



Impact of Insecurity on Socio-Economic Development of Select Communities in Oyo and Ondo States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: In recent years, Oyo and Ondo States in Nigeria have faced rising security challenges that threaten community peace, livelihoods, and wellbeing. Yet, little scholarly attention has been given to how these challenges affecting socio-economic development in both states.

Objectives: The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of insecurity on socio-economic development of select communities in Oyo and Ondo States, Nigeria.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive design with qualitative and quantitative methods. The target population was 13,292,700 residents of Ondo (5,316,600) and Oyo (7,976,100) States. Using proportional stratified sampling, 820 respondents were selected (328 Ondo, 492 Oyo) and given copies of questionnaire, with 806 valid responses retrieved (324 Ondo, 482 Oyo). Additionally, 25 oral interviews including 10 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and 15 In-depth Interviews (IDI) were conducted. Quantitative data were analysed with ANOVA, while qualitative data underwent content analysis.

Results: The study found that both states suffered major loss of lives and property; Ondo also faced revenue loss and breakdown of law-and-order, while some Oyo residents experienced temporary internal displacement

Conclusion: The insecurity in Oyo and Ondo states' communities has not only impacted on criminal justice, but largely affected socio-economic development of the affected communities.

Contribution: This study provides a community-level comparison of insecurity in Oyo and Ondo States from a development perspective, advancing both scholarship and policy solutions

Recommendations: The study recommended enhancing local security outfits like *Amotekun* Corps in collaboration with the Nigeria Police and Civil Defense Corps, strengthening laws against kidnapping, banditry, and illegal arms, and ensuring swift prosecution of offenders.

Keywords: Banditry, Kidnapping, Armed robbery, Farmlands, Displacement



INTRODUCTION

Security challenges facing civilians world-wide are multifaceted and interconnected. From war and terrorism to cyber-crime, gender-based violence, and climate insecurity, people at community level face threats that cut across borders. Addressing them requires rethinking security from a “human security” perspective, focusing not just on protecting states but on safeguarding the daily lives, dignity, and rights of people everywhere. Civilian populations in conflict zones (e.g., Middle East, Sahel, Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Northern Nigeria, etc.) face displacement, loss of livelihoods, and violence (Krafft et al., 2022; Abdelrhman et al., 2025). Terrorist groups (Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, ISIS, etc.) exploit weak governance and target civilians through bombings, kidnappings, and raids, while proxy wars and insurgencies often blur the lines between combatants and non-combatants, exposing community residents to insecurity (Dowd & Drury, 2017).

According to Abdel-Latif and El-Gamal (2024), armed non-state groups and other criminal elements pose a threat to the peace and security of the African countries like Somalia, Mali, Central Africa, Nigeria and Libya, battle with political authority. Banditry, terrorism, ethnic secessionists (including Boko Haram, ISWAP, and IPOB), drug and human trafficking, violent conflicts between farmers and herders, civil unrest, and many other well-planned crimes, including attacks by unidentified gunmen, theft of natural oil, appear to have overtaken traditional security organisations tasked with ensuring the safety of the local population and internal security protections in West Africa.

This is seen in Nigeria, where the counter-terrorism strategy in the north-west region has resulted in daily deaths at the local level (Mamman, 2021). In addition to drawing more out-spoken calls for restructuring or state policing, the evil actions of Boko Haram, the prevalence rate of banditry, violent clashes between farmers and herders, kidnappings in the North-West, South-East, South-West, and South-South regions, and several other areas such as secessionist movement in the South-East, cybercrimes, trans-border crimes etc, have sparked an ongoing effort to split the nation. To compound the problem, the State civil security apparatus have been apparent inability to manage these regions' internal security issues (Olusegun, 2016). As a result, the nation's citizens and different governmental levels now consider the pursuit of safety and security to be sacred. It is obvious that security is a fundamental requirement for the stability and development of any society.

. In recent years, Oyo and Ondo states, located in the South-Western region of Nigeria, have witnessed a disturbing rise in security challenges that directly threaten community peace, livelihoods, and overall wellbeing. Once considered relatively stable compared to other regions of the country, these states are now plagued by a range of violent and non-violent security threats that undermine social cohesion and hinder socio-economic development. Among most pressing challenges are the menaces of banditry, kidnapping, and armed robbery (Adeniyi & Rosenje, 2024).

Communities across rural and urban areas of Oyo and Ondo states have been subjected to violent attacks on high-ways, farms, and residential settlements. Farmers, commuters, and traders



are increasingly targeted, leading to fear of movement, disruption of economic activities, and reduction in agricultural productivity, which is a key livelihood source in the region (Ariyo's, 2022). Competition over land, water, and grazing routes has fueled violent clashes, resulting in deaths, displacement, and destruction of farmlands. This has deepened mistrust among ethnic groups, undermined community harmony, and exacerbated food insecurity (Nnaji et al., 2022; Olanrewaju & Balana, 2023).

Furthermore, youth involvement in cultism, political thuggery, and gang violence adds another layer of insecurity, particularly in urban centres like Ibadan, Owo and Akure (Okunzuwa & Akpede, 2025). Rival cult groups frequently clash, leaving residents in fear and diminishing the sense of safety within neighbourhoods. Women and children are disproportionately vulnerable in these states, with many victims silenced by stigma and weak law enforcement responses (Adejonwo, 2024). This not only eroded human dignity but also weakens social fabric within communities.

The cumulative effect of these security challenges is a climate of fear and mistrust across Oyo and Ondo States. Community members restrict movement, avoid night-time activities, and reduce engagement in farming, trading, and social events. Social bonds are weakened, communal trust eroded, and development prospects diminished. Yet, despite the severity of these threats, there is insufficient scholarly attention to how these challenges specifically impacted socio-economic development in Oyo and Ondo States.

Searching through existing studies (Oghuvbu & Felix, 2018; Ariyo's 2022; Ahmed-Audu 2022; Danjuma, 2023) that have been conducted in both states and beyond, findings of these studies showed diverse effects of insecurity. For instance, the works of Ahmed-Audu (2022) and Oghuvbu and Felix (2018) concentrated on the effects of Boko Haram, armed bandits, conflicts between farmers and herders and found out that these menaces have impacted communities in the North-east Nigeria and by extension, national security. Danjuma (2023)'s study evaluated security issues in connection to Nigeria's ability to survive democratically, while that of Ariyo (2022)'s study looked at the security challenges and general well-being of civil servants in Ondo State, Nigeria. Despite these laudable studies and many others, there is a dearth of study on the impact of insecurity on socio-economic development in communities of Ondo and Oyo States; an academic lacuna this study filled. Understanding these dynamics is critical to developing sustainable strategies that safeguard lives, protect livelihoods, and restore peace and stability to affected communities. Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the increasingly fragile state of socio-economic development in Oyo and Ondo States due to multiple security challenges, ranging from violent crimes and farmer–herder conflicts to cultism and weak institutional responses.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the impacts of insecurity on socio-economic development in Oyo and Ondo states. The main objective of the study is to investigate how insecurity in some selected Oyo and Ondo states' communities affects socio-economic development of the area.



METHOD

The study adopted descriptive research method and collected data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In order to compare and evaluate the security issues in the states of Oyo and Ondo, Nigeria, primary sources (interview and questionnaire) and secondary sources (academic journals, newspaper reports, articles, etc) data were used in this study. Based on the National Bureau of Statistics' (NBC) (2022) and the National Population Commission of Nigeria's (NPC) (2022) population projections, Oyo State's population was projected to be 7,976,100, while Ondo's was anticipated to be 5,316,600. Thus the population of this study is estimated to be 13,292,700 indigenous and non-indigenous residents of Ondo and Oyo states.

Given that $N=13,292,700$, being the sum total of Oyo and Ondo states, 0.05 corresponds to a 5% margin of error), a Taro Yamane sample size formula was adopted to calculate and arrive at 399.98 being the minimum sample size for the study. However, due to immense population of the study area, eight hundred and twenty (820) sample size was adopted for the purpose of wider coverage of the targeted population. This study employed proportional stratified sampling technique to allocate sample to each of the States in the following statistical process, Ondo: $5,316,600/13,292,700 \times 820 \approx 328$ respondents (40%) and Oyo: $7,976,100/13,292,700 \times 820 \approx 492$ respondents (60%). To select targeted respondents, a multi-stage sampling (simple random/purposive) techniques were adopted to randomly select communities/wards (clusters) in five (5) Local Government Areas in each State, while in both states, (20) academia, (124) servants, (160) security personnel, (213) artisans, (178) farmers, (83) self-employed and (42) members of civil society organisations were purposively selected based on the knowledge and experience on the subjected matter.

Similarly, Eight (8) Key Informant Interview (KII) sessions were designated in each state with respondents drawn from four (4) Amotekun senior staff/representatives, two (2) senior police officers, and two (2) senior NSCDC staff and ten (10) (IDI) In-depth Interview sessions were also designated in each state with informants from traditional and religious institutions (2 each), youth leaders (2), market women leaders (2), and civil society organisations (2). In summary, (328) copies of questionnaire were administered in Ondo State and (492) copies distributed in Oyo State, making a total of eight hundred and twenty (820) copies of questionnaire distributed in both states.

A total of four hundred and eight-two (482) copies were retrieved from Oyo State and three hundred and twenty-four (324) copies were retrieved from Ondo State, making a total of eight hundred and six (806) copies of questionnaire retrieved back and analysed using descriptive analysis. Out of the thirty-six (36) interview sessions designated for the study, twenty-five (25) were successfully conducted which included ten (10) Key Informant Interview (KII) and fifteen (15) In-depth Interview (IDI) sessions. The data that were gathered from the field survey after collection were analysed with the use of both the qualitative and quantitative techniques using ANOVA. The quantitative data collected was presented using descriptive statistics. The frequency counts of disagree and agree were taken to determine the level of acceptability and unacceptability of each of them. The qualitative data collected were given content analysis by transcribing and analysing oral evidences collected.



RESULT

4.1 Demographic Distributions of Respondents

The demographic of the respondents are; education, marital status, and ethnic groups and local government of residents, as presented in Table 1.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Educational status		
	PhD	12	1.49%
	Master	101	12.53%
	ND/NCE/DIPLOMA/Degree/HND	356	44.17%
	SSCE Certificate	188	23.33%
	Primary Certificate	79	9.80%
	No Formal Education	70	8.68%
	Total	806	100.00%
2	Marital Status		
	Single	272	33.74%
	Divorced	58	7.20%
	Widowed	13	1.61%
	Separated	47	5.83%
	Married	416	51.61%
	Total	806	100.00%
3	Ethnicity Affiliation		
	Hausa/Fulani	19	2.36%
	Igbo	79	9.80%
	Yoruba	662	82.13%
	Others	46	5.70%
	Total	806	100.00%
4	Local Government (Oyo State):	N=482	100.00%
	Atisbo	96	19.92%
	Iseyin	97	20.12%
	Surulere	94	19.50%
	Saki West	97	20.12%
	Saki East	98	20.33%
	Total	482	100.00%
5	Local Government (Ondo State)	N=324	100.00%
	Odigbo	65	20.06%
	Owo	64	19.75%
	Akure	63	19.44%
	Okiti Pupa	64	19.75%
	Irele	68	20.99%
	Total	324	100.00%
	Grand Total	806	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey; 2024



The surveyed population reflects diverse educational backgrounds, with 44.17% holding ND/NCE/Diploma/Degree/HND qualifications, indicating strong emphasis on tertiary and vocational training. Marital status results show married respondents as the majority (51.61%), followed by singles (33.74%), while divorced (7.20%), separated (5.83%), and widowed (1.6%) were fewer, suggesting stable household dynamics and social support networks. Culturally, 82.13% were Yoruba-speaking, reflecting strong ethnic presence. In Oyo State, the five LGAs (Atisbo, Iseyin, Surulere, Saki West, Saki East) shared nearly equal proportions (19.5%–20.3%), ensuring balanced representation. Similarly, in Ondo State, the five LGAs (Odigbo, Owo, Akure, Okiti Pupa, Irele) each accounted for 19.4%–21.0%, with marginal variations preventing concentration in any single area. The close percentage range across LGAs (within 2%) strengthens representativeness and reliability for comparing insecurity impacts across communities.

The impact of insecurity on socio-economic development in selected communities of Oyo and Ondo states

Table 2: Showing respondents' perceptions on impact of insecurity on socio-economic development in selected communities of Oyo and Ondo states

Variables (Oyo State) 482	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Loss of life and properties	208 (43.15%)	207 (42.95%)	33 (6.85%)	9 (1.87%)	25 (5.18%)
Breakdown of Laws and order	218 (45.23%)	214 (44.40%)	13 (2.70%)	27 (5.60%)	10 (2.07%)
Loss of government Revenue	98 (20.33%)	173 (35.89%)	50 (10.37%)	115 (23.86%)	76 (15.77%)
Internally Displacement of rural residents	235 (48.76%)	194 (40.25%)	7 (1.45%)	14 (2.90%)	32 (6.64%)
Decrease in Food Production	118 (24.48%)	284 (58.92%)	11 (2.28%)	23 (4.77%)	46 (9.55%)
Variables (Ondo State) 324	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Loss of life and properties	83 (25.62%)	201 (62.03%)	5 (1.54%)	-	35 (10.81%)
Breakdown of laws and order	88 (27.16%)	210 (64.81%)	-	-	26 (8.03%)
Loss of government revenue	105 (32.41%)	133 (41.05%)	56 (17.28%)	17 (5.25%)	13 (4.01%)
Internally displacement of rural residents	141 (43.52%)	136 (41.98%)	11 (3.40%)	29 (8.95%)	7 (2.16%)
Decrease in food production	129 (38.27%)	154 (47.53%)	0 (%)	44 (13.58%)	-

ANOVA

The impact of security challenges on community security					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.989	2	.532	1.008	.239
Within Groups	14.678	158	.096		
Total	15.667	160			

Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2024

Table 2 presents quantitative data on the impact of security challenges in Oyo and Ondo States. In Oyo, 86.1% (Strongly Agree + Agree) believe security challenges cause loss of life and property, compare to 87.65% in Ondo. On breakdown of law and order, 89.63% of Oyo respondents and 91.97% in Ondo agreed. Regarding government revenue, 56.22% of Oyo respondents agreed, while a stronger consensus of 73.46% was recorded in Ondo. On internal displacement, 89.01% in Oyo and 85.5% in Ondo agreed. Similarly, 83.4% in Oyo and 85.8% in Ondo linked insecurity to reduced food production. Overall, Ondo respondents showed stronger consensus on the impact of security challenges, while Oyo exhibited more variability, especially on government revenue and food production. ANOVA analysis ($F = 1.008$, $p = 0.239$) revealed no significant difference between the two states, confirming consistent perceptions across groups. Thus, while variations exist, both states recognise severe impacts such as loss of lives and property, food decline, and displacement. Qualitative findings further affirmed that locals in both states remain highly vulnerable to insecurity. A traditional leader of Ago-Amodu, Saki East LGA, shared his plight about the impact of insecurity in the area:

We are predominantly farmers in our community. We produce what we eat and sell out to other places. Since the attacks and kidnapping of farmers started, cost of food has increased drastically and many residents are struggling to survive. At several occasions my people have been attacked by the unknown gun men operating like armed robbers. A resident who came from United Kingdom to open up a large-scale farming was recently murdered. The same thing applicable to a U.S. A. based hotel business man who was kidnaped alongside his workers in Ogbomosho. Kai....., my brother, our country is no longer safe. KII/ Male /Traditional leader/ Ago -Amodu/Oyo/2024

The market women leader of Oja Oba in Owo town said thus,

Any time there is cult clash in this town, at least one or two people will die. Apart from that, we are always vulnerable to attacks in the market because hoodlums hide under it to steal. In some occasions, we have to lock up our business and shops for days waiting for the situation to be brought under control. IDI/ Female / Market women leader /Ondo/ 2024

In Ondo State, a transporter who travel virtually every day explained the impact of armed robbery in the Benin-Ore high way:

Hahaha.... we have lost many lives to robbery attacks along this route. Robbers use to destroy the roads for the benefit of slowing down the vehicles so as to have opportunity to carry out their heinous act. But since the advent of kidnapping for ransom, robbery attack is no longer profitable again. Once you are being kidnapped, you just have to get ready to cooperate with them and offer them what they need. Several women were raped last two month after collecting their money along the major road. IDI/ Male /transporter /Ondo/2024

The analysis revealed that several lives and properties have been lost to the incessant attacks by bandits, farmer-herders violent conflict, armed robbery and cult-related clashes in Oyo and Ondo



states. Along the high-ways, respondents submitted that kidnappers killed and raped road users, while in the rural communities; many residents have been killed including foreign-based individuals who came around to establish a business empire in his community. These findings aligned with the study of Odalonu and Egbogu (2023) that since 2011, nearly 200,000 people have been displaced killed, kidnapped and more than 500 villages were burnt by bandits in northern Nigeria. However, beyond northern Nigeria, this current study had shown that communities in Oyo and Ondo states in South-Western Nigeria are confronted with similarly precarious situation. This is an indication that social cohesion and development in the study locations are threatened by insecurity.

Insecurity in both states has taken another dimension in terms of destruction of properties as reported in the oral interview sessions. This finding is further being validated by reports of Institute for Economics and Peace (2019); (2018); and Ojo (2020) that unknown gunmen suspected to be foreign herders were responsible for death fatalities, which constituted the majority of terror-related deaths in Nigeria including the south-west region. While these scholar and institutions' reports could be true in totality, it is essential to note based on this study that personal and business properties have been destroyed in Oyo and Ondo communities, an indication that suggests low in socio-economic development of the affected communities.

Furthermore, the finding of this study indicated that there is a decrease in government and individual revenue due to a more substantial consequence of security concerns in Ondo State compare to Oyo State. A security expert has this to say:

Economic activities of grassroots have changed. People now live in perpetual apprehension of attacks at rural area. Our monthly reports showed that major high ways have become no go area even to the security personnel that are not well equipped with arms. Robbery is no longer fashionable compared to kidnapping. The high cost of food in Ondo State can be attributed to many of these attacks to the farmers, because they cannot access their farms again. Lives and properties were recently lost to the attack carried out by unknown gun men in Ondo State. KII/Male/ NSCDC/hdqts/Ondo/2024

A community leader in Ondo State spoke on the impact of oil spillage from the activities of oil bunkering:

Well, to be candid with you, oil spillage has a lot of diverse effects on the Ilaje community, because both resources on land and on sea were destroyed, it affects the usage of water in the area, because the water would have been contaminated which then make it not safe for use, trust me fishing and farming becomes absolutely impossible, which serves as the bedrock of the economy of the Ilajes. IDI/ Male / youth leader /Ondo/ 2024



A resident of the oil community spoke about effect of oil spillage,

Oil spillage has led to serious conflict between community members and oil companies. There have been several violent protests and riots among youth and community groups over oil spillage and other oil related disputes with oil companies in the community. IDI/ Male / residents /Ondo/ 2024

The above analysis revealed that whenever there is cult related crisis, there will be a total lock-down of economic activities because hoodlums hide under the crisis to loot and steal from innocent business and shop owners. This is not different from rural communities where farmers can no longer produce enough farm produce capable of generating income for them and by extension, pay taxes to the government. Transporters equally complained that several cars and commercial vehicles have been stolen, rendering owners jobless. The study of Odalonu and Egbogu (2023) supported the above finding that the number of fatalities caused by bandits increased social risks, discouraging investment and triggering an economic crisis for individuals and communities. Beside these effects on personal economic status, governments at various levels are confronted with low revenue income because affected residents. In essence, when insecurity is not check-mated, revenue of individual and government of a state affected suffers, thereby reducing economic development.

Similarly, on the issue of displacement, findings suggest that the problem of internal relocation among rural communities is considered more serious in Oyo State than in Ondo State. Evidence from qualitative finding showed that residents of rural communities in Oke-Ogun area at one time or the other deserted their respective community due to fear of being attacked. A community leader in Sepeteri community in Saki East LGA explained further:

We have once relocated from this area, pending the time security situation is improved. Even the Oba in our community and that of close villages left their respective domains to a more secured communities and towns due to fear of being attacked by unknown gunmen. IDI/ Male / youth leader /Oyo/ 2024

A resident Fulani corroborated above submission:

We were forcefully pushed out of this community accusing us of being the attackers of the residents. Sunday Igboho Boys came and drove us away from our settlement. We lost many of our cattles along the line. We temporarily camped in Kwara State communities. IDI/ Male / Fulani leader /Oyo/ 2024

This finding is closely related to the study of Manu et al. (2024) that Boko Haram has claimed many lives and rendered thousands homeless. Meanwhile, aside from Boko Haram menace in Northern Nigeria, insecurity in term of bandit attacks, farmer/herders' conflict, It is therefore safe to submit that insecurity situation in Oyo State lead to internally displacement of rural residents, though this may not be as severe as it was in Northern Nigeria.



The analysis showed that there is a decline in food production caused by security difficulties and is considered a little more severe problem in Ondo State than in Oyo State. Respondents to oral interview sessions in Irele and Owo communities attributed high cost of food in the State to inability of farmers to access their farm land. According to a respondent in the Owo town:

Nobody can go far away in the forest again to carry out to farming any longer. Herd will destroy the farms. Large scale farming is unrealistic activities in our community and that is why there is high-cost of food because we practically imported some of the foods we consume. IDI/ Male / Farmer /Ondo/ 2024

A farmer that witnessed attacks on his farm confirmed that:

In 2021, I lost my cassava farm worth millions of Naira. Since then, I have been buying food to feed my family as against what is obtainable before. Herders are destroying crops making it impossible for the farmers to harvest reasonable crops to sell and eat. IDI/ Male / farmer /Ondo/ 2024

This finding validated the research of Usman et al. (2023) that, scarcity of food and the high cost of food are caused by 96.4 percent of the insecurity in some parts of northern Nigeria where hostage taking activities of unknown gun men and livestock rustling are prominent. As obtainable in Northern Nigeria, available data to this study obviously showed that the major cause of food insecurity in Ondo state is due to insecurity in some communities where farmers cannot longer have access to their farms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the insecurity in Oyo and Ondo States presents a complex challenge threatening peace, economic and social development of some communities in both states. Aside recorded increase in the death of vulnerable, properties, have been stolen, economic activities badly affected and many communities' residents have abandoned their homes. These problems not only affect personal safety and means of livelihood of people, but present a serious impediment to the economic development of both states. The problem transcends conventional security concerns, requiring responses that integrate law enforcement with broader developmental and humanitarian strategies. Addressing this crisis demands urgent, coordinated and sustainable interventions capable of restoring stability, strengthening institutions, and safe-guarding the well-being of citizens. This study hereby recommended that:

- i. Government should enhance the operational capacity of local security outfits such as Amotekun Corps, in collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force, NSCDC, and community vigilante groups.
- ii. Governments of Oyo and Ondo States should invest in youth empowerment programmes through vocational training, agribusiness incentives, and digital skill development to reduce the lure of criminal activities.



- iii. State governments should strengthen laws against kidnapping, banditry, and illegal arms possession, ensuring swift prosecution of offenders.
- iv. Improved inter-agency collaboration among security operatives and better accountability mechanisms should be instituted.

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Dr. Abiodun Ayodele conceived the study, including the design. Ekundayo John K collated the data, and handled the analysis and interpretation, while Dr. A. Ayodele and Ekundayo John K. initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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