

THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ON NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract: *Insecurity has been one of the major problem facing Nigerians today and in tackling this problem to a reasonable extent, agricultural production can be used in tackling insecurity in the country. Nigeria is a country been faced by diverse security issues which include: Kidnapping in the Niger Delta region, Boko haram insurgency in the North east and the contemporary issue now which is the herdsmen killing.*

These insecurity issues are been caused by unemployment, high rate of poverty, malnutrition, political instability and corruption all the same, national Security is paramount in the development of a country and in the Nigeria case insecurity issue can be tackled through: Creation of employment, reduction of poverty, eradication of malnutrition and the deradicalisation of the youths through agriculture. Agricultural production is a very important dimension of national security.

This paper examine the relationship between Agricultural Production and National Security, ways in which national security can be achieved through agricultural production and proffer comprehensive strategies that can be used to promote National Security through agricultural production.

Keywords: *Agricultural production and National Security*

Background of the study

Growth in agricultural production is necessary not only to increase food availability and raise nutrition levels of the population; it is essential to the security of a nation. Indeed it is accepted that a prerequisite for rapid economic growth is the channeling of agricultural surplus (production in excess of own consumption) to the non-farm sector. It will not however be our purpose to analyse the way in which the agricultural sector can make a contribution to national security.

Economic insecurity, and food insecurity, can be a significant threat to personal, community and national security. At times, these links are direct and obvious, such as in 2008 when a spike in food prices led to riots and unrest in various countries. At other times, the impact is more indirect, such as the multi-year drought in Syria that turned more than half of the nation into desert and, according to the United Nations, resulted in more than 800,000 Syrians losing their entire livelihoods. The subsequent dislocation laid the ground for

the spark that caused the uprising against an oppressive dictatorship and led the country into a full scale civil war Daniel, 2016.

The increasing attention paid to food's impact on poverty, humanitarian crises, conflicts and climate change all suggest that agricultural production is a national security concern. In Nigeria, food is a much more complicated subject than it used to be. Today, policymakers must consider not only nutrition but also access to locally grown commodities, management of food waste, and the impact of commodity prices on the daily cost of food. Agricultural production both affects and is vulnerable to changes in economic stability, climate change, education and national health. Debate over "food deserts," or places without access to fresh fruits and vegetables, remain important when it comes to socio-economic indicators, and addressing the "double burden" of malnutrition in Nigeria sparks conversations about inadequate, education, and nutrition in the rural areas of Nigeria. When striving for the physical wellbeing of the public within an interdependent system, these kinds of issues surrounding food security rest at the foundation of any national security strategy. With food security on the national security agenda, international peace building interventions including those delivering food assistance could reduce the tensions of conflict and create self-reinforced resistance against the underlying sources of conflict by fostering unity and trust while building the legitimacy and capacity of the country Johanan, 2015

Although "national security" often conjures up images of missiles and militaries, it should also prompt images of maize and millet. The availability of and access to food is inextricably linked to prosperity and stability Humanitarian aid can provide life-saving food and development assistance in the post-conflict or crisis period and should strive to sustain agricultural supplies and create livelihoods as a way to advance stability and prevent new disruptions of the peace. While the concept of humanitarian aid is relatively straightforward, it is the implementation and continual governance of food that often create problems. If assistance and support programs are not designed and implemented correctly and inclusively, they can further mangle food markets and be used as a tool of oppression through the misappropriation of aid. Peace building interventions with food security promotion can also have indirect benefits through the long-term process itself. With the inclusivity necessary to properly design, implement and evaluate programs, various groups who would otherwise be at odds must interact and work together, which consequentially builds social resistance to violence. Jonathan, 2011

On the other hand, investing in agriculture is one of the surest ways to reduce insecurity, poverty, expand economic activity, and grow the middle class. Ending food insecurity is very much in the interests of the Nigerians. Jack and Chris, 2014

Statement of the Problem

Security challenges are emerging contemporary issues been faced by Nigerians today, some of this security challenges include: Boko Haram, Oil bunkering in the Niger Delta region, Kidnapping, Armed robbery, Political violence and the most contemporary now is the case of herdsmen.

Several reasons have been the cause of these challenges unemployment, high rate of poverty, malnutrition, arm robbery and political instability and corruption. Not with standing national Security is paramount in the development of a country and in Nigeria's case insecurity issue can be tackled using Agricultural production as a tool.

At the heat of the problem is the Absence of a Comprehensive strategy which can be use to implement the usage of agricultural production as a tool of national security.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to identify the role of agricultural production on national security and the specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between Agricultural production and National Security;
2. To assess the ways in which national security can be achieved through agricultural production and;
3. To proffer comprehensive strategies that can be used to promote National Security through agricultural production.

Conceptual Clarifications

We shall clarify some concepts and review some literature with regards to developing the subject in Nigeria:

Agricultural Production: Agricultural production is the art and science of planting of crops, rearing of livestock, processing and storage of all farm products. Ayoola, 2000

National Security: National security is a concept that a government, along with its parliaments, should protect the state and its citizens against all kind of "**national**" crisis through a variety of power projections, such as political power, diplomacy, economic power, military might, and so on. Adams et al., 2016

Method of Data Collection

The study adopted both primary and secondary sources of data, this involve wide consultation of books, journals, magazines, internet, published and unpublished books. Unstructured interview with some Agriculturist and security personnel's was conducted.

Sampling Technique

Using the simple random sampling technique, five different institutions were visited which include Federal ministry of agriculture, Federal ministry of defence, Army headquarters, Police headquarters and National Defence College. The researcher purposively selected a sample size of 25 respondents for the study.

Analytical Techniques

- Descriptive statistics
- Likert type scale

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between Agricultural Production and National Security

Agriculturist 60%

Security agents 40%

15 of the respondents are agriculturist which makes it 60% of the respondents, while 40% were security operatives. 80% of the respondents believe agriculture can drive national security while 20% do not believe hereby, out of the 80% agriculturist were 55% and 25% were in the defence sector. This implies that 91.6% of the agriculturist believe agricultural production can impact on National Security and 62.5% of the security agents believe there is a relationship between agricultural production and national security. This hereby reveals in the study that there is a relationship between agricultural production and national security.

Ways in which national security can be achieved through agricultural production

The respondent has responded that since the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria today are: Unemployment, High rate of poverty, High rate of illiteracy, Malnutrition, High rate of illiteracy, Political instability and corruption. The study has hereby suggested the following as ways in which national security can be achieved through agricultural production:

- Reduction of poverty in Northern Nigeria
- Deradicalisation of Niger delta youths
- Eradication of malnutrition in North East Nigeria
- Reduction of unemployment in Nigeria
- Eradication of political thugery
- Reduction of corruption in Nigeria

Strategies for promoting National Security through agricultural production

- Provision of adequate security for farmers
- More political will in agricultural sector
- More focus on agriculture in Nigeria

Economic empowerment of Nigerian youth

Educational empowerment of Nigerian youth

Sensitisation and awareness of rural dwellers on how farming can help to improve their security

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This paper has examined the issue of the role of agricultural production on National Security. Some issues that are central to agriculture and national security include high rate of poverty and malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of political will and corruption.

All these constitute a major source of insecurity in Nigeria which the study reveals that agriculture can be used as a tool to reduce this insecurity in Nigeria. The government of Nigeria is therefore called upon to also try carrot means of curbing insecurity by adopting some agricultural means and not just the stick method of using force alone. If agriculture is well focused on, it can go a very long way in tackling insecurity in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The problem of insecurity in Nigeria is further compounded by high rate of poverty and malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of political will and corruption. Therefore, in terms of the link between agricultural production and national security.

Hence, some recommendations were derived from this study:

More security agents should be deployed to the rural areas where farming activities do take place so as to remove fear of crisis on farmers hereby increasing their production

Government and NGOs should focus more on agriculture

Credit facilities should be made available for youths in Nigeria hereby helping to deradicalising.

Federal government should make agriculture more attractive by making available easy access to land by the Nigerian youths

Everyone most especially the rural dwellers should be sensitized on how farming can reduce insecurity in their area

Government should employ more youth in the agricultural sector of the economy

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