

Hunger in the ‘Oil Field’: A Review of Food Crisis and Hunger Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

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Abstract

The rate of hunger in oil rich African States specifically Nigeria is becoming so alarming despite the huge wealth generated over the years. There seemed to be a mismatch between government policies, rising population and food security. The prices of food items have been rising since 2000, triples in 2008 and reached unbearable limit in 2023 and 2024. Food scarcity is a significant problem to the masses whose capacity to buy food is hindered by poor wages and food marketing cartels that control the force of food demand and supply. On the other hand, peasant farmers have lost interest in farming because of unfavourable conditions like high cost of farm input, human invaders, microbial invaders as well as pest. The issue of hunger has attracted palliative from federal government, private donors and international agencies. Policy analysts are dissatisfied with the notion of palliative-hunger alleviation strategy being that it acts as a first aid treatment rather than a cure. The study adopted both primary and secondary data primarily using CBN bulletin, online materials and interview. Key informant interview was carried out using officials from NIMETS, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Power and Energy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs. Sixty (60) interviewees were purposively selected and the criteria was based on their depth of knowledge in their various fields of endeavour. The study delves into understanding how hunger became a chronic ailment in an oil rich Sub-Saharan African giant. In the study, historical framework of hunger was established, the reasons for persistent hunger despite intervention as well as key hunger alleviation programmes were discussed. It was revealed that several factors are responsible for hunger ranging from climate, environmental hazard, unsuitable policies, high electricity tariff and petrol prices, exchange rate fluctuation, global oil price shock, insecurity, poor social welfare structure, low motivation to farming, over-riding number of consumers than producers and government commitment to food production and value-added services. In the study, food crises in Nigeria began from the 21st century precisely year 2000 when the price of petrol, exchange rate and global oil price rose uncontrollable and peaked between 2023 and 2024 resulting to series of hunger protest and strike across different labour unions in the country. Given this, it was recommended that holistic, people-centred and multi-sectorial approach to hunger reduction be employed against the conventional methods characterised by imposition of failing policies for the masses.

Keywords: Hunger, Oil, Field, Review, Food Crisis, Hunger Alleviation Programmes, Nigeria.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Hunger has left an indelible scar in one of the largest oil producing areas in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria as a nation battles for decades to pull her citizen out of food crisis, yet negligible success has been achieved. Food crisis is the cause of mortality for elderly persons, youth and children. A report by FAO indicated that for every five seconds a child dies of hunger, and in each year about 6 million children are also dying of hunger (FAO, 2012). In the report, nearly 870 million people were suffering from chronic undernourishment between 2010 and 2012, and majority whom are living in developing countries (FAO, 2012). High death rate from food insecurity causes is a serious concern

especially in oil enriched zones which are notable for civil unrest, environmental degradation, corruption, land pollution and agricultural failure (Abraham *et al.*, 2021). Food insecurity has become an endemic societal ailment in virtually all the African oil producing nations including Gabon, Congo, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Uganda, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Angola and Cameroon. The question arose as to what befalls African oil fields to be ravaged by chronic hunger despite years of resource exploration and oil-led wealth generation. The masses find it difficult to feed well even when the entire world recognise African oil producing areas as ‘Economically Bouyant Zones’. To buttress this fact, the narrative of hunger in African Oil fields has not

received global attention because of misleading national statistics. Proceeds generated from oil and gas sector revolves within the elites' hemisphere, leaving the entire regions to drown in the oasis of hunger.

Before now, some scholarships came up with their notion of hunger as a state of food deficit (WHO, 2021). Others have opined that hunger is an aftermath of agricultural failure, but such opinion does not hold water due to globalisation and global food supply chain. From the perspective of public policy analyst, hunger connotes structural policy failure that could thwart equity in food supply, access and availability. This school of thought coincided with that of Poppendieck, who labelled hunger as a deliberate tool of corporate organisations and government to suppress the poor masses (Poppendieck, 1999). Hunger sometimes may emanate from food imperialism, unleashing greater effect on vulnerable populations (Patel, 2013). Sen in his seminal work sees hunger as an outcome of market structural adjustment. In a capitalist economy, the forces of demand and supply could cause irregularities in the market system and subsequent food hoarding and price uncertainties. Inefficient food distribution and wastage tremendously contribute to hunger which according to Gustavsson *et al.*, (2011) stated that about 1/3 of food produced globally is wasted either by hoarding or spoilage. A classical example is the case of food palliative reserves discovered wasted in some part of Nigeria arouse public protest across the Nigerian food belts. Political instability and ethno-religious clash can disrupt food production and distribution, leading to malnutrition for children and elderly (Gustavsson *et al.*, 2011). It should be noted that the indecision of the government can equally affect food production, processing, distribution and marketing. In Nigeria, public policy failures have left the country to become one of the most dependent countries of the world particularly on foreign monetary aids, food aids and technical aids. Food security policies and programmes are either executed half way or are mis-implemented by individual tiers of government. Hence, as long as policies are executed by people, there is bound to be some levels of mistrust and clash of interest. As a result, the overall citizens suffer from the policy failures up to the extent of lacking basic food.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Hunger unarguably remains a barrier to sustainable development with implications on under-five children, elderly and youth. In 2019, about 144 million under-five children were malnourished, while 22% of children were stunted due to chronic malnutrition as at 2022 (UNICEF, 2023). About 6% (around 45 million) children suffers from nutritional wasting against 14% of children who are underweight globally (UNICEF, 2023). Another report from UNICEF in 2022, revealed 35% of nutritional stunting for under-five children in Sub-Saharan Africa, 38% in South Asia, 10% in Latin

America and Caribbean (UNICEF, 2023; WHO, 2023). These statistics indicate the burden of child nutritional crisis at global and regional scale. Hunger affect all societal class not only under-five children. The effect of hunger tends to limit human development and resourcefulness, and also impact on the success of other sustainable development goals such as health, education, climate change, infrastructure, energy, responsible consumption, decent jobs and gender equality. Attainment of zero hunger requires that food supply, access and policies and due consideration of peasant farmers be respected.

Since the discovery of oil as well as other minerals in sub-Saharan Africa, the age long peasant farming became a taboo and many people seemed to have thrown away their hoes and machet, abandoned their farmlands to fallow and chose administrative career that is less stressful, rather associated with larger monetary reward. This social transition later led to class struggle, financial mismanagement, diversion and monopoly of oil and gas proceeds by fewer elites and the general marginalisation of the masses.

Overdependence on petro-dollar by these African countries portend great dangers for their domestic food production because oil exploitation in African context is associated with occupational changes with high premium for oil and gas related jobs at the detriment of traditional informal sector (Igberaese & Okojie, 2010).

Oil producing African countries like Nigeria, Libya, Sudan, Angola and Algeria over the past decades had marched out of civil unrest that is destructive to food security. Global oil price fluctuation had affected food prices in many oil-rich countries. The rise in the price level of foodstuff constitutes the largest share of the cost-of-living index. For example, from 2005 to 2012, the price index for meat and poultry increased exponentially, fresh fruits, fish, crustaceans and proteins are no longer affordable to the poor (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 2023; Darwez *et al.*, 2023). An increase in oil price raises the cost of farm equipment's, fertiliser, pesticides and the costs of food processing, packaging and distribution.

Food insecurity is not just a problem of Nigeria and West Africa, other globally recognised oil producing zones like the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) experience significant constraint in food supply to her citizenry. A report from Arab Barometer's seventh wave (2022) indicated that majorities from 53 percent in Libya to 68 percent in Egypt report that they ran out of food before they had money to buy more. Still in the same report, in nine out of 10 countries sampled, more than half of all citizens express concern about running out of food before being able to get more. The proportion has remained the same, the absolute number of undemourished individuals in MENA rose from 44

million to 55 million between 2004-2006 and 2016-2018, owing in great part to ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen (Arab Barometer, 2021). Food crisis in oil enriched areas are timely and the following research objectives will guide the study:

- i. To examine the effect of government policies on food crises in Nigeria
- ii. To ascertain whether environmental hazard contribute to hunger in the study area
- iii. To analyse the effect of global oil prices, domestic petrol price and exchange rate on hunger scenario in Nigeria
- iv. To assess the effect of conflict and associated social welfare services on hunger reduction in Nigeria
- v. To analyse the effect of climatic condition on food production in the study area

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Historical Evolution of Nigerian food crisis

Food security has taken centre stage in global discussion and unfortunately the sub-Saharan Africa specifically Nigeria has experience a drastic food supply deficit. Nigeria likewise other regional counterpart are chronic food importers and high consumers and thus, food prices seemed to shift upward. Okuneye (1995) in her Inaugural lecture noted that Nigerian agriculture is on the 'Run' but refuses to move. She addressed the rising cost of food triggered by multiple causes.

The complexity in gaining access to food among vulnerable population is worsened by interplay of food shortage, economic and political policy inconsistencies, rising import, fluctuating prices and geopolitics of exchange rate. According to Scandinavian Institute of African studies (1983), the interplay of exchange rate of N1.4 against \$1 in 1970 and food surplus of the 1970's became the genesis of political economy of food system in Nigeria.

Food crises in Nigeria started when export led economy was prioritised at the expense of peasant farming. No country succeeds in the fight against food security without peasant farmers' engagement. Before the British amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates to form a unified entity called 'Nigeria', economic specialisation was prioritised and every region produced what it has comparative advantage over others. Cocoa production was strong and sufficient for export from the West, Groundnut store houses were massive in the North, rubber in the mid-west while the Southern counterpart engages in large scale palm oil production. After the second world war, a major restructuring in governance altered economic specialisation significantly. The first National development plan shifted attention much to infrastructure (40%) than to food production. A combination of two sectors; primary production and trade/industry received a negligible quota of 13.6 and 13.4%. In order to divert funds in these

sectors, large scale irrigation scheme, big ranches, plantation and farm settlement for cash crops export were established. During this era, peasant and staple food like rice, cassava, wheat and maize was never a national priority. Though the production of export-led cash crops provided foreign exchange but justification for financial transparency from crops exported was considered (Ojo, 1977).

Various reports including the FAO recommendations of 1966, the American Consortium for the study of Nigerian Rural development (based in Michigan University) summarily reiterated the need for agricultural restructuring for Nigeria from export-led plantation scheme to peasant farmers-focussed food economy. Regional cessation was brought to an abrupt end by the incursion of the civil war and the domination of the central authority. During this phase, petroleum export became the major source of external revenue (Onakoya, 2015).

The second development plan began between 1970 to 1974. In the period, more attention was shifted towards large scale development projects specifically construction and infrastructure. While the third national development plan emerged in 1975, emphasis was given to importation of food which altogether affected the production of staple food. In the civil war era, the southern part of the country was agriculturally unproductive, with the Northern counterpart threatened by unprecedented drought and southern by flood and gullies.

To be more candid, the interplay of the booming crude oil price, the civil war experience and aftermath of civil war characterised by rural-migration and structural changes in labours form the historical framework for food crisis in Nigeria after 1970. However, at the beginning of 1970, the price of imported food rose from N58 million to N1.1 billion (CBN, 1978). Food produce became one of the major importation sources and created an avenue for inflation, hoarding and structural hunger. The pattern of import changed from conventional sugar and milk and other produce like fish, meat, wheat, rice and maize were major import. Report from Central Bank of Nigeria estimated that import of wheat rose up to 1.3 million tonnes in 1978 (CBN, 1978).

Another report from Tom (1981), showcases that import demand for milk rose from 53, 000 tonnes in 1970 to 148, 000 tonnes in 1977, sugar rose from 91,000 tonnes in 1970 to 363, 000 tonnes in 1977. Rice rose from 17,000 to 413,000 in 1977 while import of wheat rose from 259, 000 to 1.1 million tonnes in 1973.

What also constitutes a structural imbalance in food sector was the scenario of salary and wages review. The Udoji commission of 1974 set up by the military regime aimed at reviewing the salary and wages structure

in the civil service. The outcome of the report caused a revolt within and outside the public services and culminated to the exponential rise in food. The 'food cartel' capitalised on this revolt to hoard, monopolise and drown the food industry.

After the windfall, series of projects like the River Basin Authority, irrigation schemes, grain reserves, food marketing and credit facilities were instituted to revive the agro-allied sector.

Some 'hunger alleviation programmes' like Operation feed the nation masterminded by Olusegun Obasanjo targeted restoring the dying state of food production. The programme as conceived from the original plan was aimed at returning food production to peasant farmers rather than relying on imported food. However, public policy critic like Egwunyenga (2006) and Obadan (2002) had observed that this project being a copied work from Ghana's Operation feed yourself, was politicized in a manner that fertiliser distribution and seedlings were not directly given to rural farmers and vision was subsequently blinded and terminated.

Around 1977, agricultural credit guarantee scheme was formed to mobilise peasant farmers with capitals from private banks and to ensure that rural agrarian areas are empowered with loan for agricultural development. The policy was not too successful due to low coverage, low participation of peasants and the political influence of mechanised farmers who had more collateral to secure credit than the rural farmers.

In the same year, the Nigerian National grain board was constituted alongside the Nigerian Tuber and root crops board with the statutory role of purchasing surplus food products for reserves and regulating of food prices. During the same decade, the land use decree was established to replace the traditional land system which hindered food production. It was demanded that before land is acquired among peasant farmers, adequate consultation and consent are to be made from traditional authorities.

The land use decree offers formal and full ownership of land to the state while the occupants of the land were issued individual right of ownership. The decree promoted land privatisation and state control over land (Razak, 2011; Nwocha, 2016).

Regulation of land for both rural and urban dwellers was the major outcome of land use decree. At community level, there was a clause on transfer, sub-leasing, revoking of land for public use, mortgage of land as well as land fragmentation without prior consent of local authorities. Land reform came along with a shift in the agricultural sector. Through 'land capitalism', it became easier to secure land for large scale projects like the 11 river basin development projects, dams, rubber

estates, cocoa and oil palm plantation, private forestry and many others. Despite the perceived benefits of land use policy, public office holders on their part, took advantage of this opportunity and amassed landed property for themselves and future generations.

The national accelerated food production plan (NAFPP) was further inaugurated to promote distribution of food input and the establishment of agro-services centres in rural areas, but little success was recorded due to administrative bottleneck. After this, the World Bank assisted Agricultural development projects (ADPs) came into force (World Bank, 2020). The original plan of the project should have been one of the best projects because many actors were involved in project implementation; viz a viz state and federal government and professionals in the agro-allied sector.

By 1975, between 60,000-90,000 household in Kaduna, Sokoto and Bauchi were selected for pilot study. Farm service centres were created to distribute farm input. Provision for demonstration farms, tractor hiring services and seed multiplication farm, rural water project, rural road and agricultural education projects for training and researches were made. At the end of the first project phase, three other states were added (Plateau, Benue and Kwara States).

The three pilot ADPs were allocated a total of N26 million in the third plan and N44 million in the revised third plan while the World Bank issued N43 million for the three projects in the 1st five years (Yusuf & Shittu, 2017).

A lot of scholarship has attested that the ADP-approach was successful to some extent (Afolabi, 2018). Series of ADPs projects and programs brought out measurable improvement in the agro-sector. The National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP) was a national project in collaboration with state-level ADPs, Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), the Lagos State ADPs, World Bank Funded projects including NEWMAP and several other agricultural investments specifically focus on rice, cassava, wheat and cash crop production (ERGP, 2017). The Funtua project succeeded in expanding the yield of maize, sorghum, groundnut and other crops. The exorbitant cost of irrigation which was politically motivated in the Northern Nigeria did not commensurate with the crop yield. In order to resolve some constraints in the food supply chain, joint strategic mission between the world bank officials and Nigerian professionals was reached. The outcome of the report stresses the relevance of small holder approach in the fourth development plan. The report reiterated that ADPs approach be improved and large scale mechanised farming should replace human labour. The report also emphasized the role of private sector in farm input procurement and distribution so as to relieve the burden on government (World Bank,

2020). The ADPs became the centre piece of green revolution and about 8 projects were initiated in 7 northern states and 1 southern state. By 1981, almost all the states were partly or totally involved in the project planning. The success of the earliest projects in Funtua, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto Gombe, Borno and Bauchi prompted state-wide project implementation to improve efficiency.

By assessing the contribution of ADPs in the fight against hunger, it can be argued that food production experienced an upsurge from 0.3-2.5% between 1975-1980 (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2019). The five agro-based projects place little value on staple food production.

As against the report by D'Silva and Raza as well as Beckman cited in Jimmy and Osogi (2025) whose works outlined the success of funtua project for having improved the production of staple food. However, such foreign-based and colonially doctored submission is prone to error because if 3 pilots projects in addition to the Ayangba and Lafia projects were successful, food importation will never have been an option of the government in the 1980s.

It can be said that the ADPs project succeeded in the production of maize, sorghum, cowpea and rice during the ADPs expanded project (Olayemi & Oyebanji, 2003). In the case of the Lafia projects, traditional gender roles played out in such a manner that some peasant farmers had limited resources to access hired labour for the social norms do not permit housewives to work in the farm (Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2009; Ishola, 2011). In both the ADPs and Lafia projects, credit was given to groups of farmers and some other influential persons (including politicians) and this brought about inequality in access to funds (Ishola, 2011; Bamidele, 2013; Fashogun, 2016). In my submission, the ugly experience of peasant could be compared with the green revolution implementation saga in India whereby poor peasant farmers were marginalised.

The project also covered the Southern part of Nigeria such as Cross River, Ogun, Anambra, Bendel, Imo, Lagos and Rivers States. The project was jointly sponsored by the implementing groups and unfortunately the project later suffer managerial setback as compared with the huge financing by World Bank, federal and state government. As soon as the oil price fell from 2 million barrel per day as at 1980 to 1.4 million barrel per day, the shortage of revenue of government affected government funding of agricultural projects.

Another administrative bottleneck arose from the conflict in appointment of imposed staff from World Bank and synchronisation lapses among stakeholders. Nigerian scholars like Jerry Gana and Mabogunje from University of Ibadan find fault in the funtua projects for

being world bank directed instead of world bank assisted as envisaged (Akinola, 2015).

By 1982, enormous articles were published to show case the failure of green revolution and due to negligence of world bank to expand the project and seeming administrative constraint, the project came to abrupt end (Ogunleye, 2022; Ogundele and Okoruwa, 2007).

While food supply was at stake and the populace thrown into hunger, government resorted to enforcing a partnership with private foreign capital for agro-investment. There was need to invest on large estates and mechanised farms. For instance, the large sugar plant that was meant to produce 100, 000 tonnes of sugar with several thousand labour force, after its completion only produce 23 tonnes of sugar because of insufficient raw materials.

During the period, government showed commitment to boost rice production and about 466 rice cooperative were empowered with input and machineries in line with the irrigation-fed farming approach.

The Nigerian government got confused at some point and sought partnership with the American agricultural investors in 1981 and their objective was to explore all opportunities from either domestic, private-led or world bank assisted projects that could bail out the national food crisis (Yusuf & Shittu, 2017).

Inadequate data collection and monitoring capacity of ADPs staff limits the expansion and success of the pilot projects (Fashogbon, 2016; Olaniyi *et al.*, 2017). A close examination of food production constraint in post-independence era was the deficit in staple food production specifically wheat. Wheat is known to thrive favourably in the temperate environment. Studies shown that wheat grows better in dry season and irrigated conditions. The northern peasant farmers were reluctant to cultivate wheat together with sorghum and millet for fear of losing their traditional crops. The white rice brought by the British in the 1970s was not cultivated in large scale because of little research on soil suitability for rice farming. Nigeria imported about 400, 000 tonnes of rice in 1977 alone. In the 1980s, local rice farms were established but production in the production scale was never adequate to meet the growing population.

In the aspect of sugar being a principal raw material in agro-processing industry, there was a need to fill the gap for consumers (Adesina, 2021). A total of 363, 000 tonnes of sugar was imported in 1977 as well as 709,000 tonnes in 1980. A multi-million Savanna project in Gongola targeted at producing 50,000 tonnes of sugar in 1980 was not successful and the initial cost of operation which stood at N71 million subsequently

rose to N500 million. It was one of the biggest wastage recorded in the agricultural sector within the decade.

Studies by Nwachukwu (2019) and Ogunleye (2022) revealed that the major setback noticed were the cost of securing mega land for plantation, conflict among local land owners, construction of dam for irrigation, processing facilities and machineries.

Another crops that calls for concern in the post-independence era was cereals. The socio-politics of cereals captured the attention of everyone since wheat is considered a major raw material in breweries, bakeries and many others. Import of cereals was accompanied with increment in the finished product of wheat-serviced industries.

2.1.2 Levels of hunger

Hunger seemed to have different dimension. There are people who are hungry for a quality food (balanced diet). This form of hunger emanates from lack of access to balanced nutrition. Although the household are feeding, but the food could not provide the essential minerals for body optimum growth. Hunger also surfaces when household do not have even the least and cheapest food and sometime may resort to skipping hours of

meals. Hunger is a product of poverty. Just as Effiong (2021) categorised poverty into categories including: extreme poor characterised by hopelessness, moderate poor seen in the context of middle-level poor, managing poor who are still striving to break out from poverty cycle. In the same vein, hunger is multidimensional in approach. They are hungry people who totally hopeless and live by the mercy of people's support, some who are hungry due to unfavourable public policy that renders food non-accessible and unaffordable to the masses (structural hunger). Hunger also manifest when people are unable to eat balanced diet due to their socio-economic circumstances. These category of population only eat to survive rather than meeting the required calories and body nourishing ingredient.

In Nigeria, hunger has attracted national protest (hunger protest), demonstration, suicide and strike actions over the years. In the middle of 2024, a nationwide hunger protest received international attention. Critics like Abiola & Okunade, (2020) as well as Aina *et al.*, (2015) have noted that hunger has come to stay in Nigeria and as a result, policy makers need a more holistic approach to address food insecurity scenario in Nigeria.



Fig. 1: Poor woman protesting hunger with empty pot

This pictorial evidence shows the extent of hunger and the emptiness of the masses who could no longer purchase food stuff due to daily price hike.



Fig. 2: A cry for food assistance; Source: Vanguard, 1st August 2024

The masses have been stretched beyond limit and this woman protested with empty pot to show her state of hopelessness and helplessness in a system where

there seemed to be no focus on food security for the masses.



Fig. 3: Nation-wide hunger protest; Source: Punch News, 4th Punch, 2024

Hunger protest in the Nigerian state is a continuum. Nearly every year after the pandemic, labour union as well as youth and senior citizen make a nation-

wide march to attract global audience that state agencies should put measures to address hunger.



Fig. 4: Hunger as a key social problem

In the placard, hunger is no longer a myth, rather a reality. Every societal class has felt the pain of hunger and it has come to stay.

2.1.3 Nigerian food System in the Era of economic boom

Nigeria witness an era of economic boom between 1970- 1980. The production scale of petroleum increased from 5 million barrel at the cost of N8.8million in 1960 to 325 million barrel (N510 million) and push ahead to 803 million barrel (N1.2 billion) in 1979. During this same period, agricultural production decreased from 1,218,000 tonnes at the cost of N251 million in 1960 to 799,000 tonnes (N253 million). The quantity of agricultural production also dropped from 530, 000 tonnes in 1975 to 240,000 tonnes in the middle of 1960s, meanwhile export earnings from petroleum product was gaining momentum (CBN, 1990). Nigeria enjoyed a booming sum of about N1 billion from the oil and gas sector in 1971 and N13 billion in 1980. Due to the colossal Export benefit from export, the government inaugurated the marketing board to control agricultural export prices and other associated levies. Peasant farmers enjoyed booming price in the sales of groundnuts, cocoa, cotton and palm oil until the administrative failure of the marketing board, migration of peasant farmers to Nigerian cities and enlistment into the Nigerian Army during the civil war marked the highpoint of this era, in addition to global market crisis and invasion of crop pest and disease sets in toward the middle of 1970s.

2.1.4 Hunger alleviation Policies and programmes

While organisation cannot be sustainably successful without a clearly guided route map. Policy can

be likened to a route map that indicate the direction at which certain decisions are/would be carried out. Once, policy makers take their vision off the compass, a different outcome which might be unfavourable and questionable is attained. A policy is a principle or rule to guide decisions and achieve rational outcome (Obamwonyi & Aibieyi, 2014). A policy may be considered as the process of making relevant institutional and organisations decisions which include priorities on expenditures, goals, target and perceived duration of goal attainment (Egonmwan, 2000; Jiboye 2011). Public policies are meant to address the problems of the common man thus, should be people-focussed. Following this proposition, a study by Obamwonyi & Aibieyi (2014) added that an average Nigerian is more concerned with distributive policies because this is the policy aspect that is touchable, consumable and impactful. For instance, the seed distribution as well as food palliatives make a lot of meaning to the poor, the hopeless and the poorest of the poor.

In 1975, the government initiated the National Seed Service (NSS) with the mandate of producing certified seeds as well as to arrange for seed certification. Furthermore, the National Seed Policy (NSP) was established in 1992 to provide guidelines for the development of seed for agro-business. In 1986 the Directorate of Food, and Rural Infrastructure (DFPRI) was established to influence the performance of agricultural related project in rural areas so as to boost food production.

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was established in 1986, it aims at restructuring and diversifying the production base of the economy so as to

reduce the over dependency on the oil sector and imports. Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Cooperation was formulated in 1987 with the mandate of providing insurance cover for businesses engaged in agricultural production. This policy did not see the light of day as it was never implemented successfully.

The Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), enunciated in 1992, was formulated to provide access to credit for micro entrepreneurs and farmers at the grassroots levels and development of indigenous technology.

Again, Nigerian Agricultural, Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) was established in the year 2000 and tasked basically with financing at both the micro and macro levels, it was mandated to meet the funding requirements of Nigerians in the agricultural

sector to foster food security. National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF) was established in 2002, the body was tasked to be involved in agricultural research and development, and it was designed to promote the development of the agricultural sector. Lastly, in 2005 the government assisted by the World Bank established the Fadama project, designed to enhance agricultural production and value addition to small holders and rural entrepreneurs in the states under the Fadama programme. The programme targeted small scale water management systems in low lying flood plains for all year-round food production. The project brought about the adoption of simple, low cost irrigation technologies that helped farmers achieve substantial rise in production of horticultural crops. As part of effort of the government to tackle hunger, numerous agricultural research institutes were established as thus:

Table 1: Agricultural Research Institutes in Nigeria

S/N	Agricultural Institutes	Year	Objective (S)
1	Institute for agricultural Research	1924	genetic improvement of crops such as sorghum, cowpea, cotton, groundnut
2	National Cereal Research Institute	1975	genetic improvement and production of soybean, rice, sugarcane, and sesame.
3	Lake Chad Research Institute	1960	genetic improvement of wheat, millet, and barley.
4	National Root Crop Research Institute	1976	genetic improvement of yam, cassava, cocoyam, Irish and sweet potato and ginger.
5	Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria	1964	Improvement of cocoa, cashew, kola nut, coffee and tea
6	National Institute for Oil palm Research	1937	genetic improvement of oil palm, date palm coconut, and ornamental palms.
7	National Animal Production Research Institute	1977	production of food animals' species and forages
8	The Nigerian Stored products Research Institute (NSPRI)	1954	Conduct research in all aspect of post harvest handling and storage of all agricultural crop

As shown in Table 1, efforts have been put in place to establish various agricultural institutes since 1924 with the main objective of augmenting food production.

3.1 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study adopted both primary and secondary data primarily using CBN bulletin as well as online materials from relevant authors who made notable impact on the subject matter. The official report spanned between 1970 to 2023. Key informant interview was carried out using officials from NIMETS, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Power and Energy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs. A total of 20 questions were designed in the interview guide. To the NIMETS, Questions were raised to understand how climate contribute to food insecurity. Questions also centred on the performance of state policies on food production were channelled to staff at the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, questions were channelled to staff at Ministry of Power and Energy to ascertain how the price of petrol and electricity tariff affect food prices. Staff at

the Ministry of finance were asked as to how state budget and financial commitment has affected food security. At the Ministry of Environment, some questions were raised to understand how environmental hazard influence food production whereas, Ministry of humanitarian affairs enlightened us on the performance of social welfare services in the fight against hunger. Altogether, sixty (60) interviewees were purposively selected and the criteria was based on their depth of knowledge in their various fields of endeavour.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nigeria. Nigeria is the most populous country on earth with population rising from 140 million as at 2006 to over 200 million in present day population protection data (NPC, 2006). The country is blessed with fertile soil for agriculture and sufficient minerals for development. The major regions are the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are involved in food production at different scale. While there are more food consumers, a lot of farmers are either disengaged due to conflict, chemical spill and poor harvest. In spite of huge investment in agriculture, hunger really affect this

Africa’s giant. The prices of food in Nigeria varies based on regions; lowest in the North, lower in the South west and higher in South east and South-south. Crops planted

in Nigeria is based on climatic consideration with more of cash crops in the South and cereals in the North.

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Price of Petrol Against Exchange Rates in Nigeria

YEAR	Average petrol price (N)	Exchange rate (Naira against one Dollar)	Average Crude oil price at world market (USD) per barrel
1970	3 kobo	0.7	\$1.8
1975	8 kobo	0.7	\$12
1980	15 kobo	0.6	\$32
1985	39 kobo	0.9	\$34
1990	70 kobo	7.4	\$25
1995	11	22	\$18
2000	22	86	\$26
2005	60	135	\$57
2010	65	150	\$80
2015	145	280	\$49
2020	165	420	\$37
2023	557	460	\$83
2024	1180	1738	\$82

Source: CBN Bulletin

In Table 2, it is clearly shown that the average petrol price in Nigeria was geometrically progressing from 3 kobo in 1970 to 70 kobo in 1990. The sharp rise from N11 in 1995 had little effect on food prices until 2015 when the petrol rise hit 145 and later exploded to 1180 in 2024. Exchange rate equally impacted negatively on food security. As at 1970, even up to 1985, the gap between dollar and naira was very slim. From 2000, exchange rate progresses from N86 to \$1 and later landed at 1738 as at November 2024.

The floating of naira currency brought a tremendous shift from N460 per dollar to N1480 in July 2024 and N1738.7 as at November 2024. The floating system introduce fluctuations in exchange rate, complexities in food importation and biting food crisis. In addition, the price of crude oil at world market sharply rose from \$1.8 per barrel to \$12 per barrel during the Arab Israeli war. It peaked in 2010 (\$80 per barrel), fell sharply to \$37 during covid and rose again to \$83 in 2023.

Table 3: Retail Price of Staple Food in Nigeria from 1977-1993 (local market price)

YEAR	Guinea Corn Per 50kg Bag (N)	Millet Per 50kg Bag (N)	Maize Per 50kg Bag (N)	Beans 50kg Bag (N)	Rice (locally produced) 50kg Bag (N)
1967	8.5	8.2	7.3	8.8	15
1972	4.0	4.0	3.0	6.2	10.0
1977	14.6	14.5	13.1	30.7	34.6
1982	25.9	27.9	36.2	53.0	53.1
1987	30.8	30.0	41.9	119.1	118.0
1992	240.5	236.5	226.3	371.9	654.1
1997	700	700	720	980	2000
2002	1800	2500	1500	1950	5000
2007	2200	2100	2400	3000	8000
2012	3500	3000	3000	10,000	10,000
2017	4000	3800	7000	12,000	17,000
2022	35,000	70,000	50,000	66,000	85,000
2024	69,000	72,000	60,000	90000	95000

Source: Nwofoke *et al* (2024), Central Bank of Nigeria National Survey, 1992; CBN annual bulletin, Akanji and Ukeje, 1995

Note: Author converts tonnes as used in CBN Bulletin to kg by his discretion

While examining food prices particularly grains in Nigerian market, it should be noted that there is asymmetry in foodstuff prices between the Northern and Southern fringes. The Northern region enjoys cheaper

prices due to her larger production base as compared to the Southern counterpart that are primarily consumers. Prices also fluctuated either on monthly basis, distance from production base, regional and state level likewise

brand or quality of the products. In this study, we generally used price average as observed in different Nigerian markets.

A close examination of retail price of staple food in Nigeria from 1977-1993, indicates that the price of guinea corn was cheap in 1977, cheaper in 1980 and became too expensive in 1984 and 1993. The price of millet drops significantly in 1980 and 1986, while the price of maize equally drops in 1979. The price of beans also drops in 1980 likewise the price of rice had a downward trend in 1977 and 1982.

The study used a time series interval of 5 years. Food inflation and price fluctuation in the civil war era 1967-1970 was marked by blockage of food by the Nigerian government who masterminded this military strategy. Meanwhile, in the period, food prices were more biting in the South eastern region while other region, food supply was at least not totally collapsed as in the case of Igboland which was heavily ravaged by food crisis in the civil war era.

Unarguably, the grain market in Nigeria has experienced significant fluctuations in both supply and prices over the last five decades. These changes are driven by a range of factors, including political instability, economic policies, climate conditions, market demand, and global events. Following the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the country's agricultural sector faced numerous challenges. The war had devastated farmlands, leading to reduced grain production. However, the 1970s saw efforts to revitalize the sector, with government investments and support for grain farmers, particularly in maize, millet, sorghum, and rice.

Prices remained relatively stable during the early part of the decade due to government intervention. However, by the late 1970s, there was some volatility due to global price increases, especially for imported grains such as rice. The 1980s were marked by Nigeria's adoption of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986, which aimed to liberalize the economy. While the government sought to diversify agriculture, there were issues like inadequate infrastructure, rural-urban migration, and droughts that hindered production. Grain production remained inconsistent, and there were heavy imports of rice and wheat. The early 1980s experienced relatively high grain prices due to a combination of global inflation and the devaluation of the Naira. This period also saw some regional instability, such as the drought in the Sahel, which further reduced the availability of grains, leading to price increases.

More still, the situation of 1990s was not too favourable and was marked by continued economic struggles, including the aftermath of the SAP and declining agricultural investment. The focus on oil

revenues overshadowed agricultural development, and grains like rice and maize were increasingly imported to meet domestic demand. Local production of key grains such as millet and sorghum suffered from inadequate government support.

Grain prices remained volatile, driven by inconsistent production and fluctuations in global grain prices. The Nigerian naira devaluation during the 1990s contributed to higher costs of imported grains, impacting local prices. The impact of economic reforms was felt as domestic farmers struggled to compete with cheaper imported grains.

The early 2000s saw a stabilization in grain production, due to improved agricultural policies, technological advances, and a greater focus on food security. The government introduced initiatives aimed at improving local production, such as subsidies for fertilizers and support for farmers' access to modern equipment. Despite improvements in production, grain prices remained highly volatile due to a combination of factors like high rate of grain importation, the dubiousness of middlemen who hoarded foodstuff, climatic hazards and regional conflict. The devaluation of the naira against major currencies in the 2000s led to a rise in the cost of imported grains. By the 2010s, Nigeria saw significant efforts to boost local production of grains such as maize, millet, sorghum, and rice. Government programs like the "Agriculture Transformation Agenda" (ATA) helped to support the sector. Agricultural output increased, especially in maize and rice production but prices were still going upward (as seen in Table 3). What actually affected food sector was the depreciation of the naira, escalation of regional sects, drought in Northern regions and global pandemic.

The Grain production has remained a central focus for Nigerian government in the 2020s, with an emphasis on closing of borders for grain importation and focus on local production. Though the policy was favourable to boost the economy, there was insufficient resources and incentives for farmers, likewise sound policies to curtail the excesses of hoarders.

Down the Southern region, food price hike was so rampant leading to hunger protest in nearly all the states of the federation. Some of the major issues in the period were the depreciation of the naira against the dollar (especially in 2020–2024), food inflation and the influence of Russia-Ukraine war that shaped global grain prices, and later had a direct effect on Nigeria's grain prices.

At the same time, Local grain production faced challenges due to the rise in fuel prices (affecting transportation) and security concerns in the northeastern regions, where much of the grain production takes place.

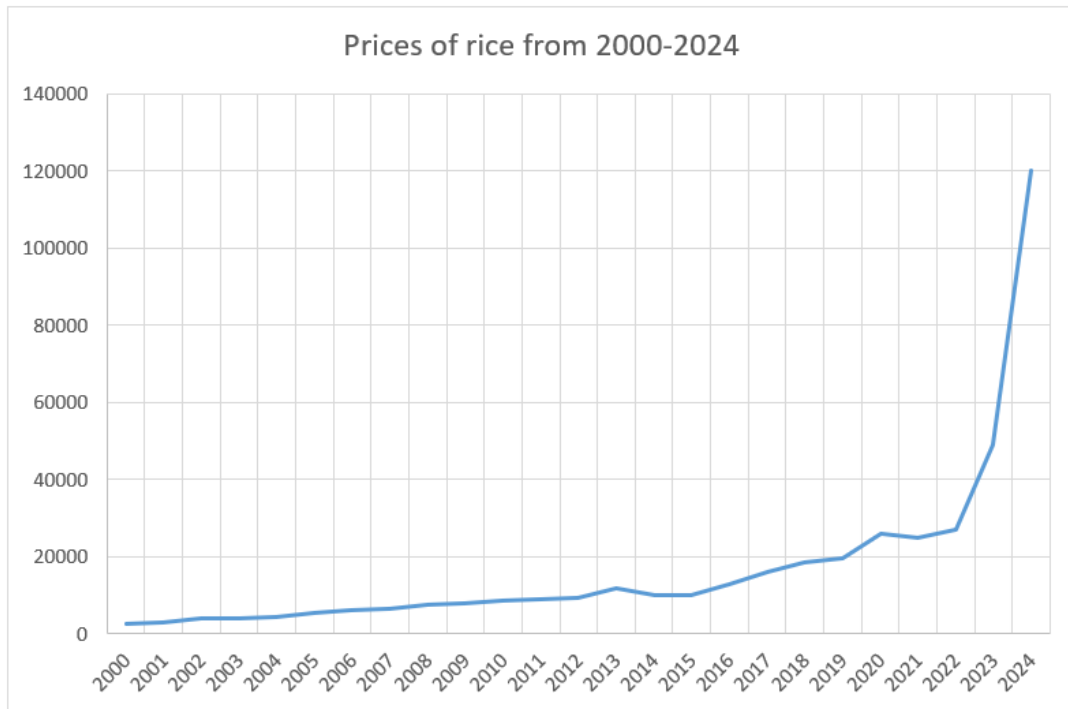


Figure 1: Price of Rice in Nigeria from 2000-2022
 Source: Nwofoke et al., (2024)

Price of consumer goods is a critical factor that influence the intensity of hunger in a region. From this analysis, the price of rice has been fluctuating and progressively rising steadily up from 2000 up to 2013 before it hit an upward trend in 2015. The price of rice suffers a sharp rise in 2022 from N27, 000 to N49,000 and N120, 000 in 2024. Critics noted that price fluctuation was an outcome of government policy (Ayinde and Folola 2015). For instance, a certain policy was brought up to buy excess rice produced by the farmers for reserve, commitment towards local rice production. Aina et al., (2015) using time series data of a period of 42years assessed the effect of Price Variation on Rice Production in Nigeria. From their findings,

shortage in the domestic supply of food grains in Nigeria resulted in increased market prices of the commodities, thus leading to change in the prices of rice overtime. Regional imbalances in local rice production affected rice availability. The South western, Middle belt and Northern counterpart were the most active players in local rice production. Similarly, down the Niger-Delta trough, Ebonyi and Cross River State contributed significantly in the cultivation of wetlands/upland rice whereas, Akwa Ibom State, Abia, Imo and Rivers State had a low premium on rice investment. Many factors are responsible for the price of rice; primarily, exchange rate, petrol price, transport tariff and border closing which promote illegal transaction in rice industry.

Table 4: Guaranteed Minimum Prices of Prices of Scheduled Food Crops: 1977-1986 (per 50kg)

YEAR	Beans Per 50kg Bag (N)	Maize Per 50kg Bag (N)	Millet Per 50kg Bag (N)	Sorghum 50kg Bag (N)	Rice (milled) 50kg Bag (N)	Wheat 50kg Bag (N)
1977	9.0	6.5	5.5	5.5	20	5.5
1978	9.0	6.5	5.5	5.5	20	5.0
1979	17.25	10.0	11.0	10.5	28.5	11.8
1980	17.25	10.0	11.0	10.5	28.5	11.8
1981	18.0	10.5	11.6	11.0	29.8	12.4
1982	18.0	10.5	11.6	11.0	29.8	14
1983	18.0	10.5	11.6	11.0	29.8	14
1984	30.0	17.5	18	18	29.8	20
1985	30.0	22.5	25	25	30.0	22.5
1986	34.5	26.0	28.8	28.8	30.0	26

Source: Secretariat of Technical Committee on Produce Prices (TCPPC); Akanji and Ukeje, 1995

Note: Author converts tonnes as used in CBN Bulletin to kg by his discretion

From Table 3, the price of beans was stable in 1977 and 1988, increases geometrically from 1977 up to

1986 without a slight decrease. The price of Maize, millet, sorghum, rice and wheat follow similar pattern

following an upward trend on yearly basis. During the era of the Nigerian Marketing Board, the guaranteed minimum prices (GMPs) for food crops were set by the

government to ensure that farmers received a favourable income and to protect them from price fluctuations affected by forces of demand and supply.

Table 5: Price of Staple food between 2022 to 2024

YEAR	Beans Per 1kg (N)	Yam tuber Per 1kg (N)	Groundnut oil – per bottle (N)	Maize per 1kg (N)	Garri per 1kg (N)
2022	360	330	950	280	330
2023	630	576	1471	580	493
2024	2000	1300			1100

Source: Consumer Advocacy and Empowerment Foundation, 2023; 2024

At the state level, Ebonyi recorded the highest average price of Beans (white, black eye brand) with N875.71, while the lowest was reported in Bomo with N256.67. The highest average price of Bread sliced at 500g was recorded in Ebonyi with N650.0, while the lowest was recorded in Borno with N261.38. In addition, Akwa-Ibom recorded the highest price of 1kg Yam tuber with N695.93, while Bauchi recorded the lowest with N133.28. Tomato price was highest in Akwa Ibom State with N 1103 and lowest in Taraba with N135. Brown beans was highest in Ebonyi (N894) and lowest in Bauchi (N249) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

The South-East recorded the highest average price of 1kg of Beans brown (sold loose brand) with N1,048.54, followed by the South-West with N1,013.35, while the lowest was recorded in the North-West with N675.54. The South-South and South-East recorded the highest average price of 1kg onion bulb with N1,310.47 and N1,065.83, respectively, while the lowest was recorded in the North-East with N657.84. Meanwhile, South-South had the highest average price of 1kg of Tomato with N1,327.98, followed by the South-West with N1,068.17, while the lowest was recorded in the North-West with N460.64 (NBS, 2023).

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Nigerian food system is hit by several forces ranging from internal and external sources. The behaviour of food producers, food marketers, food safety regulators, bureau de change, legislative and executive arms of the government who make and enforce decisions. A slight pressure on food production chain can lead to food crisis while at the same time, an increase in the prices of food can equally trigger social unrest.

Lagi *et al.*, (2011) reported that food prices are the precipitating condition for social unrest in North Africa and the Middle East in the year 2011 as well as earlier riots in 2008 which coincided with large peaks in global food prices.

From the result of interview at Ministry of Agriculture, it was noted that the outcome of government policies on food production is a product of changing administration and that there seemed to be no continuity, follow up and commitment by new regime. According to

them, one of the reasons for food insecurity in Nigeria is inconsistencies in public policy toward agro-sector development. A great number of policies had been adopted long before independence. It was further revealed that inadequacy of food storage facilities is connected to the failure of food sufficiency in Nigeria. From a submission by Igberaese and Okojie-Okoedo (2010), Nigeria experienced food wastage of 0.81 million metric tonnes between 1995 and 2000 due to inadequate storage facilities. It will be difficult to attain food security in an environment that support wastage. A study by Obamwonyi & Aibieyi (2014) traced the failure of public policy to institutional rivalry primarily caused by overlapping of functions of the agencies.

On the subject of environmental hazard on food production, respondents at the Ministry of Environment admitted that resource exploitation like sand aggregate, oil and gas and forest-based products have contributed to agricultural loss and food availability in some areas of the country. According to them, places like Ogoni land and Ibeno have faced declining food yield following unregulated resource exploitation.

My personal observation at Oloibiri at Ogoniland and Upenekang and Mkpnanak at Ibeno revealed that mineral exploitation and associated ecological degradation is a threat to household food security. Similar study by Ehimogue & Assian (2023) attested to this proposition. They mentioned that places where crude oil exploration activities are carried out often experience a downward decline in food production due to petroleum-associated hazards such as oil spill, gas flaring as well as community conflict. They further added that crude oil exploitation affects seed germination and makes agricultural land unfit for food production. Awojobi *et al.*, (2014) reported a similar trend between declining agricultural production and deteriorating rural economy in the oil-producing areas of Nigeria.

Findings made by Song and Davis-Kollman (2019) revealed that petroleum activities had strangled agricultural sector in North Dakota. It was noted that over 175 oil spills were reported from June 2018 through June 2019 and about 90 percent of the spill affected agricultural land and wetlands.

Musaiger *et al.*, (2008) had pointed crude oil contamination as a threat to food production in Bahrain while a report by Trevors and Saier (2010) had stated the loss of about 820,000 birds and other life forms in the Gulf of Mexico following mineral exploration. Impact of crude oil exploration on food production in the Middle East has been reviewed in a work carried out by Kotilaine (2010). The Gulf Cooperation Council Countries of Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirate have limited arable land that is affected by soil and water contamination due to natural resources exploitation and this affect food production. Other studies made similar findings that the concentration of petroleum hydrocarbons in the coastal waters and wetlands of Kuwait is a serious concern on food sector (Barrett (2010); Asem *et al.*, 2016). Petroleum-associated food crises are equally experienced in Columbia and South America. Around the Cartagena Bay, oil spill has swept swamps, farmland, ground water and forest ecosystem (Oliveira *et al.*, 2021).

Findings also revealed that global oil prices, domestic petrol price and exchange rate have a significant effect on food prices (see Table 2 & 3). Findings from interviewees at the Ministry of Power and Energy indicated that the price of petrol and electricity tariff affect food prices. Higher electricity tariff affect food producers and processors who depend on power supply for their services and vice versa. On the other hand, increase in fuel price is an invitation for food price hike, a serious threat to small scale holders and financially-struggled households.

Issue of global oil price shock on food production has been carried out by Dillona and Barrettb in 2015 in their attempt to create a link between global oil prices and local food prices in East Africa. Using maize and petrol price data from east Africa, it was shown that global oil prices affected food prices, primarily through transport costs. Ngare & Okova (2021) saw similar trend flowing in Kenya whereby there was a correlation between fuel prices on food prices in Kenya. This is consistent with previous findings by Serra *et al.*, (2011) that corn price shocks cause increases in ethanol prices, which in turn induce adjustments in gasoline prices that feed back to crude oil markets. Rashid (2007), Gilbert (2010), and Torero (2016) have identified the most common causes of food price volatility as exchange rate uncertainty, climatic factors and policy failure.

It was found out that social unrest was a key variable on food prices fluctuation. Interviewees (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs) complained the wastage of food in conflict-torn areas as well as the burden of government in providing services specifically food to refugee camps. They admitted the support of private sector, international agencies and other non-governmental bodies in building a cohesive force in food

distribution. According to them, areas ravaged by Fulani herdsmen, Boko haram and unknown gun men are losing out in food production. Food producers in these regions have been dis-incentivised by the losses in the food supply chain.

Some scholars like Michele (2002), hinted that herding violence is constraining food production in sub-saharan Africa. The herdsmen-farmers conflict has inflicted havoc on fourteen of Benue's 23 local governments, including Guma, Gwer- West, Gwer-East, Agatu, Ado, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Katsina-Ala, Logo, Kwande, Ukum, Tarka, Buruku, and the northern part of Makurdi (Apenda, 2016). In the Logo Local Government Area of Benue State, there have been multiple incidences of conflict between transhumant pastoralist Fulani herders and peasant farmers. For instance, on January 30th, 2014, about nine farmers were killed, in another attack on May 24th, 2015, 100 people mostly farmers were killed in villages (Apenda, 2016).

This menace discourages famers from returning to the farm and similar cases are found across Western and Eastern Africa, and in parts of the Mediterranean Basin, Central Asia and South America.

Findings from this study (interviewees at NIMET) have linked food crises to climate variabilities. Changes in rainfall temperature, and soil type had dissected the agro-ecological zone into three (3) segments; with the South dominated by root and tuber, middle belt by grains and tubers and North by cereals like millets, sorghum, rice and wheat. The Northern as well as the middle belt regions of Nigeria had been considered a safe haven for nomadic farming and massive grain depot for several decades until the emergence of insurgencies. The Northern states are battling with water scarcity and extensive period of dryness which affect some certain food crops to either wilt or die off. The Southern part is blessed with an all-year round rainfall, nevertheless, flood has been a serious threat on cultivated land and crop harvest. The middle-belt such as Kogi and Benue States tends to enjoy favourable climatic condition, and at the same time plagued by terrorism by Fulani herdsmen. This clearly reflect the regional peculiarities of climatic zones and food production complexities.

It was also noted that apart from climatic variables, cultural division and regional priorities in the informal sector has been responsible for chronic hunger whereby some regions do not contribute much to agricultural sector. Olomola (2013) made similar observation that the cultural division of the country influence the involvement in food production over time. While the Fulanis have contributed hugely to meat production, the Ibo speaking and Akwa-Cross are mainly farmers and traders with a large population in food marketing and distribution chain, and the Yoruba

speaking are mainly involved in administrative work apart from certain population contributing to food production in some part of Ondo State, Osun and Oyo State. The Tiv and Idoma are known for cultivation of tuber crops and cereals. The peculiarities of region in the economic sector play a key role in the struggle for food sufficiency. Following this regional peculiarities, region that invest much in agricultural sector tends to have cheaper prices of food than other counterpart (see Table 5).

Additionally, findings revealed that social welfare services have successfully assisted in cushioning the effect of hunger. The limited resources channelled to vulnerable persons to a larger extent has restored hope although the pangs of hunger may not be completely wiped off (Ministry of humanitarian affairs interview). Finally, it was revealed that arresting hunger in Nigeria is possible but difficult due to financial involvement required. They restated the problem of insufficient funds as a major impediment in post-covid era and the state of response on emergency food crisis-related cases strictly due to multiple stressors (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs interview).

4.3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the collapse of global economy and the introduction of structural adjustment programme (SAP), series of policies/programmes had been initiated and executed to expand food supply. Some of the hunger alleviation programmes which were meant to boost food security in the country failed due largely to the fact that they were meant to enrich the pockets of political appointees. This was revealed in the unsustainable implementation approach as different regimes initiated different policies that could not stand beyond the government of the day. Besides, the real beneficiaries were isolated and thereby giving way to unintended beneficiaries to gather public resources unlawfully. For instance, the Agricultural and Cooperative Bank which would have guaranteed microcredit to farmers and agricultural businesses was never designed for the poor Nigerians and the requirement could only be met by the elite class. The hallmark of Nigeria's food crisis was over-reliance on food importation and the wake of global food supply politics, currency devaluation and series of internal controls which are threats to food production. Due to the above-mentioned constraints, some measures to expand food basket of the nation and heal the hunger epidemic are recommended:

- Government and NGOs should disburse start-up funds to peasant farmers and other agro-entrepreneurs through direct agro-funding. Intended beneficiaries can access direct financial incentives without third party system. This will reduce administrative bottleneck in seed, finance and food distribution. Also, agricultural subsidy can be useful to farmers, processors and food consumers especially the

poor who do not have the required collateral and alternative source of finance.

- Nation-wide storage facilities like silos, cribs and food banks can help to evade future food crisis, while preserving food reserves for future fight against hunger. There should be improvement and diversification in power supply in agrarian communities to boost their production.
- To reduce the influence of foreign exchange on food importation and export, native crops and animals should be massively produced to reduce the burden of foreign products whose supply is hindered by price control.
- Regional food investment can close the gap of dependence on one region for food production and expand the food basket across all regions. Therefore, quality incentive for all regions in agricultural sector can serve as a motivator and in a long run all the regions will be fully participated in production rather than consumption alone.
- Pro-active steps should be taken to reverse environmentally degraded areas into cultivable food hubs. Flood prone areas, desert encroached areas, abandoned mined areas and chemically spilled sites should be reclaimed for food production. Beside, Nigerian Wetlands are not adequately utilised for food production purpose, hence, investment in wetlands areas for food should be explored.
- Prices control should be periodically reviewed and food cartels should be disengaged and sanction appropriately. These prices ranges from price of petrol, exchange rate and food prices. Hence, deliberate state regulation on prices is necessary.
- Climate data should be accessible to farmers and regional climatic issues on food crises should be addressed at various regional and local setting.
- Improvement in financial commitment in the fight against hunger is urgently demanded
- Regional and community insecurity should be addressed appropriately and farmers be encouraged to return to the farm.
- Lastly, public policy and programmes towards food sufficiency should be holistic, achievable, all-inclusive, transparent and target-driven.

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