

IMPACTS OF INSECURITY ON RECREATION AND TOURISM IN KATSINA STATE, NORTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Insecurity has become a global phenomenon affected even the most advanced countries of the world such as the United States of America where periodic gun violence or mass shooting of unarmed civilians has been claiming many lives annually. Though insecurity is more prevalent in developing countries where series of armed conflicts have claimed many lives, destroyed properties, and forced displacements. This paper examined the impacts of insecurity on recreation and tourism in Katsina State Northern Nigeria. The methodology employed to collect data for the research includes field visits to the affected areas to observe the physical and human settings. There is also the use of focus group discussions involving ten participants each from two groups in each of the eight local government areas most affected by the insecurity. The results have shown that Katsina State possesses a variety of recreational and tourist centers such as historical sites and monuments, recreational parks and resorts, waterfront areas, geomorphic features, and durbar festivals. The results further showed that banditry is the form of insecurity affecting recreation and tourism in the State from 2011 to date (2023). Banditry has negatively affected recreation and tourism in form of loss of lives of recreationists, taking over forests and villages containing tourist's sites, halting recreation and tourism projects, deliberate clearance of forest areas, restricting travelling and cancellation of durbar festivals. This is despite the series of efforts by the Federal and State Governments towards curbing insecurity to allow recreation and tourism to flourish. There is therefore the urgent need to adopt more active and decisive measures to combat the insecurity there-by promoting tourism and recreation in Katsina State northern Nigeria.

Keywords: *Impacts, insecurity, banditry, bandits, recreation, tourism, Katsina State.*

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is a situation where citizens of a country, state or community are exposed to threats to their lives and properties, thereby they live in fear and uncertainty. Insecurity in many countries prevails in a situation of near breakdown of law and order and it is a manifestation of the inability of the security forces to tackle the situation (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2021).

Insecurity is a global phenomenon affecting even the most advanced countries of the world such as the United States of America (USA) where periodic gun violence or mass shooting of unarmed civilians have created insecurity. For example, there was ten mass shootings from February 17th through February 19th, 2023, that killed 37 people (Hauck, 2023). Even in Japan, a former President was recently gunned down by an assas-

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sin which leads to his death (Arranz et al, 2022). In Europe the Russia-Ukraine war has created an unprecedented high level of insecurity not witnessed in the continent since end the Second World War in 1945 (CFR, 2023).

In the developing nations, insecurity has become endemic as it has persisted for many years despite the presence of security forces and their attempts to tackle it. In several countries of Asia, decades of armed conflicts have brought insecurity as a result of the violence between government forces and armed groups (Laub, 2023). The Syrian civil war for example has created serious insecurity that has attracted the participation of other countries and armed groups. The Afghan conflict, the Arab – Israeli conflict and the conflict between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region are other examples of armed conflicts that have led to serious insecurity in the continent of. Asia (United Nations, 2023).

In the continent of Africa, insecurity has persisted in several countries due to more than a decade of conflicts. Examples include the Libyan conflict, the South Sudan conflict, the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo between M23 rebels and government forces. In the West African sub-region, militant jihadist violence intermingled with community conflicts from northern Mali in 2012 has spread to Burkina Fasso and Niger Republic. This conflict has killed 4,000 people in the three countries in 2019 according to United Nations figures (Associated Press, 2020). The Boko Haram insurgency has also brought unprecedented level of insecurity in the Lake Chad region countries such as Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroun and Nigeria.

In Nigeria, since the return to democratic rule in May 1999, has witnessed insecurity resulting from tribal and religious conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, militancy and cultism, sea piracy, armed robbery, Boko Haram insurgency, violent separatist movements and armed banditry (Akinela, 2016; Ladan & Badaru, 2021). The forms of insecurity that is affecting Katsina state and indeed other northwestern states is banditry. Banditry is defined here as an organized crime committed by outlaws armed with dangerous weapons in mainly areas where there is limited presence of security forces such as village settlements (Akinyetun, 2022). The crimes committed include murder, robbery, cattle rustling, illegal tax collection and imposition of fines forced labor, raping and other forms of sexual molestation of women and girls, kidnapping and hostage taking among others (Okoli, 2021). Banditry in northwestern Nigeria started in 2011 in Zamfara state from where it spreads to neighboring states such as Katsina. According to a report by the West African Network of Peace building (WANEP) from January to December 2019, bandits were responsible for more than 1,000 civilian deaths in the Northwest (Wodu, 2020). The impacts of these deaths have ripple effects across village communities that will last generations. Banditry has further affected virtually all sectors of the socio-economic activities of the people crippling or devastating most of them. Since insecurity is a situation where people are exposed to harm or danger that can lead to loss of lives and or destruction of properties, it is bound to have impacts on tourism. Tourism according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which entail the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment to visit places of recreation and interests, pleasure, and leisure. Tourism is defined further as “a collection of activities, services and industries which deliver a travel experience comprising transportation, accommodation, or lodging, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home (UNWTO, 2010).

A distinction is made between domestic and international tourism. Domestic tourism refers to tourism by citizens of a nation within the geographical area of their country. International tourism refers to tourism by citizens of another country or visitors who normally do not reside in the country. Since tourism involves visits by travelling to places of interests and staying for at least two days, it will naturally be possible when there is security of lives and properties. This is the link between tourism and security; therefore, insecurity has negative impacts on tourism as most tourists keep away from sites that are facing insecurity. Insecurity affect tourism in many countries of the world as criminals usually target tourist sites or places usually visited by foreigners to carry out their nefarious activities. For example, four American tourists were kidnapped at gun point at Mexico border city of Matamoros on March 3rd, 2023, two of them were later found dead (CNN, 2023). There are many examples, especially in developing nations. On March 16th, 2016, gunmen launched an

attack on Grand Bassan Beach resort in Cote d'Ivoire killing 16 persons. On October 12th, 2022, Islamic state terrorists launched a deadly attack on Longan hotel popular with Chinese nationals in central Afghanistan. Two among the Chinese nationals became injured while trying to escape the attack by jumping from the hotel balcony with eighteen Afghans confirmed killed from the hotel (Aljazeera, 2022).

Besides the attacks on tourists' sites and infrastructures such as hotels, media reports about insecurity have negative impacts on tourism by discouraging visitors. For example, the region of Tillaberi in Niger Republic has many tourists' sites one of which is W. National Park which straddles the tri-border areas of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger Republic identified as World Heritage site by United Nations Educational and Scientific Cooperation (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 2015). But the insecurity facing the region has discouraged tourists from visiting not only the national park but Tillaberi region as a whole.

In Nigeria recent reports showed that the insecurity in the country is affecting tourism and tourism development. The Assistant Director General National Park Service (NPS) has on 27th November 2021 lamented that Park Rangers at Okumo National Park are being kidnapped by bandits which is hampering tourism activities at the park. A member of Niger State House of Assembly has on June 21st, 2022, also lamented that bandits and terrorists have infiltrated the Kainji National Park from where they kill or kidnap the inhabitants in both Niger and Kwara states. The security agents are requested to flush the bandits out of the park (Channels TV, 2022). The persistence of insecurity is indeed affecting tourism as many states of the federation with tourist sites are being boycotted or avoided by tourists due to fear of being kidnapped for ransom, attacked or even killed by terrorists (Ayantoye, 2022). In fact, most international tourists are becoming scarred of being victims of banditry or Boko Haram in Nigeria and they will opt to visit other safer and more secure African countries like Kenya or the Gambia. On May 20th, 2022, it was announced in international dailies that the bandits have taken over the Kainji National Park, who have equally established their camp in the hitherto famous games reserve (Wakasso, 2023).

From 2011 to date (2023), Northwestern Nigeria has been facing serious insecurity arising from criminal activities of armed gangs on motorcycles who have camped in abandoned forests and forest reserves to launch attacks on rural communities and roads within the States and linking the States. These criminal activities referred to as banditry have affected virtually all the sectors of the economy and the lives of the people including recreation and tourism. The banditry originated from Zamfara State, one of the States in the Northwest and then spread to other neighboring states like Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Niger. The objectives of the paper are to identify the recreational and tourists attractions in Katsina state, explain the impacts of insecurity on recreation and tourism in Katsina State, highlight the recent efforts in tackling the insecurity and recommend appropriate measures to end the insecurity for recreational and tourism development.

METHODS AND DATA

The methodology employed to collect data for the research includes field visits to the affected areas to observe the physical and human settings as they relate to recreation and tourism in the state. The affected areas are the eight frontline LGAs most affected by the insecurity arising from banditry. They are Jibia, Batsai, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, Dandume and Sabuwa LGAs. These LGAs were visited at different time periods due to their location and convenience of the visits. The visits to Jibia and Batsari were on July 2nd, 2023, with Safana and Danmusa on July 4th, Kankara and Faskari July 11th and Dandume and Sabuwa on July 15th, 2023. During the visits, focus groups involved ten participants from two groups in each of the eight LGAs. This means twenty participants forming two groups participated in the eight LGAs to give a total of one hundred and sixty (160) participants. The questions that were discussed include what are the recreational and tourist attractions in their LGAs, what are the impacts of insecurity on recreation and tourism and what are the recent efforts of the government towards combating insecurity.

An Infinix hot 8 phone was used to snap pictures of tourist and recreational attractions in Katsina State which were included in the study. Secondary sources of data were collected through desk research from textbooks, conference papers, journal articles, environmental reports, state government publications and internet sourced materials. The results collected from the primary and secondary sources were analyzed through descriptive qualitative analysis shown in the form of graphs, tables and pictorial evidence of the tourist attractions in the State.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Recreation and Tourism in Katsina State

Recreation in Katsina State: A number of recreational activities are carried out by the people, particularly in the evenings daily, during weekends and public holidays. Outdoor recreational activities are the ones that are predominant that are carried out within village and urban settlements in the state. Outdoor recreational activities are important as they benefit the body, mind and/or spirit (NSC, 2023). The table 1 below shows the predominant recreational activities in Katsina State.

Table 1. Major Recreational Activities in Katsina State

N ^o	Recreational Activity	Location of the Activities	Persons engaging in the activities
1	Attending wedding events	At homes and event centers	Bride, bridegroom and their friends and mates including women
2	Fishing	On water bodies like streams, rivers, ponds and dams	Children and the youths on water bodies
3	Football playing	Stadiums, football fields in schools, along streets and undeveloped plots	Children and the youths
4	Football viewing	Football viewing centers in towns and some villages	The youths and some middle-aged persons
5	Hunting	Bushy, scrub areas, forests, and forest reserves	The youths who sometimes are accompanied by dogs and some persons
6	Sightseeing	Areas with recreational and tourists' sites in most of the LGAs	Children and the youth for recreational purposes
7	Strolling	Within and at the outskirts of villages and towns	The youths and the elderly or aged
8	Swimming	Puddles, ponds, dams, streams, and rivers	Children the youths and some middle-aged persons
9	Watching festival processions	Headquarters of the two emirates of Katsina and Daura during the two ieds and Maulud festivals.	Children, the youths middle-aged persons and some of the old
10	Wildlife viewing	Aldusar Park and Zoo located at the State capital Katsina	Children, the youths and the middle-aged persons

Source: Ladan (2007), KSIPA (2014)

From table 1, it can be observed that there are ten major recreational activities in the State that are engaged by persons of different age-groups. Attending wedding events is a popular form of recreation engaged mainly by the youths and women especially in major towns such as Daura, Funtua and Katsina. In response, a number of social events/centers have been established to cater for the needs of wedding events. Fishing, though also a form of occupation, is carried out by some recreationist on water bodies found within the state. Playing football is the most popular form of sport that is engaged mainly by the youths in almost every space or vacant land especially in the evenings. Watching European football matches is a popular form of recreation particularly among the youths who have become supporters of various clubs such as Real Madrid of Spain, Manchester United of England, A.C Milan of Italy etc. Hunting as a recreational activity is carried out

on even deforested forest reserves such as Barawa forest reserve in Batagarawa LGA (Ladan, 2022). Sightseeing as a recreational activity is carried out in places where there are interesting physical and human features to be seen. In certain instances, even travelers along roads use to stop for sightseeing and photography, thereby preserving the memories of such sites.

Strolling is a form of recreation undertaken by almost all age groups with the aged using it also as a form of exercise. Swimming as a form of recreation is carried out on the numerous water bodies in the State and swimming pools are available in some hotels. Watching colorful festival processions by the people is a seasonal form of recreation in mainly the headquarters of the two emirates of Daura and Katsina. Wildlife viewing opportunities are available at Aldusar Park and Zoo Katsina that was established in May 2019. Other wild lives are viewed in some few areas of forests and bushes in the State.

Tourism in Katsina State: According to the focus groups, Katsina State has a variety of tourists' attractions scattered all over the State. The attractions include historical sites and monuments, cultural festivals, forests and forest reserves, geomorphic and geological features, sports stadiums and hotels, recreational parks and resorts and waterfront areas. A sample of these attractions are shown on Table 2.

Table 2. Selected tourists attractions in Katsina State

Nº	Tourists' attraction	Address/Location`	Attractions to Tourists
1	Aldusar Park and Zoo	No. 8 Shehu Musa Yar'adua Road Katsina	1. Children's recreational area 2. Youths' recreational area 3. Zoo for wildlife viewing
2	Eid-el-Fitr and Eid-el-Adha cultural festivals	Along specific routes and squares in Daura township and Katsina city	1. Colorful procession of traditional rulers and their subjects 2. Traditional music and dances
3	Emir's Palaces at Daura and Katsina	1. Sarki Abdulrahman square Daura 2. Kofar Soro Katsina	Unique royal traditional architecture dating back many years but still standing and un-faded
4	Gimi Inselberg and natural spring	Gimi village Safana LGA along Marina-Runka Road Safana LGA	1. Massive granitic inselberg 2. Natural spring water flowing beneath the inselberg
5	Gobarau minaret	Along old Katsina city market to Sabuwar Kofa road	A high-rise minaret dating back centuries made of baked clay and mud
6	Jamvaly hotels and resorts Katsina	M.T. Usman Road near Liyafa Palace hotel, Katsina	Budget hotel and resort with modern facilities
7	Jibia dam site Jibia 142 cubic meters of water	Southeastern part of Jibia town, Jibia LGA	1. Chamah Park beach 2. Several spots for relaxation including picnicking
8	Kogo forest reserve Birnin Kogo	Southwestern part of Birnin Kogo village of Faskari LGA	Northern Guinea savannah vegetation type with some wildlife in the forest.
9	Kusugu well Daura	Near Nigerian Correctional Service building at Daura, Daura LGA	The well that is the historical site of the seven Hausa States of northern Nigeria
10	Mairuwa Motel Funtua	Along Funtua-Sheme road 2kms away from Funtua town	1. Several chalets provide accommodation to travelers and tourists. 2. Recreational spots, facilities for wedding events and social gatherings
11	Maulud-el-Nabiyi cultural/religious festivals at Daura and Katsina	1. Major roads in Daura township 2. Major roads in Katsina city	1. Colorful procession of Islamic school pupils and students 2. Music and songs praising the Holy Prophet
12	Muhammad Dikko Stadium, Katsina	Mani road, before Barhin housing estate, Katsina	1. 35,000 seat capacity multi-purpose stadium for various sporting activities 2. Home stadium of Katsina Untied FC

Sources: Attahiru et al (2020), KSIPA (2014) and ONN (2023).

From table 2, it can be observed that the state possesses a variety of tourist attractions in different parts. The Aldusar Park and Zoo Katsina was established in May 2019 as there was no such a facility to visit, especially during weekends, public holidays, and festive periods. The *eid* festivals and palaces of the emirs are attractions resulting from religion and culture of the people of the State. The colorful processions of men on

horse-backs can be seen on figures 1 and 2 during the *eid el fitr* and *eid el adha* festivals in Katsina city. The Gimi inselberg and natural spring are one of the several geomorphic and geological features that dotted parts of the State. The Gobarau minaret and Kusugu well (serial number 9) are historical sites related to the rich history of Katsina and Daura emirates.

Jamvaly hotels and resorts and Mairuwa Motels (serial number 10) are meant to provide comfortable accommodation to tourists coming to the State and travelers passing through the state including catering for domestic tourists. Jibia dam site is one of the waterfront areas that has been partially developed into a beach at Chamah Park. The park, though dilapidated, was visited by tourists and recreational before the advent of banditry. The Kogo Forest reserve (212.66km) has been listed among the ten forest reserves to be converted into a



Figure 1. The entourage of Sarkin Musawa District Head of Musawa on procession during 2023 eid el fitr.



Figure 2. Areal view of the entourage of Emir of Katsina during eid el adha on June 29th, 2023.

National Park to harness its tourism potentials (Omorogbe, 2020). The Maulud festival is an annual event held at Katsina and Daura where it is called ‘Sallar Gani’. The Maulud festival is held to commemorate the birth date of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Muhammad Dikko Stadium as the home ground of Katsina United Football Club has attracted other football teams in the Nigerian Premier League to visit the stadium and Katsina city also.

Impacts of Banditry on Recreation and Tourism in Katsina State

According to the focus groups, the insecurity arising from the banditry has negatively affected recreation and tourism in Katsina State in different forms and ways. Table 3 and 4 show the impacts of banditry on recreation and tourism in Katsina state.

Table 3. Selected incidences of recreational activities impacted by banditry in Katsina state

Nº	Date and location	Recreational activity	Impact of banditry
1	April 12th, 2020, Pauwa forest Kankara LGA	Local hunters on a hunting expedition backed by vigilante had encountered the bandits	Bandits had an encounter with the hunters with eleven (11) hunters losing their lives while five (5) other hunters sustained various degrees of injuries.
2	June 9th, 2020, at a football field outside Kadisau village Faskari LGA	Group of youths playing football outside the village	Bandits opened fire on the youths after an argument/ confrontation with some of the youths losing their lives.
3	July 6th, 2020, around Chamah recreational Park Jibia	Group of recreationists were heading to Chamah Park for relaxation	Bandits on their motorcycles rode in front of the park and the recreationists had to return to Jibia town.
4	January 12th, 2021, at Dan Raku village	Group of people attending a wedding event at the village	Bandits invaded the event kidnapping seventeen (17) persons who spent 25 days in captivity before been released.
5	February 18th, 2021, along Unguwar Rimi to Maigora Road Faskari LGA	Group of women numbering seventeen (17) traveling to attend a wedding event.	Bandits blocked the road to kidnap the women except one that was released later due to ill-health of her child.
6	March 10th, 2021, at Tsayau Forest Jibia LGA	Group of hunters moving around the forest for a hunting expedition.	Bandits attacked the hunters with seventeen (17) losing their lives and twenty-five (25) kidnapped.
7	July 20th and 21st 2021, at Katsina City, Katsina LGA	Large number of recreationists wanted to watch the eid festival procession.	Bandits' attacks, killing kidnappings and cattle rustling plus destruction of properties led to cancelation of the festival in sympathy with the victims.
8	July 6th, 2022, at Dutsinma, Dutsinma LGA	Group of recreationists were intending to visit Zobe dam site sightseeing.	Bandits launched an attack on the advance convoy of Nigerian President Buhari along Yantumaki to Dutsinma close to the Zobe Dam on July 5th, 2022,
9	July 11th, 2022, at Kwarare village along Katsina – Jibia road	Three youths attended sallah eid celebration at Katsina coming from Jibia town.	Bandits blocked the road to kill one among them while two others were kidnapped and shot driver on the leg.
10	August 2nd, 2023, at Mai Karya village, Faskari LGA	Some children coming out of the village for swimming at a nearby pond.	Large number of bandits were sighted moving along a cattle route leading to abandoning of the activity.

Source: Ladan (2023).

Table 4. Some tourist attractions impacted by banditry activities

Nº	Tourist attraction	Banditry activities	Impacts of the banditry activities
1	Chamah Recreational Park Jibia	Tourists keep away from the park due to fear of attack and or kidnapping.	Movement of bandits along a cattle route near the park
2	Gimi inselbergs and natural spring, Gimi Safana LGA	Bandit leader and his foot-soldiers have taken over the Gimi village	Most motorists have stopped going to Gimi and the Runka-Gimi-Marina Road has been abandoned for some years.

Nº	Tourist attraction	Banditry activities	Impacts of the banditry activities
3	Kogo Forest reserve, Birnin Kogo Faskari LGA	Bandits have camped inside the forest using it as hideout and operating base.	Nobody dares to go into the forest for any activity due to serious threats posed by the bandits.
4	Mairuwa Motel Outskirts of Funtua town Faskari LGA	Bandits move around the motel and dam sites particularly in the evenings.	The motel is abandoned by motorists and tourists to avoid attacks by the bandits.
5	Matsafa waterfalls, Yartamiyar Jino Kankara LGA	Bandits have moved out of the forest to camp at a village primary school.	Most of the people of the village have fled due to fear of the bandits. Local transporters do not travel to the village
6	Rugu forest reserve at western parts of Batsari, Safana and Danmusa LGAs	Bandits have created camps in the forest that serves as their den.	No tourist dare move close to the forest hideout of the bandits for fear of attacks or kidnappings.
7	Ruma rock formation and spring water, Batsari LGA	Bandits mount roadblock along the road leading to Ruma village	Most motorists have abandoned plying the road and tourists are warned by the locals to keep off.
8	Tsaunin Sani hill, Yantumaki to Maidabino road Danmusa LGA	Bandits hide on top of the hill to come down to block the road to rob or beat passenger or confiscate motorcycles	The road leading to the hill is abandoned due to the threats posed by the bandits.
9	Yantumaki forest reserve Yantumaki Danmusa LGA	The forest reserve is used by bandits as a station and den to keep kidnapped victims.	Tourists have kept away, and local people also warned visitors coming into the village not to go close to the reserve.
10	Zango-Bakkai-Pauwa inselbergs Kankara-Pauwa road Kankara LGA	Bandits block a section of the road to rob travelers and if resisted can shoot with their guns.	The inselbergs areas are not accessible due to the threats posed by the bandits.

Sources: Ibrahim (2021) and Ladan (2023).

From tables 2 and 3, it can be observed that the insecurity arising from the banditry has led to the loss of lives of twenty-nine (29) persons who are mainly hunters. A total of seven hunters and recreationists sustained injuries. Also, fifty-eight (58) persons were kidnapped, some are women attending wedding events while others are hunters on a hunting expedition. The bandits have taken over forest reserves such as Kogo, Rugu and Yantumaki which makes it difficult for any tourist's activity. In fact, banditry has halted the planned conversion of the Kogo Forest reserve into a national park. Furthermore, the bandits have deliberately destroyed forests to convert the land to farmlands especially in the Rugu Forest reserve. In other forest reserves, it is the local people who are destroying sections of forest to deny the bandits hiding places to launch attacks on the people or travelers. The consisted aerial bombardments of bandits and bandit's camps have further destroyed the flora and fauna of most of the forest (PR Nigeria, 2023). The bandits have also taken some villages that contain tourists' sites such as Gimi in Safana LGA and therefore such villages have become inaccessible.

The bandits mount roadblocks to rob, attack or kidnap travelers which as drastically restricted travelling to areas with tourist sites in Batsari and Kankara LGAs. The killings by the bandits and the need to sympathize with those affected have led to the cancelation of the eid festivals by Daura and Katsina emirates. These cancelations of the eid festivals in 2020 and 2021 are a huge setback to recreational and tourism activities in the State as it also affects hotels that provide lodging to visitors (Vanguard, 2022).

Daily and weekly media reports on the insecurity in Katsina State about the killings, injuries, and kidnappings and burning of villages by the bandits have labeled the whole State as insecure. The result is that domestic and international tourist's inflow into the state has drastically reduced since the beginning of banditry in 2011. Most of the recreational activities have been restricted to areas with villages and townships for fear of attacks, robbery, and kidnapping by the bandits. Therefore, recreation and tourism have been limited and restricted due to the insecurity created by banditry in the State.

Recent Measures Adopted by the Government in Combating the Insecurity

The new government that came to power on May 29th 2023 at both the Federal and State levels has made efforts to tackle the insecurity arising from banditry which will positively impact recreation and tourism. These efforts are:

- (i) President Tinubu has appointed new security chiefs and gave them a new security template towards tackling the banditry affecting the Northwest zone where Katsina state is located. One of the templates is to carry out consistent aerial bombardment of the forest camps and hideouts of the bandits.
- (ii) Katsina State Police Command in collaboration with vigilantes and local hunters have carried out an intelligence led raiding and clearing operation in Batsari and Jibia LGAs. This raid led to the decimating of five bandits and recovery of rustled cattle and ruminants on June 18th, 2023 (ABC News, 2023).
- (iii) Katsina State Government has recruited 2,400 youths from the eight most-banditry affected LGAs. The youths will form a Community Security Watch Corps that will be well-trained to assist the conventional security forces that are inadequate to tackle the insecurity arising from banditry in the State.
- (iv) Katsina State Government has established a new Ministry of Internal Security and Home affairs to address the issues and challenges of insecurity. Several measures have been planned for adoption to curb the activities of bandits and other criminals operating in the State.
- (v) Katsina State Executive Council in a bid to end the insecurity bedeviling the State for more than a decade has approved the sum of N7.8 billion (or \$9,750,000) for the procurement of modern equipment for security agencies deployed to the State. The equipment will include security vehicles for patrol operations, hi-tech security equipment and other security gadgets (Ogalah, 2023).
- (vi) Katsina State Government has issued a new Security Challenges Containment Order with effect from August 31st, 2023. The order is meant to control movements into the forests dens of the bandits, sale of cattle in frontline LGAs, transportation of cattle out of the State, riding of motorcycles and carrying of passengers on tricycles, registration of vehicles and motorcycles and sale of petrol in jerry cans in a new move to improve public security and safety (Kabir, 2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered towards tackling insecurity arising from banditry thereby boosting tourism and recreation in Katsina State.

- (i) The Federal Government should direct the armed forces to carry out simultaneous air and ground offensives in all the states of the Northwest geo-political zone with a view to ending the menace of banditry once and for all.
- (ii) After the air and ground operations against the bandits a reforestation and forest restoration program should be carried out with a view to restore the forests towards fulfilling their tourism potentials.
- (iii) The Kogo Forest reserve conversion into a National Park project should be pursued vigorously once the bandits have been flushed out of the forest. This is important in view of the capability of the project to boost tourism in the State and neighboring States.
- (iv) Adequate publicity campaigns should be carried out to make the people to be aware of the recreational and tourist centers in the State. The centers need to be promoted in order to attract domestic and international tourists to the State.
- (v) Katsina State government through the Ministry of Information and Culture should carry out a media campaign towards erasing the stigma attached to Katsina state as one of the states bedeviled by insecurity arising from banditry once the menace is over.

- (vi) Katsina State Ministry of Commerce and Investment should develop the recreational and tourist sites to national and international standards. This can be done through rehabilitation of roads, provision of adequate power and water supply plus other facilities required by recreationists and tourists.

CONCLUSION

The insecurity bedeviling Katsina State, northwestern Nigeria from 2011 to date (2023) has affected all sectors of the social and economic life of the people including recreation and tourism. Katsina State has many recreational and tourist centers that are capable of been developed and promoted for the economic development of the State. Unfortunately, the forest reserves, inselbergs and rock formations that could have been developed into recreational centers and national parks have become the den of the bandits. Bandits have also taken over villages containing tourists and recreational sites, making them inaccessible to the public. The bandits have restricted traveling along some roads in the State thereby limiting access to tourist sites in such areas. Besides these, the bandits have been expanding their areas of operation to cover other LGAs beyond the eight most affected. This has given the erroneous impression that the whole of the State is insecure and therefore recreationists and tourists need to avoid the State. The new administration that took over governance at both the federal and State levels has made efforts aimed at combating the banditry and ensuring security to allow recreation and tourism to thrive. But the efforts have so far not yielded the desired results of bringing security to allow economic and social activities such as recreation and tourism to be revived. This situation calls for the urgent need to adopt more active and decisive measures to combat the insecurity which will in turn promote recreation and tourism in Katsina State, northern Nigeria.

Further research plans included an assessment of the tourism potentials of Katsina State which a view to further making them known within and outside the country of Nigeria located in West Africa.

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