



IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CROP PRODUCTION IN THREE SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN GWOZA LGA OF BORNO STATE

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Abstract

Security is multi-dimensional and all-encompassing which can be viewed from perspective of the individual, group, country or the world at large. The large scale of destructions of lives and properties by terrorist activities in the northern eastern part of the country has crippled the one buoyant economic fortress of Borno. The main cities and towns in the north are now living in abject fear. The issue of fear have dominated the mindset of the people that they no longer go to farms. This study will therefore focus on terrorist activities in the three selected communities in Gwoza local government of Borno state and its impacts on women participation in crop production. The study design was a cross-sectional survey. The study population was residents in the three selected communities of Gwoza LGA. Respondents selected using a multi-stage sampling method. The research area was first clustered into communities and three communities were purposively selected namely Pulka, Ngoshe and Ndufa because of their level of women participation in agricultural production. In each selected community; a systematic sampling technique was employed in selecting 15 households and from each household a respondent (woman) from 25 years and above was purposively selected after their consent to participate in the study. Each group of discussants consisted of ten (15) members; on the whole 45 respondents were selected. Instrument of data collection was Focus Group Discussions and were transcribed and content-analysed. Findings revealed challenges of insecurity in the area have negatively affected women participation in crop production thereby leading to more poverty, hunger and starvation. The study recommends that in order to forestall food insecurity (hunger, starvation) pandemic, sincere efforts should be strategized to end insurgency with strong political will.

Keywords: Impacts, Insecurity, Women participation, Crop production, Community

Introduction

Man is a social being that live collectively in communities. Every human community has fundamental challenges that are usually tackled collectively. One of such challenges is the need to protect lives and properties in the community. Security is multi-dimensional and all-encompassing which can be viewed from perspective of the individual, group, country or the



world at large. No one can experience perfect security because individuals or states are not perfectly secure or completely insecure but experience varying degrees of security or insecurity at various times. At the level of community, security has so much to do both with the perceptions that members of the community have about their environment and the actual state of security or insecurity in the community (Nnoli, 2006). Meanwhile, Nigerian government have adopted various measures which include intelligence gathering, community partnership, appraisal of security architecture, coordinating security activities under a centralized command structure, increased budgetary allocation to security and created sundry apparatus to manage the security challenge in the country.

Women's contribution to agricultural production in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. This is basically because they are the backbone of rural and national economies. 80% of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, who are mostly women. Women comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sectors – 80% of food production, 10% of those who process basic food stuffs. They undertake 60 to 90% of the rural marketing; but do not have access or control over land and other productive resources (Agronigeria, 2016). However, their contributions and participation in agricultural production has been hindered recently by the recurrent threats of insecurity.

Insecurity is a fundamental feature of human existence. Yet conceptualizing the term 'insecurity' is problematic as most studies prefer to simply see insecurity as the opposite or absence of security. Beland (2005) defined insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. To him, insecurity refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. Insecurity is also referred to as the antithesis of security (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). In their study, Adagba *et al.* (2012) opined that insecurity is a state of being subject to danger or threat, a situation of fear or anything that causes fear, harm or has the capability to cause fear or harm to an individual. Such issues according to the writers could be politico-strategic, socio-economic or ecological in nature. Similarly Imhonopi and Urim (2012) conceptualize insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property. They argue that the concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as absence of safety, danger, hazard, and uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safety.

In another development, Achumba *et al.* (2013) defined insecurity from two perspectives. First, as a state of being open or subjected to danger or threat of danger; where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. The scholars further identified some common descriptors of insecurity to include want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, doubtful, inadequately guarded or protected, lacking stability, troubled, lack of protection, and unsafe to mention a few.

The sustainable production of food is the first pillar of security. Though, Agricultural development is a complex process and a challenging one as well, women farmers play a vital role in food production and food security. In doing so, they contribute to national agricultural output, maintenance of the environment and family food security. Women take part actively in farming activities and in processing farm products, in addition to their domestic and reproductive responsibilities. In Nigeria, the involvement of women in agriculture have attracted greater attention in recent years, the need to develop a suitable extension service that



is gender specific and tailored to women farmers cannot be overemphasized. According to Federal Ministry Agriculture and Rural Development as reported by Sahel (2014) women account for 75 percent of the farming population in Nigeria; working as farm managers, and suppliers of labour. Though, women constitute a large portion of the farming population, women's possibilities in agriculture are hindered by formal and traditional rules. Generally, the extent of gender involvement in agricultural production varies across ethnic groups in Nigeria (Sahel, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity remains a major challenge in Nigeria as the situation in the country is characterized by incidence of political violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, cult activities, banditry, herders-farmers clashes, cattle rustlings, arson, looting, insurgencies and terrorism leading to loss of lives and properties on daily basis. Not only has the continued state of insecurity threatened the very fabric of national integration in the country and created the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety, it has also meted a deadly blow to the country's educational, industrial and socio-economic development including agricultural production (Imhonopi and Urim, 2012). Consequently, most people especially the poor masses have to sleep with their eyes open and live under perpetual fear of the unknown. Nigeria consistently rank low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country. The large scale of destructions of life and properties by terrorist activities in the northern part of the country has crippled the one buoyant economic fortress of Borno. The main cities and towns in the north are now living in abject fear. The issue of fear have dominated the mindset of the people that they no longer go to farms. The current problem has endangered the lives of women in particular and crippled the socio-economic and farming activities of the area and the security situation is becoming worse on a daily basis. This paper will therefore focus on terrorist activities in the three selected communities in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State and its impacts on women participation in crop production.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- i. To what extent do women participate in crop production before the challenges of insecurity in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State?
- ii. To what extent has insecurity affected the participation of women in crop production in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State?
- iii. What are the impacts of insecurity on women participation in crop production in the area?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the impacts of insecurity on women participation in crop production in three selected communities in GwozaL.G.A. of Borno State. Among the specific objectives include the following:

- i. To describe the level of women participation in crop production before the challenges of insecurity in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State.
- ii. To examine the challenges of insecurity on women participation in crop production in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State.
- iii. To identify the impact of insecurity on women agricultural productivity in the area



Methodology

The study was carried out in Gwoza Local government of Borno state which is located in North East Nigeria. Gwoza is located on 11°5'10"N 13°41'29"E with a population projection of about 448,311 based on National Population Commission, (2016) of 388,600 people as base year and covers an area of about 2,833 Km² (Nigerian Postal Service, 2012). The study was a community-based cross sectional using survey design. Women from 25 years old and above, residents in the selected communities participated in the study. Multi-stage sampling was used to select respondents. The research area was first clustered into communities and three communities were purposively selected namely Pulka, Ngoshe and Ndufa because of their level of women participation in agricultural production. In each selected community; a systematic sampling technique was employed in selecting 15 households and from each household a respondent (woman) from 25 years and above was purposively selected after their consent to participate in the study. Each group of discussants consisted of ten (10) members; on the whole 45 respondents were selected. The instrument for data collection was Focus Group Discussions (FGD) guides (Nyumbaet *al.*, 2018). FGD was held in each of selected communities. Three (3) field assistants who were thoroughly trained on the instruments helped in the data collection process. The qualitative data were transcribed, content-analyzed and presented in narrative form.

Results

Data collected were coded and processed, simple percentages were used for the demographic characteristics of respondents while the qualitative data were transcribed, content-analyzed and presented below.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

What is the state of security in your area?

All the participants in the group admitted that there is serious security threat to their lives and properties. Two of them opined, one after the other, "for the past 7 years, since August, 2014 we have not been sleeping well with our two eyes closed and it has to do with the fear of Boko haram". One of them added, "It started like a dream when we experienced cases of missing people along the farm road or in the farm, then we would be seeing letters of either we should vacate our community or that they are coming to attack us". At a point, women who are mostly the victims are being carried away from their farms. Another participant noted, "My husband was killed on our farm". Also participants were of the opinion that they are no longer safe whether at home or in their farms. For instance, one of them said "the fear of Boko haram has paralyzed every activity in the community". Another said that "all her children are out of school and many have fled the community running for their lives".

When asked what has been your level of participation in crop production before the insurgence? All the participants agreed that they are all farmers and have been participating in agricultural production (hyrda) in the area before the security problem. One of the participants said, "She used to wake up early in the morning to go to her personal (Uzuwan) farm before returning after some hours and later joined the family farm". They all claimed that farming



has been their occupation and means of livelihood. They were actively participating in various crop productions before the insurgence.

When they were asked what kind of crops are you producing?

Participants mentioned groundnut, okro, beans, Benie seed and Bambara nuts.

How frequent do you produce these crops under normal circumstance?

All the participants were of the opinion that they produce in large quantities annually because it's not for their own consumption only but for economic purpose. One of them said "I used to produce minimum of 15 bags of groundnut and 10 bags of okro every year but now I can't produce anything again because of insecurity.

Has insurgency affected your agricultural production, if yes describe?

All the participants chorused YES! We can no longer go to our farms because of fear of being killed by Boko haram insurgents. One participant said "we now go to farm only two days in a week and only farms that are close to the village". Again another said "before now, we are relatively economically independent but as a result of the insurgency, we have become totally dependent on charity through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other humanitarian agencies. According to the participants, insurgency has negatively affected their agricultural production. Some conclude that "we can no longer go to farm as before". Another participant said "we are now planting crops around our houses only for basic consumption"

What do you think can be done to improve the security situation in your area?

Participants were of the opinion that government should provide more security that can guard them on their farms because it is seriously affecting their agricultural production. Government should also encourage local vigilantes by motivating them with allowances and give them modern tools to fight the insurgents. One of them said "let everyone engaged and protect herself with Ekihya". Some participants opined that security agencies should be well equipped. One participant said "government should help us beg the Boko haram to allow us go to our farms". Another participant said that "only God can help us".

Table 1 present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Age distribution showed that the respondents are adults who engaged in farming activities in their communities. The marital status indicated that majority of the respondents are married (60%). Educationally, the distribution also indicated that only 11.1% have tertiary education. Religion distribution of the respondents showed that only 4.4% practices traditional religion.

Discussion of Findings

There is generally high incidence of insecurity in Gwoza LGA. Feelings of fear and uncertainties pervade the sentiment of women in the selected communities within the Local Government Area. To buttress the point of insecurity in the area, as far back as 23rd June, 2014; it was reported that the Gwoza LGA came under attack from Boko Haram insurgents that arrived from Maiduguri (Kayode, 2014; Deutsche Welle, 2014). Ishu-Josef (2014) and Audu (2014) had also reported that people living in Ngoshe, Pulka, Kirawa, Agapalwa, Ashigashiya and Cikide in the surveyed area where the study was carried out had earlier been sacked by the insurgents. The extent of participation by women on crop production was therefore, very low as measured against the experience of the past before the insurgency. Agricultural production has been affected negatively just like other socio-economic and education development in the area. This assertion can be corroborated by Igidi (2014) who reported that Gwoza town had been sacked by Boko Haram thus leading to the people

migrating from the area. This thus leads to lack of the women participation in farming which is the source of their livelihood. Although, there are heavy presence of military and other security agencies in the area, this has not assuage the fear experienced by members of these communities particularly women and children.

Table1: Demographic Data of the respondents

Community	N	%
Ngushe	15	33.3
Pulka	15	33.3
Ndufa	15	33.3
Age	N	%
25-34	10	22.2
35 – 44	18	40.0
45 – 54	11	24.4
55 and above	6	13.3
Marital status	N	%
Single	5	11.1
Married	27	60.0
Divorced/Separated	4	8.9
Widowed	9	20
Educational Background	N	%
Non-formal	6	13.3
Primary	11	24.4
Secondary	23	51.1
Tertiary	5	11.1
Religion	N	%
Christianity	20	44.4
Islam	23	51.1
Traditional	2	4.4

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that the insecurity occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram has affected the participation of women in agricultural production. Generally, the extent of participation role of women in crop production as seen in the study is grossly low compared to what it is before the insurgency, threats to lives and properties has crippled the motivation of women to engage in activities that can enhance the economic development of the society and their well-being.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Security management needs to be redefined in order to emphasize the role of people themselves, local hunters and vigilantes should be empowered to take ownership of security management and participate more actively.
2. In order to forestall food insecurity (hunger, starvation) pandemic, sincere efforts should be strategized to end insurgency with strong political will.
3. Government security agencies are putting in their best but it appeared that they are overwhelmed, therefore more support should be sought from other countries that are willing to help without playing politics with human lives.

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