

Assessment of Food Insecurity on Internally Displaced persons in Niger State and its Implications for the Niger State Government

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ABSTRACT

Food insecurity is a major problem affecting the well-being of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. In Niger state, the situation remains appalling with attendant consequences on the Internally Displaced Persons. This study investigated food insecurity and its impact on internally displaced persons in two local government areas in Niger State. Data were sourced across two local government areas of Niger state - Shiroro and Raffi local governments; identified among areas with high rate of internal displacement. Human Security Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. A total of 200 respondents made up of: Shiroro 100, and Raffi 100 respondents each who had been displaced between the year 2018 to 2021 were randomly selected, and a questionnaire was administered. Findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between food insecurity and internally displaced persons. Also, 90% of respondents in the areas complained of food insecurity resulting from the activities of banditry, kidnappings, insurgency among others. The study concluded that food insecurity has serious implications on internally displaced persons in Niger state. The study recommended that concreted efforts should be invested in information and intelligence sharing and utilization to ensure that risk factor resulting in insecurity, such as banditry, farmers herders' conflict, kidnapping, flooding among others and its effect on food insecurity are reduced or eradicated to guarantee food security and reduction of internally displaced persons in Niger State.

Keywords: Food, Insecurity, Internally, Displaced, Persons

1.0 Introduction

Globally, food security is an essential requirement for the continuous existence of mankind as well an indispensable factor in nation's quest for economic growth and development. As such, nations put in their resources to ensure that there is need for high level of food production and availability in order to meet the food needs for the survival of the growing population. However, food insecurity caused by low food production and internal displacement resulting from both man-made and natural phenomena has increased since 2003 (Norwegian Refugee

Council, 2016). According to Food and Agriculture organization (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. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are individuals or groups of people who have been forced to flee their homes or obliged to flee their habitual residence to escape armed conflicts. In Nigeria, IDPs usually suffer partial loss of identity, an identity that is embedded inland, in nature, in social relations and contend with problems

while seeking a voluntary and safe return or of resettlement elsewhere.

Niger state is seriously faced with the problem of food insecurity and internal displacement as a result of activities of insurgency-banditry, farmers-herders' crises, cattle rustling, kidnapping, and disasters, such as flooding and drought. These violent insurgent groups use extreme forms of violence to threaten villagers who are predominantly farmers across Niger state, forcing them to flee from their homes and livelihoods. Many of them end up living in IDP camps, which are often overcrowded and experience food shortages. According to Inga, (2021), 15 of the 25 local government areas in Niger State have been taken over by bandits, kidnapers and insurgents. There may be no less than 500,000 IDPs scattered in different parts of the state. Worst hit are Shiroro, Munya, Rafi, Mariga, Paiko and Mashegu local government areas. As a result of the incessant invasion of these communities, residents have either been ejected from their ancestral homes or they voluntarily fled to the various IDP camps in the state. As of now, there are five camps in Niger State, located in Kuta, Gwada both in Shiroro LGA, one in Rafi, headquarters of Rafi LGA, and one each in Maikunkele, Maitumbi in Bosso and Chanchaga Local Government Areas respectively (Inga, Ibid). The IDPs live in makeshift tents and shelters built out of plastic and metal sheets, which offer little relief from harsh tropical climate conditions, such as rainfall, drought, and high temperatures, making it difficult to grow food. The dilemma of the IDPs is exacerbated by the fact that oftentimes the required resources to cater for their well-being are usually in short supply. Situations like this is sometimes exploited by the bandits, kidnapers, insurgent and other violent groups to conscript the indigent young boys and girls to enhance their criminal activity (Inga, Op Cit).

Despite various provisions to enhance the security and welfare of its citizens, the people had to contend with food insecurity with an upsurge in the number of internal displacements, with serious implications for the state government. The objective of this

study, therefore, is to examine the effect of food insecurity on internally displaced persons and its implications for the Niger government with specific reference to two local government areas. The scope of this study is limited to food insecurity and its impact on internally displaced persons in Niger state from 2015 – 2021. The justification for this period is based on the fact that the period marked an increased in the level of terrorist activities, banditry, kidnapping which brought about an upsurge of IDPs with a catastrophic consequence on food insecurity in Niger state.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Niger state, there is prevalence of violent crimes including robbery, kidnapping, destruction of properties and raping of women as well as intimidating, killings and perpetuation of criminal activities among others. This has posed serious challenges on food insecurity and internally displaced persons in the state. As such, anxiety has continued to grow over the disruption of socio-economic activities and uncertainty of the return of normalcy in the affected areas. This is because these camps are faced with numerous challenges, including accommodation, feeding, deficiency in provision of health facilities and lack of conveniences like toilets. Also, because the camps are not permanently built to take care of emergencies, schools are mostly used which all grossly inadequate. No fewer than 30 to 40 people are clustered in each of the classes available including children. Water is rationed with no essential drugs to cater for the sick and other emergency cases (Aminu, 2021).

The situation has persisted despite several military operations and increased number of patrol platforms by the Nigerian armed forces supported by the Nigerian Air force (NAF) and other security activities launched to curb their activities. It is most likely that the measures employed by the security agencies as well as state governments has not been adequately effective and therefore not yielded the desired results. The increased occurrences of insecurity in the state could be as a result of

the porosity of the country's border coupled with the vast land mass in the state. This makes it easy for the influx of the bandits, kidnappers and insurgents thereby increasing food insecurity and internally displaced persons in the state.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2.1 Internally Displaced Persons

The concept of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) does not have a legal definition. It is not as elusive as it relates to terms such as refugees, migrants etc. The 1992 report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations is the most widely used definition of IDPs. According to this report (cited in Ayinmoro & Uzobo, 2016) IDPs are; „persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.“ In a similar definition, the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009), defined the term Internally Displaced Persons as; „persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border“. Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011), in buttressing the above definitions, stated that there are two major components of the IDPs; the coercive or otherwise involuntary movement which takes place within national borders mainly caused by factors such as armed conflict, violence, human rights violation and disaster. These factors afford people little or no choice at all to leave their homes and further alienate them from the most essential protection mechanisms, such as community networks, access to services and livelihoods. The second component of the IDPs as identified by

Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) is the movement within national borders which IDPs remain legally under the protection of national authorities of their habitual residence, unlike refugees who have been deprived of the protection of their state (country) of origin, they are expected to enjoy the same rights as those who are not displaced. This means that they could return whenever the prevailing circumstances (e.g., conflicts, wars, natural disasters) that made them to leave in the first place is no longer in their former place of residence.

2.2 Food Insecurity

The term food insecurity can be seen from the angle of shortage in the access to nutritionally adequate and safe food, resulting majorly from poverty (Kleinman et al, 2010). According to FAO, (2010), food insecurity is a product of inadequate consumption of nutritionally adequate food, considering the psychological requirement of food by the body as being within the sphere of nutrition and health. Similarly, according to Adeoti (2009), food insecurity is as a result of lack of resources to acquire and produce food, thereby leading to persistent inadequate diet. That is food insecure situation is said to exit when the demand side is not balanced with the supply side. According to FAO (2006), food insecurity exists when everyone at all times cannot afford safe and nutritious food to preserve a healthy and active life. The three pillars surrounding food security include food availability, food safety and food utilization. Departing from the, Idachaba (2006) noted further that food insecurity is the antithesis of food security and it exists when all people have no social, physical and economic access to adequate, nutritious and safe food to meet their nutritional needs.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Routine Activity Theory pioneered by Cohen Felson in 1979. The theory holds that crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial- temporal convergence of 3 essential elements of crime, namely a motivated

offender, an attractive target and the absence of capable guardianship. According to the exponents of the theory, motivated offenders are individuals who are capable and willing to commit a crime while suitable targets can be a person or object that are considered by offenders as vulnerable. On the other hand, guardianship can be a person or object that is effective in deterring the offence to occur. This theory can be applied to the study in view of the fact that banditry, terrorism, kidnappings are crimes that has been precipitated and sustained by the prevailing socio-economic environment in Niger state. The presence and prevalence of ungoverned and unregulated hinterlands as well as influx of these criminals have provided opportunity for them to thrive. In addition, the presence of viable but vulnerable rural economy largely on animal husbandry, crop production and illegal gold mining provides targets. In this context, the absence of governmental security apparatus in rural communities gives incentive for criminal opportunism and impunity.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the survey design using the explanatory method and carried out in Niger state, Nigeria. This is because Niger state accounts for some number of internally displaced persons.

The population of this study are the internally displaced persons: adults and children, married or single, whose views or response gave an insight into the subject under study and stakeholders in the management of internally displaced persons in Niger state. The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. A combination of multistage, systematic and simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 200 respondents in 2 LGAs namely Shiroro and Rafi, LGAs in Niger state interviewed for the study. A total of 190 questionnaires were returned and used for the analysis of this study. The data collected through the above sources was analyzed using the simple descriptive analysis and the Chi-square.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study is based on the survey design using the explanatory method and carried out in Niger state, Nigeria.

TABLE I
Distribution of Respondents in two LGAs Niger State

State	LGA	Distributed	Returned	Percent
Niger	Shiroro	100	97	52.0
	Rafi	100	93	48.0
Total		200	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table I above shows that in Niger state, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed with 100 questionnaires administered in Shiroro LGA and 100 questionnaires also administered in Rafi LGA, making a total of 200 questionnaires administered in Niger state. The response pattern as indicated above shows that respondents from Shiroro LGA were 97 which is represented by a response rate of 54% and those from Rafi LGA were 93 respondents represented by 48%. The general response rate from the 2 LGAs in Niger state was 95%.

4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

TABLE II
Sex Distribution of Respondents

State	Sex	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Male	83	48
	Female	90	52
Total		190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table II above shows that from the gender distribution of respondents from Niger state, 83 respondents represented by 48% were males while 90 respondents represented by 52% were females. This is however not deliberate but as a result of sampling coincidence and response pattern. This may

also be an indicator that the females in Niger state were more enthusiastic to participate in the study than the males.

TABLE III
Age of Respondents

Age (Years)	Responses	Percentage (%)
20-29	34	18
30-39	70	37
40-49	37	19
50-59	29	15
60 and above	20	11
Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

As shown in Table III above, 34 respondents represented 18% fall within the age of young adulthood category. 70 respondents represented by 37% belong to the middle adulthood category, while 29 respondents represented by 15% fall within older adulthood category. Also 20 respondents represented by 11% belongs to the retirement category. This therefore shows that majority of the respondents fell between the ages of (30-39). These are able bodied men and women who engaged in farming and trading activities.

TABLE IV
Distribution of Marital Status of Respondents

State	Sex	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Single	34	17
	Married	70	39
	Divorced	25	12
	Widowed	61	32
	Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table IV above shows that 34 respondents represented by 17% belong to the single unmarried category, while 70 respondents represented by 39% belong to the married category. Also 25 respondents represented by 12% belongs to the divorced category and 61 respondents represented by 32% belong to the widowed group. This indicates that people in the married status formed the majority of respondents in the state.

TABLE V

Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Respondents	Responses	Percentage (%)
Farmers	85	45
Traders/Artisan	39	20
Public and civil servants	17	10
Unemployed	49	25
Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

As shown in Table V above, the occupational distribution of the rural dwellers showed that the overwhelming majority of the respondents with 85 respondents represented by 45% engaged in farming as their major preoccupation. 39 respondents represented by 2% were traders/artisans and engaged in trading activities (largely petty trading) while 17 respondents represented by 10% were public/civil servants while 49 respondents represented by 25% were unemployed.

TABLE VI

Distribution of Educational Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Responses	Percentage (%)
Religious studies	104	55
First leaving school certificate	42	21
WASC/GCE/SSCE	21	11
OND/NCE (A Level)	10	6
HND/Degree	9	5
Postgraduate	4	2
Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table VI above shows the educational qualification of the people. As indicated 104 respondents represented by 55% had religious education, 42 of the respondents represented by 21% held first school leaving certificate, while 21 respondents represented by 11% were holders of (O'Level) certificate 10 respondents represented by 6% possess Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or National Certificate in Education or its equivalent. 9 respondents represented by 5% were holders of Higher National Diploma and Degree while 4

of the respondents representing 2% possessed Postgraduate certificate.

4.2 Assessment of Effect of Food Insecurity on IDPs

TABLE VII

Distribution of IDP into communities due to various criminal activities

State	Activities	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Insurgency	34	18
	Banditry	105	56
	Kidnapping	25	14
	Natural disasters	17	9
	Others	9	3
	Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table VII above indicated that 34 respondents represented by 18% were victims of insurgency, 105 of the respondents represented by 56% were victims of banditry, 25 respondents represented by 14% were victims of kidnappings. 17 of the respondents represented by 9% were victims of natural disasters while 9 of the respondents represented by 3% were victims of other criminal activities in the state.

TABLE VIII

Distribution of impact of Influx of IDPs on agricultural production

State	Activities	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Very High	92	48
	High	78	41
	No Idea	2	1
	Very low	7	4
	Low	11	6
	Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table VIII above shows that 92 respondents represented by 48% stated that the impacts of IDP influx on agricultural production were very high. 78 of the respondents represented by 41% stated it was high, while 2 respondents represented by 1% had no idea while 7 of the respondents represented by 4% said it was very low and 11 of the respondents represented by 6% stated that it was low in the state. The study shows that the influx of IDPs

significantly reduced the agricultural production for both men and women in the state.

TABLE IX

Distribution of the Pressure of IDPs on Food Security

State	Activities	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Very High	104	55
	High	78	40
	No Idea	1	1
	Very low	5	3
	Low	2	1
	Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table IX above shows that 103 respondents represented by 55% stated that the pressure of IDP on food security were very high, 78 of the respondents represented by 40% stated it was high, but 1 respondent represented by 1% had no idea while 5 of the respondents represented by 3% said it was very low. 2 of the respondents represented by 1% stated that it was low in the state. The population pressure resulting from incoming IDPs led to some agricultural land being redirected towards nonagricultural purposes. For instance, the construction of emergency shelters for IDPs and the establishment of refugee camps significantly reduced farming areas previously available to the local population.

TABLE X

Distribution of Respondents on the effects of Food Insecurity on the Health of the IDPs

State	Activities	Frequency	Percent
Niger	Acute food shortage	99	52
	High child mortality	12	6
	Severe Malnutrition	54	28
	Rampant Diseases/Epidemic	25	13
	Total	190	100

Source: field Survey, 2021

Table X above shows that 99 respondents represented by 52% stated that there is acute food shortages in their IDPs camps. 12 of the respondents represented by 6% stated there

was high child mortality, but 54 respondents represented by 28% stated that there were cases of malnutrition. 25 respondents represented by 13% said there were rampant cases of diseases/epidemic in their IDPs camps.

TABLE XI

Distribution of Respondents on the effects of Food Insecurity on the Health of the IDPs

Variables	Numb er	Mean	Std	X2 cal	Df	X2 Critical	P-value
Food Insecurity	190	1.24000	.680970	.5690*	348	.1950	0.00070
Internally Displaced Persons	190	18.2400	4.73500				

Source; Researcher's SPSS Analysis, 2021

The result of the Chi-square above, shows that the X^2 value (.569*) is greater than X^2 -critical value (.195) at 348 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. The observed level of significance P-v 0.0007 is less than 0.05. This reveals that there is a significant relationship between food insecurity and internally displaced persons in Niger state. Food insecurity has a significant and negative effects on the IDPs in Niger state. On the other hand, the influx of IDPs has significant effects on the amounts of state government resources, available to satisfy the new demands induced by the IDPs. This is attributed to the obstacles caused by armed criminals on local agricultural production in the state.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, Niger state IDPs are experiencing growing exposure to food insecurity. Also, Human health, climate, and environmental shocks complicated the needed stability thus make achieving human development goals more difficult. From the study there is growing evidence of terrorism, banditry, kidnappings, communal violence, farmer-herder conflicts, drought, desertification, and extreme temperatures which disrupt agriculture, markets and trade, resulting into food insecurity and internally displacement of people, its development and sustainability. Also, it can be said that armed violence in Niger

state has led to food insecurity and internally displaced persons. From the study, the negative outcome of armed violence has influenced all levels and dimensions of food production with consequences on IDPs. This is because they depend on food and even when they get the food from the government, they might not be able to meet the daily basic calorie intake as it is recommended for a person. In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented: government should meet the demands of host communities by ensuring the enhancement of local agricultural capacities. This will ensure a sustainable pathway to food security. Concerted efforts should be invested in data collection, sharing and utilization to ensure that risk factor changes are quickly identified and nipped in the board. Also, mechanisms for monitoring agricultural season and production should be strengthened. The state government and partners should invest in social protection systems and provision of food assistance for the most vulnerable in the IDP camps.

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