FOOD INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A THEMATIC EXPOSITION

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Abstract
Agriculture has remained an important aspect of any economy. Viable agricultural programmes and activities in any polity are capable of sustaining the food supply and reserves needed for the welfare of the citizens. But in Nigeria, Agriculture is despised as able bodied young people do not have interest in Agriculture. Climate change and clashes between herdsmen and farmers and the activities of Boko Haram sect have added to food insecurity challenges in the polity as population displacement, death, and non-cultivation of farmlands and the burning down of farm produce have reduced the quality and quantity of food demand. Although the Federal Government had assured Nigerians that the fear over imminent food crisis in 2013 was unfounded, many Nigerians, especially concerned stakeholders, are not persuaded that the means and ways being devised by government at all levels can possibly address the challenge. This paper addresses the causes and consequences of these challenges and concludes by positing that without addressing these challenges, food insecurity will persist in Nigeria for a long time.

Key words: Food Security and Insecurity, Household, Security Challenges, Climate Change and Farm Produce.

Introduction
There is no doubt that the present Jonathan administration has scored good marks in the area of agriculture. Minister of Agriculture and Rural development, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, who superintends the sector at the national level, is driving the Federal Government’s transformation policy in the sector. However, recent developments, especially the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the predominantly farming areas of the Middle Belt region which has resulted in the destruction of lives and farmlands, have become a major threat to efforts to boost food production.

From Benue to Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau in the North Central region and Zamfara and Kaduna States in the North West, clashes between farmers and herdsmen have left in its trail heavy losses of lives and property. These losses of lives have adversely affected farming activities and other related businesses. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has heightened the fear of hunger. Already most farmers in the affected states
have abandoned farms for fear of being attacked by the herdsmen. For the predominantly farming communities of Benue and border communities of Nasarawa and Taraba states, farming is no longer business as usual. Several farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed men believed to be Fulani herdsmen.

Agricultural and development experts are unanimous in their predictions that the gains recorded in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effects of terrorist activities on farmers in Benue and neighbouring states. Already, seven out of the 23 local governments in Benue state, namely Guma, Gwer-West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande and the Northern part of Makurdi mostly affected by the rampaging herdsmen have tale of woes to tell. The effects of the sustained Fulani war in the affected localities have led to farmers’ reluctance to go back to their farms even as the current farming season is far gone. In Benue state, for example, women from Guma and Gwer west local governments have stayed away from farms for fear of being killed or raped by the marauders.

Curiously, both groups are pointing accusing fingers, each blaming the other for the havoc being perpetrated in the farming communities. As the blame game continues, several reprisal attacks have continued to occur in the attacks, heavy casualties in human lives and properties are recorded on both sides.

As a result of the growing fears of insecurity over the past few months in the country fuelled by lack of stable supply and rising food prices. Prices of essential commodities and food products have skyrocketed making them unaffordable to the common man, caused by well meaning but seemingly impractical policies of the federal government in these segments. Prices of rice, for instance, has been hitting historic highs of N12,500 per bag, triggering a panic amongst the people across the country. Persistent increase in prices of other staple products such as fish, bread, meat, cereals, chicken, yam, onions, beans, vegetable oil, tomatoes, groundnut oil and others have aggravated the continued woes of the common man. Shortage of products and ever-increasing prices has created unsettling sentiments across communities, dampening the country’s efforts to end poverty. There are estimates that more than 65 per cent of the Nigerian population is food insecure (Osagie, 2013).

Nowadays, soaring food prices in major cities across the Nigerian states are being reported with adverse impact on household budgets. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-east and pockets of conflicts in some states where basic food items for the nation come from are making food commodity prices to rise for a range of foodstuffs, from beef to fruits and vegetables, thus squeezing consumers still struggling with modest wages. It is axiomatic to posit that the Northern region of the country has remained a major source of food supply to other parts of the country, especially the South. To be sure, about 90 per cent of food items consumed in Lagos and other South-west states come from the North. For example, Ketu, Mile 12 and Oyingbo markets in Lagos, all get supplies from the North on a daily basis as countless trucks are seen unloading quantities of onions, tomatoes, pepper, fruits, potatoes, yams, vegetables and the likes at these markets.

But this is no longer the case as the general insecurity in the Northern part of Nigeria is adversely affecting farmers in the area. Fewer trucks now come down to the South these days, because of the crisis and this is having its effects on prices of food. The effects of the crisis in the North is already being felt, not only by the consumers but the traders as well who depend on supplies from the North for their business. Expectedly, the cost of foodstuffs, especially pepper and tomatoes has hit the roof. Housewives now complain that N500.00 worth of pepper for instance is no longer enough for a pot of soup for a family of four. While transporters are afraid to go to the North because of insecurity, Northern farmers are groaning too as traders from the South have not been going up North to buy the produce. Most crop farmers and those dealing in
livestock in the North are fleeing their land en masse and migrating to neighbouring countries because of the crisis.

In September 2013, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) had warned that Sahel States in Northern Nigeria as are faced with severe food insecurity. The release mentions, “Poor families have used up their food stocks and are facing high food prices awaiting the next harvest.” Alarmingly, it points out that over 1.4 million children in the region are at risk of severe malnutrition in 2013. In certain products regrettably, the country’s ambitious Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) seems to have been hijacked by unscrupulous operators across the country’s borders.

With sustained violence in the northern part of the country and climate change, major cities like Enugu, Port Harcourt, Ibadan and Lagos are getting food price shocks as rising food prices bite into household budgets. The essence of this paper is to examine the causes and the consequences of food insecurity in Nigeria and suggest ways of address this problems and challenges. To achieve this objective, following the introduction is theoretical perspective of food insecurity. The next section addresses the causes and consequences of food insecurity. The final segment offers recommendations and concludes the paper.

Contextualizing Food Insecurity

Food security is the condition in which all have access to sufficient food to live healthy and productive lives (World Bank, 1986). United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Africa, (1986:12) defined food security as a situation “When all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life”. Food security is dependent on agricultural production, food imports and donations, employment opportunities and income earnings, intra-household decision-making and resource allocation, health care utilization and caring practices (Maxwell and Frankenberger, 1992). It is a multidimensional development issue that needs cross-sectoral integrated approaches. However, because there are concerns that such approaches can be too costly, too complicated or take too long to show results, institutions may not invest their scarce resources in implementing them. Moreover, household food security issues cannot be seen in isolation from broader factors such as physical, policy and social environment (Hoddinott, 2001).

According to World Bank (2001), food security is of three folds, these are food availability, food accessibility and food affordability. Food availability for farming households means ensuring sufficient food for the households through production. However, it should be noted that simply making food available is not enough; one must also be able to purchase it, especially the low income households (Sen, 1981). Hence, food security connotes physical and economic access to adequate food for all household members, without undue risk of losing the access. The concept of food security has expanded beyond the strict biological requirements of sustenance for survival. Food security does include consuming at a level adequate for physical and mental health and also includes the right to cultural preferences. It also includes obtaining the food in appropriate proportion (Robertson, 1990). Food security therefore involves interconnected domains, with questions of agriculture, society, environment, employment and income, marketing, health and nutrition, and public policy (Pottier, 1999).

Food security is a broad concept which cuts across many dimensions. It means access to adequate food for a healthy life. This definition points to at least two parts of this complex concept: access to available food and adequate nutrient intake for sustainable health. It is a complex and tricky task to formulate a one-size-fits-all set of food security targets. This is clear from the multiple determinants of the food security status of a household or its members. The most salient determinants can be summarized in the following way:

- **Household composition**: Households vary in terms of size (number of household members), age structure (adults and children) and gender (females and males). Nord and Hopwood (2007)
examined the importance of household composition insofar as it aids in understanding the food security status of children in the household.

- **Wealth and livelihood strategy**: This consists of various incomes (wages, social grants, etc) and assets (land, livestock, etc.).
- **Geographic location**: This refers to the rural and urban locations, whether the settlement is largely formal or informal, and distance from the nearest or from frequently-used food markets, as for the sake of this study, a city (urban) is being considered.
- **Institutions**: markets, the state, social capital/networks.
- **Time**: the food security condition could be transitory or chronic.
- **Risk**: shocks that are related to the weather, health as well as commodity price movements.

Household food security depends substantially on household income and asset (or wealth) status. A low-income household is more likely to suffer food shortages than a wealthier household. Food expenditure comprises a large share of the spending of poor households, making them relatively more vulnerable to the impacts of food price inflation. This relationship between a household’s food security status and its purchasing power is far from static; it changes over time (Aliber, 2009; Romer-Lovendal and Knowles, 2006). All other factors remaining constant, changes in income alter the quantity and quality of foods purchased and consumed. Price movements of food and non-food items also affect the ability to buy food. For example to cope with rapid food inflation, a household could cut its food purchases and adjust its consumption patterns. Typical coping strategies include: buy a smaller quantity of food, switch to different types of food, reduce dietary diversity and skip meals (Oldewage-Theron et al., 2006). Aliber (2009) pointed out that those high dependency ratios mean that losing an income-earning opportunity can make a household that might have been food-secure into one that is not.

NEPAD (2005) adds that food security requires an available and reliable food supply at all times. At the global, regional and national levels, food supply can be affected by climate, disasters, war, civil unrest, population growth, lack of effective agricultural practices, and restrictions to trade. Government initiatives that encourage a policy environment based on macroeconomic stability and competitive markets can improve food availability. At the community level, food security is essentially a matter of access to food. Insecurity can be temporary or chronic. It may vary with age, status, gender income, geographic location and ethnicity. Poverty is the main cause. Sustainable progress in poverty reduction is critical to improve access to food. Individuals need access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. They need adequate health services, and a healthy and secure environment, including a safe water supply. Food security is therefore closely linked to the economic and social health of a nation, society and individual.

In 2006, the United State Department of Agriculture, (USDA) introduced new language to describe ranges of severity of food insecurity. USDA made these changes in response to recommendations by an expert panel convened at USDA’s request by the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academies. Even though new labels were introduced, the methods used to assess households’ food security remained unchanged, so statistics for 2005 and later years are directly comparable with those for earlier years for the corresponding categories. The CNSTAT panel also recommended that USDA make a clear and explicit distinction between food insecurity and hunger. According to the report:

- Food insecurity—the condition assessed in the food security survey and represented in USDA food security reports—is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.
- Hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.

The word "hunger," the panel stated in its final report, "...should refer to a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation." To measure
hunger in this sense would require collection of more detailed and extensive information on physiological experiences of individual household members than could be accomplished effectively in the context of the CPS. The panel recommended, therefore, that new methods be developed to measure hunger and that a national assessment of hunger is conducted using an appropriate survey of individuals rather than a survey of households.

The CNSTAT panel also recommended that USDA consider alternative labels to convey the severity of food insecurity without using the word "hunger," since hunger is not adequately assessed in the food security survey. USDA concurred with this recommendation and, accordingly, introduced the new labels "low food security" and "very low food security" in 2006. In order add currency to its report, USDA identified the major features of Households With Very Low Food Security. Conditions reported by households with very low food security are compared with those reported by food-secure households and by households with low (but not very low) food security in the following graph:

**Percentage of households reporting indicators of adult food insecurity, by food security status, 2012**

![Graph showing percentage of households reporting indicators of adult food insecurity, by food security status, 2012](image)


The defining characteristics of very low food security is that, at times during the year, the food intake of household members is reduced and their normal eating patterns are disrupted because the household lacks money and other resources for food. Very low food security can be
characterized in terms of the conditions that households in this category typically report in the annual food security survey. The survey identified as follows:

- 99 percent reported having worried that their food would run out before they got money to buy more.
- 97 percent reported that the food they bought just did not last and they did not have money to get more.
- 94 percent reported that they could not afford to eat balanced meals.
- 96 percent reported that an adult had cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food.
- 89 percent reported that this had occurred in 3 or more months.
- 95 percent of respondents reported that they had eaten less than they felt they should because there was not enough money for food.
- 68 percent of respondents reported that they had been hungry but did not eat because they could not afford enough food.
- 47 percent of respondents reported having lost weight because they did not have enough money for food.
- 29 percent reported that an adult did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.
- 23 percent reported that this had occurred in 3 or more months.

All households without children that were classified as having very low food security reported at least six of these conditions, and 66 percent reported seven or more. Food-insecure conditions in households with children followed a similar pattern.

Food insecurity is the most broadly-used measure of food deprivation in the United States. The USDA defines food insecurity as meaning “consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” Acceptable shorthand terms for food insecurity are “hungry, or at risk of hunger,” and “hungry, or faced the threat of hunger.” Food insecurity can also accurately be described as “a financial juggling act, where sometimes the food ball gets dropped” (The Texas Food Bank Network, 2014). The organization goes on to itemize what “food insecure” does not mean to include the underlisted:

- Food insecurity is not “the government’s definition of hunger.” It is a broader term that captures outright hunger and the coping mechanisms that households use to avoid hunger.
- Food insecurity is a household situation, not an individual situation. While food insecurity affects everyone in a household, it may affect them differently. Therefore it is not correct to state that specific individuals in a food insecure household (such as children) definitely experience outright hunger or specific coping mechanisms. Rather than describing these individuals as being “food insecure”, they should be referred to as “living in a food insecure home.”
- Food insecurity is a year-long measure. Therefore, it is not correct to assert that every food insecure household is experiencing food insecurity “right now,” will experience hunger “tonight” or “does not know where their next meal is coming from.” Research shows that food insecurity tends to be episodic and often cyclical.
- Food insecurity does not mean that a household lacks access to grocery stores, lives in a “food desert,” or does not have time to shop/cook. It only refers to lack of food access based on financial and other material resources.

The physical factors play a large role in determining the type of activities that can be undertaken by the urban households. Government policies, on the other hand, have a strong effect on the design and implementation of household food security interventions. Likewise, the presence of social conflict expressed in terms of mistrust of other social groups or even outright violence, is also an important factor in the design and implementation of interventions in a given region.
Olagunju, et al (2012) suggest that in order to combat threats of famine and pervasive poverty thereby ensuring food security for its population, the Nigeria Government strategy has rested on increasing the availability of food grains through significant investments in agricultural technologies (high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizer), services (extension, credit, inputs), and rural infrastructure (roads, markets).

For our purpose, we are adopting the FAO (2013) definition of food insecurity. According to the document, it is a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity, poor conditions of health and sanitation and inappropriate care and feeding practices are the major causes of poor nutritional status. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory.

**Causes and Consequences Food Insecurity in Nigeria: A Thematic Exposition**

According to (Maxwell, 1998), the phenomenon of urban food insecurity has been attributed to the following interconnected factors: Income insecurity making an individual or household unable to purchase sufficient food or food with adequate nutrient content to assure food security; spatial factors such as living in a neighbourhood without an affordable grocery store, markets or other outlets; disproportionate income allocation to other areas, such as rent, leaving an insufficient budget for food; and isolation, loss of autonomy or a lack of a social network. These sources of food insecurity are not related to food availability. Instead, hunger is most often attributed to problems of distribution, with gaps increasing between poor and rich countries as well as between the poor and rich within countries.

Income inequality is one source of food insecurity common to countries in the developed and developing world. Other common perpetrators of food insecurity in developed countries are unemployment and the welfare crisis (Riches, 1998). For instance, for many Canadians, the increasing commodification of food supplies is removing the ability to access adequate and nutritious sustenance. Continued lack of recognition in social policy discourse suggests that these trends are likely to persist (Koc & Dahlberg, 1999).

Mrs. Ayomide, a vendor at Iyana Ipaja market told THISDAY that since the beginning of the year, prices of pepper and tomatoes have gone up geometrically. She explained thus:

We cannot explain what is actually happening; all we see is that prices go up every day. You cannot foretell what the price of anything will be by tomorrow, what you know is the last price at which you bought it. It was not like this in the past. You just cannot predict prices and this affects our planning. This morning I had to use two tomato-paste, each sold for N40 with small dried pepper to make my stew since the cost of pepper has gone up. True, most consumers have now resorted to using pepper mixed in tomatoes paste to cook their soups because it is more economical (Ekah, et.a,2014:52).

Mallam Shittu who has been bringing tomatoes to Lagos for over 10 years also told THISDAY that a basket of tomatoes that sold for between N300 and N500 about 10 years ago now goes for between N7000 and N9000. According to him:

The prices of tomatoes, onions and pepper have continued to rise since the beginning of the year. This truly, has been a bad year because of high cost of transportation, increase in fuel price and farmers’ inability to access their farms owing to Boko Haram insurgency. Shittu pleaded with the government to find quick solution to the insurgency going on in the North as well as doing something about the fuel price. "If this is done, things would be a lot better, because we are the ones suffering (Ekah, et.al,2014:52)."
At Shomolu market in Lagos, the situation is the same. A vendor, Ajoke Samseeden said: "I no longer sell pepper of fifty naira, because there is no gain on it" (Ekah, et.al, 2014:52). She added that a tray of pepper now costs one hundred naira, which is double its usual cost. Another trader, Mrs. Chikezie said the high price of the perishable item is attributed to the fact that it’s raining season and as such the goods are usually expensive. She added that climate change cannot be ignored as well.

According to the newly-released World Bank’s Food Price Watch, (2014), Food price shocks can be responsible for the origination and continuation of conflict and, more generally, political instability. Increasing empirical evidence shows that international food prices and the domestic pass through to local markets of these international prices has a significant role in all types of conflict, from interstate wars to civil wars, regime breakdowns, and communal violence. The World Bank reports that in 51 riots in 37 countries over the last eight years, food was the principal consideration. In the February 2008 food riot in Cameroon, for example, between 24 and 100 individuals were killed and 1,671 were arrested in riots that reportedly paralyzed the capital. The riot was triggered by frustrations over rising food and fuel costs. In Buenos Aires in 2012, teenagers ransacked and robbed working-class neighborhood grocery stores in rioting that left 22 dead and more than 200 injured. In 2009, 20 people were trampled to death in a food riot in Pakistan. And as Nigerian farmers in the North are having difficulty accessing their farms owing to insurgency in that part of the country coupled with climate change effect on agriculture produce, there may be reason for fear of the unknown.

The frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers boils down to ‘pasture and water’. According to spokesperson of Miyetti Allah, an association of the herdsmen in a recent interview with an online newspaper, Secretary General of the association, Muhammed Bello, said “It is a conflict basically about resource use...It is the issue of pasture and water”(Tyohmba, 2014:34). He, however, admitted the conflict has recently been infused with politics, legal issues, religion and ethnicity. But he expressed conviction that if the resource use conflict is solved, the clashes would go away. According to him, neglect of agricultural development and Nigeria’s inability to regulate influx of foreign herdsmen has contributed immensely to the buildup of the crises that now engulfs Nigeria’s arable graze-lands. He recommended the revival of the “jangali” (cattle tax) system, as well as other measures to curb the growing clashes.

Undoubtedly, the devastating effect of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North is having its impact on other states in the country, especially when it has to do with the supply of foodstuffs. Particularly affected food items are pepper and tomatoes, which mostly come from the Northern states. The supply of these two major food items, which happen to be part of every delicacy in an average home, is in short supply, especially in Lagos where a handful is sold at a very costly price. This therefore implies that the insurgency in the North has not only caused scarcity of certain commodities but has also affected the prices of these commodities in the market.

In fact, cost of living has never been so high, and the masses are really complaining about the high cost of essential foodstuffs. Mrs. Stella Udoka, a housewife who resides in Agege area of Lagos State said she had been buying tomatoes and assorted peppers that could make a pot of stew that could last for at least three days for her family of five at the price ranging between N250 and N300, but these days she coughs out between N900 and N1000 before she can make a stew that hardly lasts for three days. According to her, “before now I could make a good stew with tomatoes and pepper worth N250 or N300 but now I must buy between N900 and N1000 and with that I can only manage to make a pot of stew that would last for three days. It has never been this costly before” (Ekah, et. al, 2014).

At the popular Ile-Epo market along Lagos –Abeokuta Expressway, a small bowl of tomatoes that sold for N200 now costs N500.00. Mrs. Oyinlola, a pepper vendor at Akowonjo-Egbeda market explained to Thisday why she has not been able to buy more pepper to refill her stock. She said:
The Mallams that travel home to bring pepper to Lagos are scared to go home because of the insurgency going on in the North. Even the farmers that grow them don’t go to their farms anymore because they fear they might be kidnapped or killed. Those who are courageous enough to go only managed to bring little and it is not enough to go round for us their customers. A basket of pepper which was sold at the rate of N4000-N5000 (depending on the quality of the pepper) is now being sold for N8000 including transport charges as well and people who are lucky to get it earn little or no gain after they have been sold in retail (Osagie, 2013:24).

Today, most developing countries like Nigeria are net food importers, and their dependence on imports is growing. In the case of rice, since the implementation of high tariffs for rice importation, legal imports into the country have come to a standstill, creating a massive demand from staple consumers. In the absence of local paddy production to meet this demand, smugglers have been having a free ride, pumping rice into the country through the borders. The neighbouring countries including Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Benin have zero or negligible duties, thereby acting as conduits for the illegal trade of rice into Nigeria. It is reported that more than 2.5 million tonnes of rice was imported into these countries since Nigeria’s implementation of the new tariffs at 110 per cent (Tyohomba, 2014:34).

Most of this volume found its way into Nigeria through the porous borders. For instance, Benin imported in excess of 1.7 million tonnes of rice, for a population of just 10 million people, several times more than their average consumption clearly indicating conduit operations. As a result, the federal government and terminal operators are losing billions of naira in unpaid custom duty and levies, as well as handling charges. The Deputy Comptroller General of Customs (DCG) in charge of Enforcement, Saka Yinusa, recently said the importation should be through approved seaports to ensure adequate payment of import duties, levies and other charges. He disclosed that Nigeria lost estimated N1 billion on contraband rice daily, which translated to N356 billion yearly. The smugglers also often engage the customs officers on gun duels, resulting in loss of officers on government duty (Ekah, et al., 2014:52).

The farmers have their own set of problems and have not been able to adequately respond in meeting the demand caused by the abrupt stoppage of imports of finished rice. A recent report suggests that the rampant smuggling further compounded the woes of local rice millers operating in a high cost environment - devoid of infrastructure such as potable water, power and good road networks - with sparse funding. The nation is also reeling from the severe impact caused by the Boko Haram activities. It has been reported that in Borno, Muhammed Namadi, the Borno State Farmers Association chairman said: "Hundreds of farmers have been killed or forced to abandon rice and other crops ready for harvesting or just planted"(The Sun editorial, 2014:14). He spoke in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital and a former insurgent stronghold. Without immediate relief, farmers in Borno, who already live with abject poverty, insecurity and isolation, could also face widespread hunger. "We have suffered a great deal as farmers in the last three years," Namadi said, asking the state to provide farmers with money and equipment. "Many young and old farmers have been forced to leave their farms." Nearly 20,000 farmers have been driven from their land by both the insurgency and the military crackdown since Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in May declared a state of emergency in Borno and two other northeastern states, according to the Borno state agriculture commission. Entire villages have been cut off from their farmlands by military roadblocks and insurgents increasingly operate in the countryside.

In June, the Chad Basin Development Authority reported that 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of rice paddies had been abandoned at the peak of harvesting season. Large-scale investments made into the farming and milling industries by private businesses are also jeopardy, following Customs’ inability to protect the industry from the vagaries of smugglers. Small farmers consume most of the paddy produced in the nation on a sustenance basis. Several rice
mills in the country have been fully or partially shut down due to lack of paddy supply, leading to unemployment and mounting losses for the entrepreneurs. These include Olam Nigeria, Ebony Agro Industries Limited, Ashi, Mewa, and Umza rice processing mills, and Popular Foods (Ekah, et al., 2014:52).

The new agricultural policy that was aimed at protecting the local rice industry interests seems now to be helping smugglers make a fortune. The millers face unfair competition from smugglers, making their large investments unviable and effectively stalling any new expansion plans in the country. To elaborate, the cost of Indian origin parboiled rice is around ₦70,429 per MT and Thailand rice is around ₦90,083 per MT. Comparatively, rice paddy in Kano is at a high ₦78,618 per MT, while in other places like Ebonyi, it’s at a prohibitive ₦88,446 per MT. The price to a consumer in Lagos therefore of local finished rice is around N 16,000 per 50kg, whereas the imported rice was being sold at an affordable N 8,000 per Kg, until the tariffs were increased significantly (Ekah, et al., 2014:52).

Further in a recent media report, The Managing Director, Attajiri Rice Mill Sokoto, Alhaji Nura Attajiri, said:

Most of the people that collect agricultural loans from government for paddy rice production are not genuine farmers. I strongly believe that it will take some time for Nigerian farmers to meet local demand and this can be achieved only if government is determined to put in mechanisms to ensure that only genuine farmers are empowered (Ekah, et al., 2014:52).

Pertinently, the President, Rice Distributors Association of Nigeria (RIDAN), Esther Olufunmilayo, urged government to review the impact of its present policy on the economy, arguing that tariff hike imposition without tangible transformation of the local rice value chain defeats government’s rice self-sufficiency goal. The reality is that the increase in import tariffs for rice has not made any significant impact on paddy production. The rice millers are going out of business, the consumers are suffering from lack of affordable supply, and the federal government is losing out heavily on revenues whilst the smugglers thrive prosperously. The federal government needs to act expeditiously to enhance availability of essential food products through legal channels at affordable prices.

Combined with persistent constraints, from fiscal to physical, this dependence results in food insecurity for large sectors of the population, particularly the urban poor (Singer, 1997). Population growth has also been linked to food insecurity. The current population of the Horn of Africa (HOA), currently at over 100 millions, has doubled since 1974 and is expected to increase by 40% by 2015. The increase is putting intense pressure on scarce natural resources and has resulted in growing urban migration. Despite this, vulnerable people experiencing food insecurity live primarily in rural areas. They have little political leverage, live in scattered and difficult to reach rears, and are left to deal with extreme climate conditions and a fragile ecosystem (NEPAD, 2005).

Nigeria’s economic performance has not been impressive over the past few decades. The trend of investment has shown performance below expectation; available data show the growth rate in fixed capital formation for 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995 were 0.16 percent, 0.38 percent, 0.05 percent and 0.35 percent respectively. The situation further worsened with negative growth rates-0.06,-0.08,-0.1 percent for 1998, 1999 and 2002, respectively. This may have largely been due to the unstable macro-economic and political environment during these periods. The low rate of investment may also have been due to poor level of savings as the growth rates in savings over the same period (1998 and 1999) were negative, -1.29 per cent and 5.16 percent respectively. A review of population indicators in Nigeria shows that Nigerians population has more than doubled since 1960. Presently, based on the last census results (2006), Nigeria’s population is over 140 million, showing annual estimated growth rate of over 3 per cent. The reality of this situation might not necessarily be with the absolute size of the population but, with the ability of the
economy to grow commensurably and sustainable. It is then a fact that the rate of population increase in Nigeria is clearly unsustainable and directly and indirectly affects macroeconomic variables and performance.

The farming sector itself needs critical assessment. Apart from the fact that the farmers are under-earning, they are not cultivating enough; there are still enough lands not cultivated. There are a lot of issues that need resolution. Manpower is one of the issues. The older farmers are dying out, and it will be great if farming becomes a popular vocation among the youths. That should be a major structural objective we should be picking as a nation. It also requires some government policies; the use of instrument to manipulate, to control the environment. We are talking of running a free economy that means handwork; everything must run on its own. There is need to bring in a centralised planning; the communist thought of planning everything centrally – what government used to do and which we are moving away from. Government needs to look at the whole picture because the farmers in their small scale cannot see the whole picture; they can see what they farm out. But sometimes it is better when there is more information available to them, if the government helps them to decide what to plant and provide information on soil and market. Government needs to intervene with purchase; that is why government needs to buy or guarantee certain outputs. These are elements of central planning which will help achieve free economy. In advanced countries, government intervenes in the agriculture sector because of the need to put agriculture above all other sectors. There should be partnership between government and all other players in the agriculture sector. We have to move away from where government just tells people what to do; government must be involved and attend to needs.

Certain basic infrastructure in developed countries are lacking in Nigeria. Presently, we are still talking about power; it is basic. A lot of rural activities are based on roads, water. Certain basic infrastructure, which should not be the business of the farmers are not in place. There are some areas that are duty of farmers; that is why you see some of the farmers have become advocates of farmers. If the farmers do not give out output, farmers do not have anything. For instance, Boko Haram has stopped the flow of beans, which we need. Food processing industry should be a secured sector because of its position in the hierarchy of human needs. There should be a market that drives it, where both local and foreign producers can compete and the buyers decide by quality and not price. Farmers are subjected to the hardship that people are complaining of because they are the manufacturing industry for the agricultural products. Farmers are in the agricultural chain, but the manufacturing environment is not conducive for them. They are faced by multi-taxation and unfavourable government policies. With interest rate at 20 per cent on paper, if you go and borrow, you end up with about 30 per cent. Foreign companies will come with cheaper products because of this. The environment is very bad for food processing.

**Recommendations**

Food security is attained when all people at all times have physical or economic access to sufficiently safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Tollens, 2000). In addition, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) identified it as a world without hunger where social safety nets ensure that those who lack resources still get enough to eat (FAO, 2007). This implied that food security critically depends more on socio-climatic conditions, and access to food, rather than the production or physical availability of food.

The ability of any nation to effectively address climate change and food security for growth and development depends a great deal on the effectiveness of that nation’s system of innovation. This means that key actors and stakeholders in different universities and public research institutes, as well as Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the private sector must work together in synergy to come up with priority areas of Research and Development (R & D) activities and proffers solutions through the conduct of inter-disciplinary research in the areas of climate change and food security.
Government efforts in initiating a bill on climate change are commendable, but actions need be urgently expedited in passing the bill into law. Having said this, it is imperative to state here that the new Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy approved by President Goodluck Jonathan institutionalized the development, deployment, diffusion and application of eco-friendly energy, agriculture, biological and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the national economy. The policy is explicit on human capacity development, technology diffusion and transfer in requisite technologies which can be used to address climate change and food security concerns. The STI-policy articulates, among other innovative ideas, a robust and reliable funding mechanism (the National Research and Innovation Fund) to drive cutting-edge R & D activities. This fund could be utilized among other areas, to strengthen national capabilities in R & D with specific reference to climate change and food security issues. In this regard, it is imperative for government and other key national stakeholders to be fully committed to the implementation of the new STI policy to effectively drive national capabilities in the management of environmental change and food security challenges. Institutions of higher learning should put appropriate policy measures in place to enhance their capacity to develop suitable human capital that can develop new technologies, manage and use existing appropriate technologies for climate change mitigation/adaptation and food security. It is recognized that climate change and food security issues are global concerns, hence as a point of priority, government and other key stakeholders operating within the framework of the national system to innovation must develop national strategies to address these issues in sync with the global best efforts.

Government and analysts believe that the rising livestock population and encroachment on grazing lands were some of the causes of the clashes. Statistics have shown that in Nigeria, only 141 grazing reserves have been gazettes with less than 20 equipped with resources for pastoralists. A proposed National grazing Route and Reserve Commission, if established, would acquire and manage parcels of land across the 36 states of Nigeria for the purpose of providing pastures for these nomads and their herds of cattle. This proposal will help in returning farmers to their farm lands thereby check mating food insecurity in Nigeria. States affected by these frequent clashes are making moves to find lasting solutions, just as similar efforts are being made at the federal level.

In Kwara state recently, the government reportedly earmarked N220 million for the creation of grazing reserves in the state, as part of efforts to address the incessant clashes between herdsmen and farmers. The state commissioner for agriculture and natural resources, Anthony Towoju, said that the grazing reserves would be created in the three senatorial districts of the state while nine stock roots were also to be spread across the state. The commissioner said that the grazing reserves would be equipped with veterinary clinics among other livestock services that would be provide. He said that the reserves would be created in Alapa, Asa local government area of the state to serve the Kwara Central, while that of Kwara north will be created at Lata, Patigi Local Government with the one for Kwara South to be located at Babanloma in Ifelodun local government area of the state. The new stock roots, the commissioner stated would cover several communities. Towoju said the government would also expand the existing Gidan Maigida, a settlement currently accommodating over 100 herdsmen, to accommodate more readers.

The commissioner, who expressed the hope that the measure would end the incessant clashes between farmers and herdsmen, noted that the state was the first to create grazing reserves. At the federal level, several efforts are being made, by both government and the National Assembly.

Last month, the House of Representatives said it was working on a bill to facilitate an end to incessant conflicts between herdsmen and arable farmers in the country. Though he did not give details of the bill, Vice Chairman of he house committee on agriculture, hon. Munir Danagundi, who gave his hint in Abuja in an interview with newsmen, said he was optimistic that the bill would go a long way in promoting a cordial relationship between arable farmers and
herdsmen. This is one of the ways through which we can resolve conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. Danagundi said in the 1970s there were demarcated grazing reserves and stock routes across the country, which he said, helped in preventing conflicts between herdsmen and arable farmers. The lawmaker said unfortunately the stock routes and grazing reserves were encroached into resulting in the clashes between the two parties.

Also, delegates to the on-going National Conference from the North-central zone of the country have made a case for the establishment of a National Grazing Reserves Commission. The delegates in a memorandum, which was jointly sponsored by Senator Iyorchia Ayu and Magdalyne Mbadzendar Dura, both delegates representing North Central and Benue State, said if the recommendation sails through, would specifically provide for the establishment, preservation and control of national grazing reserves and livestock routes. Ayu, a former President of the Senate, in a letter copied to the National Conference committees on agriculture, national security and law, judiciary, human rights and legal reforms, infirming them off the development, however hinged the recommendation on the recent clashes involving Fulani herdsmen and farmers across the country, where several people were reportedly killed.

In recent times, Nigeria has recorded violent conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers across the country, leading in most cases to loss of lives, properties and displacement of the farmers. These conflicts have been actuated by the continuous search for green pastures and water by the herdsmen for their livestock.

**Conclusion**

The current improvement is a policy framework, but things are yet to be translated at the farmers’ level. First of all, we need a correct policy framework. It is only now that we have a Minister that is looking at the true picture of agriculture and agricultural food chain as well as the framework, proposing something better, though it will take time before we see it. Implementation is different. There might be a good idea, but implementation is a different thing; it is still proposed. The programme is targeted at all farmers. The large-scale farmers might be engaged quicker or faster than the small-scale farmers. The small-scale farmers need to be organised and plug into government programmes. Governments are intervening in agriculture; it is good they saw the need to come into the sector. They have some objectives they are pursuing, and if religiously pursued, it will impact the sector. Among the various sectors of the economy, that is the one that has great potential impact on development, poverty, unemployment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) creation. It will help reduce the dependence on imports.

**References**


www.Texas Food Bank Network (2014),