



INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA, 2015-2020

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: June 10th 2023 Accepted: July 10th 2023 Published: August 14th 2023</p>	<p>The background to this study established that one of the primary obligations of government is to provide adequate security for its citizens. Hence, the relevance of the government as an institution through which the will of the state is implemented, is tied to the performance of such basic but indispensable function. Basically, this study thoroughly investigated the impact of the surge in security challenges in Nigeria on food security. In addition to that, the study examined the factors that are responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, the scope of this study spanned between 2015 and 2020. The study relied on secondary sources like textbooks, journals, newspapers and internet materials for data collection and used content analysis for data analysis. The Karl Marx theory of Economic Determinism and John Locke's theory of Natural Rights on which this study was anchored, separately but agreeably demonstrated the role of the state in ensuring the economic wellbeing of the people through the provision of adequate security. This study revealed that the escalating trends of insecurity in Nigeria, expressed in herdsmen/farmers clash, banditry and kidnapping, had impacted very negatively on food security during the periods under review. The study further uncovered that factors which include youth unemployment, poverty, religious radicalism/extremism, ethnic bigotry, border porosity, etc. are responsible for the growing spate of insecurity in Nigeria. This study concluded by admitting that although the findings of the study showed that the problems of insecurity has brought untold economic hardship on the Nigerian state, if the relevant government authorities could be proactive enough to effectively tackle the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, religious extremism, security personnel incapacitation, etc. as recommended by this study, the challenges of insecurity would be effectively surmounted.</p>

Keywords: Insecurity, Agricultural Activity, Food Security, Production, Government, Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Incontrovertibly, the fundamental essence of government is woven around the performance of two major functions, namely: provision of means of livelihood for the citizenry and provision of security. While the former denotes everything that pertains to the necessities of life like food, shelter and job creation, the latter entails a statutorily defined mechanism that ensures the safety of the lives and property of the citizens. The primary responsibility of the state to provide security for its citizens is captured in section 14(2b) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (as amended). In fact, the provision of security becomes pivotal as it supposedly guarantees the invulnerability of humans

to security threats as they pursue the attainment and satisfaction of their socio-economic needs. Interestingly, government's responsiveness to the provision of the basic necessities of life does not only add value to governance, it also gives credence to the legitimate status of the leadership class. The above body of statements captures holistically, the position of Benson (2017). Thus,

In modern democratic practice, political sovereignty is neither attained by conquest nor by imposition; it is rather a product of the degree of responsiveness and answerability of the governing political class to the myriad of needs of the citizenry.

Responsible governments world over, strive to secure the loyalty and cooperation of the people by fulfilling the fundamental tasks of governance like the provision of basic infrastructure, welfare services and security (p.49).

For more than a decade now, the Nigerian state has been confronted with the monstrous malaise of security crisis. The pattern and trend of insecurity in Nigeria in recent times have ranged from insurgency, banditry, to kidnapping activities. The boko haram terrorists' onslaught in the north east, banditry, cattle-rustling and kidnapping in the north west, north central, south-east and south-south geographical zones have been particularly threatening to the existence, safety, well-being and survival of the Nigerian population (Nwozor, 2018).

In the north east region of the country, the activities of the boko haram insurgents, apart from destroying many lives, have also sacked majority of indigenes and residents from their ancestral homes and residential areas. Unfortunately, such development has so far, culminated in the growing incidences of internal displacement and destitution in that region. Regrettably, majority of the people who are internally displaced in that part of the country, constitute peasants whose major occupation is farming. According to Goni (2015), peasants constitute between 85-90 percent of the population in the various IDP camps in the north east part of the country. Also, Ahamba (2020) remarks that in the north-west, south-east and north-central parts of Nigeria, the growing incidence of banditry-associated activities such as senseless killings, cattle-rustling and kidnappings have severally resulted in the partial or the near-total abdication of forest and crop farms by both commercial and subsistence farmers. Hence, bushes and farms have been deemed unsafe for prospective farmers.

In the opinion of Campbell (2018), factors associated with youth unemployment, illiteracy and degenerate societal morals are responsible for the spiraling degree of insecurity in Nigeria. In the perspective of Benson (2017), the Nigerian government has failed in the aspect of the effective management of the nation's security architecture, hence, the unabating trend of insecurity across the country.

Food security in Nigeria has, in recent times, become a very pressing national imperative. Hence, a report from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (FMARD) in 2016 indicated that in spite of Nigeria's favourable agro-landmass of 92.4 million hectares, over 85% of the country's population was food insecure. Furthermore, FMARD remarked that the degenerating food security in Nigeria equally had a corresponding effect on the nutritional capacity of food intake by majority of Nigerians. Essentially, Nwozor et al (2019) observed that between 2004 and 2006, over 9.1 million Nigerians suffered from malnourishment. However, the figure had increased to 25.6 million between 2016 and 2018. Accordingly, Nwozor et al attributed this incidence to poor agricultural output which is generally evident in low food production, poor variety in food cropping system, and comprehensive decline in perishable food preservation activity.

In spite of the fact that the Nigerian State is yet to implement the ECOWAS 10% benchmark for sovereign states as national budget for agriculture, the actual annual agricultural output does not reflect the investment of up to 7% budgetary allocation. Such deficiency has been contributory to the inability of the Nigerian nation to attain the 6% annual growth in productivity as projected in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)-an initiative of the broader ECOWAS Agricultural policy (Ilo et al, 2019).

Aside aspects of managerial inadequacies on the part of the government, like poor policy implementation, and programme/project continuity crisis, in recent times, the prevalent security issues have seriously threatened the pace of agricultural development and food security in Nigeria. The unfortunate eruption of insurgency in Nigeria in 2009, with its escalation in subsequent years to other forms of security challenges has had severe effects on the economy, particularly the agricultural sector. The activities of boko haram terrorists, herdsmen-farmers clash and the activities of kidnappers have over time, disrupted farming activities nationwide. Hence, majority of internally displaced persons in the north east part of the country comprise farmers. The same applies to the north central part of Nigeria where farmers-herders clash have persistently dislodged farmers (Campbell, 2018).

Therefore, the main thrust of this study is to establish the relationship between insecurity, agricultural development and food security in Nigeria. It specifically seeks to critically examine the impact of insecurity on agricultural practices, as well as the factors that give rise to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, between 2015 and 2020.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the qualitative research method. Relevant data were basically obtained through the secondary source. These include: text books, journals, newspaper publications and browsing of the internet. Content analysis was used in the presentation and interpretation of data.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Insecurity

The conceptualisation of 'Insecurity' can be easily understood from its literal opposite from the word, 'security'. Hence, while the latter presupposes a state of comfort and safety from physical harm, the former explains a condition of feeling of anxiety, edginess and psychological discomfort. The definition of 'Insecurity' in this context is derived from its micro-individualistic perspective. Thus, this definition excludes the implication of an organised or pre-meditated orchestration of conditions of unsafety, terror and fear against individuals, group and community (Green et al, 2000). According to Miles (2007), insecurity predominantly entails a socially defined condition of emotional distress, anxiety and apprehensions, spearheaded by a group of people with demonstrated or intended capacity to unleash violence within a geographically defined entity.

Using the macro-socio-political indices as the basis for the definition of the concept of insecurity, Nwozor (2018) explains that insecurity represents an atmosphere of unease and uncertainty over the possible unleashing of aggression or violence by discontent sects or groups whose grievances could on one hand be propelled by extremist tendencies. On the other hand, and mostly so, it could be motivated by perceived socio-economic and political infractions, which is usually alleged to have been perpetrated by the leadership class of any society, region or state. Nwozor's definition was given a broader and more practical perspective by Ahamba (2020). According to the latter, insecurity implies the presence of physically demonstrated violence and mayhem, defined in terms of killings, maimings, rape, abductions, etc.

Insecurity exists in various forms. Accordingly, these differences include insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, etc. According to Gbazue (2016), insurgency involves an act of violently organised rebellion by a militantly armed group, against a lawfully constituted authority of the state, either seeking for an overthrow of an existing government, or to influence drastic changes in policies or institutions of government. Gbazue further explains that insurgency could be instigated, either by extremism or political revolution. Gbazue (2016), made a comparison between the objectives pursued by the defunct Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), led by Prince Yormie Johnson and that of the current boko haram sect in Nigeria. Accordingly, Gbazue (2016) maintained that while the then INPFL fought for the overthrow of the unpopular and tyrannical government of the then president of Liberia, Samuel Doe, the boko haram group are fighting for the abolition of western culture and the entrenchment of the full principles and practice of sharia law into the legal and governance system of states in the northern part of Nigeria.

In the aspect of Banditry, Nwozor et al (2019) described the term as an all-inclusive and integrated system of criminality, involving acts of terrorism, irrational killings, brigandage, gangsterism, robbery, etc. In line with this opinion, they associated the prevalent incidence of fulani herdsmen onslaught in the northwest and northcentral parts of Nigeria which usually involves reckless destruction of innocent lives, cattle rustling and looting, with acts of banditry.

Kidnapping, according to Ilo et al (2019) involves a criminal act of abducting people and placing financial ransom on their heads as condition for their release. According to them, in recent developments, kidnapping activities are usually politically motivated and sponsored. Ilo et al (2019) further observed that kidnapping activities constitute the most rampant and prevalent crimes in the south east and south-south regions of the country.

Therefore, based on the above definitions provided by various authors on the concept of insecurity, this study submits that insecurity fundamentally presupposes a bitterly hostile social environment, characterised by acts of violence resulting in deaths and physical maiming, threats of violence, fear of the unknown, mutual trepidation and anxiety.

Food Security

According to Ahamba (2020), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided an elaborate but comprehensive definition of the term, 'food security'. According to the agency:

Food security means having, at all times, both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. A family is food secure when its members do not live in hunger or fear of hunger. Food insecurity is often rooted in poverty and has long-term impacts on the ability of families, communities and countries to develop and prosper. Prolonged undernourishment stunts growth, slows cognitive development and increases susceptibility to illness (p. 93).

As remarked earlier, the above definition by USAID captures in its entirety, all that food security as a concept implies, both in principle and in practice. In their analysis of the definition provided by USAID on the concept of food security, Ahamba (2020) observed that food insecurity in a society is synonymous with the lack of basic human development-the latter which is demonstrated in the ability of people to have access to the fundamental needs of life. Principal among the fundamental needs of life according to Ahamba is the availability of food and good nutrition for the people, hence the core of human existence and survival is embedded in food security. Ahamba (2020) therefore rationalised that since food security is critical to the basic economic development of the human person, the government of any nation state should prioritise it in its social welfare policies and programmes.

In their opinion, Nwozor et al (2019), observed that with the decline in the price of crude oil in the international market in recent years, Nigeria can no longer guarantee food sufficiency through importation, with the slender revenue earnings from the sale of crude oil. According to them, with this obvious reliance on food importation, a decline in the importation of sufficiency would then give rise to the unavoidable problems of food shortages, food price inflation, poor dieting/malnutrition, and outbreak of diseases.

In a separate opinion, Paul (2015) informed that poor and depreciating food security in a country have the capacity to compromise a nation's economic production capacity. Hence, Paul impressed that in a situation where poor nutrition-

the latter which is a component of food insecurity deteriorates the health condition of the working population in a society, it would have a corresponding effect on the production capacity of such society.

A Brief Analysis of the Nexus Between Insecurity and Food Security

Food Security, which is the direct benefit of a brilliantly planned and comprehensively executed agricultural developmental objectives has continued to inundate the policy initiatives of the international community for more than two decades now. The preeminent importance attached to food security over other developmental imperatives by the international community is informed by its critical role in the sustainability of the ever-growing world population. Also, food security, from the perspective of the international community has been adjudged essential in mitigating various aspects of humanitarian challenges faced by most countries within the fold of the international community. Launched in the year 2000, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was a scheme, initiated by world leaders to reduce to the barest minimum, extreme poverty and hunger. In 2012, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was changed to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations. Consequent upon that, the central objective of MDGs which was anchored on "reduction of extreme poverty and hunger" was changed to "no poverty and zero hunger". Interestingly, the realisation of the central mission and objective of the SDG is underpinned in the vibrancy of food security in a country (Nwozor et al, 2019).

In their analysis, Benson (2017) asserts that human security in any sovereign political entity assumes a precedent position over national security, hence, without the former, the stability of the latter can hardly be guaranteed. By implication, Benson in this context, tries to project the impression that since human security has as its components, personal security, economic security, political security, social security, etc. it could have the potency to impact either positively or negatively to national security. In line with Benson's position, Ahamba (2020) affirms that human insecurity in most circumstances metamorphose into national insecurity. Ahamba (2020), further explained that when individuals in a society cannot satisfy the basic components of human security which consist in food, health, shelter, etc. they tend to most times, resort to aggressiveness and hostility. Consequently, such tendencies could amount to a broader display of frustrations that are usually expressed in the form of armed violence and other forms of criminality. Such situations, both in the short- and long-term basis have always been known to culminate in national insecurity.

In a separate input, Gbazue (2016) informs that the elements of national insecurity which comprise insurgents, bandits, armed robbers, kidnappers and their collaborators, constitute the centrifugal forces in a state. According to Gbazue, the centrifugal forces are averse to the progress and development of the state. In other words, these forces disrupt and compromise developmental efforts in the state, including the agricultural sector. Gbazue (2016) further stressed that, by constituting a disruption to farming activities through acts of terrorism, cattle rustling and kidnapping, these bunch of criminals end up frustrating the agricultural activities in a state-a situation that gives rise to food insecurity.

In their own view, Ilo et al (2019) assert that the prevalence of incidences of insecurity in a country always prompt administrative distractions from tackling very essential tasks of governance, to combating the public-menacing activities of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, etc. According to them, instead of channeling resources, (financial, human and material) into the promotion and advancement of some critical sectors of the economy, like the agricultural sector, state resources are compulsorily, but circumstantially invested in the purchase of ammunitions and other sundry insecurity-combating logistics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on Karl Marx theory of Economic Determinism and John Locke's social contract theory of Natural Rights. Fundamentally, Economic Determinism theory is premised on the historic notion that the interactive forces of a society's economy determine and define all aspects of political, social, religious and cultural life of such a society. The principles on which Karl Marx propounded his theory of economic determinism, according to Egbo (2015), consist in the following:

- a) Human existence, as it concerns the social co-habitation of man can be traced to the fundamental interest of involving in the activities of production and distribution of goods and services for the consumption and satisfaction of the basic needs of humanity.
- b) The existence of inequality, unfairness, and marginalisation, characterise the mode of production and distribution of the commonwealth of the society.
- c) Social conflicts/struggles, strife and antagonism result from experiences in the mode of production and distribution of resources.
- d) Social conflicts/struggles and antagonism, resulting from relational disaffections can degenerate into social instability, reflecting in the form of insecurity of lives and property.

According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2011), Karl Marx developed his principles of economic determinism from his conceptualisation of the philosophy of dialectical materialism. Marx conceived of dialectical materialism as a philosophy which presupposes that political and historical happening result from the conflict of social forces. Thus, conflict in this context is seen as being engendered by material and basic needs such as food and shelter. Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2011) further informed that Karl Marx used the concept of Dialectical Materialism to explain the consequences of the State's compromise and abdication of its primary responsibility of effectively and judiciously utilising the resources of the state to satisfy the basic needs of man. Hence, the conflict of social forces represents the presence and activities of dissenting groups who are bent on disrupting the stability of the social environment of the state, with a view to advancing their sectarian interests and agenda.

In the aspect of John Locke’s social contract theory of Natural Rights, Danladi (2018) pointed out that Locke built this aspect of his social contract theory on three assumptions:

- a) That the people willingly surrendered their individual rights to the supremacy of the government, with the expectation to obtain guarantee from the same government for the safety of their lives. Hence, Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2011) observe that John Locke remarked that, “the obligation to obey the government would depend on the fact that public power was used for peace, safety and public good of the people” (p.224).
- b) That it is the right of the people to demand from the government, the security of their means of livelihood and property. Accordingly, “...everyman, that has any possession or enjoyment of any government, does thereby give his tacit consent, and is as far forth obliged to obedience to the laws of that government.... (Locke 1960, in Mukherjee & Ramaswamy 2011, p. 224).
- c) That the people are at liberty to become rebellious, and thus, throwing the society into social chaos.

While the theories as propounded by Locke and Marx have a similarity in their agreement that social conflicts/struggles are attributable to the desire for economic survival, Locke distinctively holds that the government of any state has the primary responsibility to ensure the security of the means of livelihood of its citizens. In line with the impression conveyed above, the core objective of this study is to examine the extent to which insecurity, the opposite of which is supposed to be the primary responsibility of the government has impacted on food security in Nigeria. Hence, the explanation stated above, justifies the relevance of the two theories of Locke and Marx to this study.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

An Assessment of the Impact of Insecurity on Food Production in Nigeria, 2015-2020.

With the persistent upsurge in population growth, it is deserving for the Nigerian state to match this prevailing trend with a corresponding increase in food security. In the year 2016, table 1 below indicates the disparity between the demand and supply of staple foods in Nigeria. The statistical analysis of the figures in the table demonstrates the insufficiency of food, in relation to the high population of people in demand for it. The picture painted below, according to FMARD (2016), depicts a reflection of a poor and declining state of agricultural activities in Nigeria. Furthermore, FMARD observed that in spite of the over \$5.5 billion spent annually between 2015 and 2016 on food importation, the country still continues to face shortages in food supply. This condition has over time, threatened and compromised food security in the country.

Crop	Demand (tons)	Supply (tons)
Rice	6.3 million	2.3 million
Wheat	4.7 million	0.06 million
Maize/corn	7.5 million	7.0 million
Soya beans	0.75 million	0.6 million
Tomato	2.2 million	0.8 million

Source: FMARD, 2016

From 2015 to 2018, the population growth rate rose from 2.8 percent to 3.1 percent, with the projection of a sustained increase to 4.1 percent by the second quarter of 2021. However, the current reality shows that the Nigerian nation is still incapable of meeting the growing demand of food security for its teeming population due to the growing decline in agricultural output and “an almost total dependence on food importation”. The country, from 2015 to 2018 has been making an annual expense of \$3 to \$5 billion on the importation of food crops like rice, beans, wheat, groundnut, fish, and other processed foods such as flour, noodles, tomato paste, etc. (CBN, 2018).

In 2019, with the desire to stem the tide of food importation and encourage comprehensive agricultural development, the Nigerian government announced the closure of its land borders. The closure of Nigerian land borders, at its outset, effected a check on illegal activities of cross-border smuggling of agricultural products. Unfortunately, the land border closure policy of the government could not live up to its fundamental purpose, as the cost of food importation continued to increase instead of decreasing. In the same year 2019, the United States of America exports of processed wheat, beverages, wine, milk and soybeans to Nigeria accounted for \$595.5 million (a 93% increase compared to 2018). In contrast however, the Nigeria’s export of agricultural raw food like cocoa beans, tea and herbal products, cashew/tree nuts, banana, etc. in 2019 accounted for only \$50 million. The official explanation given for the big margin of difference to Nigeria’s disadvantage was attributed to the inability of Nigeria to meet up with export target- the latter which is a direct consequence of a decline in agricultural output. Due to the fact that local wheat and cereal crop production by no means, meets the consumption demand of the Nigerian population, the shortage is being augmented annually by import. In 2019, the decline in food production in the country was augmented by import which was estimated at \$1.8 billion and \$2.1 billion by the second quarter of 2020 (Ahamba, 2020).

Again, table 2 below indicates the extent to which Nigeria’s export of agricultural products have been insignificant, in comparison with her import rate. It also explains the degree to which the low level of local production in the agricultural sector is not commensurate with the high demand for food, hence the export augmentation alternative. The table below, statistically represents the disparity between import and export of raw and processed cereal crops between Nigeria and U.S.A. from 2017 to 2020. The table is summarily interpreted to imply that local wheat production meets an insignificant portion of Nigeria’s wheat consumption demand. Thus, the figures in the table are represented in units of hundreds and thousands.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total market size	1, 300,000	1,450,000	1,799,000	2,099,000

Total local prod.	12, 700	16,400	17,000	15.300
Total exports	300	400	400	350
total imports	1, 543, 000	1,434,000	1,782,400	2,084,050

Source: USDA/BICO; Nigeria's Wheat Millers Association; Master Bakers' Association, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Nigerian Customs Service, 2020.

In spite of the rich natural resources, vastness of agricultural lands and the favourable agro-ecological advantages that the Nigeria state enjoys, the country continues to be plagued with poor agricultural output and food insufficiency. Nigeria has a total land mass of 92.4 million hectares. Out of this figure, 79 million are arable. Again, about 97% of the cultivatable lands are located in rural communities (FMARD, 2016). The failure of the Nigerian state to be sufficiently food secure in spite of the profundity of fertile land mass, according to Guseh and Oritsejeafor (2019), can be largely attributable to the current spate of insecurity in the country. According to them, this trend has been responsible for the lack of adequate concentration in farming activities in rural communities around Nigeria. According to International Crisis Group (2018), between June 2015 and May 2018, the Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen onslaught against farming communities in rural areas of northeastern and northcentral parts of Nigeria had accounted for over 26, 500 fatalities. The report from this study further claimed that 71% of these attacks were executed in rural farmlands and bushes where both subsistence and commercial agricultural activities take place. In the view of Ukoji et al (2019), the most worrisome security challenges in recent times are the farmers-herders clash which became the more pronounced from 2015. Ukoji et al acknowledged that the fulani herdsmen, being itinerant pastoralists always come in confrontation with farmers as they usually encroach on farmlands. In the circumstance, in a bid to challenge the inordinate destruction of their crops by grazing cattle, farmers usually come in conflict with herders. The latter, according to Ukoji et al have been known in recent times, to exhibit a more intensive armed-violent aggression in the course of any ensuing conflict. Such situation, according to this source always result in the massive killing of most times, defenceless farmers. Campbell (2018) observed that since the inception of the present Administration in 2015, the fulani herdsmen terror attacks against farmers have been growing in leaps and bounds. The severity of the onslaught unleashed by the fulani herdsmen on rural farmers metamorphosed into real acts of terrorism, to the extent that the terrorist group was classified as the fourth deadliest terror group in the world by the Institute for Economics and Peace, having killed up to 1,229 people in less than a year (Benson, 2017).

The fulani herdsmen terrorist group draws strength from the socio-cultural organisations of Kautal Hore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and the Fulani Nationality Movement (FUNAM). On several occasions, the kind of provocative and violence-inciting statements that emanate from the quarters of these two socio-cultural groups, in defence of either herdsmen-related attacks or the right of their members to access any field or farmland for their cattle grazing, tend to establish the impression that the terrorist group is a militant integral of both MACBAN and FUNAM. Again, the more worrisome is the fact that the dreaded fulani herdsmen terrorist sect is further emboldened by the sheer lackluster and indifferent disposition of the federal government in confronting the menacing trends of herdsmen-farmers violent clashes. The clearly-observed propensity on the part of the federal government to treat with kid gloves, aspects of irresponsible conducts, inciteful and implicating statements by the leadership and members of MACBAN and FUNAM, continuously raises the suspicions of the general public about the complicity of the federal government in the prevailing fulani herdsmen terror attacks. The blunt confidence with which the fulani herdsmen terrorist group operates has over time, degenerated to a resort by the violent sect to wield AK47 guns undisguisedly as they access farmlands and farming communities to unleash their murderous acts (Ilo et al, 2019).

Prior to the inauguration of the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, the Nigerian state, under the administration of former President Goodluck was enjoying some degree of relative stability in food security. Hence, agricultural practice was persistently thriving under a socially conducive and stable atmosphere. Through the Grassroot Development Initiative (GDI), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) distributed over 4.2 million seeds and fertilizers to farmers nationwide, during the 2013 farming season. Also, in 2012, the federal ministry of Agriculture through the then Minister, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina facilitated the lending of financial incentives to the tune of N3.5 billion to rural farmers. The amount was reviewed upwards to N20 billion in 2013. Again, by tremendously improving the food supply chain, the former President Jonathan's administration achieved, not only an appreciable degree of success in the area of food security, but also in the aspect of export promotion. To that effect, between 2013 and the second quarter of 2014, Nigeria had reduced its food import by 40%- a milestone that implied the country's march to food sufficiency. Towards the end of 2014, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), had rated Nigeria as the world's largest producer of cassava, having an overall annual output of over 45 million metric tons (Ajayi, 2015).

However, Nigeria's gradual advancement towards economic self-sufficiency through comprehensive agricultural activities was ruthlessly disrupted in 2015, with the upsurge in security challenges. The nascent trend of insecurity in this context was particularly associated with the prevalent cases of farmers-herdsmen crisis. The advent of this face of insecurity in Nigeria had given rise to a sudden annihilation and rape of most farming communities in the country. Nwozor (2018) observed that the fact that the Nigerian state, from 2015 could no longer sustain the gains of the gradual agricultural resurgence, initiated by the previous administration, the nation was hard-hit by economic recession in 2016. One of the obvious reasons for that, according to Nwozor was attributable to the sudden decline in the price of crude oil- a situation that was compounded by poor economic activities, especially in the agricultural sector.

An Assessment of Factors Responsible for the Growing Spate of Insecurity in Nigeria.

As insecurity continues to constitute a major current socio-economic bane in Nigeria, there are factors which are obviously responsible for the unabating trends in such a dismal social reality. To this effect, Obiechina (2019) identified five major factors that are responsible for the seemingly recalcitrant stature of insecurity in Nigeria. These include:

- a) **Youth Unemployment:** According to Obiechina, the youth constitute the most physically vibrant, emotionally active, and economically resourceful aspect of a country's population. Hence, their maximum utilisation, either in the negative or positive perspective could go a long way to define a society's social stability. Furthermore, Obiechina informed that the ever-growing rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria, especially in recent times, has continued to create the platform where desperate politicians and members of business cartels exploit the exuberances of youths to foment social chaos to satisfy their own selfish motives. Their study observed that since the majority of the population of youths in Nigeria are not meaningfully engaged in economic purposes, they become liabilities, instead of assets to the society. Thus, a National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report in the first quarter of 2020 shows that between 2015 and the first quarter of 2020, youth unemployment had grown from 11.70 to 53.43 (NBS, 2020).
- b) **High Rate of Poverty and Hunger:** In this regard, Obiechina impressed that the existence of an escalating rate of excruciating poverty and biting hunger has the capacity of unleashing strings of frustration on a society. These frustrations according to him, are demonstrated in variants of social disturbances, indicated in robbery cases, kidnappings, banditry, terrorist attacks, ethno-religiously motivated violence, etc. According to Obiechina, the above highlighted trends paint the picture of the prevalent security situation in Nigeria. Accordingly, Aderounmu et al (2021) inform that as at the first quarter of 2020, about 93 million Nigerians were living below poverty line of less than US\$1.90.
- c) **Religious Extremism/Radicalism:** In this aspect, Obiechina observed that supposedly, Nigeria should be a secular state. However, the propagation of religious extremism by over-zealous and extra-pious religious leaders has continued to create a scenario of undue and senseless competition of superiority between the two main religions in the country (Islam & Christianity). In the opinion of Gbazue (2016), "the escalation of religious crisis in Nigeria has often time been fundamentally engineered by offensive indoctrinations by religious clerics" (p.27). Obiechina (2019) further observed that at any rate, whenever there is an incidence of religious crisis in the country, state resources is channeled towards resolving the crisis instead of being directed to economic purposes that would create job opportunities, alleviate poverty, and in the over all, improve the living standard of the citizenry.
- d) **National Border Porosity:** Here, Obiechina (2019) noted that the lack of effective method of checks on the high level of illegal migration of persons into the country, compromises the territorial integrity of the Nigerian state. This, according to Obiechina, raises the level of insecurity in the country. Also, according to Obiechina, the smuggling and proliferation of firearms into the country remains illegal businesses that are transacted on the enablement of a largely-perceived porosity of Nigeria land borders. In corroboration, Ahamba (2020) observed that between 2016 and 2019, the activities of illegal migration of persons from the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger republic have accounted for over 57% increase in membership recruitment into the Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen terrorist sect.
- e) **The Growth of Ethnic politics and Nepotism:** Under this categorisation, Obiechina observed that the deliberate protection and over-pampering of one ethnic nationality at the expense of others, and the calculated persecution and marginalisation of some ethnic groups have significantly contributed to the growth of insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, Nwozor et al (2019) identified that since the inception of the former President Muhammadu-led Administration in 2015, the Nigerian state has been witnessing a widespread practice of nepotism. In their analysis, this condition has indeed, spiraled cases of sectarian agitations. Also, Nwozor et al (2019) noted that, for these separatist groups to remain relevant, the resistance posed by them against the state, constitutes a great deal of insecurity.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

- a) The security of lives and property of the citizenry is a fundamental and constitutional responsibility of the state.
- b) The recurring trends of insecurity in Nigeria, especially between 2015 and 2020 has been responsible for the decline in agricultural production and food security.
- c) There is high rate of Hunger and Poor Nutrition due to the insufficiency of food importation between 2015 and 2020
- d) High rate of Youth Unemployment, poverty, hunger and religious extremism constitute the major remote causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
- e) Border porosity, ethnic bigotry and nepotism constitute the major political factors that are responsible for insecurity in Nigeria.

CONCLUSIONS

This study, from the contributions of scholars, as well as the provision of the extant law of the land, identified that the provision of security for the lives and property of the citizenry is a fundamental obligation of the state. Hence, the government which is the machinery through which the will of the state is fulfilled, is saddled with such fundamental task. Accordingly, social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke had in their separate postulations,

impressed that the need to secure the lives and property of the people in a society necessitated the creation of government. In Nigeria, the constitutional responsibility of the state, through its machinery-the government, is enshrined in section 14(2b) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (as amended) and it reads thus: "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". The implication of the above cited constitutional provision, according to Benson (2017) is that the inability of the government to be responsive to the fulfilment of the above-mentioned task underscores its irrelevance.

This study uncovered, through the various literature investigated, that the escalation of terror-inclined violence across the country had gravely disrupted agricultural activities and consequently worsened food insecurity. This study revealed that the killing onslaught perpetrated by terrorist sects, especially the Fulani herdsmen-a trend that has gained prominence, right from the inception of the former President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 has sacked various farming communities in the north-central, north east, and north west. This trend, according to the findings from this study includes the activities of banditry- a development that has given rise to criminal activities like kidnapping and cattle rustling. The abandonment of farming activities and the displacement of very large number of farmers in rural farming communities had given rise to alarming trends of food shortages during the periods under study. Unfortunately, these incidences of insecurity transpire in rural communities of north west, north central and north east where there is large expanse of pastoral lands for agricultural purposes.

This study also revealed that the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria which had culminated in the disruption of agricultural activities had necessitated the outrageous hike in the level of food importation during the periods under study. Unfortunately, it is the finding of this study that, in spite of the enormous financial resources invested in food importation, local consumption demand in very large measure, exceeded the volume of food importation. This development had implication on food scarcity. As a result, the era of scarcity of food had degenerated into high cost of food. Consequently, low access to food had increased hunger and poor nutrition.

It is a finding in this study that the high rate of youth unemployment, poverty, hunger and religious extremism are the remote and fundamental factors that engineer insecurity in Nigeria. This study revealed that unemployment, poverty and hunger could provoke frustration from the affected, to the extent of resorting to violence. Also, this study revealed that mischievous politicians and ruthlessly desperate business men usually exploit such avenues to disrupt the peace of the society.

In the course of interrogating literature about the factors that are responsible for the upsurge in security challenges, this study unearthed that the permeability of Nigerian national borders has severally led to the unchecked influx of illegal migrants into the country. According to Ahamba (2020), the uncontrolled migration of illegal elements into the country has led to the multiplication of the membership of terror groups in Nigeria, as well as in the area of proliferation of fire arms. Again, this study revealed that the politics of ethnicity and nepotistic sentiment-based style of leadership that has characterised the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari since 2015 has brewed regionalised secessionist movements. Consequently, such has resulted in several cases of chaotic and violent-ridden agitations across the ethno-religious divides in the country.

The challenges of insecurity have over time, assumed a recalcitrant stance in Nigeria's public space. Most pathetically, analysing the problem from the economic angle, recent trends of insecurity in Nigeria have lamed the already snail-like pace of economic development in the country. This study, while investigating several literature relevant to the problem area, disclosed the extent to which the growing spate of insecurity in Nigeria, particularly within the periods under study (2015-2020) had adversely crippled agricultural activities in most rural communities where commercial farming activities take place. This study further uncovered that the crippling of agricultural activities by the incidences of insecurity has had grave and unpleasant effect on food security. It is therefore anticipated that the recommendations that would emanate from this study, if properly utilised by relevant authorities would arrest the recurring problems of insecurity in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively deal with the menace of insecurity in Nigeria, this study recommends that the government at all levels should devise and employ workable mechanisms that would go a long way in resolving the very fundamental factors that inject the drive for civil violence and instabilities into the social fabrics of the Nigerian society. Socio-economic issues like unemployment, poverty, hunger and poor but socially injurious normative orientations among the younger generations should be tackled forthwith. To achieve this objective, governments at all levels should embark upon a comprehensive, realistic and target-oriented socio-economic reforms that should be backed by a high degree of political will.

Again, in dealing with the psychological and political aspects of insecurity in Nigeria, this study recommends that there should be a systemic widespread initiative that should be geared towards discouraging the propagation of inciting messages or speeches by religious leaders and community heads which tilt towards drives for ethno-religious violence. Also, it should be incumbent on the legislative arm of government to initiate a bill that would rein in the executive arm of government to shun all acts of nepotistic pattern of appointments into public positions that divide the country along ethnic lines and thereby creating security tensions in the polity.

Lastly, in the aspect of confronting the physical hazards of insecurity in Nigeria, it is the recommendation of this study that the government of the day should up its game as it concerns predominantly, the rejuvenation of the nation's

military strength. This is with a view to protecting the country's land and sea borders, and to effectively repel attacks by armed terrorist groups.

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