



Journal of Frontiers in Multidisciplinary Research

Analysis of Impact of Armed Banditry Conflict on Girl-Child Education in Eastern Part of Sokoto State, Nigeria

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Article Info

E-ISSN: 3050-9726

P-ISSN: 3050-9718

Impact Factor (RSIF): 7.34

Volume: 07

Issue: 01

Received: 07-02-2026

Accepted: 06-03-2026

Published: 05-04-2026

Page No: 257-274

Abstract

In recent years, the concern for girl-child education has been a topical issue of discourse in both academic and policy circles in Nigeria. To this extent, governments at all levels have been intensifying efforts aimed at encouraging parents to enrol both their male and female children in school without discrimination. This is because it has been recognized that education of the girl-child is vital for societal development. Thus, it can be argued that girl-child education is central in assisting individuals to acquire all the necessary skills and knowledge that would benefit society in all facets of life.

In spite of the indispensable role of girl-child education in promoting social well-being, the situation is sadly disheartening. Various factors that are attributable to this poor situation include socio-cultural norms and values, economic inequality, domestic violence, religious traditions, and social conflicts. While many of these factors create inhibitions, even policies meant to address the problems are also shrouded in similar existential mysteries. This similarly, albeit historically, creates regional dichotomies in girl-child education in this country.

It is against this background that the paper seeks to examine the impact of armed banditry conflict on girl-child education in the eastern part of Sokoto State.

Keywords: Girl-child education, Armed banditry, Educational disruption, School enrolment, Socio-cultural barriers

1. Introduction

The question of girl-child education must be generally situated within the context of the essential factors of development. This is perhaps why the issue of girl-child education is particularly a global development question in developing countries. Thus, girl-child education is centrally important to the overall development of societies and must be seen as germane to creating stability, peaceful co-existence, individual human development, and improving a state's global standing among the comity of nations. It is indeed a human rights issue for all girls to be educated (Pereznieto *et al.*, 2017) ^[10].

However, contrary to this idealistic view of girl-child education as an all-important stimulus for growth and development, its reality in Third World countries, especially Nigeria, is gloomy and troubling. This regional bias is characteristic of many northern regions of countries in West Africa. It is, in fact, within this dilemma and social conundrum of girl-child education that many developing countries across the world—particularly those ravaged by conflict, such as Nigeria—find themselves, thereby experiencing the disturbing consequences of underdevelopment and social dislocation.

By implication, with the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, criminal terror and violent armed banditry in the Northwest, the secessionist conflict involving IPOB in the Southeast, and sporadic ethnic nationalist conflicts in the Southwest—alongside widespread issues such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and inter-group (settler–indigene).

Conflicts in the North-Central region mean that the whole of Nigeria seems somewhat to be on fire, as if no part of the country is immune to the flames of violence and conflict. This situation can be explained by the debilitating interplay of socio-cultural norms and values, religion and traditional inhibitions, economic inequalities, gender gaps, and institutional maladies. These realities are particularly alarming in northern Nigeria, especially in Muslim-dominated regions of the Northwest and Northeast. Various factors attributable to this poor situation include socio-cultural norms and values, economic inequality, domestic violence, religious traditions, and social conflicts. While many of these factors create inhibitions, even policies meant to address the problems are often shrouded in similar existential challenges.

This, similarly—albeit historically—has created regional dichotomies in girl-child education. In Nigeria, for example, the challenges of girl-child education are more devastatingly pronounced in the North than in the South (Adam and Mohammed, 2023). This suffices to argue that the issue of girl-child education is alarmingly critical in developing countries.

Compounding these disheartening narratives of girl-child education in northern Nigeria are the rising tides of violent armed conflicts, including Boko Haram insurgency and armed banditry, with attendant consequences such as displacement, disruption of social order, insecurity, gender-based and sexual violence, and kidnapping. This situation has worsened all indices of human development in Nigeria. By implication, it has devastating effects on girl-child education, reversing progress and potentially eroding the gains made through various reforms aimed at advancing it.

The central argument of this study is that, in addition to socio-cultural and religious inhibitions as well as economic inadequacies, violent armed banditry has further worsened the already troubling state of girl-child education. Thus, despite the indispensable role of girl-child education in promoting social well-being, the situation in some parts of Nigeria remains deeply concerning. This research, therefore, investigates the impact of violent armed banditry on girl-child education in Eastern Sokoto State.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the state of girl-child education in Eastern Sokoto State.
2. To analyse how the government has been addressing traditional and customary challenges of girl-child education in Sokoto State.
3. To explain how armed banditry has affected various dimensions of girl-child education in Eastern Sokoto State.
4. To examine government and community responses to the challenge of armed banditry in relation to girl-child education.
5. To analyse policy options available to relevant education stakeholders to improve girl-child education in this conflict-ridden Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Conflicts generally result in the loss of livelihoods and changes in social roles for men and women. In conflict-affected environments, there are threats to girls' education that result both directly and indirectly from ongoing violence. Direct threats include death or injury, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy. Indirect threats include forced recruitment into armed groups, banditry, and displacement. All these factors negatively affect the level of girls' education (UNESCO, 2015) ^[11].

Agusiobo (2018) ^[3] identifies threats to girl-child education to include lack of safety, bullying, sexual harassment, and unfriendly learning environments. In a study on how conflict affects the girl-child in post-war Sierra Leone, Ani and Osakwe (2014:31) ^[2] argue:

“The damaging hands of conflict have touched the Sierra Leonean state. The consequences of the conflict on the girl-child have directly and indirectly affected the development of the overall human capital of the state. Today, increasing numbers of girls who grew up in the war-torn country are turning into teenage mothers, thus creating a dangerous

multiplier effect on the nation-building process. The poverty level in the country has enlarged the pool of uneducated girls in the society, creating potential danger for the country's future children, who would be nurtured by these largely uneducated present and future mothers.”

Studies have shown that many girls fail to transition to junior secondary school due to a combination of conflict, economic hardship, and socio-cultural barriers (Agusiobo, 2018) ^[3], leading to early termination of their education. Concerns about declining educational attainment among girls have prompted governments and stakeholders globally to prioritize improvements in education systems. This is because girl-child education has the potential to make society a better place.

Ani and Osakwe (2014:32) ^[2] further assert that:

“Education for girls gives the family unit the social, mental, and economic mobilization needed for societal development.”

Significantly, educating the girl-child benefits not only the individual but also her children and society at large. Today's girl-child education shapes tomorrow's society. Educating a girl leads to positive transformation, improving not only her life but also that of her family and the broader community (Ember, 2020) ^[5].

Olatide (2023) ^[7] defines women's education as the process that enables a woman to become aware of herself, develop her capacity to utilize her environment, and acquire literacy and vocational skills necessary for functional living in society. When proper care and support are given to the girl-child, the goals of education can be achieved.

Education remains a cornerstone of national development. Access to education is not only a basic human right but also a key driver of social progress and the reduction of socio-economic inequalities across gender and age groups.

In response, various national and global initiatives have focused on increasing girl-child enrolment at all levels of education in Nigeria. The Federal Government introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme to provide affordable education for all. Many state governments have also implemented free and compulsory primary and secondary education policies for both male and female children. Additionally, child rights and protection laws have been enacted to reduce school dropout rates and prevent child labour and street hawking.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist in achieving full access and retention in girl-child education

(i.e., Primary 1 to JSS 3) level (National Policy on Education, 2013), achieving Education for All (as contained in the EFA declaration) is still a mirage, especially for the female gender. This can be attributed to the numerous challenges facing the girl-child, such as trafficking, religious and cultural beliefs, early marriage, prioritization of the male child over the female child, fear of promiscuity, rape, poverty, drug abuse, unemployment disparity, and poor funding of the education sector, among others.

Based on this, Ember (2020:27) ^[5] argues that “despite many global declarations and development goals, and significant efforts by the international community, gender disparity in education continues to exist.” Over the years, the issue of gender inequality in education has persisted in both developing and developed countries. For this reason, Smyth (2007) argues that “historically, men in Western countries

have tended to have higher educational attainment levels than women.”

To further buttress this, Oluyemi and Yinusa (2016:9) ^[8] state that:

“In Nigeria, there exists a common belief that women are second-class citizens, and that a woman is a man’s property or pleasure object, and therefore considered as a machine meant for producing children. This has resulted in unfair treatment of the girl-child, especially with regard to education.”

In the same vein, UNICEF (as cited in Oluyemi and Yinusa, 2016) ^[8] reports that young girls, particularly in Northern Nigeria, are denied the right to education; instead, they are given out in early marriage and become teenage mothers, leading to negative consequences for both the individual and society at large.

Chinyelu and Somti (2016) ^[4] attribute the obstacles to girl-child education in Nigeria to several factors, including poverty, cost of schooling, religion, materialism, child labour, parental dissatisfaction with schooling, child trafficking, male preference, early marriage, fear of academic failure, teenage pregnancy, unfriendly school environments, lack of health facilities, illness, prolonged teachers’ strikes, low teacher commitment, sexual harassment, limited job opportunities, lack of counselling, and peer pressure.

Furthermore, Omede and Agahlu (2016) ^[9] categorize obstacles to girl-child education into economic, political, school environmental, socio-cultural and religious factors, as well as sexual violence and abuse.

3. Methodology

The study area for this research is the Eastern part of Sokoto State. The area was purposively selected based on the intensity of conflict. Six Local Government Areas (LGAs),

identified as the most affected in the state, were selected for the study.

The study adopts a mixed-method research approach using a quasi-experimental design, which appropriately captures the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The target population for the study is 660 respondents. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed across primary and post-primary schools, targeting headteachers, class teachers, and female students in the six selected LGAs.

Both structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Respondents were sampled using the probability proportional to size sampling technique.

For qualitative data collection, methods included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), participant observation, and secondary data sources. One FGD was conducted in each LGA, making a total of six FGDs. Additionally, two interviews were conducted per LGA, resulting in a total of twelve interviews.

Secondary data sources included academic articles, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. Qualitative data were analyzed using interpretive descriptive methods, while descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. The effects of conflict were examined through both direct and indirect threats to girl-child education.

A total of 660 questionnaires were administered across the six selected LGAs. Out of these, 589 were correctly completed and returned. The distribution of the questionnaires across the LGAs is presented in Table 1. The table indicates that Wurno LGA accounted for the highest percentage of responses (17.99%), followed by Gwadabawa with 17.15%. Overall, there was a relatively even distribution of questionnaires across the six LGAs, with an average sample size of approximately 100 respondents.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Across the 6 Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Goronyo	100	16.98
Gwadabawa	101	17.15
Isa	91	15.45
Rabah	98	16.63
Sabon-Birni	93	15.79
Wurno	106	17.99
Grand Total	589	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

4. Results and Discussion

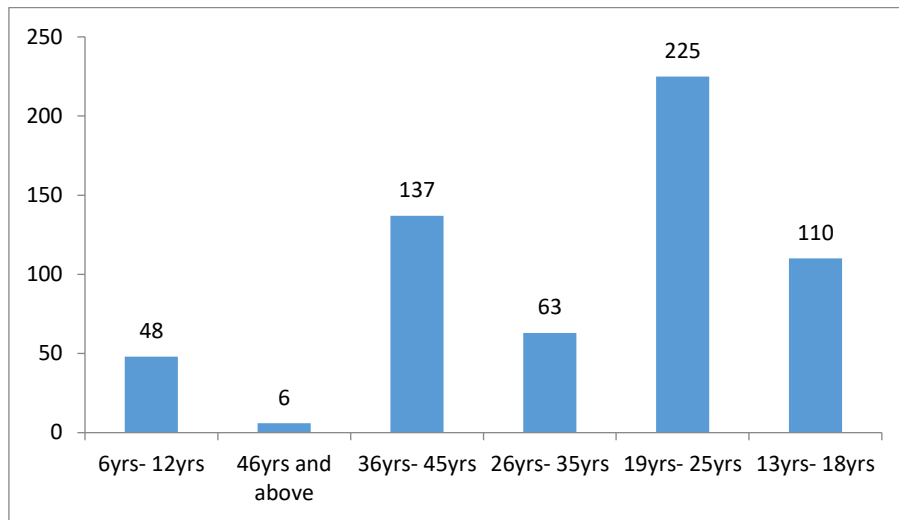
4.1. Data Presentation

The presentation of data commenced with the descriptive statistics of the socio-economic characteristics of the 589 respondents. The socio-economic characteristics examined in this study include age, educational attainment, marital status, occupation, among others.

With respect to age, Figure 1 shows that a larger percentage

of the respondents fall within the age category of 19–25 years, followed by those within the age range of 36–45 years. The least represented age group is 46 years and above, with a total frequency of 6.

This implies that more than 50% of the total respondents are within the school-age population. Out of this, 158 respondents, representing 27.0% of the total respondents, fall within the age categories of 6–12 years and 13–18 years.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Age

The analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of respondents in relation to education, as shown in Figure 2, revealed that 239 respondents have obtained secondary

school education, while 216 have completed tertiary education such as Colleges of Education, Polytechnic, and University education.

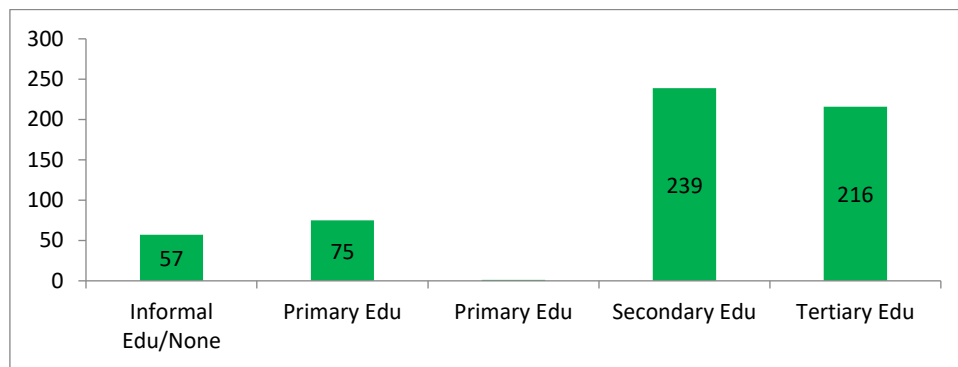


Fig 2: Educational Attainment of Respondents

The figure further shows that 75 respondents, equivalent to 12.22% of the total respondents, only obtained primary education, while 57 respondents have informal education such as Qur’anic education in the study area. Cumulatively, the figure indicates a relatively high level of literacy in the study area and the importance attached to education. The disaggregated analysis of the level of education in each

of the six Local Government Areas covered by the study was also examined. Table 2 reveals that Rabah LGA accounts for the highest number of respondents who have acquired tertiary education, with a percentage of 37.5%, followed by Gwadabawa and Isa LGAs with 21.7% and 17.6%, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Their Level of Education by LGAs

	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	GrandTotal
InformalEdu/None	50			1	3	3	57
PrimaryEdu		13	17	5	29	11	75
SecondaryEdu	50	41	36	11	40	61	239
TertiaryEdu		47	38	81	19	31	216
GrandTotal	100	101	91	98	91	106	587

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

The LGAs that have the highest number of respondents with primary education and below are Goronyo LGA followed by Sabon-Birni LGA, with a total of 50 and 32 respondents, equivalent to 37.87% and 24.24%, respectively. It is important to note that Sabon-Birni is one of the Local Government Areas significantly affected by violent armed banditry, resulting in school closures and population

displacement, while the situation in Goronyo may equally be attributed to conflict eruptions. Another important socio-economic characteristic that influences girl-child education is the marital status of respondents. Figure 3 reveals that a larger percentage (40%) of the respondents are single, while 1.0% and 5.0% are widows/widowers and divorced, respectively. The remaining

54% of the total respondents are married, indicating that a larger proportion of the population in the study area lives within family settings. This has significant implications for

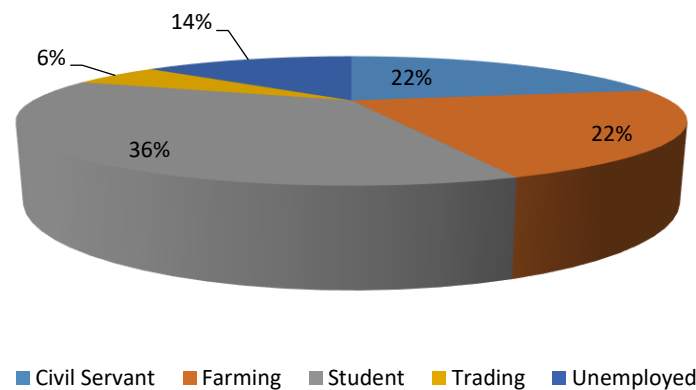
the population of school-age children and, by extension, the level of girl-child education in the area.



Fig 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

In relation to the occupational distribution of respondents, Figure 4 shows that students constitute the largest proportion of respondents (36%) in the study area. Civil servants and farmers account for 14% and 22% of the total respondents, respectively, indicating significant representation. The unemployed make up 22%, while traders account for the

smallest group with 6%. The distribution further explains the larger percentage of respondents who are single, as presented in Figure 3. Expectedly, students are still categorised as part of the population under training and are therefore not considered suitable for marriage.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 4: Occupational Distribution of Respondents

4.2. Status of Girl-Child Education

The analysis of the data begins with an examination of the state of girl-child education in Sokoto State, which is one of the objectives of the study. Thus, the study disaggregates and interrogates the number of girl-children in each of the respondents' households based on Local Government Areas. Table 3 indicates that Gwadabawa accounts for the highest

number of families with at least four girl-children and above, which is equivalent to 27.23% of the total number of respondents. This is followed by Sabon-Birni with a percentage of 22.77%. In the case of Isa and Wurno, the two LGAs recorded the same frequency of 44 respondents each, equivalent to 21.78% of families that have at least four girl-children.

Table 3: Number of Girl-Child in Each Family by LGA

	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	GrandTotal
4andabove	1	55	44	12	46	44	202
Three	50	13	16	4	22	18	123
Two	49	12	13	73	15	20	182
One		20	18	5	6	15	64
None		1		3	4	9	17
GrandTotal	100	101	91	97	93	106	588

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

With respect to those with at least three girl-children in their family, Goronyo Local Government recorded the highest frequency with a total of 50 respondents (40.65%), followed by Sabon-Birni and Wurno LGAs with percentages of 17.89% and 14.63%, respectively. However, an insignificant

number of respondents indicated that they do not have more than one girl-child in their family, equivalent to 13.78%. This implies that about 86% of the families have at least two girl-children as members of their household. This also reflects the prevalence of the girl-child in the study area and

corroborates the data released by the National Population Commission, which indicates that the male population is slightly higher than the female population. On the aggregate, families with two girl-children constitute the largest percentage, recording 36.7% (equivalent to 216 responses). This indicates that families with two school-age

female children are the most common among the six LGAs covered by the study. This is followed by families with at least three school-age females, with a total frequency of 86 respondents, suggesting that larger family sizes exist but are less prevalent.

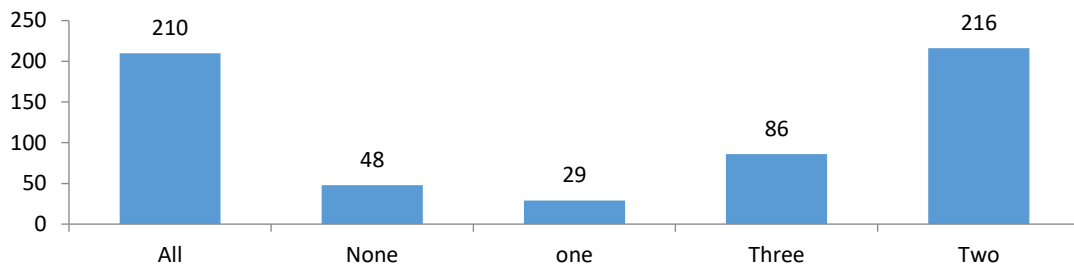
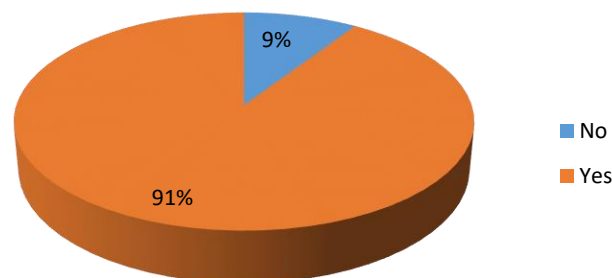


Fig 5: Number of Girl-Child per Family

In contrast, households with no girl-child recorded a frequency of 48 respondents, equivalent to 8.15% of the total responses, while those with at most one girl-child accounted for only 4.9%. This implies that families with smaller numbers of girl-children are less common in the study area. For households that indicated all their children are female (represented as “All” in Figure 5), a high frequency of 210 respondents was recorded, equivalent to 35.6% of the total responses. Taken together, Figure 5 suggests a clear tendency for most families to have at least two girl-children.

Considering the prevalence of families with at least two girl-children, respondents’ opinions on their interest in girl-child education were sought. The descriptive analysis of responses illustrates an overwhelming interest in girl-child education, as shown in Figure 6. The figure reveals that 91% of respondents indicated their willingness to ensure that their girl-child is educated, while only 9% expressed otherwise. Thus, interest in girl-child education is high across the six LGAs covered by the study.

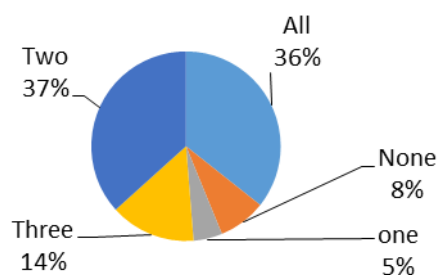


Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 6: Distribution of Respondents’ Opinions Based on Their Interest in Girl-Child Education

Having ascertained the prevalence of girl-children in the study area and the interest of respondents in girl-child education, the study examines the number of girl-children

attending formal education in each of the respondents’ families, and the result is presented in Figure 7.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 7: Number of Girl-Child Schooling in Each Family

From the figure, 37% of the total respondents affirmed that at least two of the girl-children in their family are attending school, while 36% of the total respondents indicated that all the girl-children in their family are attending school. Only 5% of respondents indicated that at least one girl-child in their family is attending school, while 8% indicated that none of the girl-children in their family are attending school.

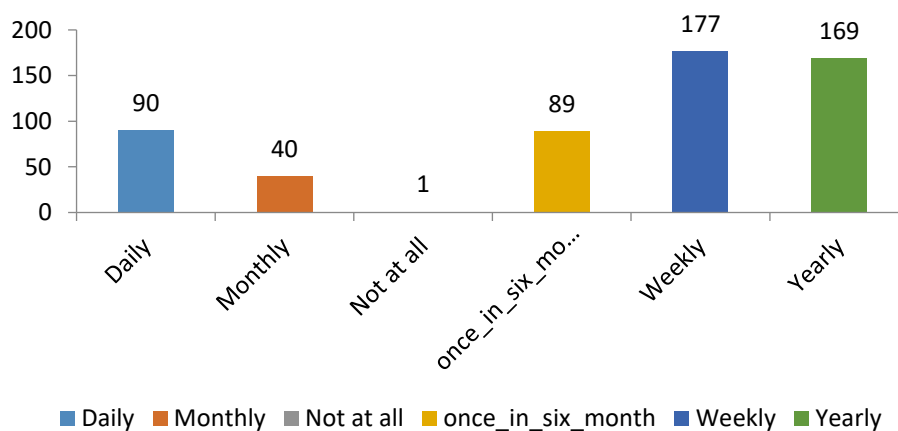
Adding the percentages of those who reported that only one girl-child and those who reported that none of their girl-children are enrolled in school gives a total of 13%, compared to 37% recorded by those who stated that at least two of their girl-children are attending school. Thus, it could be concluded that the majority of families in the study area enrol their girl-children in school. This indicates that households in the study area give priority to girl-child education. This further supports the results presented in Table 2, which show that a large percentage of respondents had completed secondary education, and Figure 6, which shows that 91% of

respondents are interested in girl-child education.

On the impacts of insecurity and girl-child education, insecurity in the Northwest Zone has not only disrupted the livelihood activities of people in the area but has also negatively affected educational activities in the zone. The increasing rate of conflict has disrupted school calendars due to school closures, the use of schools as temporary military posts and IDP camps, kidnappings, and killings of staff and students, making schooling unsafe for both teachers and learners.

This section of the study examines how insecurity has affected girl-child education in the study areas. The study investigates how frequently communities experience attacks by bandits, the number of girl-children kidnapped, teachers who were attacked, and the frequency of school closures.

In terms of frequency of attacks in the study areas, Figure 8 reveals that bandit attacks are largely a regular occurrence in the affected communities.



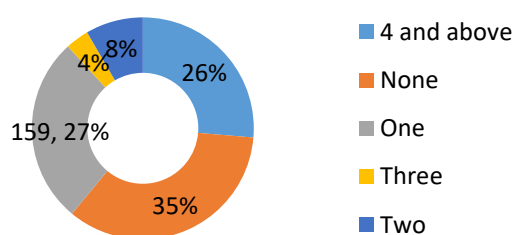
Source: Data from Field work, 2025

Fig 8: Distribution of Respondents' Opinion on Frequency of Attack in Their Community

From the figure, respondents who indicated that attacks occur on a weekly basis represent the highest number (177), showing that banditry is a persistent and recurring threat in the study area. This is closely followed by 169 respondents who stated that attacks happen yearly, while 89 respondents acknowledged that attacks occur once in six months. This suggests that even in relatively less-affected areas, the problem remains significant over time. In addition, 90 respondents agreed that attacks occur on a daily basis, while those who stated that their communities experience attacks on a monthly basis recorded the lowest frequency of 40 respondents. Only one respondent indicated that his/her community has not experienced any attacks.

The above findings indicate that bandit attacks are widespread and frequent, with most communities experiencing attacks either daily or at least weekly. The near absence of respondents selecting "Not at all" strongly suggests that banditry has become a common security challenge across the state, severely affecting community safety and disrupting educational activities.

In terms of kidnapping, Figure 9 reveals respondents' experiences with the abduction of family members. About 200 respondents indicated that none of their family members had been kidnapped, while a significant number equivalent to 160 respondents acknowledged that multiple family members had been abducted.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 9: Responses on Number of Family Members Kidnapped

Another 150 respondents stated that not less than four members of their family were abducted, while fewer respondents (50) acknowledged that two members of their family had been kidnapped. The least category is those who stated that three members of their family were abducted, with 20 responses.

Overall, the data suggest that while many respondents (equivalent to 35% of the total responses) have not personally had a family member abducted, a significant percentage of the population has experienced one or more kidnapping cases within their families, highlighting the pervasive nature of this security challenge.

Existing studies (Navia, 2003) have established that

abduction events are not only traumatic for the direct victims but also significantly affect family functioning and psychological well-being.

A disaggregated analysis of family members kidnapped, as shown in Table 3, reveals that Goronyo and Gwadabawa contribute heavily to the higher counts of multiple family members abducted, while Rabah shows a notable number of cases where at most one family member has been kidnapped. This distribution suggests that kidnapping is both prevalent and unevenly distributed, with some areas exhibiting high incidences of repeated abductions, underscoring deep insecurity in those communities.

Table 4: Number of Family Members Kidnapped by LGA

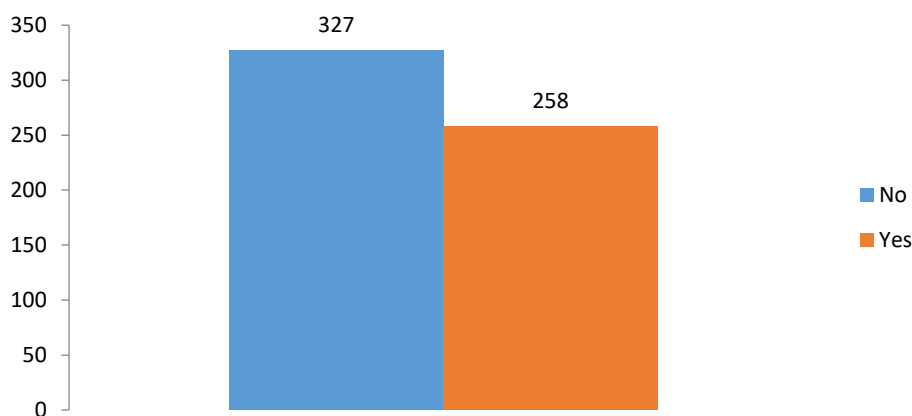
No of Family members kidnapped	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	Grand Total
4 and above		54	41	13	14	32	154
None	51	24	23	10	42	53	203
One	49	11	14	69	7	9	159
Three		2	4		12	2	20
Two		10	9	4	16	10	49
Grand Total	100	101	91	96	91	106	585

Kidnapping is increasingly documented as a serious social problem with deep psychological, social, and economic consequences. Enomue (2025) reports that kidnapping trends in Nigeria show that insecurity and weak law enforcement contribute to escalating perceptions of threat, which aligns with the high number of respondents reporting multiple family kidnappings in Figure 9. This high rate of kidnapping shows that abduction events are not only traumatic for direct victims but also significantly affect family functioning and psychological well-being.

For example, Novia (2003) established that families and individuals who experienced kidnapping recorded high levels of psychological distress and disruption of family ties even

months after release. Furthermore, the socio-economic implications of kidnapping extend beyond immediate loss, as kidnapping disrupts family structures, including loss of income due to ransom payments and school dropouts (Patrick *et al.*, 2024).

Having ascertained the prevalence of kidnapping activities in the study area, respondents were asked whether female members of their families were victims. Figure 10 reveals that 327 respondents (56%) acknowledged that female members of their families have been victims of abduction, while those who said “No” recorded 258 responses, equivalent to 44% of the total responses.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 10 (22): Distribution of Respondents’ Opinion on Female as Victim of Abduction

Table 4: Number of Family Members Killed Due to Insecurity by Local Government Areas

	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	Grand Total
fourandabove		37	31	7	12	19	106
None	51	18	17	9	39	54	188
One	49	31	28	6	25	26	165
Three		1	2	3	8		14
Two		7	8	68	8	2	93
GrandTotal	100	94	86	93	92	101	566

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

With respect to killings by bandits, the aggregate analysis revealed that the largest number of respondents (188 families) reported that none of their family members were killed. However, the table also reveals a high level of lethal impact, as 165 respondents reported the death of at least one member of their family, while 93 respondents acknowledged that they have lost at least two members. Particularly alarming is the 106 respondents who reported losing four or more members, demonstrating the extreme severity of violence in some communities.

The disaggregated analysis of Table 4 indicates that across all the LGAs, Rabah recorded an exceptionally high number of responses in favour of those who said at least two members (68) of their families were killed by bandits. Gwadabawa and Wuruno also recorded high frequencies of responses (37 and 19 respectively) in favour of those who said they had lost at least “four and above” family members. Goronyo and Sabon-Birni display relatively higher “None” counts, indicating uneven distribution of the negative impact of conflict across the six LGAs covered by the study. The uneven distribution across LGAs suggests that insecurity is geographically concentrated.

In relation to attacks targeting teachers, Table 5 presents

respondents’ views on the number of teachers kidnapped in their communities across the six Local Government Areas (Goronyo, Gwadabawa, Isa, Rabah, Sabon-Birni, and Wuruno).

Another group of victims of rural banditry that significantly affects girl-child education are teachers. On the aggregate, Table 5 indicates that the largest proportion of respondents (337) stated that no teacher was kidnapped. However, the disaggregated analysis revealed that Isa LGA represents the local government area with the highest frequency of responses (81) indicating that at least two teachers have been killed, making it one of the most affected areas.

It was further revealed that 83 respondents acknowledged that “four and above” teachers have been abducted in several communities, especially in Goronyo, Gwadabawa, and Sabon-Birni, pointing to organized and persistent banditry activity. Those who said “three teachers” and “at most one teacher” recorded total frequencies of 36 and 47 responses respectively. In contrast, Goronyo shows the strongest resistance to teacher kidnapping, with 100 respondents reporting none, highlighting important variations in local security conditions.

Table 5: Distribution of Number of Teachers Kidnapped per Community

No. of Teachers Kidnapped	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabah	Sabon Birni	Wuruno	Grand Total
Four and above		0	29	21	6	10	17
None	100	50	45	17	51	74	337
One	0	9	11	1	16	10	47
Three	0	12	12	4	3	5	36
Two	0	1	2	68	10	0	81
Grand Total	100	101	91	96	90	106	584

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

In terms of the number of teachers that were killed, Table 6 presents the distribution of responses on the number of teachers killed in communities across Goronyo, Gwadabawa,

Isa, Rabbah, Sabon-Birni, and Wuruno, with a total of 585 responses.

Table 6: Distribution of the Rate at Which Teachers Were Killed per Community

No teachers killed Comty	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wuruno	GrandTotal
Fourandabove		29	21	9	10	17	86
None	100	50	45	17	51	75	338
One		9	11	1	16	9	46
Three		12	12	70	3	5	102
Two		1	2		10		13
GrandTotal	100	101	91	97	90	106	585

Source: Data from the Field work,2025

Overall, the largest group of respondents (338) reported that no teacher was killed, suggesting that a considerable number of communities have not directly experienced fatal attacks on teachers. The most alarming pattern appears in Isa LGA, where 70 respondents reported that three teachers had been killed, and an additional 9 respondents reported four or more teacher deaths. This concentration highlights Isa as the most severely affected area. Gwadabawa and Goronyo also show substantial numbers in the “four and above” category (21 and 29 respectively), indicating repeated deadly attacks on teachers. The “one teacher” (46) and “two teachers” (13) categories further demonstrate that even in communities not experiencing mass killings, educators remain at significant risk. Sabon-Birni and Wuruno record moderate but notable

levels of teacher fatalities, confirming that the threat extends across all LGAs; however, the impacts are unevenly distributed, as was found in Table 5.

Killings and kidnapping of teachers in many ways can disrupt educational activities through shortages of teachers, frequent changes due to transfers, and irregular classes. With respect to the rate of transfers due to insecurity, Figure 11 reveals that across all six LGAs, 86.2% (494 responses) of the total respondents agreed that there has been an increase in the rate at which teachers are seeking transfers, while only 13.8% (79 responses) are of the view that the rate has not increased.

A disaggregated analysis of respondents’ opinions on the rate at which teachers seek transfers, as shown in Figure 11A, reveals a near-unanimous opinion among respondents from

Goronyo that there has been a significant increase in the rate of transfer among teachers. Next to Goronyo LGA are Rabah and Isa LGAs, with 97.9% and 85.4% of respondents

respectively indicating that the rate of transfer has been on the increase.

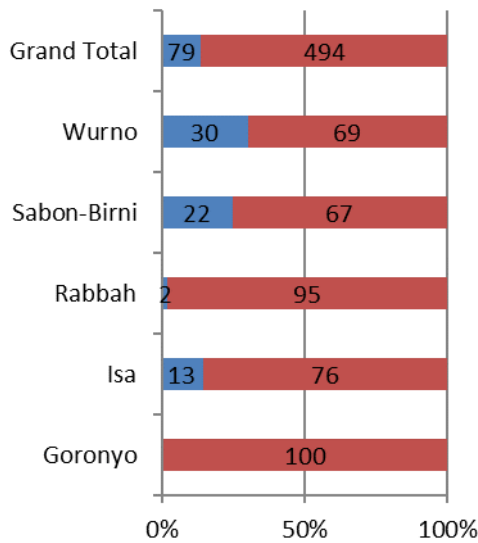


Fig 11A: Disaggregated Distribution of Teacher

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

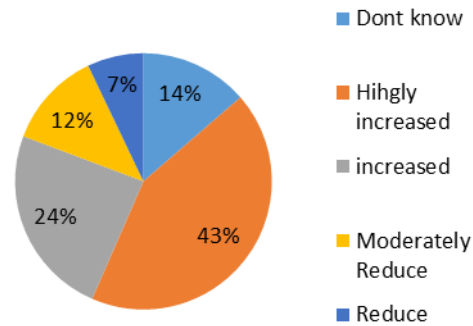


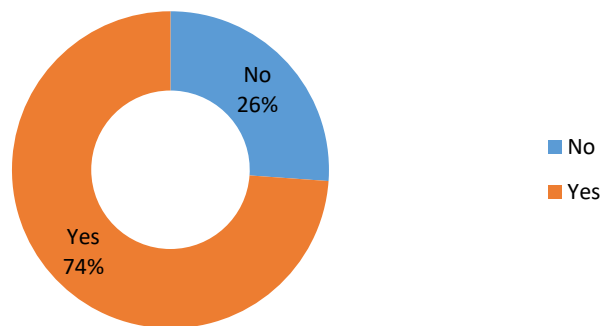
Fig 11B: Aggregated Distribution off or for Transfer by Request Transfer by Teacher

Fig 11: Distribution of the Rate at which Insecurity Increases Requests for Transfer by Teachers

On the aggregate, as shown in Figure 11B, 43% of the total respondents are of the opinion that the rate of transfer among teachers has highly increased, followed by those who said it has increased. Overall, only 7% and 12% of the respondents agreed that the rate of transfer has reduced and moderately,

respectively.

Attacks on schools and teachers do not only result in an increase in the rate of transfers among teachers, but also lead to the closure of schools as a security measure to avoid high rates of casualties in the LGA.



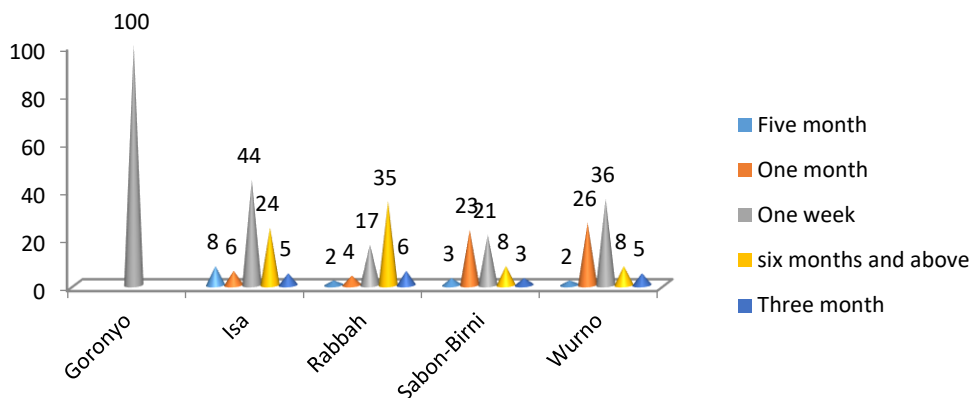
Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 12: Respondents' Opinion on the Closing of Schools due to Insecurity

Figure 12 illustrates the frequency of responses on the closure of schools due to insecurity. The figure reveals that 74% of the total respondents confirmed that schools located in their communities were closed due to banditry, while the remaining 26% stated that they have not experienced school closures. This higher proportion of "Yes" responses confirms the disruption of educational systems caused by banditry. In

addition, the duration of school closures is also important for learners' academic performance.

Figure 13 shows that almost all respondents in Goronyo acknowledged that some schools were closed for one week. This suggests frequent but acute insecurity situations that forced total, albeit short-term, school shutdowns.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 13: Distribution of Respondents’ Opinions on the Length of Period during which Schools were Closed by LGA

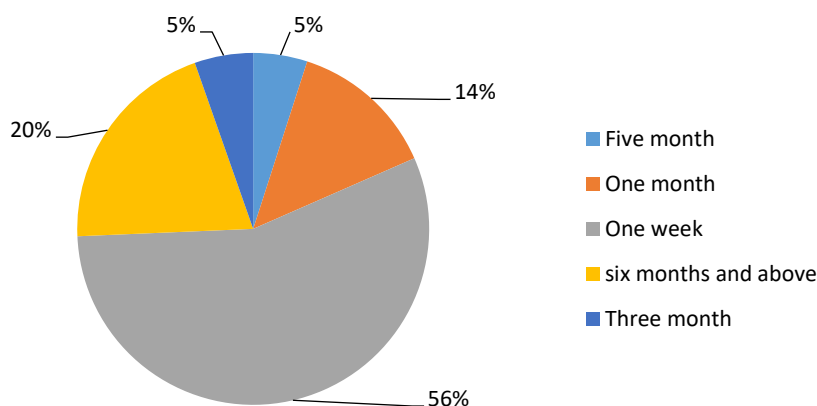
In Isa, school closures were more varied in duration. While 44% of the respondents stated that closure of schools for one week was the most common period, a substantial proportion reported six months and above (24%), alongside five months (8%), one month (6%), and three months (5%), suggesting intermittent but recurring insecurity situations.

In Rabbah, 35%, which accounts for the highest percentage of responses, indicated that schools were closed for six months and above, followed by one week (17%) and three

months (6%).

In Sabon-Birni, respondents mostly reported one-month (23%) and one-week (21%) closures, with fewer cases of longer durations.

Wuruno LGA shows a similar trend to Isa LGA, recording the highest percentage of responses (36%) in favour of one-week closures, followed by those in the one-month category, which accounted for 26% of the total responses.



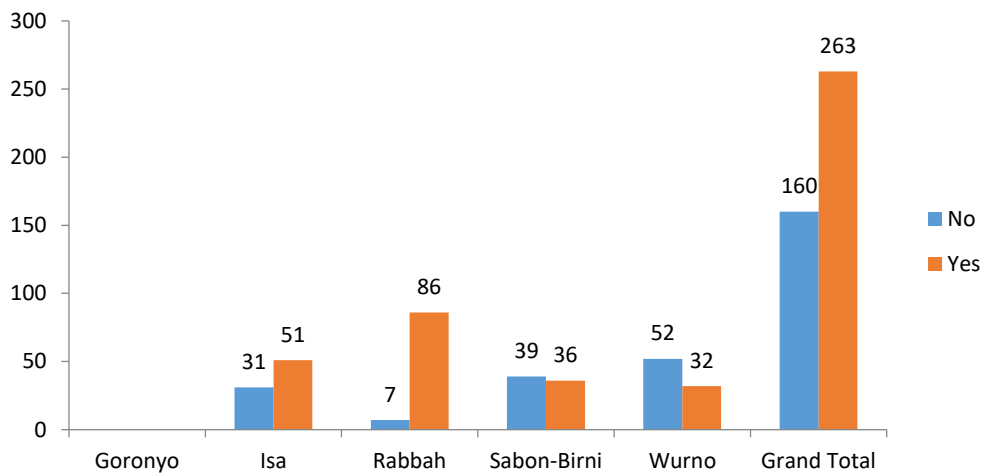
Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 14: Aggregated Distribution of Respondents’ Opinions on the Length of Period Schools were Closed

On the aggregate, 56% of the total respondents acknowledged that schools in their communities were closed for at least one week, while those in favour of school closure for five months accounted for the least percentage (5%) of the total responses. On average, 20% of the total respondents acknowledged that most schools in their communities had been closed for a period of six months and above, while 14% indicated that schools were closed for one month.

Another dimension through which girl-child education was

affected by insecurity is through the molestation of the girl-child by armed bandits. Across all the LGAs, the frequency of those who said “Yes,” indicating that girl-children were molested, was higher (263), while those who said “No” recorded a total frequency of 160. In specific terms, this pattern was observed across all LGAs except Sabon-Birni. On average, this implies that across the study area, girl-children are victims of molestation by bandits.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 15: Responses on whether Girl-Child molested by Armed Bandits

A further analysis of the molestation of the girl-child within the study areas, as shown in Table 7, revealed the number of girl-children molested due to banditry activities. From the table, respondents who indicated that at least one girl-child was molested recorded the highest total frequency of 169, followed by those in favour of at least two girls being molested, with a frequency of 134. This implies that a larger percentage of respondents acknowledged that at least one girl-child was molested as a result of insecurity.

In terms of Local Government Areas, Goronyo recorded the highest number of responses among those who stated that at least two girl-children were molested (51) and at least one

girl-child was molested (49). In the case of Gwadabawa, respondents who indicated that four or more girl-children were molested recorded the highest frequency (35). In Sabon-Birni and Wurno, respondents who stated that at least one girl-child was molested recorded the highest responses, with frequencies of 25 and 23 respectively.

This pattern aligns with conclusions from existing studies that insecurity in Northwest Nigeria has significantly threatened girls' well-being and education, as banditry not only disrupts schooling but also exposes children to physical dangers, including attacks and abuse (Adam and Muhammed, 2024) [1].

Table 7: Number of Girl-Child Molested by Bandits

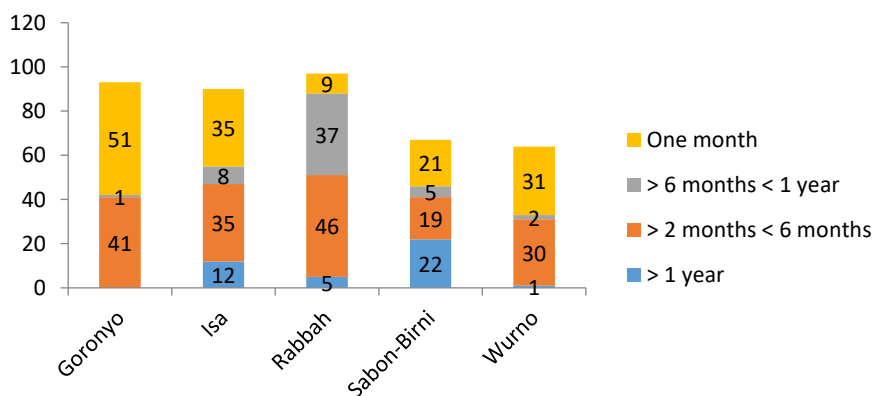
RowLabels	Goronyo	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	GrandTotal
Fourandabove		35	27	10	17	19	108
One	49	33	29	10	25	23	169
Three		11	11	72	5	4	103
Two	51	17	18	5	21	22	134

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

An empirical study by Adam and Muhammed (2024) [1] indicated that banditry increases fear and vulnerability among female populations, often leading to declining school attendance and a heightened risk of abduction or assault as households attempt to cope with insecurity.

Another way through which armed banditry affects girl-child

education is through the conversion of schools into camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The figure illustrates respondents' opinions on the length of the period during which schools in their communities were converted into IDP camps.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 16: Length of Period during which Schools Were Converted into IDP Camps

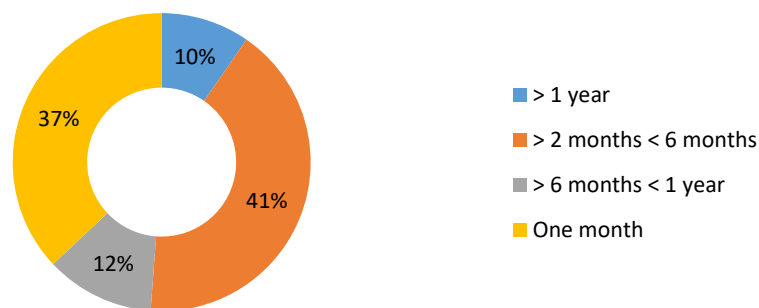
From the figure, it was revealed that in Goronyo, 51 respondents (representing the highest responses) acknowledged that schools in their community were converted into IDP camps for a period of one month, followed by those who indicated that the period during which schools were converted into IDP camps was between 2–6 months, with a cumulative total frequency of 41 respondents. In Isa LGA, there is a mixed pattern of responses, with substantial responses in favour of one month (35) and 2–6 months (35), alongside those (12 respondents) who stated that schools were used as IDP camps for over one year, indicating more prolonged occupation of schools in some communities. For the period during which schools were converted, Rabbah LGA stands out with a higher number of responses favouring longer durations. In Rabbah, 46 respondents acknowledged that some schools were converted into IDP camps for 2–6 months, while those in favour of 6 months to 1 year recorded a total frequency of 37, suggesting sustained displacement

pressures that kept schools non-functional for extended periods.

Sabon-Birni records a higher frequency in favour of long-term use of schools as IDP camps. About 22 respondents stated that schools were used as IDP camps for over one year, while 21 respondents indicated one month. This reflects persistent insecurity that forced extended conversion of schools into IDP camps.

In Wurno LGA, a higher number of respondents indicated one month (31), followed by those who reported that some schools were used as IDP camps for 2–6 months (30), with minimal reports of longer durations.

Overall, the chart shows that while short-term use of schools as IDP camps was common, Rabbah and Sabon-Birni experienced more prolonged school closure due to the conversion of these schools into IDP camps, highlighting greater severity and persistence of insecurity in those areas.



Source: Data from the Field work,2025

Fig17: Length of Period During which Schools were Converted into IDP Camps

The aggregate analysis of the length of the period during which schools were converted into IDP camps, as shown in Figure 16, indicates that the 2–6 months category recorded the highest percentage (41%), followed by those in favour of one month with a percentage of 37%. Those in favour of at least six months but less than one year accounted for 12% of the total respondents, while the category with the least percentage (10%) comprised those who were of the opinion that schools were converted into IDP camps for at least one year.

Impact of Armed Conflict on Girl-Child Education

Attacks on teachers, molestation of the girl-child, and the closure and conversion of schools into IDP camps have greatly impacted girl-child education in the study area. To analyse these impacts, the study examines educational performance, enrolment rate, attendance rate, and

absenteeism among girl-children in schools.

To assess the educational performance of the girl-child due to armed conflict, school completion rate is used as a proxy. From Table 8, 192 respondents (64.2%) reported that none of the girl-children in their family had completed school, indicating that nearly two-thirds of households have not succeeded in educating any girl to completion. This highlights a very low level of school completion among girl-children in the study area, despite the interest in girl-child education as earlier indicated in Figure 6.

Only 4% of the total respondents affirmed that only one girl-child in their family had completed school, indicating that few families manage to educate at least one girl to completion. Similarly, respondents who reported having at most two girl-children in their family who completed school were 53 (17.7%), while those with three girl-children completing school.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses on the Number of Girl-Children that Completed School in their Households

	Gwadabawa	Isa	Rabbah	Sabon-Birni	Wurno	AggregateFrequency
All			1			1
None	37	29	81	17	28	192
One	2	4	1	5		12
Three	13	13	2	8	5	41
Two	16	16	5	10	6	53
GrandTotal	68	62	90	40	39	299

Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

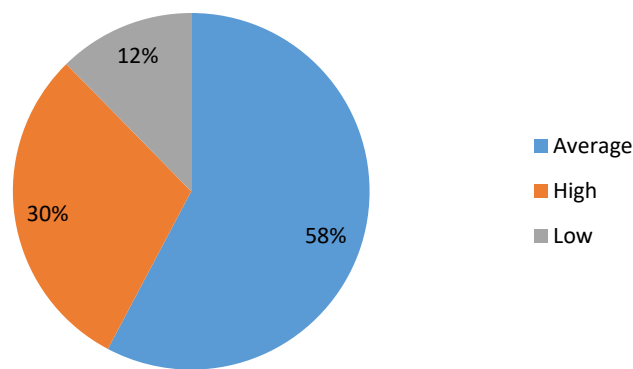
were 41, representing 13.7%. Adding the percentages of those who reported having two and three girl-children who completed school, and comparing them with those who stated that none of their girl-children completed school, the combined figures still remain relatively low compared to families where none of their girl-child has completed school. Thus, it can be concluded that the educational performance of the girl-child remains poor.

A disaggregated analysis based on LGAs, as presented in Table 7, indicates that the dominance of the “none” category is consistent across all areas, as found under the aggregate analysis. For instance, households reporting that none of their girl-children has completed school account for 54.4% of total respondents in Gwadabawa, 46.8% in Isa, 90.0% in Rabbah, 42.5% in Sabon-Birni, and 71.8% in Wurno, with Rabbah and Wurno LGAs recording extremely poor rates of educational

performance. In contrast, households with two or three girl-children who have completed school recorded higher percentages in Gwadabawa, Isa, and Sabon-Birni, though still relatively low.

In summary, the distribution of percentage scores reveals that girl-child school completion is generally very low, with most households unable to record even one girl-child that has completed at least secondary education. This pattern suggests persistent barriers—likely socio-economic factors such as insecurity, cultural constraints, and institutional challenges—that continue to limit girls’ educational attainment in the study area.

With respect to the rate of enrolment, respondents, particularly school tutors, were asked to rate the enrolment rate of girl-children in their various schools. Figure 17 presents the enrolment rate of the girl-child.



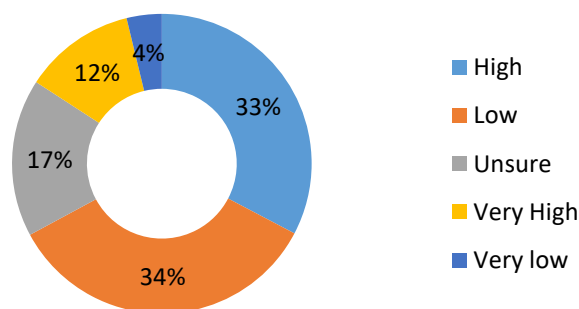
Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 18: Rating the Enrolment of Girl-Child in School

Respondents who rated the enrolment to be average recorded the highest percentage (58%), followed by those who rated the enrolment to be high, accounting for 30% of the total respondents. However, only 12% of the respondents rated the enrolment rate to be low. The distribution of respondents’ opinions regarding the rate of enrolment indicates that enrolment is moderately high. This corroborates earlier findings that households in the study area have a strong interest in girl-child education; however, the completion rate

remains poor. It is noteworthy that enrolment and completion are not the same—while many girls may be enrolled, far fewer complete their education.

Among the many reasons that may result in the low completion rate of girl-children, despite the interest in girl-child education, is poor school attendance. Figure 18 illustrates that 34% of the total responses indicate that the attendance rate is low, while another 33% rate attendance as very low.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025.

Fig 19: Distribution of Respondents’ Opinions on Rate of School Attendance by Girl-child

Cumulatively, 67% of the respondents rated the attendance rate to be at least low, compared to 4% and 12% who rated the attendance rate to be high and very high, respectively. The remaining 17% were undecided. From Figure 18, it is evident that the rate of school attendance is low, and this explains the poor school completion rate among girl-children in the study area (see Figure 14). The low rate of attendance could be attributed to frequent attacks on girl-children, teachers, and even schools themselves, which make the school environment unsafe for effective academic activities.

Among other factors affecting girl-child education, apart from violent armed conflict, are broader socio-economic conditions. Figure 19 illustrates respondents' opinions on factors affecting girl-child education across the six selected Local Government Areas (LGAs). Overall, the results show strong consensus that multiple socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors hinder girl-child education in the study area. On the aggregate, 31% of the total respondents identified parental level of education as a major influencing factor, followed by early marriage and poverty, which accounted for 22% and 16% of the total responses, respectively.

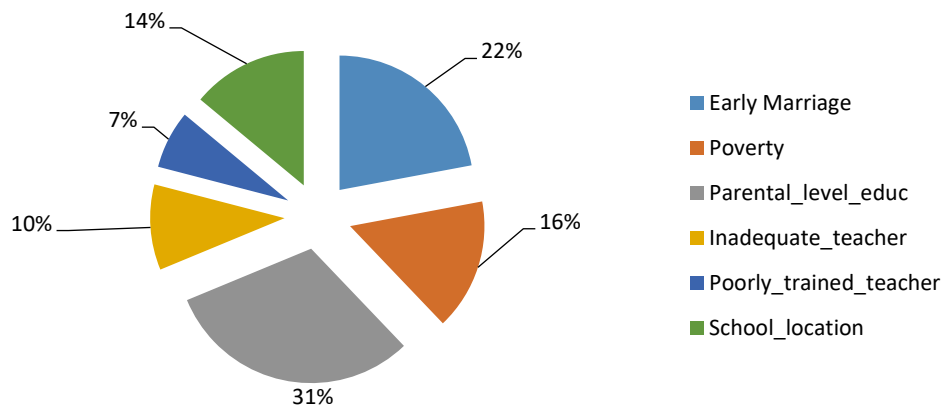


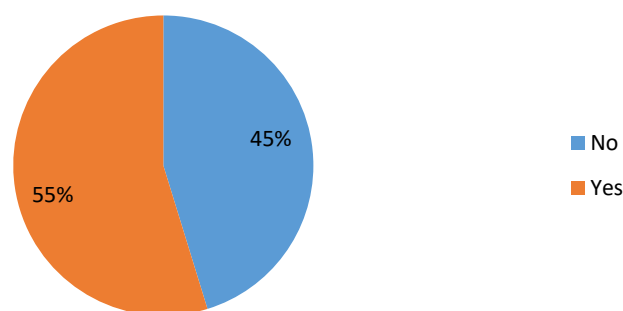
Fig 20: Factors Influencing Girl-Child Education Performance

Government and Community Responses to the Challenges of Armed Banditry

Communities and government have responded to the challenge of violent armed banditry as it affects girl-child education in the study area. Among the various efforts made by the government is the strengthening of security provisions around schools, especially girls-only schools. However, the

largest percentage of respondents (55%) are of the opinion that the government has not provided adequate security for schools, as shown in Figure 20, while the remaining 45% indicated that the government has made provisions for school security. There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents across the study area.

Grand Total

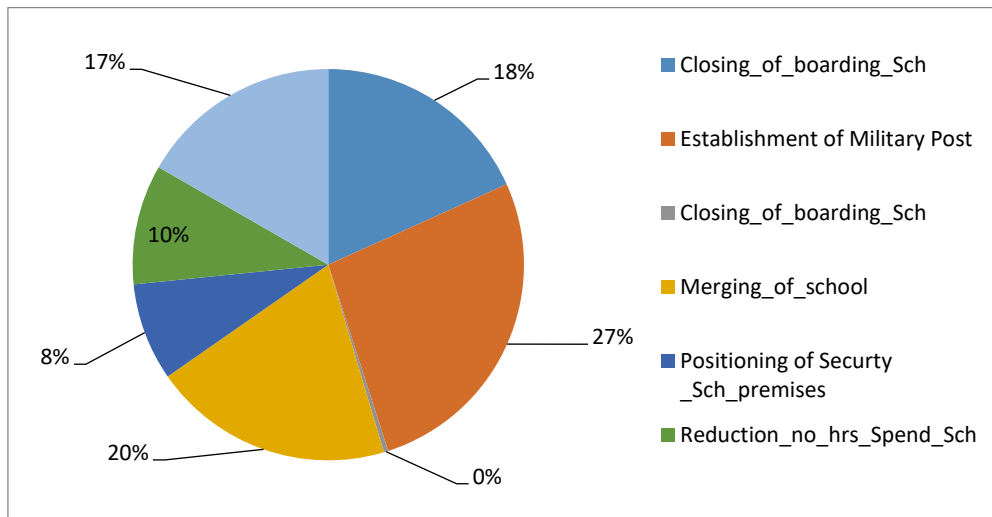


Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 21: Government Provision of Security for Schools

With respect to the different security measures provided by the government, the establishment of military posts accounted for 27% of the total responses, followed by the merging of schools, which accounted for 20% of the total

responses. The closing of boarding schools, reduction in the number of school hours, and other related measures accounted for 18%, 17%, and 10% of the total responses, respectively.

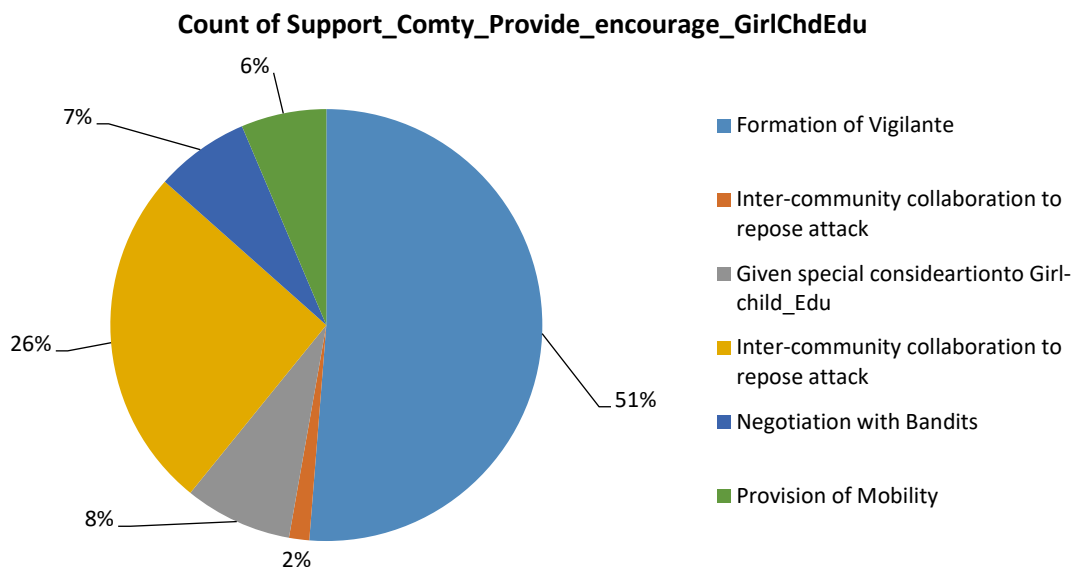


Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 22: Government Responses to Challenges of Insecurity in the Study Area

On the part of the community, the formation of vigilante groups and inter-community collaboration among neighbouring communities to repel attacks are some of the

common responses adopted. Figure 21 indicates that the formation of vigilante groups is the most common response by communities.



Source: Data from the Field work, 2025

Fig 23: Community Responses to the Challenge of Armed Banditry in Respect of Girl-Child Education

in the study area, accounting for 51% of the total responses, followed by collaboration among communities to repel bandits' attacks, which recorded 26% of the total responses. Among other less common responses across all the LGAs covered by the study are negotiation with bandits (7%), giving special attention to girl-child education, and the provision of mobility for school-going girls.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examines the impact of violent armed banditry on girl-child education in the eastern part of Sokoto State based on cross-sectional data. Data were obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires to 589 respondents randomly selected across six LGAs.

Simple descriptive statistics in the form of tables, pie charts, and histograms were used to analyse the data. Based on the results, the following are some of the major findings of the study:

1. The study reveals a relatively high literacy level among respondents, as the majority attained at least secondary (239 respondents) or tertiary education (216 respondents). This indicates strong educational awareness across the six LGAs—Goronyo, Gwadabawa, Isa, Rabah, Sabon-Birni, and Wurno. However, educational attainment is unevenly distributed. Rabah LGA recorded the highest proportion of tertiary-educated respondents, while Goronyo and Sabon-Birni recorded higher proportions of respondents with only

2. primary or informal education. This disparity is partly linked to insecurity, particularly in Sabon-Birni, where school closures and displacement due to banditry have disrupted educational access.
3. On the state of girl-child education, an overwhelming 91% of respondents expressed strong interest in educating the girl-child, and the majority of families have at least two girl-children. Furthermore, 73% of respondents indicated that at least two or all their girl-children are attending school.
4. On the prevalence of insecurity, the study confirms that insecurity is pervasive across the study area. Most communities experience attacks either daily or weekly, and only one respondent reported no attacks. Female family members are particularly vulnerable, with 56% of respondents confirming that girls in their households had been abducted. Additionally, several families reported multiple deaths due to insecurity, with some losing four or more members. The severity of violence varies geographically, with Isa and Rabah emerging as some of the most severely affected LGAs in terms of teacher killings and family casualties.
5. Regarding the impact of violent armed banditry on girl-child education, the study revealed that it has had significant negative effects through disruptions of academic activities. A significant percentage (74%) of respondents confirmed school closures due to insecurity, while 20% reported closures lasting six months or more. About 41% of the total respondents indicated that schools were converted into IDP camps for 2–6 months, and 86.2% agreed that insecurity increased teachers' transfer requests.
6. Finally, the study established that government responses to the challenges of insecurity, as they affect girl-child education, revolve around fencing of girls' schools, merging of schools, and closure of boarding schools as the major and most common responses. On the other hand, the formation of vigilante groups and collaboration with neighbouring communities to repel attacks are the common resilience strategies adopted by communities within the study area.

6.2. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the study concludes that cultural resistance to girl-child education is no longer the dominant barrier. Enrolment levels are rated as average to high (88% combined), suggesting that households prioritize schooling for girls. The challenge, therefore, is not initial enrolment but retention and completion. Teacher abductions and killings were also reported across LGAs, with Isa LGA recording particularly high fatalities. These conditions have created teacher shortages, irregular classes, and unstable learning environments. The disruption of both infrastructure and human resources directly undermines effective schooling for girls.

Based on the high rate of enrolment and low school completion rate among girl-children in the study area, the study concludes that there exists a clear gap between enrolment and educational outcomes. This gap is driven by insecurity-related factors—school closures, fear of abduction, molestation, displacement, and teacher shortages—combined with socio-economic constraints.

Thus, while community interest in girl-child education remains strong, sustained participation and successful completion continue to be significantly hindered.

Child education is strong; however, sustained insecurity and structural barriers continue to hinder educational completion and long-term attainment.

Finally, the responses by government to the challenges of insecurity have largely been temporary and have not adequately addressed the root causes of conflict vis-à-vis the challenges of girl-child education in conflict-affected communities. On the part of the community, apart from the formation of vigilante groups to repel attacks, the provision of transportation services for girls has not received significant attention. Thus, access to education—due to the merging of schools and the closure of boarding schools—has been constrained by distance and the cost of transportation.

Overall, the study demonstrates a paradox: strong societal interest and moderate enrolment in girl-child education coexist with extremely poor completion rates due to persistent armed banditry and socio-economic challenges. Insecurity has disrupted schooling through attacks, kidnappings, teacher losses, prolonged closures, and the conversion of schools into IDP camps. Without sustained security stabilization and institutional support, improvements in enrolment may not translate into meaningful educational outcomes for girls in the affected LGAs of Sokoto State.

5.3. Recommendations

Given the high frequency of attacks, prolonged school closures, teacher killings, and the conversion of schools into IDP camps, the government should institutionalize a community-based Safe School Protection Model that goes beyond fencing and ad hoc military deployment.

Finally, although enrolment and interest in girl-child education are high (91%), completion and attendance rates remain low. Therefore, policy must shift from access-focused interventions to retention-focused strategies.

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How to Cite This Article

Rabo MU, Kura SYB, Olaiya MO, Danjuma IA. Analysis of impact of armed banditry conflict on girl-child education in eastern part of Sokoto State, Nigeria. *Journal of Frontiers in Multidisciplinary Research.* 2026;7(1):257–274.

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