Dynamic Multidisciplinary Journal of Nigeria: Delta State University Library, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria
Email: Dmjon2080@Gmail.Com, ISSN: 2955-0564, Articles Are Indexed in Google Scholar
Volume 8, Number 1, January – December 2026

CURTAILING INSECURITIES THROUGH ADOPTING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Nigeria has witnessed and continues to experience a persistent series of insecurity challenges ranging from violent conflicts, kidnappings, farmer-herder conflicts, terrorism, banditry, and armed robbery, and so on, that have resulted in loss of life and property, fear, lack of trust and poor development. The paper examines how community empowerment strategies can be used to curtails the challenges of insecurities and advocate for a strategy shift from police, military and other agent's reliance to a more comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable approaches of security managements. A survey research designed was adopted for the study and structure questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used as instruments for data collection. A sample of 150 was considered for the study, and cluster and purposive sampling procedures were used for the selection of the respondents for this study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including percentages, means, standard deviations and Pearson product-moment correlation. It was revealed that the respondents agreed that community empowerment strategies can be used to curtail insecurity in Nasarawa State, with mean scores ranging from 2.50 and above and a standard deviation of 0.90 for all questions asked. The tested hypothesis showed a positive correlation between community empowerment strategies and insecurity reduction, with r=0.611 and a p-value of 0.01. The study recommends that community empowerment strategies should be encouraged because of their roles in curtailing the challenges of insecurity in Nasarawa State.

Key words: Insecurity, Curtailing insecurity, Empowerment, Community Empowerment

Introduction

Nigeria state has witnesses persistent cases of insecurity acts that had undermine its peace, governance, infrastructures and human development in the past and present days. The recurring acts like communal clashes, farmer–herder conflicts, banditry, kidnapping activities, cultism activities, armed robbery, violent extremists, militia groups, ethnic conflicts, political thugs, and so on that occur daily both in urban and rural areas have become a source of concern. Its causes are mostly attributed to scarce resource competition, weak human development and empowerment, poor logistics, social exclusion, weak intelligence and information gathering, poverty, youth unemployment and so on. The insecurity acts often escalate into armed conflicts and various types of crimes in society

(Adejumo. 2020, Bamidele, 2021; Aduloju and Okolie – Osemene, 2022, Usman, 2023; and Dare and Akintomiwa, 2025). Some of these acts of insecurity are fueled by environmental stressors like desertification and shrinking farmlands, poverty and unemployment, social exclusion, lack of empowerment, as well as population pressure that intensify struggles over scarce resources. These have led to the destruction of lives and property, mass displacement of persons, weakened inter–community relations, created fears and a lack of trust and freedom in the minds of many citizens, and poor development in the country. The fact remains that conventional security control measures that depend on police, military and other security agencies have not addressed the challenges. Some scholars and security experts are of the view that sustainable security controls must go beyond policies to address human security as the major causes of crimes in society.

Nasarawa State has experienced various kinds of organized and unorganized criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, banditry, insurgency, rape, robbery, and so on that are associated with poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and illiteracy. This makes the state insecure in areas of peacebuilding, economic growth and development for peaceful coexistence. This has resulted in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and complex security challenges that further complicate the situation by giving criminal groups more power to terrorize the communities and resist state security forces. That created atmosphere of fears, disrupts daily life activities', reduces investors' confidence, and weakens the authority of state institutions. Beyond violent crimes, structural drivers of insecurity are evident in the socio–economic landscape due to high levels of poverty, social exclusion, youth unemployment and limited access to opportunities, which have created a fertile ground for their recruitment into various criminal groups. Odey and Angbashim, (2024), and Usman, (2023), stated that youth's exclusion from productive employment and non-empowerment of communities has been a triggered factor for their restiveness and involvements in crimes in Nigeria. The realities underscore that insecurities in Nasarawa is not merely a security sector challenge but a developmental one, which requires a holistic solution of both security responses with that of socio – economic and community empowerment strategies to address it properly.

Community empowerment strategies emerge as a sustainable way to address insecurity in Nasarawa State, where empowerment programmes in areas of economic, social inclusion, education, and political capacity are put in place to make communities self-reliant and productive. It will help in expanding people's capabilities and enhancing communities' voice. Which militate against the root causes of insecurities like poverty, unemployment and social exclusion in the state. The empowered communities are more resilient, better able to manage conflicts peacefully and less vulnerable to criminal recruitments (UNESCO, 2021, Okolie, 2022 and Ibrahim and Alagbe,2023 andJames,2025).

By addressing the socio–economic foundation causes of insecurity, communities are less susceptible to crimes and violence. Which should base on framework that reflect local realities that provide a conceptual and practical means of achieving a more secured community resilience, cohesion and ultimately, sustainable security outcomes in the state.

Statement of the Problem

The consequences of insecurity are not just an abstract concept, but are visceral realities of scorched earth that can lead to total breakdown of the economy and humanitarian services that dwarf the peaceful existence in the state. Nigeria has witnessed a series of security and socio-economic problems for years, such as Boko Haram, insurgency, banditry, violent extremist groups, militia groups, social exclusion, and poverty and so on. Which have trapped serious crisis and systematic displacement of many communities that many persons are being killed, kidnaps, rapes were countless lives and properties loss without considering the factors that causes insecurities and its effective means of its managements.

Despite government and community interventions through military and formal security agencies' operations, through surveillance and policy making, huge budget allocation to security agencies, it continues to witness high rate of insecurities. Thousands of people have been displaced, with disruptions to their socio-economic activities. The conventional security response is only for short-term relief without addressing structural causes of insecurity like poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and weak government institutions. Which underscores a critical gap in the existing approaches in peace building rather reliance more on coercive measures or kinetic methods of crime controls like arrests, patrols, prosecution and neglecting of community empowerment strategies in peace building process. And there is no empirical data showing the design evidence-based on community empowerment strategies that help to curtail insecurity in the state. This is the gap that is going to be filled in this study.

Research Questions

i. What are the community-based strategies that can be used to curtail insecurity in Nasarawa State?

ii. To what extent are community empowerment strategies used in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State?

iii. How effective are the community empowerment strategies in addressing insecurity in Nasarawa State?

iv. What challenges are associated with implementing community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State?

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine how community empowerment strategies can be used to curtail insecurity in Nasarawa State.

The specific objectives of the study seek to:

i. Identify community-based strategies that can be used to curtail insecurity in Nasarawa State.

ii. Examine the use of community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State.

iii. Examine the effectiveness of community empowerment strategies in addressing insecurity in Nasarawa State.

iv. Examine the challenges associated with the implementation of community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are stated to guide the study:

H_1: There is no significant relationship between economic empowerment strategies and the rate of insecurity in Nasarawa State.

H_2: There is no significant relationship between community empowerment strategies and the curtailment of insecurity in Nasarawa State.

Conceptual and Literature Reviews

Insecurity: Is referring to the state of unsafe of human life and properties that dwarf progress of the society or a state that safety of human life and properties are no longer secure in a place that limits their fundamental rights, freedom to life and dignity of human existence. That is a situation that constitutes a threat to lives, property, and the general peace and well-being of a given society. Curtailing Insecurity is the steps or approaches put in place to checkmates the rates of crimes in a place or measure use to overcome insecurity rates in a given community as to reduce crime rates among the people.

Insecurity acts like banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, armed robbery, militias groups, violent extremists, Islamic extremists, terrorism and so on that are been witnesses in different parts of Nigeria. And their mode of operation is through invade communities, kill of innocent residents, burn houses, rape victims, cattle rustle, kidnapping and abduction of people for ransom, displacement of residents and so on are widely spread across different parts of the country. These have resulted in loss of lives and properties, created fears and lack of trust, poor economic growth and development, create tensions and no peaceful coexistence among the people in the country. (UNESCO, 2021, Aduluju and Okolie–Osemene, 2022, and Usman, 2023). And they equally advocated for strategies shift from military-reliance security control to a more comprehensive, and sustainable approaches to address insecurities. Despite military operations remain indispensable for achieving enduring peace and stability, but it cannot address the underlying socio- economic factors that will make the insecurities not to persist.

Community is a groups people living in a particular area that have common goals, culture and common ownership of their wellbeing's and resources that have common sense of belonging and see each other as a single entity or a whole. Empowerment is the aid put in place to uplift the social status of a community and individuals to enhance their well-being and to overcome some of their societal challenges. Is the assistance given to individuals, groups and communities to help them overcome and improve some of their challenges for their well-being and to maximise functioning in the society? Community empowerment refers to the aid and assistance that is given to communities to help them overcome some of their societal

challenges for their well-being, which will boost their socio-economic and political development.

Adopting Community Empowerment strategies is widely used as a multidimensional approach that enable individuals and groups to gain greater control over the decisions and resources that shape their lives. Is the capacity to build confidence, strengthen participations, and exercise agency in addressing local challenges of insecurities in the community. In practice, empowerment can be examined in four dimensions such as Economic empowerment, Political empowerment, Social empowerment and psychological empowerment (Bamidele, 2021; UN, 2023; Usman, 2023; and Ukyedeikimine, 2024). These dimensions build resilience and reduce the risk factors associated with insecurity in society. The concept of security controls has to shift from state-centered perspectives to people-centred approaches. However, Security is not only freedom from external threats but also freedom from want and fear. This perspective highlights the need to address the rate of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion as part of building a secure society.

Nigeria government embarks on different types of community empowerment programmes, which includes Social Protection, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), N-Power, National Home-Grown School Feedings Programme (NHGSFP), and Government Enterprise Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and so on. These are strategies that have played a vital role in addressing insecurities within the country and also strengthen the ability to manage conflicts peacefully and collaborate with other security institutions to maintain stability. A Community that lacks social cohesion and empowerment strategies are more vulnerable to violence and insecurity. The empowered and cohesive societies are better positioned to achieve sustainable peace that explains how individuals and communities gain controls over their lives, access to resources, participations and their security.

Ejikene (2016), National Security Strategies (2022), US Department of State (2024) and International Organization for Peacebuilding and Social Justice (2024) highlight the effects of insecurity, which include:

- **Threats to freedom and safety, poverty, and unemployment**
- **Political alienation**
- **Lack of infrastructure.**

This study is relevant because insecurity rates in Nasarawa State are at high levels and are often linked to poverty levels, social exclusion, unemployment, weak empowerment programmes and non-involvement of the community in governance. But fostering social inclusion and building psychological confidence is necessary for communities to become active agents in peacebuilding and security rather than being passive recipients of external interventions.

As they emphasise that Community empowerment strategies in the state focus more on skill acquisition and training, however, there are limited empirical study on adopting community empowerment strategies to reduce insecurities and no comprehensive study that link community empowerment strategies directly to insecurities reduction in Nasarawa state which is the gap that this study will like to address**.**

Theoretical Framework (Social Bond/ Control Theory)

Social bond theory was proposed by Hirbchi's, 1969, Gottfredson and Hirschi's, 1995 and it was used to draw an explanation to this work, which emphasis on the reasons why people commit crimes and how the social bond helps in controlling their behaviours from criminal activities. Community members are bonded together and committed to the common bond that keeps them from committing crimes, with an emphasis on what is wrong to act against the interest of society. People commit crimes when the bond of society is weak, but when it is strong, people are afraid to commit crimes. And there are opinions that human beings are naturally selfish and sometimes commit crime for pleasure if there is no control measure of togetherness (Macionis, 2001, Eddiefloyd, 2011 and Giddens and Phillips, 2013). They are up viewed that controls and crimes goes with imagining the consequences of one's behaviour and its reactions by other people that deters most people from committing crime in the society. But some individuals who have little to lose from crime are likely to become rule breakers when the bond is weak. They stated four (4) elements of social bond as: -

1. Attachment – strong attachment encourages conformity to the rules and group standards, while a weak relationship allows people to be free, with a high risk of some of them engaging in crimes
2. Commitment – greater a person commitment, legitimate opportunity to the common bond, the greater advantage to make the people conformity to set up bond while in contrast and little confident is more likely to drift people into crimes activities
3. Involvement – serious involvement on legitimate activities reduce crime rates as against less involvement that make people to commit crimes.
4. Belief – strong beliefs in conventional morality and respect for authority and figures control crime, while people with weak beliefs are more vulnerable to temptation and easily fall into criminal activities.

That strong bond among people goes with serious attachment, commitments, involvement and beliefs that will result in conformity to the rules and achievement of security management, while a weak social bond among people can result in deviance, crimes and insecurities in society. In the community, members learn to obey societal rules, develop habits of self-control and discipline, and refrain from wrong acts based on the standard guide which applies to all members regardless of their affiliations.

The theory was able to highlight the causes of insecurities and provided a framework for empowerment interventions on means to curtail insecurities in society. It also explains why a kinetic approach to crime control fails in Nasarawa State. However, they failed to look at the structural causes of insecurities and did not explain the causes of organised and white-collar crime and the impacts of empowerment in curtailing crime in a place.

Social bond theory was adopted for this study because of its influence on how to control and manage crime in society. As they focus on social inclusion, participation, social interventions and beliefs on common bond and for change in the society. Adopting community empowerment strategies helps ensure security by addressing the essential needs for the general interest of the community. These are built on value consensus, achievements, equal opportunity, differential reward and peaceful co-existence. The theory emphasises the roles of community empowerment and social bonds in promoting peaceful co-existence, and it shares values. However, did not consider empowerment as a tool for curtailing insecurities

and to rebuild insecure society with link to human security and empirical gap between empowerment and security in Nasarawa state, needed to be address.

Methodology

A survey research design with mixed methods of data collection was used for the study, where primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FDG) from the sample population. This facilitated easy evaluation of problems under investigation. The study area is Nasarawa State with focus on Keana, Toto and Wamba Local Government Areas with the population study of 1180. The sample size of 150 respondents was considered for the study, with 50 respondents drawn from each of the Local Government Areas respectively. The targeted populations of the study are Traditional Rulers, Security Agents, Youth Leaders, Women Leaders and Politicians. And 10 respondents were equally drawn from each of the three (3) Local Government Areas for Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among the same respondents.

The study adopted multi-stage sampling procedures for the selection of the respondents in these 3 Local Government Areas for the study. Cluster and purposive sampling procedures were used for the selection of the respondents for the study. The state was cluster based on the three (3) senatorial zone, and further cluster into one Local Government Area in each of the zone. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted based on the already known category of population representation for the study. Each of the segments was fairly represented in the sampling frame for the study. For the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), two (2) respondents were selected from each of the groups, making a total of ten (10) respondents for the discussion. The two (2) instruments were used for data collection to obtain accurate research findings.

Data sources used for the study were both qualitative and quantitative sources, and data collected in the field were based on the research questions, problems and objectives. Structured questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used as instruments for collection of primary data in the field. This was designed to find out the respondents' opinions on ways of curtailing insecurities through adopting community empowerment strategies in Nasarawa State. And three (3) points likert scale rating with responses of (a) very often (b) often (c) not often and (a) very effective (b) effective (c) not effective were used for them to choose among the alternative options. The scale arrangement was from 3, 2 and 1

The researchers and research assistants were directly involved in the process of administering and collecting the filled questionnaires and conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in the field. The respondents were given enough time to fill out the questionnaire before its collection. The distribution of the questionnaires was easy, but their collection was not easy, because some of the respondents were absent and some questionnaires were misplaced. Despite the challenges, the researchers were able to collect data from respondents and achieve a wider coverage of opinions. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire employed in the field.

The data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistical tools of percentages, mean, and standard deviation and inferential statistical tools of Pearson product-moment correlation for testing the research hypotheses. This gives an in-depth understanding of the

study and equally suitable in multiple variables analysis with a single dependent variable study. .

Table 1: Response Rate obtained from Questionnaires

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	150	100.0
Returned/Valid	146	97.3
Not Returned	4	2.7

Source: Field Survey, 2026

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to respondents, and 146 were duly filled and returned and considered valid for analysis, while 4 (2.7%) questionnaires were not returned. The valid response rate was therefore 97.3%.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Construct	No.of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Economic/ Financial Empowerment	4	0.839	Acceptable
Social Inclusion and Political Engagement	4	0.859	Acceptable
Skill Acquisition, Educational and Entrepreneurship Empowerment	4	0.852	Acceptable
Moral/Psychological Empowerment	4	0.840	Acceptable
Employments and personals Supports	4	0.825	Acceptable

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Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire instrument adopted in the field. Cronbach's alpha values fall between 0 and 1 (though negative values can happen if items are poorly coded). ≥0.9 = excellent internal consistency, 0.8-0.89 = good reliability, 0.7-0.79 = acceptable reliability, <0.7 = poor reliability. The results indicated good internal consistency across all five constructs as alpha coefficients range from 0.825 to 0.859. This indicates that the items within each section measure their respective constructs with satisfactory internal consistency for this model analysis

Data Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

Table 3: Community-based strategies that can be used to curtail insecurity in Nasarawa State

Community empowerment strategy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Community policing and regular police–community collaboration	131	89.7	1st
Youth employment, vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes	126	86.3	2nd

Community-based intelligence gathering and prompt reporting of suspicious activities	122	83.6	3rd
Strengthening neighborhoods watch/vigilante groups under lawful security oversight	118	80.8	4th
Peace building, dialogue and conflict-resolution committees involving local leaders	111	76.0	5th
Education, civic/value orientation and awareness programmes	106	72.6	6th
Women and youth participation in community security and peacebuilding	101	69.2	7th
Support for farmers/herders dialogue and early-warning mechanisms	96	65.8	8th
Community development projects and livelihood support for vulnerable households	91	62.3	9th
Improved collaboration among traditional, religious and community leaders	87	59.6	10th

Field Survey (2026)

Note: *N = 146 respondents. The question is treated as a multiple-response item; therefore, respondents were permitted to select more than one strategy, and the frequencies do not have to sum to 146. Percentages were calculated as frequency ÷ 146 × 100.*

Table 3 revealed the community-based strategies that can be used to curtail insecurities in Nasarawa State. The table shows that community policing and regular police–community collaboration recorded the highest frequency, with 131 respondents (89.7%). This suggests that respondents place considerable emphasis on active collaboration between residents and formal security agencies, which reflects the role of social inclusion and participation empowerment in insecurities controls. Youth employment, vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes ranked second, with 126 respondents (86.3%). This reflects the role of economic empowerment in reducing vulnerability to recruitment into criminal activities and creating legitimate livelihood opportunities. Community-based intelligence gathering and prompt reporting of suspicious activities had 122 responses (83.6%), while strengthening neighborhood watch or vigilante structures recorded 118 responses (80.8%). The finding equally indicates that respondents also value the local knowledge of residents and organized community surveillance. Peace building and dialogue committees, education and civic/value-orientation programmes, and increased participation of women and youth also received substantial support, with 111 (76.0%), 106 (72.6%) and 101 (69.2%) responses respectively. These strategies recognize that insecurity is not only a law-enforcement problem but can also be associated with social relations, conflict, exclusion, limited opportunities and poverty.

Overall, findings suggest that respondents favour broad community-based approaches in combining security partnerships, economic empowerment, information sharing, peace building, leadership involvement, community development and others to curtail insecurity in the state.

Table 4: Extent of community empowerment strategies usage in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State

Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
Economic/ financials empowerment initiatives provide livelihood opportunities for community members.	2.58	1.10	Agree
Moral/ psychological and personnel support reduces incentives for involvement in insecurity-related activities.	2.61	1.10	Agree
Entrepreneurship and Skills acquisition and educational training programmes are available to community members.	2.51	1.17	Agree
Youth and Women employment and livelihood programmes contribute to community security.	2.60	1.12	Agree

Field survey (2026)

Table 4: A 3-point Likert scale was used. Where 3 = very often, 2=often, and 1=not often, with a decision benchmark of 2.0. A mean of 2.0 and above was treated as agreement, while a mean below 2.0 was treated as disagreement. The results show item means between 2.51 and 2.61. The aggregate mean was 2.57 (SD = 0.92), which is above the decision benchmark. This indicates that respondents generally agreed that all items listed in Table 4, like economic/ financials empowerment strategies, are very often used in curtailing insecurities in the state, based on data collected from the field.

Table 5: Effectiveness of community empowerment strategies in addressing insecurities in the state

Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
Social inclusion, participation and Community members' engagement concerning local security.	2.62	1.10	Agree
Community economic and employment empowerment helps to address security concerns.	2.65	1.05	Agree
Entrepreneurship, skill acquisition, and educational empowerment in the communities and relevant authorities improve security.	2.74	1.06	Agree
Moral, psychological and personnel support empowerment helps in identifying and responding to insecurity.	2.55	1.11	Agree

Field survey (2026)

To understand the effectiveness of community empowerment strategies in addressing insecurities in the study area, a 3-point Likert scale was also used. Where 3= very effective, 2=effective, and 1=not effective were used, with a decision benchmark of 2.0. As shown in Table 5, the aggregate mean score for social inclusion, community engagement, and other items listed was 2.64 (SD = 0.91). All four items recorded means above 2.0, indicating that respondents agreed that participatory and inclusive community strategies are useful in addressing insecurity in the study area.

Table 6: Challenges associated with implementing community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State

Challenges	Frequency (N=146)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Inadequate funding and financial resources	115	78.8	1st
Inadequate security equipment and logistics	109	74.7	2nd
Poor cooperation between communities and security agencies	103	70.5	3rd
Lack of adequate training and capacity building for community members	96	65.8	4th
Fear of retaliation from criminals and insecure actors	91	62.3	5th
Political interference and poor implementation of security programmes	87	59.6	6th
Poor communication and information-sharing among stakeholders	82	56.2	7th
Poverty and unemployment among community members, particularly youths	76	52.1	8th
Lack of sustained government commitment and monitoring	69	47.3	9th
Distrust among community members and security personnel	61	41.8	10th

Field survey (2026) **Note: Multiple responses allowed**

The respondents were presented with a list of possible challenges associated with the implementation of community empowerment strategies for curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State. Respondents were allowed to select more than one challenge where applicable. The responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages and ranked from the highest to the lowest percentage.

The findings presented in the table indicate that inadequate funding and financial resources constituted the most frequently identified challenge to the implementation of community empowerment strategies for curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State based on data collected from the field. A total of 115 respondents, representing 78.8%, identified inadequate funding as a challenge. This suggests that financial constraints may limit the ability of government and other stakeholders to adequately support community-based security initiatives, including training, communication, logistics, surveillance and other empowerment activities to address insecurity in the state.

The second most reported challenge was inadequate security equipment and logistics, identified by 109 respondents (74.7%). Effective community-based security initiatives require appropriate communication equipment, transportation, surveillance tools and other logistical support. Where these resources are inadequate, the capacity of community members and security agencies to respond promptly to security threats may be constrained.

Poor cooperation between communities and security agencies ranked third, with 103 respondents (70.5%) identifying it as a major challenge. Community empowerment

approaches depend substantially on cooperation between residents, traditional institutions, community organizations and formal security agencies. Weak collaboration may restrict the flow of information and reduce the effectiveness of community-based security responses.

The table also shows that lack of adequate training and capacity building was reported by 96 respondents (65.8%), ranking fourth. This finding suggested that providing communities with responsibilities in preventing insecurity without equipping them with appropriate knowledge and skills may reduce the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives. Training in areas such as early-warning mechanisms, information gathering, conflict prevention, emergency response and communication with security agencies can strengthen community participation.

Fear of retaliation from criminals and other insecure actors was identified by 91 respondents (62.3%), ranking fifth. Community members may be reluctant to provide information about suspicious activities when they fear that their identity could be exposed or that they may subsequently become targets of criminals. This challenge highlights the importance of confidentiality, protection mechanisms and trust-building in community-based security initiatives.

Furthermore, political interference and poor implementation of security programmes were identified by 87 respondents (59.6%). This indicates that the effectiveness of community empowerment programmes may depend not only on their design but also on the consistency and transparency with which they are implemented.

Poor communication and information-sharing among stakeholders was reported by 82 respondents (56.2%). Community security requires timely exchange of information among residents, traditional leaders, local authorities and security agencies. Where communication channels are weak, potentially useful information may not reach the relevant authorities promptly.

The findings also show that poverty and unemployment, particularly among youths, were identified by 76 respondents (52.1%). Socio-economic vulnerability can make some community members susceptible to recruitment into criminal activities or other forms of insecurity. Consequently, community empowerment strategies may need to incorporate economic and livelihood components alongside security interventions.

Lack of sustained government commitment and monitoring was identified by 69 respondents (47.3%), while distrust among community members and security personnel recorded the lowest frequency, with 61 respondents (41.8%). Although these challenges ranked ninth and tenth, respectively, their relatively substantial percentages indicate that they remain relevant barriers to effective community participation.

Table 7: Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Predictor	Outcome	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
H_1	Economic Empowerment	Insecurity Reduction	0.486	<.001	Reject H_0
H_2	Community Empowerment	Insecurity Reduction	0.611	<.001	Reject H_0

Field Survey (2026)

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

$H0_1$: The correlation between economic empowerment and insecurity reduction was $r = 0.486$, $p < .001$. At the 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between economic empowerment and insecurity reduction.

$H0_2$: The correlation between community empowerment and insecurity reduction was $r = 0.611$, $p < .001$. At the 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between community empowerment and insecurity reduction.

Discussion of the Findings

Insecurities created setbacks in human and infrastructural development, where people live with fears and distrust that lead to high levels of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the state. There is a need to shift from military and other security agents' reliance to community-focused strategies to overcome insecurities, as agreed by the majority of the respondents, with 59.6%-89.7% as shown in Table 3 of the study. The study revealed that sustainable ways of addressing insecurities in the state are through using community empowerment-based strategies. This was supported by the views of UNESCO (2021, Okolie (2022, Ibrahim and Alagbe (2023, and James. 2025, in the literature reviewed in the study. Likewise, the opinions of the respondents shared during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in the study.

In the same vein, the majority of the respondents agreed that the extent of usage of community empowerment strategies is a means of addressing unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion that serve as breeding grounds for recruiting criminals in the area. The study revealed that the effective means of curtailing insecurities and the extent of usage of community strategies have been between 2.51 and 2.61, with an aggregate mean of 2.57 (SD=0.92). It shows the general agreement of respondents that economic and financial participation and inclusion are very often used as community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurities in the area, as supported by the majority of respondents shown on table 4. This was supported by Usman (2023, Odey and Angbashim (2024), and Ukiyeikimine (2024) in the literature reviewed for the study, as well as the opinions of the respondents during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Table 6 shows a positive relationship between community empowerment strategies and insecurity reduction based on testing of the research hypothesis. However, the implementation did not exclude some challenges, ranging from inadequate funding, poverty, and others, as shown in Table 8 of the work and FGD respondents' opinions, which were supported by the views of Adejumo, 2020, Bamidele, 2021, Dare and Akintomiwa, 2025, and Aboh, Ngele, and Okun, 2025 of the study.

Summary and Conclusion

Community Empowerment strategies are widely recognized as a multidimensional process that enables individuals and groups to gain greater control over decisions and resources that shape their lives. This gives the community the capacity to build confidence, strengthen participation, and exercise agency in addressing local challenges of insecurity in their areas.

The empowerment is examined in four dimensions such as Economic empowerment, Political empowerment, Social empowerment and psychological empowerment. These dimensions build resilience and reduce the risk factors associated with insecurity in society, shifting security control from state-centred perspectives to community-centred approaches. However, Security is not only freedom from external threats but also freedom from want and fear. The empowerment strategies highlight the need to address the rates of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion as part of building a secure society. Community empowerment strategies play a vital role in areas of trust, solidarity building, and cooperation within communities, which strengthen the ability to manage conflicts peacefully and collaborate with other security institutions to maintain stability.

A Community without concern for its social cohesion and empowerment is likely to face violence and insecurity challenges. The empowered communities are better positioned in achieving sustainable peace that explains how individuals and communities gain control over their lives, access to resources and participations on their security affairs. This is because insecurity rates in Nasarawa State are often linked to poverty levels, social exclusion, weak empowerment programmes and non-involvement of community participation in governance. When a state fosters social inclusion and building psychological confidence among the members of a community make them to be active agents in peacebuilding rather than being passive recipients of external interventions of security controls.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommended that:

i. All community empowerment-based strategies should be identifying and encourage their usage toward addressing insecurities in Nasarawa State.
ii. The use of community empowerment strategies should be promoted in the area of curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State.
iii. All effective means of community empowerment strategies should be identified and their implementation encouraged in addressing insecurity problems in Nasarawa State.
iv. All challenges associated with the implementation of community empowerment strategies in curtailing insecurity in Nasarawa State should be identified and addressed immediately.

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