by way of creating insecurity in schools, creating shortage of teachers, increasing the rate of school drop-outs leads to poor academic performance, kidnapping of pupils, students and teachers, occupying school buildings, closure of schools among others. In order to reduce the impacts of the banditry activities the government has adopted a number of measures, so also do the teachers and parents

Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013) carried out research on effect of Boko Haram on school attendance in Northern Nigeria. The study aimed at assessing the effect of Boko Haram on school attendance in Northern Nigeria. It was revealed from the results that there is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female pupils/, but there is a significant difference in school attendance among rural and urban schools, and there is also a significant difference in school attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in areas prone to Boko Haram attacks.

#### 4. Research Methodology

A descriptive research design was used for this study. The population of this study was three hundred and eighty-nine (389) teachers and pupils in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State, the sample size of the study was two hundred and seventeen (217), this sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The questionnaire used titled: Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on Girl-Child Education Questionnaire (IBKGCEQ). The instrument consisted of 10 items structured on four Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections. Section A consisted of the respondent's personal data, while section B, C and has 10 items questions. The items of instrument were validated and was reliable for this study

5. Results and Discussion

**Research Questions 1:** What is the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State?

**Table 1:** Responses on the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State

S/No	Items	Mean	St. Dev.	Rem.
1	The fear of banditry and kidnapping has led to a decrease in girl-child enrollment in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area.	2.69	0.65	Agree
2	Incidents of banditry and kidnapping have negatively impacted the academic performance of girl students in primary schools.	2.81	0.63	Agree
3	Parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school due to the threat of banditry and kidnapping in the area.	3.16	0.86	Agree
4	The closure of schools due to security threats has disproportionately affected girl-child education compared to boys' education.	3.11	0.77	Agree
5	The fear of banditry and kidnapping has led to a decrease in girl-child enrollment in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area.	2.69	0.65	Agree
Grand Mean		2.98		Agree

*Source: Field Survey, 2026*

Table 1. which focused on the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State shows that five items listed have mean scores above the cut off mean of 2.50 which means that the respondents shared the same opinion. However, the grand mean score of 2.98 shows that the respondents agreed on the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

The interpretation above indicates that the fear of banditry and kidnapping has led to a drastically declined in girl-child enrollment in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area, incidents of banditry and kidnapping have negatively impacted on academic performance of girl students in primary schools, parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school SS due to the threat of banditry and kidnapping in the area, the closure of schools due to security threats has disproportionately affected girl-child education compared to boys' education, the fear of banditry and kidnapping has led to a decrease in girl-child enrollment in primary schools in Shiroro Local Government Area.

**Research Question 2:** What is differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area?

**Table 2:** Responses on the differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area

S/No	Items	Mean	St. Dev.	Rem.
1	I believe that the impact of banditry on girl-child education is more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas.	3.67	0.78	Agree
2	The fear of kidnapping has a greater influence on the educational aspirations of girls in urban areas than in rural areas.	2.98	0.71	Agree
3	Community initiatives in urban areas are effective in mitigating the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education than in rural areas.	3.14	0.73	Agree
4	The prevalence of banditry and kidnapping in more common in rural areas than urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area	2.98	0.71	Agree
5	Kidnapping incidents in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area significantly deter parents from sending their daughters to school.	3.67	0.78	Agree
Grand Mean		2.88		Agree

*Source: Field Survey, 2026*

Table 2. which focused on the differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area shows that five items listed have mean scores above the cut off mean of 2.50 which means that the respondents shared the same opinion.

However, the grand mean score of 2.88 shows that the respondents agreed to all the items on differential impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education between rural and urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

The interpretation above indicates that the impact of banditry on girl-child education are more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas, the fear of kidnapping has a greater influence on the educational aspirations of girls in rural areas than in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area, community initiatives in urban areas are effective in mitigating the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education than in rural areas, the prevalence of banditry and kidnapping in more common in rural areas than urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area, kidnapping incidents in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area significantly deter parents attitude from sending their daughters to school.

## 6. Discussion of Findings

The result of research question 1 indicates that the frequency of banditry attacks in the study area disrupted the normal school schedule for girls. Girls in the community missed school due to fear of being kidnapped by bandits, abduction of school girls by bandits led to a decline in girl-child school enrollment in the area under investigation, teachers have been reluctant to teach in schools located in areas affected by banditry and destruction of school infrastructure by bandits negatively impacted the learning environment for girls.

The interpretation of research question 2 that the impact of banditry on girl-child education are more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas, the fear of kidnapping has a greater influence on the educational aspirations of girls in rural areas than in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area, community initiatives in urban areas are effective in mitigating the impact of banditry and kidnapping on girl-child education than in rural areas, the prevalence of banditry and kidnapping is more common in rural areas than urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area, kidnapping incidents in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area significantly deter parents from sending their daughters to school. The finding agrees with that of Olumodeji, and Ifeoma (2024) that conducted study on impact of banditry kidnapping and terrorism on school administration teachers' job performance and students' academic performance and students' enrolment in educational institutions in Nigeria, the study established that insecurity challenges have disrupted school administration, teacher's job performance, students' academic performance and enrolment, retention and completion of education programmes in respective educational institutions across the country

Therefore, banditry activities such as killings, kidnappings, cattle rustling, threats, intimidation,

harassment, extortion, illegal fines and tax collection, sporadic shootings to frighten the people have created serious insecurity in the North West Zone, these activities have affected the socio-economic activities of the people including education. In fact, in the affected States such as Niger, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna, and Sokoto States, banditry has affected primary, secondary and tertiary education. Recent banditry attacks, invasion of some community by Boko Haram insurgents to kidnap large number of pupils and students from primary and secondary schools has negatively affected the quality of education in the Northern Nigeria.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF,2020) the kidnapping incidences and other banditry activities have led to the closure of 11,536 schools in the Northern Nigeria from December 2020 to April 2021 which impacted the education of 1.3 million children in the 2020/2021 academic year. The Federal Government of Nigeria has on many occasions been called upon to declare "State of Emergency" on the education sector to save it from eminent collapse due to banditry activities in the Northern region (Nasiru, 2021 in Suleiman, et al. 2024).

Frederick, et-al (2023), in his investigation of school children abduction in Nigeria: implication for educational development in Northern Nigeria, revealed that between 2014 and 2021, gunmen kidnapped over 1,500 students, mostly girls, and about 1,280 teachers and pupils have died and over 1,400 schools have been destroyed. The study also revealed the effects of school children adoption to include: reductions in teachers' recruitment, nose-dive in student enrollment and lowered rates of transition to higher education levels, most especially among girls. The implication is that, it leads to discouragement of foreign investment in the education and decline in the national economy; a negative image for the nation; and a decrease in the passion and interest of Nigeria's children in education.

## 7. Conclusion

The findings from the various analysis and reviews from this study points to a negative impact of banditry activities on the education of girl-child in the affected communities. The study concluded that frequent disruption of school teaching and learning, fear of kidnapping, and the subsequent decline in girl-child enrollment underscore the urgent need to address this critical issue. The reluctance of teachers to work in schools located in banditry-affected areas and the destruction of school infrastructure further exacerbate the challenges faced by girls in accessing quality

education. The study therefore, concludes that the impact of banditry on girl-child education are more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas. This implies that the fear of kidnapping has a greater influence on the educational aspirations of girls in rural areas than in urban areas of Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- There is need for increased security presence around schools to protect pupils, especially girls from bandit attacks and ensure a safe learning environment.
- Community-based security initiatives should be adopted to complement the efforts of law enforcement agencies in safeguarding school girls.
- Government should establish temporary learning centers in secured locations to ensure the continuity of girl-child education during periods of heightened banditry.
- There is need for collaboration with international organizations and NGOs to secure funding and resources for the implementation of these recommendations.
- There is need for collaborative engagement with communities for advocacy, orientation and guidance service to raise awareness about the challenges such as post-traumatic disorder faced by girls in accessing education in banditry-affected areas.

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