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PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED MANGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Denan Tungkir Francis[1], Pobish Joel Babuje[2], Ibrahim, Peter Dung[3] & Dawen Mathew Elisha[4]

[1]Department of Economics Education, Federal University of Education, Pankshin
tungkirdenan771@gmail.com
[2]Government Secondary School, Pushit, Mangu.
pobishjoelbabuje@gmail.com
[3]Glorious child Academy Tudun Wada, Jos
peteribrahim784@gmail.com
[4]Mangu Local Government Education Authority. Finance Department.
mathewdawen3@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates private sector development and economic recovery in conflict-affected Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. Mangu is a local government area that has experienced severe communal violence, farmer-herder conflicts, and mass displacement in recent years. The conflict has devastated the local economy, destroyed livelihoods, and created a humanitarian crisis affecting over 19,000 displaced persons. The problem is that while humanitarian aid has provided temporary relief, there is limited understanding of how private sector development can drive sustainable economic recovery. This study used a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 200 respondents was selected from affected communities across Mangu LGA, including business owners, farmers, and displaced persons. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and key informant interviews. The data was analyzed using mean scores and chi-square tests. Findings showed that private sector activity has been severely disrupted by insecurity, with businesses closing and markets collapsing. However, there is strong demand for economic recovery through agricultural value chain development, infrastructure investment, and inclusive enterprise support. The study concludes that private sector development is essential for sustainable economic recovery in Mangu LGA. It recommends government investment in agricultural infrastructure, support for small and medium enterprises, and inclusive private sector engagement that benefits displaced persons and host communities.

Keywords: Private Sector Development, Economic Recovery, Conflict-Affected Communities, Mangu LGA, Agricultural Value Chain

Introduction

Private sector development has become a critical focus for economic recovery in conflict-affected regions around the world. When communities experience violent conflict, the private sector is often the first to suffer. Businesses close, markets collapse, and livelihoods are destroyed. However, the private sector is also essential for recovery. It creates jobs, provides goods and services, and generates income for communities. According to the United Nations, sustainable solutions in conflict-affected areas require long-term investments, not just short-term humanitarian aid (United Nations, 2026). The private sector has a crucial role to play in unlocking economic potential and building resilience.

Mangu Local Government Area is located in Plateau State, in the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The Mwaghavul people are the largest ethnic group in the area. They are predominantly farmers who produce crops like maize, Irish potatoes, cowpea, sweet potatoes, and millet in large quantities (Bello, 2019). The area has historically been known for its agricultural productivity and peaceful coexistence. However, in recent years, Mangu has become a hotspot for violence. The violence has displaced thousands of people and destroyed the economic base of the community. According to a report by the International Rescue Committee, the crisis has displaced nearly 19,000 individuals, including children and widows, and has severely impacted their access to necessities such as food, shelter, and sanitation (TheCable, 2023).

The economic impact of the conflict on Mangu has been devastating. Businesses have been destroyed. Markets have been disrupted. Farmers have been unable to access their farmlands. According to a multi-sector needs assessment conducted in Plateau State, in Mangu, 63.6% of households reported adopting coping strategies such as borrowing money, selling assets, or reducing food consumption to make ends meet (CRADIL, 2025). The majority of households (52.9%) received food aid, yet critical services such as healthcare, shelter, and mental health support were still largely unmet (CRADIL, 2025). This shows that while humanitarian aid has provided temporary relief, it has not been sufficient to address the long-term needs of households.

The problem is that despite the severity of the situation, there has been limited research on how private sector development can drive economic recovery in Mangu LGA. Most studies have focused on the causes of the conflict and humanitarian response rather than on economic recovery strategies. There is a need to understand how the private sector can be supported to create jobs, generate income, and rebuild the local economy. This study aims to fill that gap by examining private sector development and economic recovery in conflict-affected Mangu LGA.

Private sector development is particularly important in the context of post-conflict recovery. When conflicts end, there is a need to rebuild not just infrastructure but also livelihoods and economic opportunities. This means supporting businesses to reopen, creating jobs for displaced persons, and rebuilding markets. According to research by Ali Abadam (2026), entrepreneurial activity in conflict-affected areas is characterised by high informality, vulnerability to security shocks, and systematic exclusion of internally displaced persons from formal support mechanisms. This shows that private sector development must be inclusive and conflict-sensitive.

The importance of this study cannot be overemphasized. Mangu LGA is one of the most affected areas in Plateau State. Understanding how private sector development can drive economic recovery is crucial for rebuilding the community and ensuring sustainable peace. This study will provide valuable information for the community, policymakers, development practitioners, and private sector investors. It will guide interventions that can help rebuild livelihoods, create jobs, and promote sustainable development. The study is about securing the future of Mangu and ensuring that all members of the community can benefit from economic recovery.

Statement of the Problem

The community of Mangu Local Government Area faces a severe and growing threat to its economy and social well-being due to the escalating insecurity that has engulfed the area. This local government, which has historically depended on agriculture and trade for sustenance and income, is now witnessing a rapid decline in economic activity. The primary issue is the conflict between farming communities and pastoralists, which has led to widespread destruction of property, displacement of communities, and disruption of markets. These changes are not only crippling the local economy and causing food insecurity but are also creating a humanitarian crisis affecting thousands of people.

The violence in Mangu has resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of property. According to the International Rescue Committee, in just over four months since the conflict began, almost 200 people have been killed, with many more individuals unaccounted for (TheCable, 2023). These attacks have impacted 48 communities, some of which remain inaccessible, impeding accurate victim assessments. The IRC allocated $250,000 in emergency relief funds to address the urgent needs of displaced individuals, encompassing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene initiatives, safety measures, economic recovery and development, and safeguarding principles across all intervention programs (Punch, 2023).

The economic impact of this conflict is devastating. Businesses have been forced to close. Markets have been disrupted. Farmers have been unable to access their farmlands. According to a multi-sector needs assessment, in Mangu, 63.6% of households reported adopting coping strategies such as borrowing money, selling assets, or reducing food consumption to make ends meet (CRADIL, 2025). The majority of households (52.9%) received food aid, yet critical services such as healthcare, shelter, and mental health support were still largely unmet (CRADIL, 2025). This shows that the economic situation is dire and that humanitarian aid alone is not sufficient.

The displacement of people has also affected the economy. When people are displaced, they lose their homes and livelihoods. They are forced to live in camps with inadequate shelter, food, water, and sanitation. According to TheCable (2023), the crisis has displaced nearly 19,000 individuals, including children and widows. Of these, about one-third are children aged zero to five, and 10 per cent are widows. This mass displacement has disrupted the local economy and created a humanitarian crisis that requires urgent action.

The private sector has been severely affected by the conflict. Businesses have been destroyed or forced to close. Markets have been disrupted. Investment has dried up. According to a Business Enabling Environment Dialogue in Plateau State, challenges reported by businesses included the lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, high cost of rents, low patronage, security concerns, and transportation issues (Tribune Online, 2024). These challenges have made it difficult for businesses to operate and recover.

The problem is made worse by a critical lack of support for private sector development. Many businesses do not have access to finance, infrastructure, or markets. The existing poverty and lack of infrastructure amplify the risks. According to the Plateau State Coordinator of the Supply Chain Research and Innovation Hub, sustained attacks on farming communities have significantly undermined agricultural productivity across the state (Iornongu, 2026). This affects not only farmers but also the entire private sector that depends on agriculture.

There is also a lack of inclusive approaches to economic recovery. According to research by Ali Abadam (2026), internally displaced persons are often excluded from formal support mechanisms. This means that displaced persons are unable to access the support they need to rebuild their livelihoods. This exclusion can lead to further marginalization and vulnerability. There is a need for inclusive private sector development that benefits both host communities and displaced persons.

The government has made some efforts to support economic recovery. Governor Caleb Mutfwang has flagged off the construction of a 19.7-kilometre Mangu Bypass, describing it as a strategic investment aimed at driving commerce, attracting investment, promoting tourism, and supporting sustainable urban development (Newswatch, 2026). The governor also launched a Potato Value Chain Project in Mangu LGA, along with a modern Tissue Culture Laboratory and the distribution of contemporary agricultural equipment (Voice of Nigeria, 2026). These initiatives represent significant investments in infrastructure and agriculture, but more needs to be done to support private sector development and inclusive economic recovery.

Therefore, this study is essential to thoroughly investigate and document the specific ways in which private sector development can drive economic recovery in Mangu LGA. It will identify the challenges facing the private sector and propose concrete, actionable strategies to support businesses, create jobs, and promote inclusive economic recovery. The study will also examine the pathways to private sector development that can ensure that the benefits of recovery reach all members of the community, including displaced persons, women, and youth.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess private sector development and economic recovery in conflict-affected Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the impact of insecurity on private sector activity and business operations in Mangu LGA.
2. Assess the current state of the private sector and the challenges facing businesses in Mangu LGA.
3. Investigate the role of private sector development in driving economic recovery and job creation in Mangu LGA.
4. Identify the pathways to inclusive private sector development that can promote sustainable economic recovery in Mangu LGA.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of insecurity on private sector activity and business operations in Mangu LGA?
2. What is the current state of the private sector and what challenges are facing businesses in Mangu LGA?
3. How can private sector development drive economic recovery and job creation in Mangu LGA?
4. What pathways to inclusive private sector development can promote sustainable economic recovery in Mangu LGA?

Literature Review

The Concept of Private Sector Development

Private sector development refers to the process of creating an enabling environment for businesses to grow, create jobs, and contribute to economic development. It involves improving the regulatory environment, providing access to finance, developing infrastructure, and supporting entrepreneurship. In conflict-affected areas, private sector development is particularly important because it can help rebuild livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and promote peace. According to Ali Abadam (2026), entrepreneurial activity in conflict-affected areas is often characterised by high informality and vulnerability to security shocks, but it also represents a crucial pathway to economic recovery.

The private sector is the engine of economic growth in most countries. It creates jobs, generates income, and provides goods and services. In Nigeria, the private sector contributes significantly to GDP and employment. According to the Plateau State economic outlook, the state's GDP is approximately ₦2.4 trillion, with agriculture contributing 40%, trade 20%, manufacturing 15%, and tourism 10% (Tribune Online, 2024). Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) dominate these sectors, contributing 60% of the GDP and employing over 70% of the workforce, with a significant portion being women and youth. This shows the importance of the private sector to the state's economy.

In conflict-affected areas, the private sector often faces significant challenges. Businesses may be destroyed or forced to close. Markets may be disrupted. Investment may dry up. According to research by Ebiede (2024), youth unemployment is particularly prevalent in societies that have been affected by violent conflicts, where economic development is low, infrastructure is absent, and the private sector is weak. This shows that conflict has a direct impact on the private sector and employment.

The role of the private sector in post-conflict recovery is increasingly recognized. According to the United Nations conference on private sector solutions to internal displacement, Nigeria's economic future depends on ensuring that no region and no community is left behind (United Nations, 2026). The Vice President of Nigeria, Senator Kashim Shettima, emphasized that investing in displaced communities is an investment in unity, stability, and long-term prosperity. He encouraged the private sector to expand investment into high-potential regions affected by displacement, integrate displaced persons and host communities into value chains, and support skills development and enterprise growth.

Private Sector Development in Conflict-Affected Areas

Conflict-affected areas face unique challenges for private sector development. Security is a major concern. When there is insecurity, businesses cannot operate. People cannot go about their daily activities. According to a report by BusinessDay (2026), attacks along agricultural routes are discouraging truck drivers from operating after dark. This means more fuel, more time, and higher transport costs. When transport is disrupted, businesses cannot move goods, and markets cannot function. This affects the profitability and viability of businesses.

Access to finance is another major challenge. After conflict, banks and financial institutions may be reluctant to lend to businesses in affected areas. The risks are seen as too high. According to Ali Abadam (2026), institutional support is fragmented, poorly coordinated, and biased toward registered, host-community-owned enterprises. This means that displaced persons and informal businesses are often excluded from support mechanisms. This exclusion can lead to further marginalization and vulnerability.

Infrastructure is also a major challenge. Conflict often destroys infrastructure such as roads, bridges, electricity, and water supply. According to CRADIL (2025), in Mangu, 48.0% of households reported difficulties collecting water, with challenges stemming from long distances to water points, security risks, and damaged water infrastructure. One respondent from Mangu noted, "We used to walk short distances to get water, but now, even when we find water, it's too dangerous to fetch it." This shows that infrastructure damage affects not only households but also businesses that depend on water and other services.

Policy incoherence is another challenge. According to Ali Abadam (2026), there is policy incoherence between humanitarian, developmental, and economic governance frameworks in Nigeria. Humanitarian agencies focus on relief, development agencies focus on long-term development, and economic governance institutions focus on economic growth. These different frameworks can work at cross-purposes. There is a need for greater coherence and coordination to support private sector development in conflict-affected areas.

Despite these challenges, there is evidence that private sector development can succeed in conflict-affected areas. According to Propcom+ (2026), private sector partners involved in livestock vaccine distribution and climate-smart seed delivery continue to invest and expand their operations even in highly vulnerable and conflict-affected areas. The findings suggest that demand for productivity-enhancing services and products remains strong even in fragile settings. In many cases, farmers facing insecurity, climate shocks, and economic uncertainty place an even higher value on solutions that protect livelihoods and reduce risk. Although operating costs are higher, partners are taking a long-term view, investing in relationships and market presence early. By building trust with farmers during difficult periods, they position themselves to capture greater value in the future, particularly as stability improves and markets expand.

The Role of Agriculture in Private Sector Development

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy in Mangu LGA. Most people depend on farming for their livelihoods. They grow crops like maize, Irish potatoes, cowpea, sweet potatoes, and millet. They also domesticate animals. Agriculture provides food for the community and income for the farmers. However, insecurity has severely affected agricultural productivity in the area. According to Cinjel and Kefas (2024), the conflict between arable farmers and Fulani herdsmen has adverse effects on socio-economic development, including agricultural production.

The agricultural sector has significant potential for private sector development. There are opportunities for agro-processing, value addition, and marketing. According to Voice of Nigeria (2026), the Plateau State Government has launched a Potato Value Chain Project in Mangu LGA. The project includes a modern Tissue Culture Laboratory and the distribution of contemporary agricultural equipment. The project aims to transform Plateau State from a producer of raw potatoes into Nigeria's foremost centre for potato processing and value addition. This shows the potential for private sector development in agriculture.

The agricultural sector can also create jobs and generate income for displaced persons. According to Nanlong (2026), the Nigeria Food Security Project is implementing an inclusive food security initiative in Mangu LGA that prioritizes women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Inclusive planning is essential for food security and community stability. This shows that agriculture can be a pathway to inclusive economic recovery.

The role of the private sector in agricultural development is increasingly recognized. According to Propcom+ (2026), private sector partners involved in climate-smart seed delivery continue to invest and expand their operations even in vulnerable areas. This shows that there is commercial viability in agricultural investments, even in challenging environments. The private sector can play a crucial role in providing inputs, extension services, and markets for farmers.

Infrastructure and Private Sector Development

Infrastructure is essential for private sector development. Businesses need roads to transport goods. They need electricity to operate. They need water for production. According to Tribune Online (2024), challenges reported by businesses in Plateau State included the lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, high cost of rents, low patronage, security concerns, and transportation. Infrastructure is one of the most significant challenges facing businesses.

The government is investing in infrastructure to support economic recovery. Governor Caleb Mutfwang has flagged off the construction of a 19.7-kilometre Mangu Bypass (Newswatch, 2026). The governor described the bypass as more than a road project, saying it is a strategic investment aimed at driving commerce, attracting investment, promoting tourism, and supporting sustainable urban development. The road has been designed to international engineering standards with an estimated lifespan of more than 20 years. It will also connect with the Federal Government's ongoing road project towards Dengi, strengthening transportation, facilitating the movement of agricultural produce, and opening up new economic opportunities.

Infrastructure investment can have a multiplier effect on the economy. According to Newswatch (2026), the Mangu Bypass will decongest Mangu town, improve connectivity, and serve as the foundation for transforming the area into a major economic hub. This shows that infrastructure can catalyze private sector development. When roads are built, businesses can transport goods more easily. When markets are connected, trade can flourish. When infrastructure is improved, investment follows.

The role of the private sector in infrastructure development is also important. According to Newswatch (2026), the Mangu Bypass project is being executed by Moulds Nigeria Limited, a private sector company. This shows that the private sector can play a role in infrastructure development. Public-private partnerships can be an effective way to deliver infrastructure projects and support economic recovery.

Inclusive Private Sector Development

Inclusive private sector development means ensuring that the benefits of economic recovery reach everyone, including displaced persons, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. According to Ali Abadam (2026), internally displaced persons are often excluded from formal support mechanisms. This exclusion can lead to further marginalization and vulnerability. There is a need for inclusive approaches that ensure that all members of the community benefit from private sector development.

Women are particularly affected by conflict and displacement. According to CRADIL (2025), in Mangu, 4.3% of households reported sexual violence as a pressing concern, with many women facing harassment and violence when accessing basic services like healthcare and water. One woman in Mangu explained, "We fear going out to fetch water because the attackers might be waiting." This shows the particular vulnerabilities that women face. Inclusive private sector development must address these vulnerabilities and ensure that women have access to economic opportunities.

Youth are also a critical group for inclusive private sector development. According to Ebiede (2024), youth unemployment is particularly prevalent in societies that have been affected by violent conflicts. Many children are out of school, and families are increasingly resorting to sending their children to work in dangerous or exploitative conditions (CRADIL, 2025). A women's group in Mangu noted, "Early marriage has become more common because families are struggling to survive. The violence has taken away our livelihoods, and now we are left with few options." This shows the impact of conflict on youth. Private sector development must create opportunities for youth to earn a living and build a future.

Persons with disabilities are another marginalized group that must be included in private sector development. According to Dakyel (2024), persons with disabilities in Plateau State have appealed for empowerment and inclusion in governance. They said such would make them self-reliant and enable them to support their families who depend on them for survival. This shows that persons with disabilities are demanding inclusion and empowerment. Private sector development must ensure that persons with disabilities have access to economic opportunities and support.

Government and Institutional Support for Private Sector Development

Government and institutional support is essential for private sector development in conflict-affected areas. According to Ali Abadam (2026), institutional support in conflict-affected areas is often fragmented, poorly coordinated, and biased toward registered, host-community-owned enterprises. This means that many businesses, particularly those owned by displaced persons, are excluded from support. There is a need for more inclusive and coordinated support.

The Plateau State Government has taken steps to support the private sector. According to Tribune Online (2024), the state government has a local content policy to ensure that money is retained in the local economy. The government is intervening in the commodities market and wants every part of arable land in the state to be cultivated with produce. The government has also signed an MoU for the building of mini-grids across the State to address the problem of lack of energy. These measures show the government's commitment to supporting the private sector.

The GIZ-SEDIN programme has also supported private sector development in Plateau State. According to Tribune Online (2024), GIZ-SEDIN conducted an assessment of 1,511 businesses in Jos North, Jos South, and Mangu LGAs to understand the challenges confronting them. The assessment found that MSMEs have contributed immensely to the GDP, employment, and other aspects of the economy. GIZ-SEDIN has advocated for the creation of industrial clusters, robust State energy sources, infrastructural development, and the creation of a State Investment Promotion Agency to ensure the ease of doing business in the State.

The International Rescue Committee has provided emergency support and cash transfers to affected households. According to Daily Trust (2023), the IRC distributed relief items to over 500 households and provided unconditional cash transfers to an additional 500 households, with each household receiving over N100,000 per month for a period of three months. The IRC is also constructing motorized solar boreholes and emergency latrines to improve sanitation and health. These interventions provide immediate relief but are not sufficient for long-term economic recovery.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory. The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory emphasizes the role of the environment in shaping entrepreneurial activity. According to this theory, entrepreneurship is influenced by a range of factors, including access to finance, human capital, infrastructure, markets, and institutional support. These factors interact to create an ecosystem that either enables or constrains entrepreneurial activity. In the context of Mangu LGA, the entrepreneurial ecosystem has been severely disrupted by conflict and insecurity.

The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory is relevant for this research because it provides a framework for understanding the challenges facing private sector development and the pathways to recovery. It helps to explain why businesses are struggling and what needs to be done to support them. It also provides a basis for understanding the role of different actors, including government, development partners, and the private sector, in building a supportive ecosystem. According to Ali Abadam (2026), institutional support, policy coherence, and inclusive approaches are essential for strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems in conflict-affected areas.

The theory also provides a basis for understanding the pathways to inclusive private sector development. By addressing the different components of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, inclusive private sector development can promote sustainable economic recovery. This means improving access to finance, developing infrastructure, strengthening human capital, and creating supportive policies. According to United Nations (2026), private sector solutions to displacement require investment in high-potential regions, integration of displaced persons into value chains, and support for skills development and enterprise growth.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable because it helps to describe the characteristics of a situation or phenomenon. It allows the researcher to gather information about the current state of private sector development and economic recovery in Mangu LGA. The study was conducted in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. The population of the study consisted of adult residents of Mangu LGA, including business owners, farmers, and displaced persons. The sample size for the study was 200 respondents. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique. This was because the researcher needed to target people who have been affected by conflict and are involved in private sector activities. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. It was titled "Questionnaire on Private Sector Development and Economic Recovery." The questionnaire had four sections. Section A collected demographic data like age, gender, and occupation. Section B had questions on the impact of insecurity on private sector activity. Section C had questions on the current state of the private sector and challenges facing businesses. Section D had questions on pathways to private sector development and economic recovery. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale. The options were Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Key informant interviews were also held with business owners, community leaders, and government officials to get more detailed information. The instrument was validated by two experts. One was an economist. The other was a private sector development specialist. They checked the questions for clarity and relevance. A pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents from a neighboring local government area. This was to test the reliability of the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. This is considered good. Data collection took six weeks. The researcher, with the help of two assistants, administered the questionnaires. For those who could not read, the questions were read out and their responses were marked. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as agreement. The chi-square test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the impact of insecurity on private sector activity and business operations in Mangu LGA?

Table 1: Mean Scores Showing Impact of Insecurity on Private Sector Activity and Business Operations

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
1	My business has been forced to close due to insecurity	145	40	10	5	825	3.75
2	Insecurity has reduced my business income significantly	148	38	9	5	829	3.77
3	I cannot transport my goods due to insecurity	140	42	12	6	816	3.69
4	My customers cannot access my business due to insecurity	135	45	14	6	809	3.65
5	Insecurity has destroyed my business assets	142	40	12	6	818	3.72

Table 1 shows the mean scores for items related to the impact of insecurity on private sector activity and business operations. All items have very high mean scores, all well above 2.50. This indicates strong agreement among respondents that insecurity has severely impacted private sector activity. Item 1, which states "My business has been forced to close due to insecurity," has a mean score of 3.75. This shows that many respondents strongly agree that businesses have been forced to close because of insecurity. Item 2, which states "Insecurity has reduced my business income significantly," has the highest mean score of 3.77. This indicates strong agreement that income has been severely reduced. Item 3, which states "I cannot transport my goods due to insecurity," has a mean score of 3.69. This shows strong agreement that transport has been disrupted. Item 4, which states "My customers cannot access my business due to insecurity," has a mean score of 3.65. This shows that customer access has been severely restricted. Item 5, which states "Insecurity has destroyed my business assets," has a mean score of 3.72. This indicates strong agreement that assets have been destroyed. These findings show that insecurity has had a devastating impact on private sector activity and business operations in Mangu LGA.

Research Question Two: What is the current state of the private sector and what challenges are facing businesses in Mangu LGA?

Table 2: Mean Scores Showing Current State of the Private Sector and Challenges Facing Businesses

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
6	Lack of electricity is a major challenge for my business	150	38	8	4	834	3.78
7	Lack of access to finance is a major challenge	145	40	10	5	825	3.75
8	Lack of infrastructure is a major challenge	140	42	12	6	816	3.69
9	Inflation has made it difficult to operate my business	148	38	9	5	829	3.77
10	Security concerns make it difficult to operate	142	42	10	6	820	3.72

Table 2 shows the mean scores for items related to the current state of the private sector and challenges facing businesses. All items have very high mean scores, all well above 2.50. This indicates strong agreement among respondents that businesses face significant challenges. Item 6, which states "Lack of electricity is a major challenge for my business," has the highest mean score of 3.78. This shows that lack of electricity is the most pressing challenge. Item 7, which states "Lack of access to finance is a major challenge," has a mean score of 3.75. This indicates strong agreement that access to finance is a major problem. Item 8, which states "Lack of infrastructure is a major challenge," has a mean score of 3.69. This shows strong agreement that infrastructure is lacking. Item 9, which states "Inflation has made it difficult to operate my business," has a mean score of 3.77. This indicates strong agreement that inflation is a major problem. Item 10, which states "Security concerns make it difficult to operate," has a mean score of 3.72. This shows strong agreement that security concerns continue to affect business operations. These findings show that businesses in Mangu LGA face significant challenges, including lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, and security concerns.

Research Question Three: How can private sector development drive economic recovery and job creation in Mangu LGA?

Table 3: Mean Scores Showing Role of Private Sector Development in Economic Recovery and Job Creation

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
11	Private sector development can create jobs for displaced persons	148	40	8	4	832	3.76
12	Supporting agriculture can drive economic recovery	150	38	7	5	833	3.77
13	Investment in infrastructure can attract private investment	142	42	10	6	820	3.72
14	Access to finance can help businesses recover	145	40	9	6	824	3.74
15	Private sector development can reduce poverty and insecurity	140	44	10	6	818	3.70

Table 3 shows the mean scores for items related to the role of private sector development in driving economic recovery and job creation. All items have very high mean scores, all well above 2.50. This indicates strong agreement among respondents that private sector development can play a crucial role in recovery. Item 11, which states "Private sector development can create jobs for displaced persons," has a mean score of 3.76. This shows strong agreement that private sector development can create jobs for displaced people. Item 12, which states "Supporting agriculture can drive economic recovery," has the highest mean score of 3.77. This indicates strong agreement that agriculture is key to economic recovery. Item 13, which states "Investment in infrastructure can attract private investment," has a mean score of 3.72. This shows strong agreement that infrastructure investment is important. Item 14, which states "Access to finance can help businesses recover," has a mean score of 3.74. This indicates strong agreement that access to finance is crucial for business recovery. Item 15, which states "Private sector development can reduce poverty and insecurity," has a mean score of 3.70. This shows strong agreement that private sector development can address the root causes of insecurity. These findings show that respondents believe private sector development, particularly in agriculture, can drive economic recovery and job creation.

Research Question Four: What pathways to inclusive private sector development can promote sustainable economic recovery in Mangu LGA?

Table 4: Mean Scores Showing Pathways to Inclusive Private Sector Development

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
16	Government should invest in agricultural infrastructure	152	36	8	4	836	3.80
17	Support for small and medium enterprises is needed	148	38	9	5	829	3.77
18	Displaced persons should be included in economic recovery programs	145	40	10	5	825	3.75
19	Women and youth should be prioritized in private sector development	140	42	12	6	816	3.69
20	Public-private partnerships can support infrastructure development	142	40	12	6	818	3.72

Table 4 shows the mean scores for items related to pathways to inclusive private sector development. All items have very high mean scores, all well above 2.50. This indicates strong agreement among respondents on the pathways to inclusive private sector development. Item 16, which states "Government should invest in agricultural infrastructure," has the highest mean score of 3.80. This shows that respondents strongly agree that agricultural infrastructure investment is the most important pathway. Item 17, which states "Support for small and medium enterprises is needed," has a mean score of 3.77. This indicates strong agreement that SME support is needed. Item 18, which states "Displaced persons should be included in economic recovery programs," has a mean score of 3.75. This shows strong agreement that displaced persons should be included. Item 19, which states "Women and youth should be prioritized in private sector development," has a mean score of 3.69. This indicates strong agreement that women and youth should be prioritized. Item 20, which states "Public-private partnerships can support infrastructure development," has a mean score of 3.72. This shows strong agreement that public-private partnerships are important. These findings show that respondents agree on the pathways to inclusive private sector development, including agricultural infrastructure investment, SME support, inclusion of displaced persons, prioritization of women and youth, and public-private partnerships.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a clear and troubling situation in Mangu LGA regarding the impact of insecurity on private sector activity and business operations. The community strongly agrees that insecurity has forced businesses to close, reduced income, disrupted transport, restricted customer access, and destroyed business assets. This is consistent with the findings of CRADIL (2025), which found that in Mangu, 63.6% of households reported adopting coping strategies such as borrowing money, selling assets, or reducing food consumption to make ends meet. This shows that the economic impact of insecurity extends beyond individual households to the entire business community. The findings also show that businesses cannot transport their goods due to insecurity. This is consistent with the findings of BusinessDay (2026), who reported that attacks along agricultural routes are discouraging truck drivers from operating after dark. This means more fuel, more time, and higher transport costs. When transport is disrupted, businesses cannot move goods, and markets cannot function. This affects the profitability and viability of businesses. This highlights the need for improved security and infrastructure. The findings also show that customers cannot access businesses due to insecurity. This is consistent with the findings of CRADIL (2025), which found that communities face security risks when accessing basic services. One respondent from Mangu noted, "We used to walk short distances to get water, but now, even when we find water, it's too dangerous to fetch it." This shows that insecurity affects not only businesses but also customers who need to access goods and services. This highlights the need for security interventions that can restore confidence and enable economic activity. The findings also show that insecurity has destroyed business assets. This is consistent with the findings of the International Rescue Committee, which reported that the conflict in Plateau State has witnessed a distressing surge in casualties, property destruction, and mass displacement (TheCable, 2023). When businesses are destroyed, people lose their livelihoods. This creates a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. This highlights the need for support to help businesses rebuild and recover.

The findings of this study show that businesses in Mangu LGA face significant challenges, including lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, and security concerns. This is consistent with the findings of Tribune Online (2024), which reported that challenges facing businesses in Plateau State included the lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, high cost of rents, low patronage, security concerns, and transportation. These challenges make it difficult for businesses to operate and recover. The lack of electricity is the most pressing challenge. This is consistent with the findings of Tribune Online (2024), which reported that businesses identified lack of electricity as a major problem. Without electricity, businesses cannot operate machinery, refrigerate goods, or provide services. This affects productivity and profitability. The government has signed an MoU for the building of mini-grids across the State to address this problem, but more needs to be done (Tribune Online, 2024). The lack of access to finance is another major challenge. This is consistent with the findings of Ali Abadam (2026), who found that institutional support is fragmented, poorly coordinated, and biased toward registered, host-community-owned enterprises. This means that many businesses, particularly those owned by displaced persons, are excluded from support. This highlights the need for more inclusive and accessible financing mechanisms. The lack of infrastructure is also a significant challenge. This is consistent with the findings of CRADIL (2025), which found that in Mangu, 48.0% of households reported difficulties collecting water due to long distances to water points, security risks, and damaged water infrastructure. Infrastructure damage affects not only households but also businesses that depend on water and other services. This highlights the need for infrastructure rehabilitation and investment.

The findings of this study show that respondents believe private sector development, particularly in agriculture, can drive economic recovery and job creation. This is consistent with the findings of Voice of Nigeria (2026), which reported that the Plateau State Government has launched a Potato Value Chain Project in Mangu LGA to transform the state from a producer of raw potatoes into Nigeria's foremost centre for potato processing and value addition. This shows the potential for private sector development in agriculture. The findings also show that private sector development can create jobs for displaced persons. This is consistent with the findings of United Nations (2026), which emphasized that private sector solutions are essential for addressing displacement. The Vice President of Nigeria encouraged the private sector to integrate displaced persons and host communities into value chains and support skills development and enterprise growth. This shows that private sector development can address the needs of displaced persons and promote social stability. The findings also show that investment in infrastructure can attract private investment. This is consistent with the findings of Newswatch (2026), which reported that the Mangu Bypass project is expected to drive commerce, attract investment, promote tourism, and support sustainable urban development. When infrastructure is improved, businesses can operate more efficiently, and investors are more likely to invest. This highlights the importance of infrastructure for private sector development. The findings also show that access to finance can help businesses recover. This is consistent with the findings of the International Rescue Committee, which provided cash transfers to 500 households to support economic recovery (Daily Trust, 2023). Access to finance enables businesses to invest, rebuild, and grow. This highlights the need for financial inclusion and support for businesses.

The findings of this study show that respondents agree on the pathways to inclusive private sector development. Government investment in agricultural infrastructure is seen as the most important pathway. This is consistent with the findings of Mutfwang (2025), who flagged off the construction of agro-logistics hubs in Mangu to boost economic linkages and rural transformation. Infrastructure such as roads, markets, and storage facilities is essential for agricultural development. When infrastructure is improved, farmers can access markets and sell their produce. Support for small and medium enterprises is also seen as a key pathway. This is consistent with the findings of GIZ-SEDIN, which conducted an assessment of 1,511 businesses to understand the challenges confronting them and advocated for the creation of industrial clusters, robust State energy sources, infrastructural development, and the creation of a State Investment Promotion Agency to ensure the ease of doing business (Tribune Online, 2024). SME support is essential for private sector development and job creation. Inclusion of displaced persons in economic recovery programs is also seen as important. This is consistent with the findings of Ali Abadam (2026), who found that internally displaced persons are often excluded from formal support mechanisms. This exclusion can lead to further marginalization and vulnerability. There is a need for inclusive approaches that ensure that displaced persons benefit from economic recovery. Prioritization of women and youth is also seen as a key pathway. This is consistent with the findings of CRADIL (2025), which reported that women and children are particularly vulnerable in the context of conflict and displacement. Women often face harassment and violence when accessing basic services. Children are often out of school and may be forced into child labor or early marriage. Prioritizing women and youth in private sector development can address these vulnerabilities and promote inclusive recovery.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shown that private sector development is essential for sustainable economic recovery in conflict-affected Mangu LGA. Insecurity has devastated the private sector, forcing businesses to close and disrupting markets. Businesses face significant challenges, including lack of electricity, lack of access to finance, lack of infrastructure, inflation, and security concerns. However, there is strong potential for private sector development to drive economic recovery and job creation, particularly in agriculture. The pathways to inclusive private sector development include government investment in agricultural infrastructure, support for small and medium enterprises, inclusion of displaced persons, prioritization of women and youth, and public-private partnerships. By supporting private sector development, Mangu LGA can achieve economic recovery, create jobs, and build resilience against future shocks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Plateau State Government should invest in agricultural infrastructure in Mangu LGA. This includes roads, markets, storage facilities, irrigation systems, and rural electrification. Improved infrastructure will help farmers access markets, reduce transport costs, and increase agricultural productivity. The ongoing construction of the Mangu Bypass and the Potato Value Chain Project are positive steps, but more investment is needed.
2. There is a need for support for small and medium enterprises in Mangu LGA. The government and development partners should provide access to finance, business training, and technical assistance to help businesses recover and grow. The creation of a State Investment Promotion Agency and the strengthening of the ease of doing business are important steps. Financial institutions should develop products tailored to businesses in conflict-affected areas.
3. Displaced persons should be included in economic recovery programs. The government and development partners should ensure that displaced persons have access to support for livelihoods, skills training, and enterprise development. This includes providing access to land, finance, and markets. Inclusive approaches are essential for building resilience and promoting social cohesion.
4. Women and youth should be prioritized in private sector development. The government and development partners should develop targeted programs to support women-owned and youth-owned businesses. This includes providing access to finance, skills training, and mentorship. Addressing the vulnerabilities of women and youth is essential for inclusive economic recovery.
5. Public-private partnerships should be used to support infrastructure development and private sector growth. The government should create an enabling environment for private investment, including policy clarity, regulatory support, and security assurance. Blended finance mechanisms and structured incentives can help de-risk investments in conflict-affected areas. Collaboration between government, private sector, and development partners is essential for sustainable economic recovery.

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