Impact Of Insurgency and Banditry on Food Insecurity, Farmers' Income, Households' Diet and Nutritional Status in Northeast Nigeria'

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Introduction

Research on the impact of insurgencies on food security in developing countries is limited, particularlyin the Northeast Nigeria facing critical acute food insecurity due to Boko Haram insurgency (FEWSNET, 2014). According to Imasuen (2015), insurgency can exacerbate the problem of food insecurity, limits farmers' income; increase prices of foods and may hinder utilization of nutritious food. The Boko Haram conflict had displaced about 2.2 million people in the Northeast, the vast majority–over 1.8 million in Borno State (Haruna, 2022).It is pertinent to develop mechanism to curtail the impact of food crisis to improve households' diet and nutritional status because ACAPS., (2014) estimated that some of the affected areas are at the verge of losing five children every hour.

Methods

The aim of the study was to:
1. Access the impact of insurgency on food insecurity, farmers' income and household diet and nutritional status.
2. Explore approaches to increases food security, living conditions, household diet and nutritional status.
3. Assess the potential of these approaches to positively influence food insecurity, farmers' income, household diet and nutritional status.

Triangulation methods were used in the process of data collection to enrich the robustness of the study. Data were collected on demographic characteristics and social economic conditions of farming household. The household characteristics were described based on secondary data available for the study areas. The instrument used for collecting quantitative primary data was design questionnaire. Qualitative primary data was collected through asking open ended questions to focus group. A total of 1,500 affected persons, 500 each from affected communities in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states and 1,500 non affected persons, 500 each in the non-affected communities were selected for the study. The key informants helped to give background information about the community before and after the insurgency.

Data collected was subjected to analysis using a fully integrated model of a household's optimization model of GAMS, taking into consideration agricultural production, sales/purchases, and dietary intake that computes nutrient adequacy based on the composition and quantity of each food. GAMS modeling was used to capture insurgency -nutrition linkages at the household level.
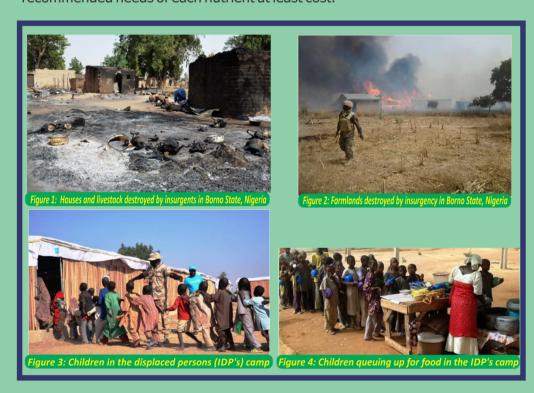
Finding and interpretation

The activities of the Boko Haram insurgency have made it impossible for the farmers to grow food and feed themselves due to insecurity. This development has led to inadequate food availability, accessibility, and consumption of nutritious food, as well as rise in prices of stable foods and dairy products in the study area. The most devastating effect of the insurgencies is the rise in internally displaced persons (IDP's) and drastic reduction in food consumption from three meals to one per day. The use of GAMS analysis model increased our understanding on the potential impacts of the insurgencies. The model was used to design intervention strategies aimed at improving household diets and nutrition by combining crop production, farm household decision and nutrient composition data to compute the combination of foods that meets recommended needs of each nutrient at least cost. Different intervention strategies for mitigating the impacts of insurgencies on crop and animal production was simulated to evaluate the relative importance of the different interventions including trade-offs between economic, environmental, gender, and social consequences. Five years Strategic Response Plan was developed to cater for the immediate household needs such as food insecurity, and health of both the affected and non-affected communities.

Conclusion

The use of GAMS modeling has offered a novel and useful way to capture insurgency -nutrition linkages at the household level. The model developed and simulated has been used to compute the combination of foods that meets recommended needs of each nutrient at least cost.

Figure 1: Houses and livestock destroyed by insurgents in Borno State, Nigeria

Figure 2: Farmlands destroyed by insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria

Figure 3: Children in the displaced persons (IDP's) camp

Figure 4: Children queuing up for food in the IDP's camp

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