

Insecurity and Negligence of Rural Development: The Bane of Food Security and Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Food security means having access to sufficient food supply at all times to meet the dietary of family to the extent of ensuring their productivity and healthy living. Food security calls in Nigeria is akin to Goal 2 “Zero Hunger” of Sustainable Development Goals, otherwise called “Global Goals” adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Sustainable development goals anchors development on the understanding that human societies must live and meet their needs without jeopardizing the chances of future generations to also meet their own needs. Nevertheless, food security and zero hunger of sustainable development goals can be considered as genuine aspiration and blueprint of the present generation in favour of posterity. In this paper we examined the Nigeria security architecture and rural development framework against the backdrop of achieving food security or zero hunger in a decade to come. The study is entirely theoretical because the scope cuts across several states in Nigeria affected by insecurity and neglect of rural development vis a vis its negative impact on food security and zero hunger. We found that Benue State, Zamfara State and Katsina State are confronted by large scale insecurity that has caused their farmers to abandon their farms and villages for fear of being kidnapped or their wives taken away. Uzere Community in Delta state is confronted by neglect of rural development. The only bridge connecting the community and Asaba urban collapsed about 29 years ago and it has since remained like that. The farmers grow foodstuffs like groundnut, cassava, yam, cocoa etc. from which they earn income to make a living but for 29 years now, all that ambition has been put on hold. Ayerose Community in Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area of Ogun state do not have a motorable road but the World Bank gave them a market. Insecurity across the country and out right neglect of rural development are twin evils that constitutes a cog on the wheel of achieving foods security and zero hunger in Nigeria. We recommended a redirection of our national goals towards getting security right and achieving maximal advantage in rural development that way we shall achieve food security and zero hunger.

Keywords: *Food security, rural development, zero hunger, sustainable development, posterity.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

To say that we are chasing shadows when we insist on using terminologies like food security and zero hunger in an environment that is seemingly not safe for even children to sit out and listen to tales by moon light is to say the least. We are not exaggerating Nigeria’s insecurity in any way beyond the magnitude it has taken. Niger Delta militants have been there for quite sometime but they occupied the creeks and making pipelines their primary target.

Boko Haram came in 2002 under the auspices of Mohammad Yusuf now late with the primary objective of establishing an Islamic state under Sharia Law in Nigeria. Their base is Sambisa forest in Bornu State-Nigeria. In all of this, they do not stop farmers from going to their farms. Perhaps you

can unequivocally use such terms as food security and zero hunger by that time because farmers were active and unperturbed.

In 2011, unconnected with either Boko Haram or Niger Delta militants, banditry violence began as a farmers-herders conflict broke out. The conflict became intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings. The consequences of this ugly development on Nigeria's polity is uncertainty, fear and emotional trauma on the citizenry especially the farmers. The activities of bandits all over the country is undermining farming cultivation, agro-allied and industrial expansion.

According to Abang (2011), Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for rural dwellers hence the highest employers of labour in Nigeria's economy. Unfortunately, our rural dwellers are the greatest victims of banditry, kidnapers and killer herdsmen. These people do not carry out their nefarious activities in the city centres because they may be confronted by security agents. They have a safe haven in the rural areas. On the 20th August, 2021, a notorious bandit, Halilu Kachalla, who operates in Bakara, Maradum, Shinkafi, all in Zambara state kidnapped 60 people. Zamfara is one of the States most affected by banditry in Northern Nigeria. The implication of this therefore is that there is acute shortage of food supply because the farmers no longer access their farms for fear of being kidnapped. The punch Newspaper on the 7th of June, 2021 reported that Benue State is under siege. That Benue State is being swept to the cliff of horror by general banditry and mass killings to the extent that chaos has seized the state reputed hitherto as one of Nigeria's food baskets. Killings that mimic ethnic cleansing is envisaged. Nomads from the North and beyond the country's borders invade farmers, villages, and settlements in the state, destroying crops, slaughtering, raping and torching homes and property. The fall-out of this mayhem is shortage of food supply.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Abang (2015), quoted in Anriques and Stamaulis (2007) as having said that it is not an exaggeration therefore to say that the battle to achieve the global society's stated objective of zero-hunger and poverty reduction will be won or lost in the rural areas of the developing countries. This is so because globally, extreme poverty continues to be a rural phenomenon despite increasing urbanization of the world's 1.2 billion extremely poor people, 75 percent live in rural areas, and for most part they depend on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related activities for survival (Anriques and Stamaulis, 2007). The importance attached to the rural sector of the economy draws sufficient sentiments towards its neglect in the developing world, especially Nigeria. To think that the food supply in our urban areas is actually drawn from the rural areas is rather a paradox to comprehend. Rural development is actually a sine qua non to national development because it forms the basis upon which national development depends. It a foundation to build up national development but largely neglected. Rural development aims to improve livelihoods by implementing comprehensive development for rural areas where a majority of people live in poverty.

APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are various approaches to rural development among which include:

- Sectoral Approach
- Area Development Approach
- Integrated Development Approach
- Growth Centre Approach, and

➤ **Community-Driven Development Approach (CDD)**

All approaches to rural development must be tied to important goals of rural development to enhance sustainable rural development. Otherwise every effort may amount to nothing. For instance, there are goals such as:

- Welfare of rural masses
- Increases in rural employment
- Food security and zero hunger
- Growth of housing facilities
- Making primary education more effective etc.

However, it may not be possible to discuss all of these approaches in this paper but we may attempt to x-ray at least the community-driven development approach (CDD) which appears to be a new approach to rural development-almost similar to participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH (CDD)

The CDD approach recognizes that poor people are prime actors in the development process, not targets of externally designed poverty reduction efforts. In CDD, control of decisions and resources rest with community groups, who may often work in partnership with demand-responsive support organizations and service providers (Abang, 2015). The essence of using CDD as the best approach to rural development played out in Ayerose Community in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State. There is no motorable road to Ayerose Community but there is a market constructed through World Bank support programme. The market stalls are over-grown by weeds because the market is not functional. The community required an accessible road to enable them take their farm products to Abeokuta Urban. If the Community was part of the decision making process that led the construction of that market the people would have suggested otherwise. Why creating a market where there is no access road? According to the voices of the poor study cited by Naranyen et al (2000), based on interviews with 6000 poor people in 60 countries, poor people demand for development process driven by their communities. This is the only way to address community problems. Take the case of Ayerose as explained above. In a study conducted on the challenges of poverty reduction in Ayerose Community drawing from the community's interaction with FADAMA II project, the community appreciated the FADAMA II projects efforts based on what they feel the programme has done for them. The researchers; (Abang & Aminu, 2014) pointed out that what the Ayerose community did not know about FADAMA II is that the project had in its positive list of the things it can fund to reduce poverty the construction of rural feeder roads and provision of markets. The project prefers to give the people a market and not a road that may have been more rewarding.

Another case of rural negligence is evidenced in Uzere Community in Delta State, Nigeria. The only access road connecting the community with adjoining urban centres is truncated because of a collapsed bridged of 29 years now. A farming community that is cut-off from the market for a period of 29 years signifies also 29 years of abject poverty and penury. Rural development is not given the pride of place it deserves because we know for a fact that if that bridge had collapsed in a major highway connecting inter-state, it would have been fixed as soon as possible. Is it right to say that the government of the day has nothing to do with people living in poverty? In the 2003-2004 Nigeria Living Standard Survey, (NLSS) shows poverty incidence by sector as 42.1 of the poor were found in the urban areas while 62.8 percent were found in the rural areas (Abang, 2013). This discovery is necessary because it explains how critical the rural areas are to the economic development of every nation. The neglect of rural development spells doom not only to the nation but to posterity

FOOD SECURITY

Food security defined as a means of having, at all times, both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. www.mvorganizing.org. This definition of food security portrays a narrative that those who conceive the ideology of food security must be ready to invest in food. It requires sufficient commitment contrary to the usual talking without the political will to take action. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as a fall-out of the white House Summit on global development in July 20, 2016 organized a panel titled “Feed the Future Partnerships for a Food-Secure 2030”. This Panel session was intended to showcase how feed the future, the United States Government’s global hunger and food security initiative, is leading to impressive and sustainable reductions in hunger and malnutrition. The administration’s initial commitment of 3.5 billion dollars over three years leveraged over 18.5 billion dollars from other donors. In 2015 alone, ‘feed the future’ helped over 9 million smallholder farmers and reached nearly 18 million children to get them the nutrition they need. This was awesome. To provide food and improve nutritional needs of 18 million children is a herculean task. However, it will not be as herculean as to getting 18 million children who are angry as a result of hunger embarking on a rampage of destruction of lives and property. The “ENDSARS” protest in Nigeria is a good example of hungry children who became angry children. The fall-out of “ENDSARS” protest will not be forgotten in a hurry. But the question is, is Nigeria doing anything at the moment to forestall a future occurrence of ENSARS” it will be designated “ENDHUNGER” protest. The magnitude of that protest can better be imagined.

The greatest manifestation of poverty is hunger. We live in a world where only few God fearing nations have empathy for person and children who lack food to eat. Hunger is considered an individual problem and because of that understanding, it has fallen short of being declared an epidemic. Hunger has indeed reached an epidemic dimension. There is hunger amongst Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) scattered all over Africa and Nigeria in particular. There is hunger and malnutrition in the rural areas of Africa and Nigeria. They depend on a few politicians who come home once in a blue moon. They gather around the homes of these politicians just to have a bite of food. The clergy men are the target of these hungry children and their parents. They approach the priest, the pastors, the Imans almost on a daily basis with the complaints of not having eaten since morning and this is about 6pm in the evening. Walk the streets of Nigerian even in the urban cities, you come across children begging you for something to eat. The situation is worse in the rural areas where poverty stricken parents put a big pot of water on fire boiling nothing just to pretend to the children that food will soon be ready. The children will wait until they fall asleep after which the parents will put down the boiling pot and also go to bed. There is hunger in the land, make no mistake about it. All hands must be on deck to manage the hunger menace. For now, the United States of America is leading the pace. All countries with people living in them must follow suit.

3. SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable rural development otherwise referred to as “Inclusive Rural Development” is about improving the quality of life of all members of the rural society. ASIAN Development Bank 1995 cited in Abang (2013). The strategy of inclusive rural development implies:

- a) **Economic:** Providing both capital and opportunities of those living in poverty and low income earners. Capacity and opportunities in this context has to do with provision of infrastructures e.g roads and cash to hire labour and pay improved seedlings or varieties.

- b) **Social:** Supporting development of those living in poverty and low-income households and disadvantaged groups, eliminating inequalities in social indicators, promoting gender equality, Women empowerment, and providing social safety nests for vulnerable groups.
- c) **Political:** To improve opportunities of the poor and low-income households in the rural areas to effectively participate in the political process especially at the village level and beyond. These characteristics of inclusive rural development by every standard, are linked with one another. In other words, it goes beyond income related factors such as prices, production and productivity. It comprises average of non-income factors that influence the quality of life (Abang, 2013). Those non-income factors include infrastructural elements like roads and markets. These things will improve the quality of lives of the people. They will make use of the road to take their products to the market. They will make us the market to reach out to customers from other neighbouring communities. This familiarity occasioned by the market will create the ambition of indicating interest to run for elective offices like ward councilors, chairmen of local government, etc. these opportunities created by provision of roads, and market can improve the people's quality lives beyond one's imagination.

GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

Every day men and women across the globe struggle to give their children a nutritious meal. Goal 2-zero hunger pledges to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Hunger is the leading cause of death in world. Our planet has provided us with tremendous resources, but unequal access and the handling leaves millions of people malnourished. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by the year 2030, making sure all people especially children and the more vulnerable have access to sufficient and nutritious food all year round. This involves promoting sustainable agricultural practices, improving the livelihoods and capacities of small-scale farmers, allowing equal access to land, technology and markets. It also requires international cooperation to ensure investment in infrastructure and technology to improve agricultural productivity (www.jointsdgfund.org).

4. ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IS TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING METHODS

- Crop Rotation: Crop rotation is one of the most powerful techniques of sustainable agriculture
- Permaculture
- Cover crops
- Soil enrichment
- Natural pest predators
- Bio-intensive integrated pest management
- Polyculture farming and
- Agroforestry.

There is a transformation taking place in farms across the United States (www.ucsusa.org). For decades, we have produced the bulk of our food through industrial agriculture, a system dominated by large farms growing the same crops year after year, using enormous amounts of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that damage soils, water, air, and climate. This system is not built to last, because it squanders and degrades the resource that it depends on.

But a growing number of innovative farmers and scientists are taking a different path, moving towards a farming system that is more sustainable environmentally, economically and socially (www.ucsusa.org). This system has room for farms of all sizes, producing a diverse range of foods, fibers and fuels adapted to local conditions and regional markets. It uses state-of-the-art-science-based practices that maximize productivity and profit while minimizing environmental damage.

Effect of Banditry on Food Security

Banditry, according to Ladan & Mutawalli (2020), has affected all facets of human life among which is food security in some states in Nigeria. Let us at this juncture examine some of these states.

a) KATSINA STATE:

Katsina States is hard hit by banditry as about five of their local government areas are affected by banditry i.e Jibia, BatSari, Safana, Faskari and Dandume. In these Local government areas we witness killings and kidnappings of farmers, chasing of farmers out of their farms, seizing of farmlands, theft of cattle, burning and raiding of grain silos, and blocking of local trade routes. These activities of bandits have affected food security greatly.

b) BENUE STATE:

On the 29th of May, 2021, the Guardian Editorial reported that 42 persons killed many abducted as bandits attack Benue Communities. The attacks took place in Katsina Ala and Gwer West Local Government Areas of the state. Residents in the affected communities of Chikaan, Mbagena and Kpav said the attackers suspected to be Fulani herdsmen invaded their communities in the early hours of Thursday and started killing people. These communities are farming communities and because of these attacks they have vacated their ancestral homes to take refuge in safer grounds. The effects of this development is that they have deserted their farms and this will affect food security.

Jannamike (2021) opined that bandit's attack heighten risks for acute food crisis in Nigeria, Stakeholders from the civil society and the media have confirmed. This is even as they vowed to unite against terror rather than do anything that could promote it. He further added that in addition to displacement, insecurity has hampered agricultural activities and heightened the risk of acute food uncertainty in the country. People cannot go to farm when recently farmers were kidnapped from the farms. It behooves on government to review the security architecture of the country to forestall this menace otherwise we can be having a famine in the country caused by insecurity.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS STRATEGY

The basic human needs strategy would attempt a direct attack on poverty as opposed to the traditional reliance on trickle-down effect of maximization of economic growth. The basic needs strategy would assign first priority to meeting certain minimum human requirements for job, food, shelter and clothing, as well as to providing access to basic health, education, etc. This theory underscores the need to address rural development from the point of view of basic human needs e.g. access roads connecting rural farmers with urban markets so as to enable them earn income from their products. That way they can achieve job needs, food needs, shelter, clothing etc. (Abang, 2007).

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

FOOD SECURITY

The strategy to achieve food security is to boost agriculture, procuring improved seedlings, measuring the climate change as against the cropping seasons. In other words, know which crop grows under which weather in order to achieve maximum yields at harvest. The goal of farmers should be to achieve food sufficiency. Low income earners and people living in poverty, should access food at all times round the seasons.

Besides food sufficiency, nutritional intakes should also be given priority as well. Malnutrition is a problem plaguing developing countries and is responsible for high morbidity rate. However, food security encompasses high nutritional value for households.

BANDITARY

This is a menace that should be halted in a hurry. Our farmers have vacated their farms lands because of fear of being kidnapped or their wives taken away from them. The first enemy of man is fear. The fact that our farmers live in fear nowadays is sufficient cause for concern. The security architecture of Nigeria requires a review. We are aware that bandits carry AK 47 unperturbed and unmolested. They kill with reckless abandon and in most cases they chase away soldiers from their bases. To achieve food security we must first of all stamp out insecurity from Zamfara, Katsina, Benue States and any part of Nigeria that may be affected by banditry. May be community policing will help because the indigenes will better keep match over themselves than imposing security agents on them.

ZERO HUNGER

The greatest manifestation of poverty is hunger. Hunger parades our household like uninvited guests. A world with zero hunger can be a dream come true all things being equal. It is achievable; all it takes is to have the political will.

CDD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In other for Nigeria to move a step closer to achieving rural development is to adopt the CDD approach to rural development. The rural areas are very critical to the development plans of every nation. How can a country achieve food security when the rural areas are neglected? The farmers in the rural areas are drivers of food security, therefore they must be carried along.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study dwells squarely on food security and zero hunger of goal-2 of sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015. We x-rayed our environment to see if we have the enablement to achieve food security and zero hunger in 2030 as postulated by sustainable Development goals. In Nigeria we saw that there is large scale insecurity occasioned by Fulani herdsmen and foreign marauders that have invaded our land in the name of bandits. Our farmers no longer feel save to go the farm and this has affected food security very negatively. Our resolve in this study therefore is that a review of Nigeria's security architecture to combat banditry was pertinent. We shall procure improved seedlings to boost our agriculture in order to achieve food security and zero hunger. We also recommend CDD approach and Community policing to strengthen rural development.

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