

CONFLICT MEDIATED MIGRATION IN NIGERIA: FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS FOR THE MITIGATION OF HUNGER

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Abstract

Traditionally, internal migration in Nigeria is fuelled by push factors such as the search for new and greener opportunities and lifestyle from the rural to the urban areas which usually culminates into social, economic and cultural benefits to both the home and host communities of emigrants. In recent times, following the escalation of conflict in different parts of the country, migration has occurred due to distress and as a desperate last resort for survival and safety. Food insecurity, shortages and hunger become part of the plethora of consequences of conflict mediated migration. In reference to the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goal No. 2 which seeks to end hunger and achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Families, communities, government and other stakeholders are grossly challenged. This paper highlights some major ways conflict and migration affect food security and advanced coping strategies.

Introduction

Migration in its diverse forms, all over the world, has been on the increase with its attendant gains and pains. Nigeria has been reported to be among the three countries that will experience rapid pace of internal migration in the near future. Khadka (2018) reported that “three countries- China, India and Nigeria are expected to add 900 million urban residents by 2050”. While migration has been a voluntary option in search of economic and social respite for most rural dwellers, the recent trends globally are indicative of the agony faced by populations who are forcibly displaced from their aboriginal homes due to incessant conflicts – migration is one way people try to cope and survive. “There are estimated 68.5 million displaced people worldwide, including 40 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs)” (UNHCR 2018 as cited in Hammond, 2018).

The concern for migration in Nigeria can be viewed from two angles: conflict in certain areas have impelled people to flee their homes for safety. Such as the case of insurgency in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states in the north east and ethno-

religious crises in Kaduna, Taraba, and Benue states; migration of certain groups of people like the herdsmen from the core North into the middle Belt and Southern states of the country in search of grasslands and water for their herds spark off conflicts, as it has been reported that these herdsmen shepherd their flocks across farmlands and farmer vehemently resist them. From this narrative, conflict may be the triggered by migration or migration triggers conflict. The crises in both scenarios have led to hundreds of deaths and quantum destruction of properties including arable farm lands and businesses. Matemilola and Elegbede (2017) stated that the civil insecurity in Nigeria borne out of the persistent conflicts has caused population displacement, limiting crop production below average, restricting market and trade activities causing higher food price.

A major consequence of impelled migration due to conflict is food insecurity because migration exerts a great deal of stress on the food system's capacity to provide affordable food for all. Hunger, therefore, becomes a prominent and importunate danger that threatens the lives of large number of people who are forcibly displaced. Their abilities to provide for their basic needs of food, clothing and shelters is undermined and compromised. The sheer force of number and food needs of the displaced people constitute huge constraint and burden on government and national economy. This view is buttressed in the words of Ojo (2016) "food insecurity is the greatest threat to national economy". Khadka (2018) also shares a similar view. He stated that "increased migration flow has accelerated the triple burden of malnutrition: the coexistence of hunger; under nutrition and over nutrition. According to the 2015 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the countries with the lowest levels of food security are engaged in or recently emerged from war/or severe insurgence.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the nexus between conflict, migration and food security is a vicious cycle. World Food Program (WFP) report (2017) clearly shows that there is a strong link between migration, food and conflict. The report stated that the refugee outflows per 1000 population increased by 0.4 percent in 2017 for each additional year of conflict and by 1.9 percent for each percentage increase of food security (WFP 2017 as cited in food and agricultural organization FAO and International Food Policy Research Institute IFPRI 2017) while conflict increases food insecurity, food insecurity and out migration disrupts the social cohesion of a community, increase grievances and discontentment which may also lead to conflict. In line with this view, FAO

(2017) posited that a vicious cycle can emerge when conflict leads to a worsening of the food and nutrition security situation, which in turn increases the risk of deepening and prolonging the conflict.

One of the concerns of the 17 point agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 goal No. 2 seeks to end hunger and achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The realization of this goal, therefore, will require a deep understanding of the food security challenges posed by conflict and migration, as well as genuine and practicable political and policy documents, humanitarian response and development efforts to address the situation.

This discourse will include: conceptual issues, food security challenges posed by conflict and migration, strategies for amelioration conflict mediated hunger as well as recommendations for improvement.

Food Security And The Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs)

The concept of food security first surfaced at the world food conference in 1974. At the conference, food security was conceptualized as the availability and price stability of basic foodstuff at the global and local levels. At the world food submits of 1996 and 2002 a more compendious definition ensued - food security is defined as when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their daily needs and food preferences for active and healthy life. (FAO, 2008). The first definition pinpoints stability of basic foodstuff in terms of price stability at all levels as a positive indicator of food security. The two definitions, however, have identified availability and accessibility of food as key pointers to food security.

Four pillars of food security are distinguishable from the second definition. They are: availability, accessibility, utilization and stability of food. It implies that all four components must be satisfied concomitantly to achieve food security.

Availability: refers to reliable and consistent source of quality of food

Accessibility: means that people have sufficient resources to produce and or purchase food.

Utilization: generally refers to the knowledge of sanitary conditions in the choice, preparation and distribution of food in a way to maximize the profit of good nutrition.

Stability: this refers to the surety of food availability and accessibility over time. (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (2017). Stability also can be referred to as sustainability.

The mere presence of these pillars of food security is not enough to achieve an appreciable result in the struggle against hunger. Impact can only be felt if these indicators are enduring and placed *pari passu* with other basic household needs that compete for the family resources. Similarly, FAO (1999) posited that sustainability of food security refers to the capacity to ensure long term stability of household food supply and the ability to meet consumption and livelihood needs on a continuous basis. Sustainability also requires that food be produced in a way that does not lead to massive losses in the productive capacity of the household. The SDG goals for the 2030 agenda are a constant reference, given that food is at the core. Goal No. 2. Seeks to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Some of the components of this goal are:

- ending hunger and ensuring access by all people to safe nutritious food;
- ending all forms of malnutrition ;
- doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale food producers;
- ensuring sustainable food production system;
- increasing investment in agriculture;
- correcting and preventing trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural market;
- adopting measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets. United Nations (UN) 2018). Achieving this goal by the target date will require a profound change of the global food and agriculture system.

Hunger is a multidimensional global problem which can be described as the distress associated with paucity of food. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool used to comprehensively measure and track hunger at all levels and it is determined by four indicators namely; under nourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. In the 2018 Global Hunger Index, Nigeria ranks 103rd out of 119 qualifying countries. With a score of 31.1, Nigeria suffers from a

level hunger that is grave. (GHI 2018). The same report has it that in sub-Sahara Africa, Nigeria has only surpassed Cote d'voire, Liberia, Burkina faso, Niger, Sierra Leone in West Africa. That makes her 10th out of 15 countries. According to the UN report (2018) 5.8 million Nigerians faced acute hunger in 2018. In a similar joint report of the UN and European Union (EU) published in 2019, Nigeria is one of the countries that experienced worst food crises in the world in 2018. A data pooled from the 2019 global report on food crises in international humanitarian and community development stated that Northern Nigeria was one of the 8 countries that housed 2/3 of the 113 million people who faced acute hunger across the globe in 2018. This same report presented the worst food crises 2018, in order of severity as follows: Yemen, the democratic republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab republic, the Sudan, south Sudan and Northern Nigeria. The speculation from this report is that Nigeria will remain among the worlds' most severe cases of food crises, same as the other seven countries currently affected and may risk falling into emergency levels of acute food insecurity. This is definitely a serious problem to grapple with. And the question that comes to mind is what are the factors preventing the reduction of the hunger Index in Nigeria? From this rich mix of quantitative and qualitative data, Nigeria is still far from a world without hunger and malnutrition. These statistics reveal insufficient progress towards achieving the No. 2 goal of the SDGs 2030.

Food Security Challenges In Nigeria Due To Conflict And Migration

The food security challenges posed by conflict and migration will be discussed under two broad headings namely:

- Disruption of the food value chain (FVC)
- Shortfalls in household food supplies

Disruption of the food value chain (FVC):

Food value chain is the sum total of those processes useful in bringing a food product from conception through the different phases of production until delivery of food to the final consumer (Hawkers et al 2012 as cited in Riccaboni and Cupertino n.d). The FVC is made up of four phases that are intertwined. They are; producers, processors, distributors and consumers. Each phase has its role and peculiar activities. The food chain shows a systematic connection between the actors and their activities. It can be seen basically as a chain of agro

and agro allied actors and activities. Food and food related issues rank “Pari passu” with agricultural processes and output. The output of one actor is dependent upon the others. For instance, there must be farmers (both subsistent and commercial) who plant, tend and harvest food crops that can be processed by the processors. If crops and other food products produced and processed are not distributed to the places and people who need them, they become useless, this amounts to losses and wastages. A disconnect, therefore, at any point on the FVC spells dome for the whole food system.

Losses and wastages are common and natural phenomenon along the FVC, but at a bearable minimum level which farmers and other actors along the chain tackle with available techniques and tools. Conflicts, however, has exacerbated to a great extent the prevalence of losses and wastages along the FVC. In a typical insurgency situation in Nigeria, farmlands including those ripe for harvesting are usually grazed and turned into battle fields. Stored foodstuff are also destroyed, man power wasted or dislocated. Furthermore, markets are closed and trading disrupted. Kah, (2017) commented that the sustained Boko Haram incursion into north-eastern Nigeria has led to so many years of poor harvest, disrupted markets and trade within and outside the affected regions which has led to a serious deterioration in the food security situation; the key bridge on important link roads have been sabotaged and remote roads ambushed making transportation of food difficult and sometimes, impossible. This disrupted transportation in the region has long term consequences on food supply in the affected areas and across the whole of Nigeria. Globally, WHO (2016) reported that food losses and wastage are equivalent to 1/3 of produced foods. These narratives and statistics do not augur well for the struggle against hunger.

Shortfalls In Household Food Supplies

While the food value chain deals with aggregate food availability at the national levels, has a wider coverage and influences household supplies. Household food supply and availability relates to food security at the household level and is dependent on the food value chain. Household food security deals with food sufficiency at the household level in terms of accessibility, availability, utilization and stability. These can be achieved either through home production or through food purchases.

The place of food sufficiency in households cannot be over emphasized as food security invariably translates to social, emotional, physiological and healthy security of households. This is why the expenditure of the family's income on food ranks highest. WFP (2017) reported that food remains the most important priority need in most households to the tune of 74 percent, followed by water 45 percent and shelter 39 percent. Agricultural production is the key to achieving a stable food supply to households, but agriculture has suffered stress from conflict, among other things.

Conflict and the consequent migration of people in mass has affected household food supplies in the following ways:

- Loss of home gardens and livestock farms;
- Loss of foodstuff and animals for food;
- Loss of storage facilities and storage capacities. Under non-conflict situations, households are usually able to engage in subsistent farming both in rural and urban areas to sustain the family's needs for macro and micro nutrients. Foods that cannot be produced are purchased with the family's income from paid jobs for the urban majority. For the rurals, who hardly have paid jobs, proceeds from the farm are sold in the market to purchase what is lacking. However, when families are forcefully exodused by conflict, this tide is turned around to the "wrong side"-no farmlands, no home gardens and livestock farms and families are stripped of their sources of income thus reducing their purchasing power. Hunger begins to take its toll on members of the household especially women and children.

Strategies For Ameliorating Conflict And Migration Mediated Hunger.

Strategies for ameliorating hunger fuelled by conflict and migration is discussed under the following headings:

- Nutrition education
- Green revolution
- Rebuilding the Nigerian state.

Nutrition education:

Nutrition education is aimed at making knowledge of good nutrition practices accessible, functional, purposeful and enduring. The content of nutrition education should include:

Recognition and promotion of local foods;

Diversification of diets;

Promotion of homegrown fruits and vegetables;

Preservation of food;

Promoting equity and fairness in distributing food within households;

Giving special consideration to vulnerable members of the family;

Promotion of small scale livestock and poultry keeping (FAO, 1997 as cited in Achor N.C 2014)

It is important to note that the level of impact any nutrition education makes is largely dependent on the nutrition education approach used. The approaches that can be used include:

- Child centered approach
- Facilitated group approach
- Family centered approach
- Guest speaker
- Interactive activities
- English as a second language
- Lecture
- Panel of experts
- Video presentation
- Self-learning/ study modules
- Counseling/ advising
- Role play (California WIC programme, (2012) as cited in Achor N.C (2014).

Achor, N.C (2014) opines that the interactive participatory approach is effective because it is activity based and the learners are engaged in various activities in the learning process. This approach makes individuals and groups excited, responsible and committed to the course of improving their nutritional status.

Hunger begins at the household level. It is often said that malnourished nations core from nutritionally deficient families. The family centered approach therefore, can also be used in conjunction with the interactive participatory approach. Advocacy for the family centered approach stems from the fact that it

deals with hunger from the root and it's specific to each family's nutritional needs. In the final analysis, a combination of approaches will yield better impact. A suitable nutrition education package will improve utilization of available food at both household and community levels.

Green revolution:

This deals with the use of mechanized and technological advances in the field of agriculture to boost yield and agricultural produce. According to Onyeiwu (2017) green revolution involves massive investment in agricultural technologies such as improved seedlings, modern machinery, wide spread fertilizer and pesticide use. Other components of green revolution include; irrigation system, multiple cropping and agricultural biotechnology. Green revolution is aimed at increasing access to productive resources; producing larger quantities of food crops, reduced production cost and cheaper prices of foodstuff in the market. It is hoped that green revolution will help to stabilize the food value chain and encourage large scale farming. With increased investment in agricultural technology, access to food increases, family income earning power also increases. There will be enough food for season and out –of – season.

Even though there are still controversies over the safety of agricultural biotechnology. Research is ongoing and government approved bodies are involved in ascertaining safety before approval for public use. Certain high yielding seeds have been approved. Farmers should be availed of the opportunities and advantages therein.

Rebuilding the Nigeria State

There is a heavy burden of institutionalized reminiscence of hurt, injustice, distrust and masqueraded hunger by various individuals, religious groups and ethnic sections Nigeria. In this trend, a growing number of individuals and groups are attacking the Nigerian state. "Some of those entrusted with the nations patrimony steal it blind" (Adibe, 2014). Its speculated that the insurgency attacks are the terrorists' way of venting their grievances on the Nigerian state. According to Fabunmi et al (2018) "terrorism is of an illegitimate means of attempting to effect political change involving indiscriminate use of violence" They further described the Boko haram insurgency in Nigeria as a popular type of insurgency characterized by the desire to wear down the population, erode democratic institutions and brutalize the populace. This type

of insurgency is also supported by a sufficient segment of the population. They focus on destabilizing government by acts of violence and by terrorizing the populace into compliance. Other forms of insurgency that have found their ways into the Nigerian state due to dissatisfaction with the system are the clan or tribal rivalry and the feral gangs.

There are lots of policies for action against conflict and food insecurity in Nigeria in prints but not in practice. And so as beautiful as those policies are they failed to yield the desired result because there is no political will, sincerity, equity and balance in administration those policies. Ojo (2016) shares a similar view. He stated that all the initiatives by government over the years have been more of lip service. There is a lot of sabotage within the political circle. Deliberate attempts by government to sideline certain geographical zones and ethnic groups give birth to the policy designs which are not inclusive. Personal, family, community, ethnic and religious interests override national interest. Monitoring and implementation agencies are inefficient because the wrong people with ill motives are appointed. It's disheartening that, sometimes security officers engaged in counter-insurgency operation compromise against the Nigerian State and its institutions. All these make nonsense of the good policies and interventions of government and international agencies towards ending conflicts and reducing the level of hunger in Nigeria.

A lasting solution for containing conflicts in Nigeria is to resolve the crises in the Nigerian nation building process. According to Adibe (2014) "terrorism will end when Nigerians come to see themselves as one people and develop a sense of what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined community". He wrote that for Anderson, a nation is a community socially constructed and imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of the group. For him, a nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion.

Those entrusted with governance should work on creating a true, fair and all inclusive Nigerian State where every Nigerian truly feels like a stakeholder. Otherwise, we will continue to have a Nigeria without Nigerians.

- Empower the state government in the north to lead the charge in the fight against insurgency through state policing.

- Trial of insurgent groups should be conducted under the Sharia Law since the sect members have vehemently rejected western civilization and its legal science.
- Specific or targeted developmental projects which do not undermine the disadvantaged regions of the country should be embarked on with the aim of providing quality education, building local capacity and providing jobs.
- Institutional reforms which involve transformations and enhancement in the national economy, health and environmental sectors. Transportation and power sectors, rural development, conflict management, workable polices on migration and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). All these developmental strategies must run concurrently. It is important to note that efficiency in one sector reinforces the other. For instance, it's not enough to furnish the forcibly migrated families in the IDP camps with food without ensuring that the environment is healthy. Unhealthy environment will cause ill-health which in turn, reduces the efficacy of food. In addition, economic empowerment through vocational education, employment opportunities, credit facilities for small business will make food not only available but sustainable. Cheap and extensive transportation system network must be repowered all over the country especially where bridges have been destroyed. This will enable farmers to transport their produce to areas where they are needed and into the open markets. Losses and wastages along the FVC will be reduced and food prices stabilized. Onyeiwu (2017) made a comparism of the Indian and Nigerian food situation on the basis of the state of transportation. He wrote " because of easy access to inexpensive transportation, farmers in Indian are able to bring their produce to the open market on a daily bases every evening. Streets in India bustle with life, as farmer fill the streets with wares ranging from fresh vegetables, fruits, potatoes, fish etc. Food vendors in turn, purchase produce from local farmers, cook the food on the spot and sell directly to people by the road side or open markets. While Nigerian streets sell recharge cards, hand kerchiefs, chewing gum, sweets, biscuits imported from china. Their India counterparts sell mainly agricultural products and agro-processed food produced domestically". Thanks to improved agricultural technology and efficient transport system.

An enduring assistance to the communities affected by conflict would rather be joint government, international and humanitarian interventions at restoring the lost systems in conflict affected areas. Bridges where destroyed should be rebuilt,

road sanitized to enhance free flow of transportation of people and food wares. Credit facilities should be made available and accessible to reinstate economic activities. Markets should be rebuilt. Destroyed water and electricity facilities should be repowered. In this way the food value chain and the peoples earning and purchasing power will be restored gradually. Consequent on these, household food supply will improve and level of hunger malnutrition will also reduce

Conclusion

Foods and nutrition are important in all the Sustainable Development Goals and they are also related to all main factors during conflict and migration. This paper establishes that conflict and migration are culpable for the rise in hunger and malnutrition in Nigeria, especially in the north east, by disrupting the food value chain and reducing household food supplies drastically.

Dealing with conflict and increased migration flows has great potential for promoting sustainable food system at the family and national levels. Nutrition education and the green revolution are key strategies to stabilizing the food value chain, increase food availability and utilization at households. In order to reduce conflict and dissatisfaction with the Nigerian State, government must embark on genuine reformations to create a nation where: human life is treated with uttermost respect and dignity; there will be no ethnic and religious bigotry, sentiments and superiority; our diversities are honored and used as pillar for growth and development; the national cake must be available and accessible to all; every Nigerian truly feels Nigerian. However, the paper posits that these strategies will make better impact when targeted, integrated and related to indigenous conditions of the people.

Recommendations

Based on the strategies proffered, these recommendation are put forth

1. Since hunger begin at the household levels. The approach to nutrition education should be family centered and interactive. Indigenous language should be used as the language of instruction in any nutrition education programme. An effective nutritional surveillance mechanism should be put in place to monitor the progress or other wise of any nutrition education package
2. Assistance and intervention to conflict affected individuals and families should targeted because not all areas have similar needs and not all

individuals and families are affected in the same way. Geographical location, gender and age should be considered.

3. The nature of food insecurity is multidimensional. Solution would require a multidimensional approach. An integrative problem solving approach should be adopted. For instance, fuel, water, food, and energy given together would prove more effective than food without the others mentioned.
4. A true national conference, true in all ramifications, free from all form of affiliations and sentiments where all regions and stakeholders can vent their grievances with the Nigerian state. This will serve as a clarification or purgation of emotion whose result will be useful in forging a way forward.
5. Strengthening the food value chain and promoting sustainable food system through collaborative partnership among the different players, restoration of damaged food chain activities and empowering chain players affected by conflict to return to status quo.

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