

# Hunger and Anger in the Land: Achieving National Security through Food Security in Nigeria

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**Abstract** : *It is a common parlance to say that “a hungry man is an angry man”. This underscores meeting a basic physiological requirement of all humans, especially food, as an antidote to violence (insecurity) in the society. Like in most sub-Saharan African nations, it is vague to concur that mineral resource dysfunction resulting in advent of the war, conflict and national insecurity are the bane of the agricultural sector and food supply in Nigeria. This paper therefore attempted to study the nexus between food and security towards a peaceful Nigerian society. Food is proxy by food security in four components and national security is proxy by non-military four dimensions and forms. Adopting purposive sampling of secondary data and information from literature, published reports on the variables; analyzed using qualitative content analysis of the textual data, the study revealed that amongst/between individuals and or group, food security being an important nugget, there is existing nexus with national security. It concluded that socioeconomic and political stability (national security) in conflict regions in Nigeria is contingent on supplying a basic human need: food. It recommended that including food security issues in security strategic policy is essential to address national insecurity and instability in Nigeria.*

**Keyword** : *anger; food; hunger; nigeria; security*

## I. Introduction

Evidently, the world is drifting in diver's directions – economy, education, agriculture, environment, security, etc. More recent concern is vested globally on insecurity with its attendant effects on agriculture- practice and food supply chain. There appears glaring non-sustainability, i.e. agriculture defiles adequate food security to everyone on the planet apparently orchestrated by the several factors i.e. climate change and natural disasters, wars and conflicts, and these threaten the future of farming (food production), and fast orchestrating insecurity across, especially in Africa.

Oxfam Novib (2007) reported that Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) declared about 815 million people in the third world are undernourished, consuming less amount of calories essential for sound health and growth. Agricultural sector which produces and support social and economic life of economies e.g. with food, raw materials, employment, and some other sectors of the economy, is dependent on the natural resources base on the peaceful environment to labor, people's expertise etc. However, apart from climate change risks leading to desertification, mounting temperatures, fluctuating rainfall patterns etc., global conflicts, wars and status of insecurity are emerging threats to food supply and people's welfare especially in the vulnerable sub-Sahara Africa and in Nigeria particularly. Moreover, a neo-dimensional order to food security is its attendant general insecurity and conflict in that, most food insecure experiencing nations and regions of the world are mostly war and conflict ravaged nations and regions of the world especially in Africa (Perez, 2018). A quick example in Africa is Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Central African Republic, Niger etc., and in the sub-regions of Nigeria.

Nigeria with over 180 million people is the most populous in Africa accounting for 47 % of West Africa's total population (World Bank 2012). However, the political, ethnic and religious risks with the outbreak Boko-Haram and herdsmen debacles concomitantly with war, conflict, food scarcity, poverty etc., are currently leaving over 2 million displaced and malnourished people in the Nigeria Northeast/ west states of Zamfara, Benue, Yobe, Borno and Adamawa in the last 8 years (FGN, 2016; World Bank and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2018). These are dynamic instructive that puzzled investigative thoughts and necessary to institute informed strategies towards choices of long-term policy decisions for over 7 billion world population, with over 180million share in Nigeria.

This paper therefore attempts to evaluate and access the nexus of the duo of food security and national security (insecurity) of life; to draw attention of national strategy and policy switch towards addressing national insecurity via food security; to suggest coordinated action balance of the duo of food insecurity and national security issues in Nigeria.

## II. Theoretical Review

Theories of causes of conflict have been categorized using two parameters— the agency and structural parameters. The agency parameter focuses on the psychological and the social, which situate causes of conflict at the level of individual or collective agency and are based on human behavior. This category argue that aggressive behavior is innate, that is, biologically programmed into the human species (Bangura and McCandless, 2007). Some of the most important assumptions of the behaviorist school are that the root causes of war lie in human nature and human behavior; and that there is an important relationship between intrapersonal conflict and conflict that pervades the external social order. The structural parameters analysis is primarily concerned with analyze group interactions at the conscious level (Cunningham, 1998) with the exercise of power - economic, political, military, and cultural- and the use of force - as a process leading to violent conflict- in intergroup relations. It suggests that the assumptions common to the roots of conflict stem from group competition and the pursuit of power and resources.

These approaches is aptly capsulated by the theory of hierarchy of human needs by Abraham Maslow (1954) showcased by the link in the Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This states that "different people are at different levels in the need hierarchy inclusive from physiological needs and then progressively move up to self-actualization needs." Hence, as an individual and or group, basic to all humans is the requirement for meeting physiological need of food, water and basic life essential, and subsequent to that is the safety need in terms of protection against violence, threat totally called security in order to enjoy the physiological benefits.

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

Food is not only an important resource, but expected to be essentially and sufficiently available for human existence, survival and development. The term food security is seen as the availability, access, adequacy and safety of consumption in nutritional proportion to meet the psychological and health requirements of the body of people in the society (Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) 2014; Etim, Duke and Ogbinyi, 2017). Ojo and Adebayo (2012) economically express food security as a situation in the food system where the food demand side balances the supply side.

Food security has been declared as a fundamental right i.e. right to adequate food, as established 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2.1) Specifically, Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24.1) in 1989 provides that “*Food security is often expressed as when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life*”. To concisely express these fundamentals suggests that equity, availability, accessibility and utilization are prominent. Apparently food security appears a mere concept or hypothetical because the universal does not yet provide adequate food streams or nutrition to everyone in the world- regional, community, household or individual level.

Idachaba, (2004) in contrast, opined that food insecurity exists when the majority of the people in a nation do not have access to food that is adequate in quality and quantity consistent with descent existence at all times. Therefore, paying a cursory look at the food system cycle and structures, (Beddington et al, 2012) asserted that, food system and strategy attracts numerous pressures- population expansion, technology, environmental, social and man-made, land resource exclusion, social inequalities etc., – which have made food production and consumption skewed in favour of and a polarization of social groups around powerful, economic and influential (Bartusevicius, 2014). This is evident in the levels of nutrition and diets shift, widespread poverty, food shortage and supplies etc., generally known as food insecurity. Food insecurity contributes to degradation, poverty and illegal depletion of natural resources, rural - urban drift and across borders, and political and economic instability and general insecurity.

National insecurity has attracted such divergent views (Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpan, 2013; Oladiran, 2014, Matemilola, and Elegbede, 2017) as dearth of protection and uncertainty, lack of safety and confidence, absence of instability and presence of chaos. Insecurity is a breach of peace resulting either from individual or groups capable of upsetting socio-economic activities in the society. This is evident in cases of ethno-religious strife, political violence, kidnapping, militancy, terrorism etc. In the contrast, national security presupposes an all-inclusive paradigm- social, economic, political and psychological – status and varied pre-conditions which certainly promote human well-being in the society. Innocent and Onyishi (2014) believe that national security is a vital social contract within a sovereign state which allows for perpetual and improved human welfare and well-being in the society. Olaniyan and Omotola (2015) argued that security has become a development concern in any modernizing state.

Deducing from these, national security components may therefore be a military-based and non-military dimensions and forms. Military-based traditional perspective of national security possibly accounted for the arms race, military balance of the art technology, military order of battle, military capabilities and strength of nations as effective strategy to deter potential force, aggressors and threats of force to both internal violation and territorial integrity of the state. The non-military dimensions and forms exceed mere war, crime and violence but focus on the physical, socioeconomic and psychological quality of life in the society. It may include economic security, energy security, social security, environmental security, food security, cyber security , infrastructure security etc.

With national security having the focus on people’s welfare and well-being, food security being an important nugget, there seem to exist a nexus between food security and national security especially prevention and protection from violence and crime. It is a common parlance to say that “a hungry man is an angry man”. This position explains the subsisting Nigeria

economy, which though was pivoted on agriculture before and subsequent the political independent in October 1960, (CBN, 2002) contributing about 70% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employing about the same percentage of the working population, and (CBN, 2000) accounting for about 90% of foreign earnings and Federal Government revenue. Nigeria being world's largest producer of cassava, cowpea and recently yam, (Nwajiuba, 2012) with an estimated 71 million hectares of cultivable land, Nigeria now ranked a food-deficit nation and depends on imports of grains, livestock and fish products (IFAD 2012). Records show that only half of cultivable land is currently used for farming while potential for irrigation stands at only 7 percent of irrigable land.

The result of these has been partly the dilapidating security level across the nation; recent escalation of herds men – farmer clashes, boko haram war, increased level of violent crimes, robbery, communal crises, ethno-religious crises, political conflict, unemployment and other social vices amongst youths have been traced to poverty and hunger in the Nigeria (World Bank 2012, Odjugo, 2010).

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Several academic findings diversely allude to the nexus of food security and national security though has been controversial. Respectively, examining empirical literature on this as asserted in the work of (Akwar et al., 2013) that conflict, violence and insurgency are informed by chronic poverty and inequality - a significant symptom of food insecurity. This scenario engenders more than 80% of insecurity related issues – deaths- in less economic advantage states. Perez, (2018) found that social ailment like food insecurity does not necessarily inform instability, but that an effective means to successfully ensure security, violence protection and the like is to enable a country to achieve food security on own resources. Succinctly to add that a peaceful and secured world correlates achieving, at least, the 'basic needs' of people are met-food.

A report by (The Economist, 2018), a world renowned magazine, asserted the essential roles of political stability in agricultural production and relief efforts. The report emphasized that conflict and war are drivers of food insecurity in 18 nations in the world in 2017, evident from damaged infrastructure, displaced populations, destroyed ecosystem and crops, leading to rising food prices. Another report from a Non-Governmental Organization (Fund for Peace, 2017) "Fragile States Index Annual Report" revealed that stability and national security in sub-Saharan Africa is crucial and one way to ensure this is through provision of basic human need-food. It alluded to Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia and South Sudan with long standing internal conflicts which have undermined the countries food security agenda.

From Nigerian scenario, (Awojobi, 2014) investigated the claim that the high level of poverty in Nigeria has been responsible for the insecurity and found that since the coming of civilian government in 1999, poverty, inequality and unemployment constitute a threat to the Nigeria's national security. This underscores International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (2012) report that an estimated 70% of Nigerians are poor, ranked 40th out of 79 on the 2012 Global Hunger Index and avails insecurity vulnerability. Studies by (Ogundele and Jegede, 2011; Oludare, et al., 2012; Odjugo, 2010) were found to reveal interrelationship between adverse ecosystem elements and food insecurity as causality of national insecurity across regions and states in Nigeria. For example, (Odjugo, 2010) study on *Overview of Climate Change Impacts in Nigeria* revealed varying and hostile effects of climate change on



agriculture practice, leading to frequent and seasonal exodus of livestock across the savannah resulting in wanton destruction of farm crops, herders-farmers crisis, life insecurity and food insecurity in Nigeria.

The threats to life and insecurity in Nigeria, in the conclusion of (Jekayinfa and Mofoluwawo, 2010) work is contingent on many causality factors inclusive of the those related to food production, illiteracy and imbalance food supply –population ratio. Growing population pressure and its attendant impacts already diminished resources and further threatening food production through stressed farm land, overgrazing and deforestation. From diversviews, it underscores the facts that allude to the rolefood security in national security.

### III. Research Methodology

Due to the nature of this research, the most suitable approach adopted is the qualitative research design using comparative summative content analysis method. This was achieved through purposive sampling of secondary data and information from literature, published reports etc., based on research variables- national security and food security. The qualitative content analysis of literary content sources is one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data, focusing on the de-contextualization, re-contextualization, categorization and compilation of related characteristics of language as communicated with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Tesch, 1990; Bengtsson, 2016). Hence, this work adopted (Bengtsson, 2016) suggested analysis schedule with slight modification, involving meaning unit of textual data, comparing and codification of textual data, categorization of the text into main and sub themes (with source reference/citation) with the aim to develop possible relationship between research variables and to elicit a finding. The work was then presented in purposively stratified tabular format.

**Table 1.** An analysis schedule of Textual Data from Literature on Food Security.

	<b>Food Security</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
<b>Meaning Unit</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<i>"Food security relies on the capacity of interconnected social, economic and biophysical systems to meet people's nutritional requirements".</i>	Food Accessibility	Jerome, A. (2012).
<i>"food security is an access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life at present plus the ability to provide enough for future generation"</i>	Food Availability	Metu A. G., Okeyika O. K and D. M. Olisa (2016).
<i>food security " exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life</i>	Food Equity	The World Food Summit, 1996,
<i>"...Is determine by food quality, nutritional values, preparation method and storage as well as feeding pattern.</i>	Food Utilization	Matemilola, S. and Elegbede, I. (2017).

<i>Food insecurity has been seen from the area of limited access to nutritionally adequate and safe foods due to lack of resources</i>	Food Sufficiency	Etim et al.; 2017
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Source: Author, 2019

**Table 2.** Analysis schedule of Textual Data from Literature on National Security

	<b>National Security</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
<b>Meaning Unit</b>	<b>Code Names</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<i>Security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. Security may also be defined as the state of being or making safe secure from danger, etc</i>	Physical security	Otto G. and Ukpere W. I. (2012)
<i>“Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria.”</i>	Security of Life	Nigerian Constitution (1999) section 33(1) and (4).
<i>“Security can be said to be the protection of values .....provide and protect most cherished values and beliefs, way of life.....”</i>	Social Security	Innocent E.C. and Onyishi T.O. (2014).
<i>“National security focus on the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society ....the tranquility and well-being of a society are pre-conditions for security”</i>	Economic Security	Yibaikwal S. (1988).
<i>“..traditional notion of national security places emphasis on the protection of state’s sovereignty and territorial integrity against domestic and external threats.”</i>	Territorial Security	Thomas A.N. and Aghedo I.(2014).

Source: Author, 2019

**Table 3.** An analysis schedule of Textual Data from Literature on National Security and Food Security.

	<b>National Security; Food Security</b>	<b>National Security</b>	<b>Food Security</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
<b>Meaning Unit</b>	<b>Condensed Meaning Unit</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<i>"...rustling and banditry activities have been a veritable threat to public safety and security ...."multidimensional nature of human security is underlined by the recognition given to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community...."</i>	Violence, Stealing and Arson lead to low food production and goods/services	<b>Physical and economic security</b>	Food Accessibility	Shehu, S.A., Victor .E,andBinta M. (2017) and Egwu S. (2016)
<i>" Being deprived from what a person believes he is entitled to, ....food security and improved standard of living, ...could lead to violence or threat of violence."</i>	Socioeconomic injustice promotes aggression and poverty	<b>Social Security</b>	Food Availability,	Etim et al. 2017
<i>"Given that the conflict is related to access to arable land, ... food insecurity situation ...the North East and South South, food insecure households have</i>	Criminal actions and concerns impair on basic needs across	<b>Territorial and economic security</b>	Food Equity and availability	Mercy Corps (2015): National Bureau of Statistics, NBS (2017):

<i>been slightly more affected by conflict ...."</i>	regional locations			
<i>'.....security challenges facing Nigeria ....have their root causes in the high level of inequality .... conflict post-independence ...interrupted production of food and displaced people leaving fertile land uncultivated "</i>	Bigotry explains interrupted supplies of elements of welfare	<b>Social Security</b>	Food Utilization and Sufficiency	Akwara et al. (2013), Adeagbo, M.O. (2012)
<i>"ethnic..... crises have had negative implications for the security of the country .....worse still, many more have been displaced or become refugees, developments that further compound the welfare of the people</i>	Communal feud inimical to overall development and welfare	<b>Territorial and social security</b>	Food Sufficiency, Accessibility and Availability,	Olaniyan A. and Omotola S.(2015):
<i>" However, the most effective means of improving security, community based violence protection, and successfully implemented transition planning is to enable a country to achieve food security through its own resources</i>	Improving security and violence involves providing food resources	<b>Economic security</b>	Food Accessibility	Adebakin M.A. (2012).
<i>"These security threats appear to have adversely impacted on the Nigerian economy, the image of the country in the global arena and social relations among the Nigerian citizens".</i>	Security threats adversely impacted on the Nigerian economy sectors	<b>Social and economic security</b>	Food Availability,	Nwagboso C.I.(2016).

Source: Author, 2019

#### IV. Discussion

Table 1, succinctly attempted to categorized food security into five (5) issues of availability, access, adequacy, equity and sufficiency. This underscores Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) concept of psychological and health requirements of food for the body in the society. Many plans, policies and programmes, globally and nationally in Nigeria, had and subsist in accommodating food security as top target or goal. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)(1990-2015), National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP) (1974), Special Program for Food Security (SPFS)(2004), Anchor Borrower for Rice Production(2016), Bank for Agriculture just to mention a few. Yet, one of the greatest challenges in Nigeria remained food availability, access, adequacy, equity and sufficiency with the effects of poverty, hunger, anger, violence and conflict in the rural regions of Nigeria (Food Security Portal, 2014).

From Table 2, sufficiently stratified national security in components, dimensions and forms concerned with development issues and not solely of a military-based perspective in a modernizing society. Physical military-based security and non-military variables are all and both imperative and conjointly reinforcing national security (World Bank Report, 2001) as *"the overall goal of development as the totality of welfare and enhancement of the qualitative existence of the populace through increasing economic, political and civil rights of the people without discrimination across gender, ethnicities, religions, races, regions and countries"*. In Table 3, the duo of the variables of national security and food security has connection and that attaining national security is contingent on food security. For example, kidnapping is motivated by economic factors and that common reason behind kidnapping across Nigeria is

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the rising incidence of chronic poverty and unemployment amongst youth, mostly in the midst of abundant natural resources.

Again, where food is available not sufficiently distributed, a poor hungry man will remain food insecure and become vulnerable to conflict as a survival strategy. This position (Perez, 2017) forms core of United States of America national security strategy for vulnerable Africa states through humanitarian element and response. For example, US Congress addressed the crisis in Central Africa Republic, Sudan and Somalia via food support as a major prong of its social and economic security stabilization strategy.

A strong economic security is guaranteed by food affordability and utilization in other sector e.g. production sector thereby generating human service engage and innovation and hence national security. Terrorist organizations and conflict thrive in environments where agricultural growth is deterred to create investment, and the problem compound the people to be weak. Low food prices through increase agricultural practices and supply encourages social networking, organized cooperation, and general physical security.

## V. Conclusion

Food appears now an imperative weapon in development issue, international diplomacy and global security. It is an instrument of national power and security. Any deprivation of basic necessities of life such as food security informs grave consequences on the global and local communities. From these views, it concluded that national security in conflict regions in Nigeria is contingent on the availability, utilization and sufficiency of a basic human need: food as a strategy for socioeconomic and political stability of Nigeria.

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