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Governance failure, insecurity, and development in Nigeria: A multi-thematic analysis of farmer–herder conflicts and banditry

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ABSTRACT

Insecurity in Nigeria has evolved into a multidimensional challenge , with farmer–herder conflicts and organized banditry posing as major threats to state stability and development. These forms of violence, while often conflated, are rooted in distinct yet overlapping dynamics of resource competition, criminal economies, and weak state capacity. . This study uses a PRISMA-guided systematic scoping review of literature published between 2010 and 2025 across six major academic databases, initially identifying 812 studies, of which 12 met rigorous inclusion criteria for in-depth analysis. The findings reveal three interconnected patterns. . First, governancefailures , in weakinstitutional coordination, limited enforcement capacity, and elite capture.. Second, insecurity produces differentiated economic impacts, particularly in agrarian regions where disrupted farming systems, displacement, and declining investment deepen poverty and unemployment. Third,while community resilience mechanisms, including local vigilante groups and informal conflict mediation structures, provide short-term coping strategies, they often operate in the absence of effective state oversight and may reinforce fragmented authority structures.. Overall, the review emphasizes the need to move beyond reactive security responses toward addressing the political and institutional drivers of insecurity. The study recommends targeted reforms in security governance, land administration, and local conflict management systems, alongside the integration of community-based initiatives within a coherent and accountable state framework.

Keywords: Governance failure, Insecurity, Farmer–herder conflicts, Banditry, Development

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