

# Insecurity and Food Crisis in Nigeria: A Study of Ayamelum Local Government Area, Anambra State

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## ABSTRACT

Insecurity is the word used to describe the activities of men of the underworld or terrorists which in Nigeria go by different names such as: insurgents, bandits, kidnappers, Fulani killer herdsmen, etc. It would appear that the activities of the aforementioned groups have overwhelmed the country on many fronts, food production inclusive. Nigeria has started re-thinking agriculture as a viable option for complementing revenue earnings from the oil and gas sector of the economy but insecurity seems to be the major clog in the wheel of progress in this regard, especially when we consider the effect of the activities of bandits, insurgents and Fulani killer herdsmen on small holder-farmers across the nation. These developments have deleterious effects on agricultural activities in general, food production and sustainable human development in particular. While there are policies and agencies in the state to combat these developments, it does appear they have proved ineffective in the face of increasing inconsistency in government policies, security problem, open grazing, climate change and global warming. Precisely, the study examined the effect of insecurity on food production in Nigeria, using Ayamelum Local Government Area, Anambra state, Nigeria, the food basket of Anambra State, as the study area. The design of the study is descriptive research survey. The eight communities in the LGA were involved in the study and the target population was the small holder-farmers selected conveniently across the communities. Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence was used as the main statistical tool of analysis. The findings revealed that insecurity in form of herders attack on farming communities has significant negative effect on food production in the country. The study concludes that the attack on farmers by the Fulani killer herdsmen is responsible for the rise in prices of agricultural products in the market as farmers have to resort to the hiring of private security operatives to attend to their farming activities throughout the farming season. It was recommended among others that the government should urgently consider the option of ranching as the alternative to open grazing as it is practiced in other civilized societies across the globe.

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**KEYWORDS:** *Insecurity, Food Crises, Farmers, Ayamelum LGA*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is blessed with numerous agro ecological resources that should make it a major exporter of food items in the world. Unfortunately, as a result of food insecurity, it has become a major food importer. In spite of its huge and vast agricultural potentials, the

country remains a crippled giant in terms food production (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Nnaji & Mac-Ozigbo, 2021). The rising security challenges in Nigeria has affected food production which was orchestrated by farmers and herders crisis thus, creating a wide gap

between the demand and supply of food. Unfortunately, effort of the government in addressing the food crisis conundrum was further frustrated by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to food shortage and crisis in the country, thus, leading to scarcity and high cost in the prices of staple food in the country. Presently, so many citizens and non-Nigerian alike cannot meet their food requirements because food prices have gone up beyond the reach of most citizens, thereby making the people vulnerable to hunger, malnutrition, diseases and other health hazard. Moreover, it reduces their potentials to engage in other productive human activities such as education, farming, fishing and other mental and physical activities. The country is not at war in the real sense of the word; however, the killings resulting from various forms of insecurity in the land qualify her to be regarded as conflict ridden and at war. Usually, the threshold required to classify an armed conflict as civil war is to record 1,000 battle deaths (Dupuy & Rustad, 2018; Guseh & Oritsejafor, 2019). But at the moment and in recent pasts, Nigeria has consistently recorded deaths in excess of 1,000 from various conflicts unleashed by various groups across the country.

On the other hand, the country's food crisis has been linked to insecurity from the Boko Haram sect, bandits and Fulani killer herdsmen which has forced farmers to abandon their farmlands. Consequent upon the crisis, Nigeria has been ranked 98 among 107 countries on global hunger index (Sahara Reporters, 2019). Since after the report above was made, the truth is that the attacks from both bandits and other criminal elements have actually increased, more lives have been lost and more farmers have been sacked from their farmlands such that if the ranking were to be done now, Nigeria might witness worst ranking on the global hunger index. These developments have deleterious effects on agricultural activities in general, food production and sustainable human development in particular. It appears government's effort to steam the ugly tide have proved ineffective in the face of increasing inconsistency in government policies, security problem, open grazing, climate change and global warming, despite the fact that there are policies and agencies in the state to combat these developments. In the light of the above, this work seeks to examine the effect of insecurity on food production in Nigeria.

### Statement of the Problem

Ayamelum Local Government Area of Anambra State is made up of eight (8) constituent communities whose main means of livelihood is agriculture with major crops cultivated as okoro, rice, cassava, yam,

maize and plantain to mention but a few. The communities have accommodated the excesses of the Fulani cattle rearers' menace over the decades because those ones were the stick (staff) and merchant bearing herders. Not until in recent times when the AK-47 and other sophisticated weapons bearing herders took over the scene with all kinds of agenda and committing all manner of atrocities to the farming communities, that the situation has become very worrisome and unbearable. The unprovoked attacks on farmers have continued unabated and it is not unlikely that the farmers' outputs will be severely affected thereby causing food scarcity and consequently hunger to the citizenry.

### Objective of the Study

The single objective of the study is to examine the effect of insecurity on food crisis in Nigeria by using Ayamelum Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria as the study area.

### Research Question

The following research question was raised to guide the study:

How does insecurity affect food crisis in Nigeria?

### Hypothesis of the study

Insecurity does not have significant effect on food crisis in Nigeria.

### Scope of the Study

The study covers the eight (8) Agrarian communities in Ayamelum Local Government Area, Anambra State. It examines the effect of insecurity on food crisis in Nigeria. That is, how the state of insecurity reinforces food crisis in the country.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Review

#### Insecurity

The word "insecurity" has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. However, Akpobibibo (2005) defines it formally as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack or inadequate protection or freedom from danger. Thus showing that insecurity is absence of peace, order and security. Achumba, Ighomeroho and Akpor (2013), insecurity can be defined from two perspectives. One, as the state of being open or subject or danger or threat of danger to harm or injury. Two, as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experience in anticipation of some misfortune. As could be seen, this definitions underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen out they are also vulnerable to the

threats and dangers when they occur. Insecurity entails lack of protection from crime (being unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm, unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfill his or her own potentials including freedom from fear (Beland, 2005; Nwagbala, 2021)

### **Food Crisis**

When a person's inability to access and consume adequate food puts their life or livelihood in immediate danger, acute food insecurity occurs. It draws on internationally-accepted measures of extreme hunger. Lee, Lee and Lee (2012) describe food crisis as a situation when food security is abruptly threatened. Food crisis usually produces widespread scarcity of food in a society. It is usually caused by numerous factors chief among which are insecurity, crop failure and population explosion. Food crisis usually results in hunger, starvation and malnutrition in the society. Food crisis therefore is the major driver of land rush and acquisition in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. As defined in the Global Report on Food crisis, a country is considered to undergo a food crisis if it is facing a shock on situation that lead to several level of acute food shortage/insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification/Cadre Harmonisé– IPC/CH-Phase 3 and above) and is unable to cope without requiring external assistance.

### **Agriculture and Food Security**

Agriculture accounts for over 70percent of the nation's food supply in Nigeria. Moreover, Food is seen as very vital to all human life and its provision is indeed one of the basic functions of the state through its agency (government) all over the globe. Every reasonable government ensures that its citizenry is well feed by creating an enabling environment for adequate and affordable food for its people (Bamisaga, 2005). Thus, herdsmen-farmers clash, food crisis and food insecurity, and hunger were not popular and frequent topics in the discourse of this era. Expectedly, agriculture became affected as production of food for subsistence gave way for production for export and urban consumption. These developments have deleterious effects on agricultural activities in general, food production and sustainable human development in particular.

### **Theoretical Exposition**

#### **Insecurity and Food Crisis**

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Nigeria, Fred Kafeero has formally raised an alarm in that an estimated 9.2 million Nigerians from 16 states and the Federal Capital

Territory face food insecurity. Similarly, the Global Network Against Food Crisis (GNAFC) had earlier expressed the same grim picture of food security situation in Nigeria that needs to be addressed to avert looming hunger and starvation in the country. Concern on deficient food production is mounting particularly against the backdrop of worsening insecurity in virtually all the states of the federation. Report on food crisis/jointly released by GNAFC and Food Security Information Network (FSIN), which states that Nigeria is set to experience lean food supply as more than 7 million people would suffer acute hunger as the very high cost of food items is already indicate of the dire situation. Without an iota of doubt, Nigeria is already enmeshed in food crisis; the virtual war situation across the nation is at the root of the rising food scarcity leading to higher food prices. Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping/abductions and raping of women in their farms by the Fulani killer herdsmen have together dealt a massive blow to food production (Global Report on Food Crisis, 2021).

Following the killings and destruction of dwellings in many parts of the country by Boko Haram members and Fulani killers herdsmen, who allow their herds to trample and eat up crops freely on farmers' farms, farmers have as a result abandoned their farms (Global Report on Food Crisis, 2021). Even in parts of the south, villagers are being rendered homeless, seeking protection and safety in smaller neighbouring communities around them. Farmers have turned to beggars in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps. This, alone, create more despair among the populace as the attacks from the criminals persist and succor is not in sight. It is such a desperate situation; they concluded that there is, no doubt, that the spate of insecurity is dealing a big blow on food production in the country (Kah, 2017). The FAO (2017) asserts that conflict affected regions in Nigeria have average higher rates of food insecure people than other regions. Similarly, Martin-Shields and Stojetz (2019) note that the areas exposed to violence or persistent conflicts are more likely to suffer food insecurity than other areas where there are none. To George et al (2020), disruption of farming activities and consequently agricultural production will always have negative impact on food security.

### **Empirical Review**

Hendrix and Brinkman (2013) on his study on food insecurity and conflict dynamics: causal linkages and complex feedback. It used content analysis and the findings revealed that acute food crisis/insecurity is caused by violent conflicts. It concludes that stable environment contributes to enhanced food production.



In another study, Kralovec (2020) examined the effect of climate change, economic and conflict on food security in Nigeria. The study which adopted descriptive survey design approach design that of all the factors mention above, conflicts from Boko Haram insurgency and banditry and the activities of Fulani killer herders had more severe negative effect on food security in Nigeria. The paper concludes and confirms the results of past research efforts which indicted insurgency and Fulani killer herders as the main cause of food insecurity in Nigeria.

Igbokwe-Ibeto, Nnaji And Ada Mac-Ozigbo studies on Open Grazing, Food Insecurity and Sustainable Human Development in Nigeria: This study was carried out using the qualitative desktop method in deriving data for addressing the issues under analysis. 31 literature sources were consulted and analyzed in order to explore the nexus between open grazing, food insecurity and sustainable human development in Nigeria. This article adopts a qualitative approach and is descriptive in nature, with the researcher setting out to illustrate the association that exists between the dependent and independent variables. Authoritative scholarly sources were reviewed, during a desktop study. The purpose was to identify the relevant publications and apply them in the research. The article argues that unless concrete efforts are made to mitigate the effects of open grazing and Covid-19, ensure increased and improved food production, the country may experience worst cases of Fulani herdsmen-farmer clashes, food crisis and human underdevelopment. The article concludes that government at all level should rise up to their responsibilities by providing enabling environment for herdsmen and farmer to engage in the production of sufficient food for sustainable human development in the country.

Nwagbala (2021) conducted a study on insecurity situation and the implications on business sustainability in Nigeria using qualitative analysis. The study revealed that insecurity had a negative impact on business sustainability and recommend that

there is urgent need for the government to address and tackle the issue of insecurity and govern in a way that foster development, eliminate crime, unemployment, and underdevelopment, corruptions in the public and private organization. George, Adelaja and Weatherspoon (2020) carried out a study on the effect of conflict on food security evidence from the Boko Haram insurgency and found that the activities of Boko Haram have harsh consequences for agricultural production.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted descriptive survey design so as to facilitate the generalization of the result for the entire population of interest. The data source is primary, collected from the farming communities in Ayamelum LGA. The population consisted of 1251 small holder-farmers identified through a pilot study commissioned by the researcher in the area. The sample is made of 303 farmers estimated from the population through application of Taro Yameni's Statistical formula for estimating the sample from a finite population. An item structured instrument designed in a Likert Scale format of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided, was used by the researcher to collect the data from the respondents on issues relating to insecurity and food crisis in Nigeria. The researcher adopted direct questionnaire distribution. Through the method, the research was able to assess the extent that respondents understood the items of the questionnaire and clarifications/explanations were made where necessary. The method helped to reduce the volume of non-response which often associates with surveys of this nature. Out of the 303 copies of the questionnaire issued out, 289 were completed and returned thus showing a response rate of 95.4 percent and it was considered adequate for the study. Concerning the method of analysis, the data were analyzed quantitatively through the application of Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence at 0.05 level of significance and 16 degrees of freedom (df).

**Table 1: Population and Sample Allocation**

S/N	Community	Population	Sample Allocation	Percentage of Total
1.	Ifite Ogwari	209	51	16.7
2.	Omor	251	61	20.0
3.	Anaku	157	38	12.5
4.	Igbakwu	103	25	8.2
5.	Umerum	135	33	10.8
6.	Omasi	134	32	10.7
7.	Umumbo	139	37	11.1
8.	Umueje	123	30	9.8
	Total	1251	303	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In terms of sampling technique adopted in selecting the units of observation, judgmental sampling method was used to select the interviewees (farmers) across the eight communities for the study.

#### 4. PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL RESULT

The research question sought to determine the effect of insecurity on food crisis. Accordingly, the opinions of the respondents are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Insecurity and Food Crisis in Nigeria**

S/N	Items of the Questionnaire	Likert Scale Options					Total
		SA	A	D	SD	UND	
1.	Attacks and displacement of farmers in their camps by Fulani killer herders is a serious threat to food security.	105 (36.3)	139 (48.1)	20 (6.9)	15 (5.2)	10 (3.5)	289 (100)
2.	Abandonment of farmlands to avoid being attacked by the killer herders have severe effect on food production.	117 (40.5)	125 (43.3)	23 (8.0)	14 (4.8)	10 (3.5)	289 (100)
3.	Farmers now hire the services of their young men as private security to accompany them to their farms for fear of Fulani's attack.	121 (4.19)	132 (45.7)	25 (8.7)	6 (2.1)	5 (1.7)	289 (100)
4.	Many women now scarcely go to their farms alone for fear of being raped or kidnapped by Fulani herders	109 (37.7)	150 (51.9)	13 (4.5)	10 (3.5)	7 (2.4)	289 (100)
5.	High food prices being experienced at the moment is due to Fulani attacks on farmers	77 (26.6)	183 (63.3)	7 (2.4)	3 (1.0)	19 (6.6)	289 (100)
	Total	529	729	88	48	51	1445
	Percentage of Total	(35.5)	(50.4)	(6.1)	(3.3)	(3.5)	(100)

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentages

N/B: (SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree and UND = Undecided)

As could be seen from Table 2, 36.6 percent of the respondents on the average strongly agreed with all the items of the statement, 50.4 percent of them equally agreed but not strongly, 6.1 percent of them disagreed, 3.3 percent strongly disagreed while 3.5 percent of them were undecided on all the issues raised concerning the effect of insecurity on food crisis in the area. But apart from the averages, there are variations in the opinion of the respondents. For instance, whereas 26.6 percent and 63.3 percent of them strongly and merely agreed with item, 40.5 percent and 43.3 percent did so for item 2 respectively. But on the whole, 87 percent of the respondents agreed with all the items.

**Table 3: Summary of Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Test Result**

Hypothesis	Sample Size (n)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Result		Sig. Level ( $\alpha$ )	Decision Rule
			Calculated	Critical		
I	289	16	45.187	26.296	0.05	Rejected

Note: means the calculated value of  $\chi^2$  while means the critical value of  $\chi^2$ .

#### Re-Statement and Test of Hypothesis

$H_0$ : Insecurity does not have significant negative effect on food crisis in Nigeria.

$H_1$ : Insecurity has significant negative effect on food crisis in Nigeria.

#### Decision Rule:

At 0.05 level of significance and 16 degrees of freedom, the calculated  $\chi^2$  value (45.187) is greater than the critical  $\chi^2$  value (26.296) (see Appendix for details of the estimation). Given this weight of evidence against the null hypothesis, it was rejected while the alternative which suggests that insecurity has significant negative effect on food crisis in Nigeria was accepted.

#### Discussion of Results

From the answer to the research question which was presented in a Likert scale format, 87 percent of the respondents agreed that insecurity is the major cause of the food crisis being experienced in the nation at the moment. The finding was established by the result of the test of hypothesis. Similarly, the result is also not different from those of past related studies and reports. The implication is that insecurity in Nigeria has become the major cause of food crisis and as it persists, more and more people are likely to face

hunger and starvation in a country that is abundantly blessed with vast arable land from south to the north.

Reports from the current study show that farmers are no longer safe in their camps as a result of the activities of the Fulani killer herdsmen and those who walk long distances to get to their farms now hire the services of their young men who serve as private security to accompany them to their farmlands for fear of attacks by the killer herders. Many of the women in the agrarian communities of Ayamelum LGA, who cultivate specific crops such as okoro, melon, plantain, banana, kidney beans, yam, cassava etc, no longer have access to their farms for the same reason with the consequence of escalating prices of the few available ones in the market. The end of the problem is not in sight because the authorities who should have intervened to stop the atrocities of the killer herdsmen appear to be protecting and providing cover for them.

In the past, Fulani herders were seen carrying long wooden staff, machetes, bows and arrows. But now, they parade the soviet assault rifle, Automat Kalashnikova (AK 47) and with that and other sophisticated weapons, they have been unleashing terror on farming communities across Nigeria. The source of the boldness of the Fulani herders is linked to the open support of their socio-cultural organizations, notably the Miyetti Allah KautalHore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and Fulani Nationality Movement as well as the tacit support of the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari. Despite the perception by Nigerians that the presidency is shielding the killer-herders and their sponsors, the government has not done anything substantial to controvert the perception (International Crisis Group, 2017; Amnesty International, 2018; Ilo et.al, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Nigeria without a critical and major assessment of the developmental approaches, ideology and strategies, there can never be any meaningful progress in resolving the food insecurity and crisis. From the empirical analysis of data using inferential statistics of Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence, it was found that insecurity is a major cause of food crisis in Nigeria. Sacked and displaced farmers, men and women who are small holder-farmers, have resorted to the use of their young men as private security for accessing their farmlands. The situation has given rise to the escalating food prices being witnessed all over the country at the moment. The end of the havoc being caused by the Fulani killer herdsmen is not in sight because they appear to be enjoying the

protection of the Nigerian leadership. The consequence is that as the attack on farmers by Fulani herdsmen continues, the country will continue to witness more and more citizens being cut up by starvation and hunger thereby reinforcing food crisis in the country.

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from them, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should do the needful by intervening to stop the unprovoked attacks of farmers in their farmlands by the Fulani killer-herdsmen across the country.
2. The government is also advised to urgently consider the option of ranching as a viable alternative to open grazing as it is practiced in civilized societies across the globe.

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