



FOOD INSECURITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON NATIONAL SECURITY.

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Abstract

Agriculture has remained an important aspect of any economy. Viable agricultural programmers and activities in any polity are capable of sustaining the food supply and reserves needed for the. Welfare of the citizens. But in Nigeria, Agriculture is despised as able bodied young people do not have interest in Agriculture. Climate change and clashes between herdsmen and farmers and the activities of Boko Haram sect have added to food insecurity challenges in the polity as. Population displacement, death, and non-cultivation of farmlands and the burning down of farm produce have reduced the quality and quantity of food demand. Although the Federal Government had assured Nigerians that the fear over imminent food crisis was unfounded, many Nigerians, especially concerned stakeholders, are not persuaded that the means and ways being. Devised by government at all levels. Can possibly address the challenge. This paper addresses the causes and consequences of these challenges and concludes by positing that without addressing these challenges, food insecurity will persist in Nigeria for a long time.

Keywords: *Food, Insecurity, National, Security, Effects.*

Introduction

The first essential component of social and economic justice is adequate food production. Even if a nation cannot send cosmonauts to the moon, it should be able to feed her population, only then can it occupy place of pride in the community of nations. Nigeria is a country richly blessed with abundant natural. And human resources that if properly harnessed can feed its people and export the surpluses to other countries, yet it is experiencing persistent food crisis both in terms of quantity and quality. Cases of malnutrition and under nutrition are growing by the day. The food intake requirements of

majority of Nigerians have fallen far below the international standard. Past effort at improving food supply through agricultural production has not yielded successful results¹

The programmers that were introduced only helped to alienate the peasant farmers who are the major producers of food in Nigeria. Some of the companies that had something to do with food production include:

1. The national Grains Production Company.
2. National Root Crops Production Companies.
3. North-east, Western and National Livestock Production Companies.
4. The Nigerian National Shrimp Company.
5. The Nigerian National Fish Company.

These companies were set up by the federal Government in 1989 to participate in direct production of food. The major crops target includes maize, rice, millet, wheat, sorghum and cassava. One should mention in passing the establishment of 11 (eleven) River Basin Development Authorities, they were set up to develop river basins for meaningful agricultural production to make Nigeria self-sufficient in food production. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution were other short-lived national campaign launched to give agriculture a good image and to encourage land owners to take to farming not only as an occupation but also as a Way of life.

These programmers were more in favors of capital intensive and large scale commercial farmers who corruptly enriched themselves at the expense of poor peasant farmers.²

Methodology

The selected methodology for this Paper is a combination of desk research and primary research that will involve collection and review of relevant documentation such as literatures from scholars, academics and writers on the relevant topics, published reports mainly books newspapers article, journal, internet websites and government publications.

Concept of Food Security

Food security refers to the availability of food household is considered food secure when it occupants do starvation (FAO 2001). Food security exists

1 F.A.O (2001). Perspective study on Agriculture Development in the Shellian Countries Vol. 3

2 F. A.O. (2010). World Food Crisis the price of Neglect

when all physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and one's access to it. A not live in hunger or fear of people, at all times, have and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes a minimum of:

1. The ready availability of nutritional adequate and safe foods and
2. An assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways that is without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other cropping strategies.³

In the World Bank Policy Study (2006) food security is defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. To the Economic commission for Africa (2009) food security involves not only food availability through storage, and trade but also more importantly food access through domestic or home produce.

It is the contentions of the (FAO, 2010) that for a country to have sustainable food security, food supplies must keep pace with increase population and urbanization. As such, according to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), addressing agriculture and population growth is vital to achieving food security. Other organizations and people have come to this same conclusion

In agriculture and population control.

USAID, (2011) proposes several key steps to increasing agricultural productivity which is in turn key to increasing rural income and reducing food insecurity.⁴ they include:

1. Boost agricultural science and technology. Current agricultural yields are insufficient to feed the growing populations. Eventually productivity derives economic growth.
2. Securing property rights and access to finance.
3. Enhancing human capital through education and improved health.
4. Conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms and democracy and good governance based on principles of accountability and transparency in public institutions and the rule of law are basic to

³ Idachaba, F. S. (2006). Strategic and Policies for Food Security and Economic Development in Nigeria. Lagos: CBN. P.102-4

⁴ 'bid p 19

reducing vulnerable members of society. The United Nation Millennium Development Goals are of the initiatives aimed at achieving food security in the World. In its list of goals, the first Millennium Development Goals state that the UN is to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty or to half it by 2015 and that agricultural productivity is the key player if this is to be achieved. Of the eight MDG, eradicating extreme hunger and poverty depends on agricultural productivity entirely. The MDG I call for halving hunger and poverty by 2015 in relation to 1990 as the base period. Improvement in food security strategies by individuals and households allows more time and resources to be directed towards improving economic situations, through investments in better means of production, further education. And other quality of life measures which can improve the communities.⁵

Causes of Food Insecurity in Nigeria

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food. Food insecure people are those whose food intake falls below their minimum energy requirements as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from an inadequate or unbalanced diet or from the body's inability to use food effectively because of infection or disease. According to FAO (2010) food insecurity refers to the consequences of inadequate consumption of nutritious food, considering the physiological use of food by the body as being within the domain of nutrition and health. Malnourishment also leads to poor health; hence individuals, fail to provide for their families. If left unaddressed, hunger sets in motion an array of outcomes that perpetuate malnutrition,

Reduce ability of adults to work and to give birth to healthy children and erode children's ability to learn and lead productive healthy and happy lives. This truncation of human development undermines a country's potential for economic development for generations to come.⁶ Famine and hunger are both rooted in food insecurity. Food insecurity can be categorized as either

5 Ibid P. 25

6 Oke Ibeanu (2009). Policy Guidelines on Crop Production and Agro—based Industrialization in Nigeria, Agricultural Development Bulletin. Abuja. p55-56.

chronic on transitory, chronic food insecurity translates into high degree of vulnerability to famine and hunger. Ensuring food security presupposes the elimination of that vulnerability. Chronic insecurity is similar to undernourishment and is related to poverty existing mainly in poor countries. No problems can be solved unless its causes are known: therefore, knowing the causes of food insecurity will help us to locate the solutions.⁷ Discussing the causes of food insecurity in Nigeria is a very difficult task; this is because most Nigerians develop apathy towards locally produced food and prefer imported food which they consider as superior to domestically produced ones.

The emergence of oil sector and the substantial revenue accruing from the sector shifted emphasis from agriculture to the extent that even domestic food production is not given the desired requirement. The government felt that it was better to import food than to embark on local production, especially when oil money has changed the tastes of most Nigeria in favor of foreign imported goods. The above reasons notwithstanding, the causes of food insecurity in Nigeria can be discussed under the following:

1 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a major cause of hunger and poverty. Food security can be a major concern for people who are incapable of or denied access to participation in labour - formal, informal or agricultural. In 2009, the UN estimated that 60 percent of the world's chronically hungry people. Are women and girls, 98% of which live in developing nations, when women have income, substantial evidence indicates that the income is more likely to be spent on food and children's needs? Women are generally responsible for food selection and preparation and for the care and feeding of children. Women play many roles in land use, production, distribution, and processing, marketing accessing, trading and food availability. They often work as unpaid and self-employed workers on and off farm employees, entrepreneurs, traders, providers of services and caretakers of children and elderly, women farmers represent more than a quarter of the world

Population, comprising on average 43 percent of the agricultural workforces, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, women have less access than men to agricultural assets, inputs and service. Analysts suggest that if women have the same

⁷ Otaha I.J. (2013). *Leading Issues in Economic Management and Administration*. Abuja: Eriba Press. P.76

access to productive resources as men, women would have boost yield by 20—30 percent. Raising the overall agricultural Output in developing countries by two and half to four percent.⁸

This gain in production could lessen the number of hungry people in the world. Reducing gender inequality and recognizing the contribution of women to agriculture is critical to achieving global food security, there is consistent and compelling evidence that when the status of women is improved, agricultural productivity increases, poverty is reduced and nutrition improves.

2. Policy Inconsistencies and Corruption

Frequent policy changes and poor performance of agencies assigned to implement -food and agriculture policies have serious setback on food production and distribution. Each time a. new government comes to power, the previous agricultural policies and programmers are abandoned and new ones are put in place, and not that the new ones are better than the old ones. It is in a bid to. Create opportunities for graft. This creates no room for stability and progress in food production. Similarly, the dismal performance of some of the past programs like Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Lower River Basin Development Authorities as well as agencies like National Agricultural And. Land Development Authority (NALDA) and the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) have contributed to low agricultural and food productivity in Nigeria.

3. Poverty and Hunger

Poverty and hunger prevent people from working hard to increase productivity. Food and agricultural productivity is both capital and labour intensive. Unfortunately, it is the poor peasant farmers that produce the bulk of food needs in Nigeria; due to their level of poverty, they find it very difficult to learn, work and care for themselves and their family members, let alone getting the necessary inputs and energy to produce for others. Apart from the inconsistency in policies most of these policies are neo-liberal which work against the interest of the domestic economy such as the devaluation of naira which made the importation of farm inputs very difficult and out of the reach of peasant farmers.⁹

4. Conflicts

⁸ Ibid P. 1

⁹ Peter.S.A.(2008) Poverty and welfare in Nigeria, Abuja,p,80-82

The ethnic or religious conflicts have devastating effects on the economic activities especially food production in the areas that they take place. Conflicts here do not necessarily mean physical lighting of wars. It means a disarticulated country or society that is experiencing structural violence without official declaration of war such as pervasive poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary people by those in power, oppression of women and children and monopolization of resources and power by some sections of the society. It will be wrong to say there is peace in such a country like Nigeria where Boko Haram and other sects are threatening-the unity of the country. Consequently, it is quite possible-. Not to have peace even when there is no war.

5. Natural disasters

Frequent climate changes leading to shortage of rainfall and persist drought in Northern part of the country and excessive rainfall and flood in southern and middle belt regions of the country contributed immensely to low food production in Nigeria.¹⁰ Low level of technology, low agricultural financing and rural- urban migration pose serious threat to food production in Nigeria.

Effects of Foods insecurity on National Security

According to the newly-released World Bank's Food Price Watch, (2014), Food price shocks can be responsible for the origination and continuation of conflict and, more generally, political instability. Increasing empirical evidence shows that international food prices and the domestic pass through for local markets of these international prices has a significant role in all types of conflict, from interstate wars to civil wars, regime breakdowns, and communal violence. The World Bank reports that in 51 riots in 37 countries include Nigeria over the last eight years, food was the principal consideration.

In the February 2008 food riot in Cameroon, for example, between 24 and 100 individuals were killed and 1,671 were arrested in riots that reportedly paralyzed the capital. The riot was triggered by frustrations over rising food and fuel costs. In Buenos Aires in 2012, teenagers ransacked and robbed working-class neighborhood grocery stores in rioting that left 22 dead and more than 200 injured. In 2009, 20 people were trampled to death in a food riot in Pakistan. And as Nigerian farmers in the North are having difficulty accessing their farms owing to insurgency in that part of the country coupled

¹⁰ Ibid, p,52-55.

with climate change effect on agriculture produce, there may be reason for fear of the unknown¹¹ Undoubtedly, the devastating effect of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North is having its impact on other states in the country, especially when it has to do with the supply of foodstuffs. Particularly affected food items are pepper and tomatoes, which mostly come from the Northern states. The supply of these two major food items, which happen to be part of every delicacy in an average home, is in short supply, especially in Lagos where a handful is sold at a very costly price. This therefore implies that the insurgency in the North has not only caused scarcity of certain commodities but has also affected the prices of these commodities in the market.¹² Today, most developing countries like Nigeria are net food importers, and their dependence on imports; is growing. In the case of rice, since the implementation of high tariffs for rice importation, legal imports into the country have come to a standstill, creating a massive demand from staple consumers.

In the absence of local paddy production to meet this demand, smugglers have been having a free ride, pumping rice into the country through the borders. The neighboring countries including Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Benin have zero or negligible duties, thereby acting as conduits for the illegal trade of rice into Nigeria.¹³

The farmers have their own set of problems and have not been able to adequately respond in meeting the demand caused by the abrupt stoppage of imports of finished rice. A recent report suggests that the rampant smuggling further compounded the woes of local rice millers operating in a high cost environment - devoid of infrastructure such as potable water, power and good road networks - with sparse funding. The nation is also reeling from the severe impact caused the Boko haram activities.¹⁴ In June, the Chad Basin Development Authority reported that 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of rice paddies had been abandoned at the peak of harvesting season.

Large-scale investments made into the farming and milling industries by private businesses are also jeopardy, following Customs' inability to protect the industry from the vagaries of smugglers. Small farmers consume most of

11 Mwaniki, A. (2004). Achieving Food Security in Africa: Challenges and Issues, *Journal of Social Science* Vol. 12, No 8, P 121 — 129.

12 Nord, M & Hopwood, H, (2007), "Recent advances provide improved tools for measuring children's food insecurity", *Journal of Nutrition*, Vol. 137, Pp.533-536.

13 Olagunju, F. 1., 01(e), 1. T. O. Babatunde, R.O and Ajiboye, A. (2012), "Determinants of Food Insecurity In Ogbornoso Metropolis of Oyo State, Nigeria", *PAT* (June), 8 (1): 111 -124.

14 Oldewage-Theron, W. H., Dicks, E. G & Napier, C. E, (2006), "Poverty, household food insecurity and nutrition: coping strategies in an informal settlement in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa", *Public Health*, Vol. 120: Pp.795-804.

the paddy produced in the nation on a sustenance basis. Several rice mills in the country have been fully or partially shut down due to lack of paddy supply, leading to unemployment and mounting losses for the entrepreneurs.¹⁵ certain basic infrastructures in developed countries are lacking in Nigeria. Presently, we are still talking about power; it is basic. A lot of rural activities are based on roads, water. Certain basic: infrastructure. Which should not be the business of the farmers are not in place. There are some areas that are duty of farmers; that is why you see some of the farmers have become advocates of farmers. If the farmers do not give out output, farmers do not have anything.¹⁶ For instance, Boko Haram has stopped the flow of beans, which we need. Food processing industry should be a secured sector because of its position in the hierarchy of human needs. There should be a market that drives. It where both local and foreign producers can compete and the buyers decide by quality and not price. Farmers are subjected to the hardship that people are complaining of because they are the manufacturing industry for the agricultural products. Farmers are in the agricultural chain, but the manufacturing environment is not conducive for them. They are faced by multi-taxation and unfavorable government policies. With interest rate at 20 per cent on paper, if you go and borrow, you end up with about 30 per cent. Foreign companies will come with cheaper products because of this. The environment is very bad for food processing.¹⁷

Implication for Nigeria and Global Economy

- 1) Human suffering: increasing incidence of insecurity in Nigeria has the implication of increasing the level of suffering for Nigerians and the entire global economy.
- 2) Substantial productivity losses: as the level of suffering increases, total amount of human effort committed to productive reasoning, uses and work diminishes, since man has to survive first to be able to produce.
- 3) Miss-allocation of scarce resources due to diminished work performance.
- 4) Growing poverty level is another implication as the vicious cycle become more complicated.

¹⁵ Osagie, C. (2013), "Fear of Food Insecurity Grips Nigeria," Saturday ThisDay, November 8, Pp. 24.

¹⁶ Pottier, J., (1999), *Anthropology of Food: The Social Dynamics of Food Security*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 15

¹⁷ Riches, G. (1999), "Advancing the Human Right to Food in Canada: Social Policy and the Politics of Hunger, Welfare, and Food Security", *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 16, Pp. 203-211.

- 5) Sustained underdevelopment and negative economic growth is another implication
- 6) Over-dependence on foreign aids and other nations of the world for survival.

Recommendations

It is widely accepted that Nigeria is not a poor country except that it has been poorly managed by those entrusted its development. It is also widely accepted that Nigeria is rich enough to feed herself and the rest of Africa, the major hindrance to this are:

1. The ethnic and religious conflicts which claimed many lives and the destruction of food crops with able men and women staying in refugee camps for two or three years.
2. Those who rule Nigeria do not believe in Nigeria because of that they lack political will and patriotic zeal to deal with the problem of food insecurity in Nigeria; hence they adopt all forms of neo- liberal economic policies recommended by the World Bank and IMF for personal profits.

These are the manmade problems, so that if properly addressed sanity will return and people's confidence in food production will be restored. The other solution to food insecurity lies with paying attention to the natural disasters such as flood, drought and pest control.¹⁸ is Fortunately, we are going to have new generation of leaders who will have faith in Nigeria and strongly believe that Nigeria must take responsibility for its own destiny, that Nigeria will uplift herself only by her own efforts in partnership with those who Wish her well.

Conclusions

Eradicating hunger and poverty requires an understanding of the ways in which these two injustices interconnected. Hunger and the malnourishment that accompanies it, prevent poor people from escaping poverty because it diminishes their ability to learn, work, and care for themselves and their family members. Food is not like other commodities, it is an indispensable and an important factor in nation's quest for economic growth and development. Being an inevitable commodity all efforts must be geared toward. Ensuring its adequate supply for sustainable economic development and human survival. In Nigeria, most of the food need is produced by peasant

¹⁸ Otaha (2013) op cit.

farmers who are scattered all over the rural areas and not multinational companies who produce on large scale for export and profit. For the dream of food security to realized agricultural policies must target these peasants' farmers and their rural environments.

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