

IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Neither farms, homes, markets, offices are safe in Nigeria. There are many issues bedeviling Nigeria. One of such issue that attracts the attention of everybody is impact of insecurity that affects all spheres of life such as education, infrastructure, movement and agriculture. Despite the role of agriculture, the sector is impacted in one way or the other by insecurity coupled with the effects of Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the causes of insecurity in the country are unemployment which is a hot issue, weak judicial system, high influx of arms, terrorists' threat, open borders, herders/farmers crisis and mass idle hands. Insecurity has affected consumers, producers and manufacturers of products. It has led to shortage of laborers, threats to lives, properties, problem of accessing farmlands, killing and displacement of peoples and agricultural development in general. A country without food is a dead country. It is recommended that government should do their best to stop the insecurity challenges. Also, Judicial System, Stakeholders, Unionists, Women, Religious Leaders among others should also put their hands on deck.

Keywords: National insecurity, food production, Nigeria.

Working Definition

- a. **National Insecurity:** Not having confident about yourself or relationship with other people or not safe or protected. Insecurity can be brought about by man, wild animals or disease.
- b. **Food Production:** Is the growing and making of foods for man, animals and industrial uses among others.

Introduction

Neither farms, homes, land, markets, offices are safe in Nigeria. There are many issues that bedevil food production ranging from covid-19, insecurity problems, among others. Everybody deals with insecurity from time to time. One of such problem that attracts the attention of people, farmers, the federal government and international communities is the impact of insecurity that affect all spheres of life such as education, infrastructure, movement and agriculture. Terrorist attack according to Uchechukwu et `al (2020) are on the rise. It is a big challenge in the country affecting crop production among others. Bombings, kidnappings,

activities of Boko Haram and Herders prevent many Nigerians from feeling safe. Farmers have abandoned their farmlands, others have migrated and others cannot freely complete their activities because of the looming threat of kidnaping and murder on their farm or in their area.

Danladi and Adamu (2020) opined that the prevalence of crisis in the country has become a major concern for Nigerians considering the impact on the security of Nigeria especially food producers. Destruction of lives and properties has almost become an everyday affair. These happenings have created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors both domestic, foreign by and large, the economy of the nation. The activities of these group such as Fulani Herdsmen, terrorists, Boko Haram Sect, Kidnappings and armed Robbers have negative effects on the economic and political life of citizens. The most worrisome of these groups is the Fulani/Farmers problems in southern and northern parts of the country. The Fulani/Farmers problem according to Ezike and Ekere (2020) causes clashes, killing and low output as a result of the harm to farm crops by the cattle.

Food production is by far the widest spread form of human activity and it is more basic than any industry. Even in this machine age, it constitutes the most promising vehicle for income drive among peasant farmers globally, in Nigeria and indeed in rural areas. According to Ohikere (2011), in spite of oil, food production remains the base of Nigerian economy providing the main source of livelihood for most Nigerians. It provides employment for more than 3¼ of the human race, it is important in terms of rural development, provision of food, export earning source of raw materials among others. Despite the role of agriculture, the sector is impacted by insecurity coupled with the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, vagaries of nature and uncertainties. Despite the various challenges, it is clear that the future of Nigeria depends very much on food production. This is because “a world without food would be a dead world” (Ahmed, Irueghe, Adeleke and Leong, 2002). Successive governments have come up with programs and policies with the aim of making Nigeria self-sufficient in food production and food security, but failed because of several problems including insecurity. Ohikere (2011), observed that all efforts of past and present have and may likely be in vain due to several problems impacting food production in Nigeria. Even though food production does not and cannot bring all possible benefits. It is not a lost case in Nigeria. But the fact remains that increase in crop production to obtain the possible benefit cannot be met with the rising insecurity challenges. To ensure food security in Nigeria, there is need to examine the issue of insecurity on food production. This is because food producers produce wide range of agricultural commodities for world markets, and even returned to them in different forms without crop production, many factories would close. Despite the wonders that science has brought, the steps taken by the government, the issue of insecurity is ongoing in Nigeria and have affected food production. It is against this background that the paper is written to examine the causes of insecurity in Nigeria, its impact on food production, conclusion and recommendation in order to promote food production in Nigeria.

The nature of national insecurity challenges in Nigeria

Since the past decade or more, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity occasioned by the activities of militants in the south-south region, this has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government. Some of the challenges according to Tumba (2020) include Boko Haram, farmers/herders conflict, kidnaping, banditry, armed robbery, terrorism, political thuggery and other related crime. The analysis showed that

insecurity affects economic growth by drying-out investments, increases unemployment and dwindles government revenue amongst others. Despite these effects, government capital expenditure on internal security did not grow astronomically to match the hydra-headed problem.

The Niger Delta Crises also poses serious and enduring threat to the fragile nature of Nigerian democracy and the ever volatile national security according to Tumba, (2020). There have been losses of lives, livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure and national resources as a result of violence in so many communities.

The causes of insecurity in Nigeria

There are numerous causes of insecurity in the country, but a few of them are discussed below:

Rising wave of unemployment is a hot issue in Nigeria: The overwhelming unemployment is capable of causing panic. The issue is especially obvious when it comes to Nigerian youths. Despite the high turnout of graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions every year, a great number of these youth according to Tumba (2020) and Aja (2020) youth remain unemployed. As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty, many people according to Kabir (2020) are frustrated with wide spread of joblessness. It has increases crime rate as a result, they are adversely attracted to violent crime.

The use of sophisticated weapons by criminals: The insecurity situation is worsened by the obsolete weapons that are used do not match to the modern sophisticated weapons used by the criminals which causes insecurity.

High influx of arms: Smugglers use porous coastal borders of the country to sell arms. The corrupt and weak judicial system only help smugglers to even sell more arms. In addition, criminals and terrorist are allowed to go free as well as collection bribe by people concern. Jane (2020) opined that they provide pistols, short guns, rifles assault rifles used against the people and military forces.

The use of youths to perpetuate crime and violence in Nigeria: Youth are used to perpetuate post-election violence that were declared to be free, fair, transparent and credible both by local and international observers that claimed lived in some states and displaced thousands of people in the northern part of Nigeria is a clear sign of an attempt to use this group of youth to perpetuate crime and violence. There has been upsurge involvement of youths in various anti-social activities and crimes such as arson, assault, murder, abduction, stealing, offences, and unlawful possession of firearms just to mention but a few.

Open borders: the country has borders that are poorly guarded. Insurgents from other countries can infiltrate without problem. This situation is especially dangerous in the Northeast. Although the Federal Government is trying its best but cannot provide enough troops to secure the borders.

Poor governance: the failure of successive administrations to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, inequitable distribution of wealth have resulted to insecurity challenges or emerging challenges.

Imbalance development: Different parts of the country have different speed of development. Due to this, the country's oil regions feel disturbed when the federal government use their oil and does not develop their society.

Weak Judicial System: People feel insecure where criminals and terrorist go free, many evil minded people think that money can buy freedom in the country, and unfortunately, the corrupt system prove this line of thought. Proliferation of youth gangs (armed robbery) "neither farms, homes, lands, markets, offices are safe in Nigeria because of repeated armed robbery" (Ajaj, 2020).

Mass Idle Hands: unemployment which now seems beyond remedy has produced mass idle hands who have become the devils workshops. Ajaj (2020) agreed that many of them decided to punish the society that fails to provide them with means of livelihood and dignity by robbing people of their properties at gun points. It has also multiplied the number of aggrieved youths and resulted in the emergence of area boys, almajiris, armed militant groups such as Boko Haram terrorist, Bakasi Boys, among others, who target the very society that alienated them.

Criminal situation: for the last few years, citizens have been victims of robbery which sometimes happen in daylight.

Terrorist threat: Terrorism in the country is not a new problem; Boko Haram and Niger Delta Avengers are two prominent terrorist organizations that cause the most damage to the country. Federal government keeps fighting with terrorist. Nigerian soldiers die every day for their country.

Violent crises between herders/farmers: herders attack farmers here and there in Nigeria increasing insecurity. Following the emergence of Boko Haram, Danladi and Adamu (2020) were of the view that it has increase access to arms and automatic weapons, exploitation of farmer-herder violence by Boko Haram terrorist has caused and is still causing insecurity in the country.

Poor Quality of Living Condition: Most graduates due to poor quality of living condition are roaming the streets of major cities in Nigeria with nothing tangible to do. Hence most of them put the knowledge they have acquired from school into armed robbery, prostitution, kidnaping, house breaking, human trafficking, herdsman/farmers crisis, terrorism, political thuggery, ritual killings, insurgency, youth restiveness, Boko Haram and other related crime. Idayi (2020) also observed that the unemployed youth help in the spread of ethno-religious clashes in the country. Land Scarcity is also one of the causes of insecurity which is associated with population increase and looking for fertile lands by the Herders.

Impacts of Insecurity on Food Production

Insecurity has negatively affected food production in one way or the other in the country because it has affected producers, consumers and manufacturers of food products.

Shortage of labourers: A large army of youths are unemployed making them to migrate to urban centers. Most of the able bodied men have migrated due to insecurity living the few aged group. In addition, most of the people especially in the rural areas do not use appropriate agricultural innovations for farming. Iorngurum (2020) and Tumba, (2015) opined that living the few aged group causes shortage of farm labourers which affect food production.

Problem of accessing farmlands: Insecurity challenges affected all spheres of life such as education, infrastructure, movement and agriculture. It resulted in high level of killing, abduction, attack which denied especially farmers from accessing their farmlands. When

farmers do not access their farmlands, Darazo, Abdullahi, and Sulaiman (2020) agreed that insecurity will surely affect food productivity, education, movement among others.

Threat due to destruction of lives and properties: Crisis in the country has become a major concern considering the impact on lives and everyday affair. These happenings have created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors both domestic and foreign by and large, the economy of the nation.

The threat has also discouraged farmers from producing certain types of crops in some affected places. Certain varieties of food crops are not cultivated e.g. rice, beans, sorghum in some places like northern parts of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Katsina States etc. because of insecurity.

Displacement of people: Nigeria has suffered high level of violent conflicts resulting to the loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties. According to Amande, Wankar and Aginiyi (2020), Benue and Taraba State have been under attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen from disputes over grazing areas for cattle. Have left hundreds of people dead, communities razed and buildings destroyed. Over 40,000 people had been displaced since the attacks.

Robbing of peoples properties: Many idle hands who have become the devil's workshop decide to punish the society that fails to provide them with means of livelihood and dignity by robbing people of their properties at gunpoint during crop production or selling of farm products, some people have migrated completely to other more secure areas living their original land which made them to abandoned their farm and resulted to food insecurity.

It affects agricultural development: The wave of insecurity rocking the country in the form of communal clashes, militancy, farmers-herdsmen conflict and the rise of Boko-Haram insurgency has further threatened the development of agricultural sector as many farmers in the north have either been killed or displaced from their native lands living farming unattended to due to insecurity.

Massacred of people: Emergence of Boko Haram increases access to arms and automatic weapons. Also as a result of connivance between Boko-Haram terrorist and herdsmen a lot of people were massacred by suspected herdsmen in Benue and Niger State. Danladi and Adamu (2020) added that Benue is the food basket of the nation, but they are inevitably attacked. Herdsmen onslaught among others have negatively affected food production.

It affected investors –workspace and output: with the general level of confusion, insecurity and uncertainty, no responsible or sane investor or farmer would want to invest in an area characterized by insecurity and unstable environment. Youth do not want to stay in rural areas and areas affected by insecurity. Food production in those areas losses its workspace which reduces output.

Acute shortage of food: In places where the crises are on-going, there is acute shortage of food and other valuable materials. This is consequent upon the fact that the farmers cannot cultivate crops during crisis period. Even if they manage to propagate food crops, it may not be possible to harvest them in the time of trouble due to fear of assault by herdsmen. Therefore, crops can remain on farms without harvest and if care is not taken, either bush fire or herdsmen's cows would consume them.

Other attendant consequences of insecurity:

In any society in the world, where there is perpetual conflict, there would be attendant consequences for the community and individuals.

Herders attack Farmers here and there. The farmers-herdsmen crises in Nigeria have created numerous negative effects that can take the country two or more decades to eradicate. Some of the adverse effects of the crisis are as follows according to Olayinka (2018).

It has led to creation of illegal weapons markets in many places in our nation. The existence of these markets has given rise to the proliferation of arm weapons, unnecessary attacks, kidnapping and cattle rustling and the people who perpetrate the acts own weapons illegally.

The unending assents by herdsmen has led to displacement of many farmers from their areas of origin leading to establishment of IDPs.

The farmer/herders conflict in question has brought about the establishment of self-defence forces, ethnic and tribal militias all over the country.

In the case of farmers-herders conflict, there would be economic losses from both sides as the warring parties will devise several means of retaliation to damage the source of livelihood of the so called enemies. The outcome will be low GDP in our nation. Adelakun et'al (2015) posited that in socio economic losses among herders and farmers during crisis, farmers are the worst hit as it affects many family farming.

Conflict may pave way for epidemic and health hazards, this is because the health condition of the affected community cannot be catered for adequately owing to fear of attack on the part of health personnel. In such condition, the tendency is that many people will die of untreated diseases.

In any conflict situation, children and women are most vulnerable. In fact, a good number of women casualties who are able to survive would either lose their husbands or children. The outcome of which is the gone the bread winners of families. Loss of bread winners affect food production negatively because the necessary material may not be available during food production period.

Conclusion

In any society in the world, where there is insecurity, there would be attendant consequences for the community. The impact of insecurity on food production has become a serious national issue that if it is not checked, will cause food insecurity. It is a known fact that successive governments in Nigeria have taken some measures to stop the problem but yet, the problem is on-going. Therefore, to promote food production in the midst of insecurity and impact of Covid-19 pandemic, it is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders in the society such as captains of industries, peasant farmers, unionist, women, students and all the tiers of government.

Advanced countries such as United States of America, Canada, Britain, China, France, just to mention but few have use different measures in tackling the impact of insecurity as such, Nigerian government should also do their best to adopt the measures that are used by the developed countries to tackle the insecurity situation in Nigeria so that people will gain the benefit of food production and to prevent our country from total collapse.

Recommendations

a. On tackling National Insecurity

- There should be good governance that is, all tiers of government should do their best to tackle the insecurity challenges bedevilling the country.

- Enough troops should be provided to secure borders. All borders should be properly guarded in order to control insurgents from infiltrating into the country especially in the North East.
- The judicial system should be good enough by not allowing criminals and terrorists to go free.
- Government should give adequate credit/loans to start up business in order to reduce poverty and insecurity level in Nigeria as well as to enable graduates put to practice the skills they have acquired.
- All security agencies should work together for better and eliminate Nigerian emerging challenges completely.
- Making education as the right of all children through early childhood care education will help in curbing the emerged challenges.

b. On enhancing food production

- The government, religious leaders, traditional leaders, non-governmental organization as well as the general public need to develop trust and work together to resolve the security situations in Nigeria in order to move forward and to ensure the continuity of food production. Therefore, all hands should be on deck.
- Youth unemployment should be combated through impacting relevant skills and job creation for self-reliance while in school so that they can fall back to such skills in the long run.
- Skill acquisition centres should be established in every local government Headquarters and be accessible to cater for the vocational needs of youth that are unable to go to school or who dropped out of school. This will help to reduce the crime and other social vices which the idle youths engage in.
- Retirement age should be reduced so that employment opportunity will be made available for the youth.
- Open grazing should be avoided to ameliorate the risk of herders' destructions of farms and related problems. Herders should allow farmers to finish harvesting before entering their farms.
- Everybody should be security conscious especially farmers when they are on their farms to raise alarm and report to appropriate quarters when threatened.
- Every community should be encouraged to protect itself by forming local militia or vigilante groups under the operators of the military and police and must be answerable to either the military or the police.
- The government of the federation must employ a joint task force to the affected areas. This will help restore law and order and build confidence of the food producers.
- The high influx of arms should be properly checked by the people concern.
- The government should use the country's resources judiciously to promote balance development and ensure peaceful co-existence.

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