

INSECURITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN WUKARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE

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Abstract

The major concern of the paper was to assess the socio-economic implication of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the major factors accounting for insecurity on the socio-economic activities of women, the implications of insecurity on the socio-economic activities of women, the challenges mitigating effective security and strategies that will promote effective security and promote socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area. Relevant literatures were reviewed on the major study objectives and the conflict theory was employed for analysis. A total of 375 respondents were sampled across religious, ethnic, marital and social background and investigated on the effect of insecurity on the socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area, The findings revealed the following: the study found that farmers/herders conflict has a significant influence on security of the local government area. This implies that the major factor that influences insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area is the reoccurrence of headers/farmers conflict. On the socio-economic implications of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State, findings indicated that the major socio-economic implication of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area is its effect on farming activities and business activities of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Other findings which identify the obstacles and challenges towards ensuring security in Wukari Local Government Area were discovered to be corruption, porous borders, customs and traditions, political struggle and poor law enforcement as contributing factors.

Key words: Insecurity, Socio-Economic, Development, Women

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented plaque of crisis and insecurity, each leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties retarding socio-economic development. According to Ezeoha (2011) "Security means stability and continually of livelihood, predictability of relationships, feeling safe and belonging to a social group. Insecurity on the other hand, is the antithesis of security. It has been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or

protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention a few. All of these have been used by different people to define the concept of insecurity. These different descriptors, however, run into a common reference to a state of vulnerability to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood. Beland (2005) views insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.” It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger.

According to Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013), security is a concept that is prior to the State, and the State exists in order to provide that concept. Security is the prime responsibility of the State (Hobbes, 1996). The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended specifically states that “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Unfortunately, government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities in virtually all state of federation.

Insecurity in Nigeria is a product of several crises that have occurred in the past and present in the country ranging from political crises, insurgency, communal clashes, kidnappings, armed robbery and most recently the farmers/herders conflict that has caused serious insecurity in many parts of the country. The farmers/herders clashes for instance are occasioned by the destruction of agricultural farms by the cattle of the nomadic herdsmen. The upsurge and incessant conflicts witnessed as a result of the clashes in the tropics have resulted in loss of lives, properties and environmental degradation as also witnessed in some developed countries affecting socio-economic development (Tartes & Watt, 2005).

The struggle for political power leading to conflicts in most parts of the country has also been a cause of insecurity. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has fueled the crime rate and terrorist’s attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation’s economy and its growth, the movement for the emancipation of Biafra in the South Eastern part of the country has also been a source of insecurity. The country has also in recent times witnessed kidnappings, armed robbery, human trafficking among others that have truncated security and put the lives of the citizens at risk and in perpetual fear. These crises have led to the destruction of health facilities thereby increasing infant and maternal mortality. The destruction of schools has further deteriorated the efforts of the Federal Government to enhance the education of the girl child. Many of the victims of these crises are now found in IDP camps where they are poorly fed, dropped out of school and are at risk of contracting ailments. The effects of insecurity are especially felt by women as they are the home makers.

To address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime, the national assembly passed the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 and the federal government in the 2017 budget made a huge allocation to security, and (Ewetan, 2017). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012). Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the

daunting challenges of insecurity in Nigeria, government efforts have not produced the desired positive result. This has compelled the Nigerian government in recent time to request for foreign assistance from countries such as United States of America, Israel, and European Union countries to combat the rising waves of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Insecurity has adversely affected the socio-economic development of women discouraging investment, agricultural production, and misallocation of resources to security agents. Also, health and education provision are adversely affected when providers in this sectors work in dangerous environments. Literacy and school enrolment rates in crises regions are well below the national average. In Taraba State and Wukari Local Government Area in Particular, there are increasing cases of crises which affect socio-economic development of women, kidnapping, communal conflicts, political assassinations, as well as cult related activities among others in Wukari Local Government Area. In recent times some parts of Wukari Local Government Area were engulfed by bandit's attacks which has so much affected women's socio- economic development as reported in the national dailies. For instance, Ejembi (2011) reports that residents of Wukari are now living in fear, as the conflict draws closer to the Taraba State Capital as a result criminal have taken the advantage to perpetrate crime. The fact that the most recent attacks have all been carried out around the vicinity of the Federal University Wukari along Wukari-Zaki Biam Road, forcing all the occupants around the area including officers of the mobile police force on patrol to flee. The crimes have threatened not only the security of lives and property but also development of society due to its growing disastrous social, political and economic impact in the land. So, it is believed that in recent years, Wukari Local Government Area has witnessed an upsurge in violent killings and maiming of innocent souls with destruction of social-economic activities of women. It is in view of the above that the paper investigates insecurity and its impact on the socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The study became necessary because in spite of the adversities brought to communities by bandit's inversion, researchers have not actually done enough to address this, particularly the effect of the insecurity on socio-economic development of women in the area. This study was therefore undertaken to address the research gap.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this paper is to assess insecurity and socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State while the specific objectives included the following:

- i. To ascertain the factors influencing insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State

- ii. To assess the implications of insecurity on the Socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State
- iii. To examine the challenges that are inhibiting security in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State
- iv. To suggest ways to ensure security in order to enhance the socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Conceptual Clarifications

Insecurity: The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. In the context of this paper insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property

Development: Chandler (2007) sees development as a broader concept that recognizes psychological and material factors that measure human well-being. Development therefore is a multifaceted phenomenon and man centered. It is the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials, and develop the knowledge capacity to exploit nature to meet daily human needs (Rodney, 1972; Nnoli, 1981; Ake, 2001). The transformation of the society and the emergence of new social and economic organizations are critical indicators of development (Stiglitz cited in Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).

Socio-Economic Development: Socio-economic development is a product of development and can be defined as the process of social and economic transformation in a society. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Thus, socio-economic development is made up of processes caused by exogenous and endogenous factors which determine the course and direction of the development. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society. Causes of socio-economic impacts are, for example, new technologies, changes in laws, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes.

Review of Related Literatures

Factors Influencing Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity is a result of malignant environment dominated by man's insensitivity to man. Many people in authority take advantage of their positions to force down policies that impoverish 'the many' in so much as it benefits them and a few others. The petroleum subsidy in Nigeria can be used as a point to justify the above statement. All Nigerians (the rich and the poor) use petrol either for generators to power electricity for household uses factories or farms. All Nigerians travel or transport products including food with fuel powered engines. Those who must drink clean water, provide boreholes for themselves but with fuel. Even the educational institutions need power and power is more readily supplied through generators using diesel or fuel. So, fuel is a product everybody consumes in Nigeria (directly or indirectly). Meanwhile all the refineries in Nigeria are said to be in a state of disrepair and fuel which is a by-product of crude oil (Nigeria's main product) is imported. Raising the cost of a product like fuel too high will impact negatively on the welfare of all Nigerians especially the poor and this is capable of generating a social revolt resulting to insecurity.

High handedness or arbitrariness was associated with the military but it is now clear that the problem of Nigeria is not uniform (that is, military rule) but the psychology of Nigerians, because many Nigerians see themselves as adventurers with the business called Nigeria and so are concerned mainly with how much enters their pockets no matter how that happens. (Punch of September 14, 2011). Ethnicity and corruption are different manifestations of the afore-mentioned situation. And this could be pushed to high levels (Joseph, 2011). The justice delivery system also does not encourage the fight against insecurity. Offenders of grievous cases may get very light sentences where they are not completely let go. How does one reconcile a situation where people caught with fresh human skull and are charged to court, only to be released on bail at \$1000 equivalent? In fact, there was a case where a senior military officer let go two 'high profile' suspects of the Boko Haram sect, who were said to have clues necessary to stem the state of insecurity. Those suspects were arrested and put in the care of the officer for maximum security but the officer allowed them to escape. The officer was charged to court and the president of the Court martial found him guilty but set him free. According to the President of the Court Martial;

It was your willingness to co-operate with other security agencies to accept suspects for safe keeping with good intentions, which had led to this unfortunate incident of escape... the court has decided to award you three months loss of seniority in your present rank of Brigadier General... you may now take your leave, (Abdulsalami, 2011).

Ethno-religious conflicts: These have arisen from distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner, (2007), Salawu (2010) and Igbuzor, (2011) identified ethno-religious conflict as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship

between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity), present the country with a major security challenge. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Adagba, et al, 2012).

The farmers and headers conflict is also one of the major intergroup conflicts that has disrupted security in several parts of the country recently. Every farming system has a boundary which separates it from the larger system that makes up the environment. Conflicts and violent clashes between farmers and nomadic cattle herders have been a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa (Tonah, 2006). The boundary represents the limits in the larger system. Farmers regularly compete with nomadic herders for farmland, pastures, water, trees and the use of rangeland in general (Akpaki, 2002).

In Nigeria, most herdsmen do not own land but graze their livestock in host communities (Awogbade, 1987). While a few have adopted the more sedentary type of animal husbandry, the increasing crises between farmers and nomadic herdsmen presupposes that grazing is a major means of animal rearing in Nigeria. The sedentary type of animal husbandry also proves to be more expensive, difficult to manage and inefficient for the rapid growing market of an ever-increasing Nigerian population. However, over the years, the presence of the nomads and their cattle has provoked violent clashes in several communities across the country. Apart from the language and cultural barriers which usually spots out the nomads as strangers, the audacity with which they shepherd their flocks to graze on available vegetation on their route has often attracted protests from the host communities. This scenario has given rise to an unhealthy rivalry between farmers and herdsmen leading to violence, loss of lives and property. In some cases, a good number of community residents, mostly farmers are wiped out and those fortunate to escape have become refugees in other places.

In recent times, the issue of violent clashes and instability between farmers and nomadic herdsmen across the regions in Nigeria has become a major focus to the Nigerian Government, International and National or indigenous development organizations.

Unemployment/Poverty: As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crime (Adagba, et al, 2012). Nwagbosa (2012) argued that the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address

challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country.

Terrorism: At the most proximate and least disputable level, terrorism is the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today, and its primary bases and sources of support have generally been located in religious fanaticism and intolerance particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism which is a global phenomenon where no one is safe was defined by Sampson and Onuoha (2011) as “the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts”. A good example of terrorism in Nigeria is an Islamic insurgence with a political undertone by a faceless group based in the Northern region of the country, which called itself Boko Haram, which takes into account the legitimate political, social and economic grievances of the Northern population. Nigeria has lost up to 1000 lives in the North since 2009 to the insurgency of this infamous Islamic sect, Boko Haram.

Effects of insecurity on Socio-Economic Development of Women

Insecurity has been identified as one of the obstacles to sustainable development (Call, 2000, Ujah and Eboh, 2006, Igbuzor, 2011). The term sustainable development was popularized in a report by the Brundtland Commission published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. In the report, sustainable development was defined as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN, 2010). Since then, the concept has been variously conceived in terms of vision expression, value change, moral development, social reorganization or transformational process toward a desired future or better world (Gladwin et al, 1995). In their view, development is unsustainable when an enlargement of human choice excludes, disconnects, promotes inequity, reflects imprudence or raises insecurity. Development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful coexistence by people. It is people who interact to carry out economic activities through their businesses. Businesses are the vehicle for economic activities that would lead to national economic development. It therefore follows those businesses play a great role in the process of development and such role can be hampered in the absence of adequate security as we now find in Nigeria.

Development of a more balanced security strategy to counter violent crimes and local terrorism

This is one of the views of Reddick (Oluwarotimi, 2012). By this, she must have meant a strategy that is all inclusive and involving a combination of methods that would not only break their communication and interactive network, but also disarm them of resources by tracking their

information inflow and resource mobility through higher technology that can also help to locate their base, their sponsors and intelligence power houses and systems (intelligence sources), identifying and isolating them for easy pick.

All the solution measures presented above are summarized in the view of Taekyoon (2009), who from a broader context of insecurity in developing countries contends that the solution to insecurity in developing countries is the maximization of governability. In his view, maximizing governability is the key to achieving security. To maximize governability, he points out three conditions as fundamental: (i) establishment of democratic governance (ii) promotion of economic development, and (iii) enhancement of institutional capacity to strengthen the two preceding conditions. He further explained that the establishment and consolidation of democratic governance is a necessary condition to reduce the incidence of ethnic and religious turmoil in developing world societies. We say here that this is very true for Nigeria. This is because, once democratic institutions are established, they contribute to slowing down ethnic conflicts by filtering them through democratic processes to find a way of narrowing widened gaps between different ethnic groups. The promotion of economic development also enhances governability. The establishment of developmental projects tailored to the needs of the people would improve societal welfare and reduce the extent of social and economic insecurity which consequently would reduce social conflicts and aggression. Once people's needs are met, they become naturally less agitated and confrontational, and the tendency to want to use illicit and criminal means to ensure their survival or try to force government to behave in certain ways or make certain decisions, would be reduced.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on Conflict theory. Conflict Theorist are of the view that there are groups in the society that have different interests. In this regard they believe that social arrangement will tend to benefit some groups at the expense of others. This is because of existence of the different interests; the potentials and the likelihood of conflict is always present. According to this theory, some groups come to dominate others and to win for themselves a disproportionate share of the society's political power, which includes wealth and privileges in the society at the expense of the less powerful (women) ones. They also incriminate the activities of the less powerful while they protect that of the powerful persons. Such situation according to this theory creates violence which often lead to conflicts resulting to insecurity. The theory is of the view that, the masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion at the hands of those in power. This perspective emphasizes social control, not consensus and conformity. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over others with inequality and power struggles resulting. There is great attention paid to class, race, and gender in this perspective because they are seen as the grounds of

the most pertinent and enduring struggles in society which often lead to insecurity (Anderson and Taylor, 2009).

According to the theory, insecurity in Nigeria abridges the basic right of citizens especially women and children as the various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. However the activities of citizens aimed at maintaining the resistance leads to increased escalation of violence which lead to insecurity that often affect women socio-economic development in Nigeria. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over the less privileged classes resulting to power struggles. In Mill (2004) view, social structures are created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources in turn, are influenced by these structures and by the "unequal distribution of power and resources in the society" (Knapp, 1994). The powerful elite (men) in society have "emerged from the fusion of the corporate elite, the Pentagon, and the executive branch of government." Mills argued that the interests of these elite were opposed to those of the people (women). He theorized that the policies of the power elite would result in "increased escalation of conflict, which is a threat to human security"(Knapp, 1994). Conflict Theorists believed that Societies are defined by inequalities that produce conflict, rather than those that produce order and consensus. This conflict based on inequality can only be overcome through a fundamental transformation of the existing relations in the society, and is a product of new social relations.

Critics of the conflict theory point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the women, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order. The strength of the theory lies in its recognition that insecurity will hinder socio-economic development and humanity generally. It hinders the effective utilization of human capital for national development. Based on the foregoing assumptions the theory has been adopted as a theoretical guide for the study.

Methodology

The survey design was employed for study. The essence of adopting this design is based on the fact that survey is proven to be very effective in obtaining data on people's views /opinions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions on an issue. Survey thus helps in gathering vital information on the overview of Socio- economic implications of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The choice of survey design is also justified because it is appropriate to the study objectives, which is concerned with obtaining opinions, attitudes and beliefs of group of people (sample). Justifying the choice of the research design (survey) has advantages, which is better than any other method of research design. The sample size was

calculated based on the formula by Taro Yamane (1967). Using Taro Yamane (1967) formula 400 respondents were selected in the Local Government Area for the study. The method of selection cut across the eleven council wards

Data Presentation

Table 1: Showing Socio-Demographic Attributes of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	50	13.3
Female	325	86.7
Total	375	100
B: Age		
18-30	40	10.7
31-45	171	45.6
46 and above	164	43.7
Total	375	100
C: Marital Status		
Single	181	48.3
Married	190	50.1
Others	4	1.0
Total	375	100
D: Religious Affiliation		
Christianity	202	53.9
Islam	165	44
Others	8	2.1
Total	375	100
E: Educational Qualification		
Primary Level	98	26.1
Secondary Level	203	54.1
Tertiary Level	30	8
Others	44	11
Total	375	100
F: Occupation		
Farmers	106	28.3
Traders	167	44.5
Civil/Public Servants	60	16
Others	42	11.
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

Tables 2: Awareness of respondents on the factors that Influences Insecurity in Wukari Local Government of Taraba State

Awareness	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Aware	276	73.6
Not Aware	56	14.9
Don't Know	43	11
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The data housed in Table 2 indicating the awareness of respondents on the factors that influences insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State revealed that 276 (73.6%) of the respondent are aware of the factors influencing insecurity, while 56 (14.9%) of the total respondent were not aware and 43 (11%) were undecided.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Responses on the Awareness of Socio-economic Implication of insecurity on Women in Wukari Local Government Area

Awareness.	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Aware.	207	55.2
Not Aware	108	28.8
Don't Know	60	16
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The data presented in Table 4 revealed the respondent's awareness of the socio-economic implication of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area that 207 (55.2%) said they were aware, while 108 (28.8%) said they are not aware and 60 (16%) had no idea.

While cross validating findings of the public with that of the police how did not show any remarkable difference. An overwhelming majority agree that they are aware of the socio-economic implication of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the economic implication of insecurity on Women in Wukari Local Government Area

Economic implication.	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Destruction of farm crops	269	71.7
Disruption and Destruction of Businesses	104	21.7
Don't know	2	0.5
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The data collected in the table above indicated that majority 269 (71.7%) of the respondents agree that economic implication of insecurity on Women in Wukari Local Government Area is felt majorly in the destruction of farm crops while 104 (21.7%) respondents revealed that disruption and destruction of businesses remain one of the economic implications of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area of Benue State and few 2 (0.5%) were indifferent on the question.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the social implication insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government Area

Economic Implication.	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Raping of women	301	80.3
Kidnapping of Women	39	10.4
Assassination of Women	35	9.3
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The major social implication of insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area is frequent occurrence of raped and armed robbery cases in the local government area. The data in the above table revealed that majority 301 (80.3%) pointed to raping of women as a major social implication of insecurity on women. 39 (10.4%) stressed that kidnapping of women is the major social implication and few 35 (9.3%) of the respondents however, said assassination of women as a social implication of insecurity on women.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their awareness on obstacles that hinders the curtailing of insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State

Awareness	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Aware	254	67.7
Not Aware	82	22.0
Don't Know	39	10.3
Total	375	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The data housed in Table 12 indicating the awareness of the respondents on obstacles that hinders the promotion of security in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The data revealed that 254 (67.7%) said aware, 82 (22.0%) said not aware and 39 (10.3%) said don't know.

Discussion of Findings

According to the findings of the study, farmers/herders' conflict has a significant influence on insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area. This implies that the major factor that influences insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area is the reoccurrence of farmers/herder's conflicts

A lot of homes were destroyed in Wukari Local Government Area over the years under review years. Wukari is one of the biggest LGAs in Taraba State. It has thousands of villages and one of Taraba's largest farming populations. It should also be noted that Wukari has been among the areas most attacked by bandits. Importantly, the Jukun cultural concept of a "home" differs considerably from the Western understanding and mindset. In the cultural and rural setting of Taraba State, a single thatched room can be a home to a farmer and his family. Most of these homes are easy and cheap to construct. Villages and communities are sometimes named after families who have set them up, and some of the homes may have only one or two thatched rooms. The collection of these single homes can form a community or a village. Most of the communities and villages structured in this manner remain unprotected, and sometimes far away from security outposts.

Bandits have used various tactics and strategies to kill, injure, abduct and displace farmers from their ancestral homes. In fact, evidence suggests that the sheer number of atrocities would not have been possible without a motivating ideology and a conscious and deliberate plan to permanently evict indigenous farmers from their ancestral homes. The deliberate plan is evident at three levels: The types of weapons used in Benue and other states against indigenous farmers, the nature of the atrocities committed by the Fulani herdsmen and the instrumentalization of fear against farmers.

Fulani herdsmen are reportedly involved in transporting small arms into Benue State using cows and donkeys. Sometimes these weapons are hidden in sacks of grain, beans and rice transported on the back of donkeys as they move from place to place. Security officials stationed at Wukari also confirmed the use of dangerous and sophisticated weapons by the Fulani herdsmen. According to some military sources, some of the Fulani herdsmen use Hilux Jeeps and motorcycles to carry out their attacks. The weapons in use include AK-47 assault rifles, homemade rifles, hand guns and Molotov cocktails. For example, in Wukari LGA, reports indicate that the Fulani herdsmen normally disguise themselves in military uniforms during the attacks and change back into their traditional clothes afterwards. According to a local farmer in Wukari who wished only to be named Anjov, the attackers sometimes came up around the River Benue using speed boats and usually returned to neighboring Plateau State using the same boats. By the time security forces were drafted to the location, the attackers had completed the killings and destruction of properties and had retreated. Because of the guerilla nature of the attacks, it was difficult for the villagers to mobilize sufficient resistance.

This finding agreed with the earlier findings of Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner, (2007), Salawu (2010) and Igbuzor, (2011) who identified ethno-religious conflict as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and

religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity), present the country with a major security challenge. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Adagba, et al, 2012).

The second objective was to assess the implications of insecurity on the Socio-economic development of women in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The findings indicated that the major economic implication of insecurity on women in Wukari Local Government is the reduction in farming activities and the destruction and disruption of business activities in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. While the social implications of insecurity were found to include rape, assassinations and kidnapping of women in the study area. The findings are in line with Alubo (2006) who opines that, conflict has effects on material life of the people especially women in several ways. He stated that, during crises, first, food security is affected as people cannot plant their crops or they had to migrate to other safety areas far away from their farms. In either situation but particularly those forced to flee, food security becomes a major problem. In a similar vein, Anaana (2015) reported that on March 15, 2015 some herdsmen invaded Wukari Local Government Area of Benue State about 4 am and killed persons, animals, properties and crops destroyed. This confirms Wokocha (2012) view that insecurity is a harbinger of violence and sexual assault on women and children, human rights violation as well as refugee crises with their attendant challenges.

Furthermore, the study set out to also identify the obstacles and challenges towards ensuring security in Wukari Local Government Area. Findings indicated that factors like corruption, porous borders, customs and traditions, political struggle and poor law enforcement posed as challenges. The findings are in line with Obasi, (2002) who observed that corrupt security officials are known to have hired and sold weapons seized from robbers and other criminals, and have allegedly directly participated in robberies. The phenomenon has outlived military rule. In December 2002, President Olusegun Obasanjo acknowledged that most of the ammunition circulating illegally had come from state security agencies such as the military and the police. The last objective was designed to evolved solutions that will enhance security in Wukari Local Government Area

Conclusion/Recommendations

The major implication of the findings from the study is the security threat posed by the activities of herders, armed robbers, cultist and rapist on the socio-economic activities such as farming and petty trading. Factors like corruption, porous borders, customs and traditions, political struggle and poor law enforcement was also discovered to be the major stumbling block towards efforts made at

ensuring security in the study area. There is therefore no doubt that the insecurity has negative socio-economic implication on women in the society. And if all these security challenges are not eradicated timely, the entire development of women in Taraba State and Nigeria at large will remain a mirage in this twenty first century and beyond.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made in order to address the problem of insecurity and facilitate women socio-economic wellbeing.

Implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing Law: one of the major factors influencing insecurity in the state was found by the study as the crises between farmers and herders. Although the Taraba State government in addressing this menace enacted the anti-open grazing prohibition law to curtail the crises between farmers and herders, the implementation of the law has been lacking over the years. The study therefore recommends the immediate implementation of the law and the punishment of violators as this will go a long way in ending the crises therefore ensuring security in the state thereby enhancing the socio-economic development of women.

The central government must tackle the constitutional issue of citizenship rights and abolish in clear term the “indigene-settler” dichotomy as it is not only at the root cause of the Jukun-Tiv conflict but many other ethnic conflicts in Nigeria where access to political power and other resources in certain parts of the country are restricted, denied or allowed on the basis of individuals citizenship status as conventionally narrowly defined in parts of the country.

Security should be strengthened at the borders: one of the major causes of insecurity is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Most of these small arms and light used in the study area are smuggled across porous borders as such security needs to be strengthened at the borders to check the smuggling of these arms into the country. Security agencies saddled with this responsibility such as the police, customs and immigration should be provided with adequate logistics so that they can be able to curtail the influx of these arms into country.

Awareness on political Struggle: The study also discovered that the major factor that facilitates insecurity in Wukari Local Government Area is political struggle. This study thus recommends that political offices should be made less attractive. The do-or-die struggle for political power is largely because of the exceedingly lucrative nature of these offices. If the pecks of political offices are reduced and made less attractive or at least in line with the practice in other jurisdictions, it will reduce the desires to recruit thugs who help steal or sustain their mandate. Rather than make political offices more attractive and risk the bloody clashes and fraud in the fight for the offices, it is posited that professionals and technocrats should be encouraged and made more comfortable in their pricing and remuneration.

Land Reforms: crises over land disputes have been a recurrent issue in this part of the country. These crises most times are the reason for conflicts which results to insecurity. The study therefore

recommends that land ownership should be clearly spelt out in form of land reforms so that rights to land will be known to citizens in order to curtail land disputes that culminate into insecurity.

Legislations: Similarly, stiffer and efficient legislations should be enacted by the legislature to replace the obsolete ones of dealing with perpetrators of violence. This in essence will halt the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which are used to perpetuate violence thereby causing insecurity.

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