

Food and Hunger Everywhere: A Nigeria Paradox of Poverty

Francis Ilenloa Igberaese* and David Okojie-Okoedo**

The paper researched on a paradox of hunger in which the people of Nigeria found themselves, despite the high level of food production in the country. This results in an island poverty and it is blamed on the lack of appropriate policies and misplacement of priorities by government and the regulatory authorities. It found out that the lack of food in Nigeria is occasioned by many factors among which are: buck buying by the rich, wastage in parties, excessive export at the expense of domestic needs and the lack of storage facilities leading to post harvest losses. The implication therefore for economics development and agricultural extension are cumulative poverty and challenge of extension workers to encourage farmers to store their produce. The recommendations are: income redistribution, investment in storage facilities, entrenchment of internal order, high limitation on food export and the need to stimulate more production.

Field of Research: Economics Development and Agricultural Extension

1. Introduction

Food insufficiency and importation have continued to dominate Nigeria, a country in which food production is the highest in Sub-Sahara Africa (Edokpia and Okafor 2009). The fact is that food production has consistently increased over the years, yet deficit and importation are on the increase. According to CBN (2002), Food production could either be labour or capital intensive, even though the efficient combination of the two variables can produce more. Edopka and Okafor (2009) observed that food production in Nigeria rose from 89.23 million metric tones in 1995 to 110.11 million metric tones in 2000. Despite this continuous rise in food production, the country is in the brink of severe food insecurity and may not meet the Millennium Development Goals (MOGs) of eliminating hunger by 2015. World Bank Development Report "WBDR" (2008), asserted that food and nutrition security poses a critical challenge to economic growth in Nigeria. Food and Agricultural Organization "FAO" (2003) reported that Nigeria had the highest number of under nourished persons in West Africa. As may be expected, this leads to both high incidence and level of poverty. Anyanwu (1997) called this Island poverty, which is in the midst of plenty. While it is true that attention needs to be paid to rural development in terms of provision of storage and other facilities to cut hunger by 50% by the year 2015, as revealed by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) cited by Igberaese (2004), in Nigeria, there is continuous depilation of foreign reserve to import food, with much attention also paid to the already developed Urban areas (Komires et al, 2002). Yet no food is produced in these areas.

* Igberaese, Francis Ilenloa (M.Sc. Economics), School of Professional Studies, Institute of Continuing Education, Benin City, Nigeria. Fatherfrancis4life@yahoo.com

** Okojie-Okoedo, David (Ph.D, Agricultural Extension), Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin, Benin City- Nigeria, Email: ibhadedavid@yahoo.com

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

After all, over 70% of Nigerians, live in the rural areas and are involved in agriculture (Odia and Igberaese, 2009), making it an agrarian country with an output highest among the Sub-Sahara African. For instance, Nigeria is the highest producer of Cassava, a major staple food which attracts other countries, but soon after Nigeria exported Cassava with a little on nothing left for domestic consumption. These wrong approaches to food sufficiency in a heavily agrarian nation are the focus of this research.

It is extremely worrisome that with enormous natural resources, vibrant labour force, and high production, the majority of Nigerians are still hungry, the nation is threatened by food insecurity, with population living on less than UI\$ per day, with lack of access to food, healthy living and in turn productivity, a case of cumulative causation. While this paper still recognizes the need for more food production, it posits that the problem is not longer in production but in distribution and massive investment in areas that could minimize or eliminate losses both in terms of produced and energy invested by labour.

The general aim of this study is to assess the courses of food insecurity in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:
ascertain the effect of lack of storage facilities on food production in the study area
ascertain the effect of inequality in budgetary allocation on food security
make recommendations base on findings

2. METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary data were use for the study. Besides the data collected from literature, "purposive sampling" and "slice through the organization" were used to generate primary data. These methods have proved of recent to be effective tools of empirical studies, Ihua (2009), adopted it in a cross country study of SMES, Sunderland et al (2003) suggested that limited resource can dictate the use of these non-probability methods in primary data collection Igberaese (2004) adopted it in radical poverty model for NEPAD (also see Odia and Igberaese, 2009).

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

Table 1: Summary of Sampling Procedure for Primary Data Across Nigeria

1	2	3	4	Total
North – West	Sokoto	Illela	25	50
		Gada	25	
	Katsina	Safana	25	50
		Yashi	25	
North-East	Bornu	Dumboa	35	75
		Biu	40	
	Adamawa	Mayo	38	75
		Mayo-Butale	37	
North-Central	Niger	Kagara	36	75
		Tegina	39	
	Benue	Mariga	35	75
		Adoka	40	
South-West	Oyo	Ogbomosho,	25	50
		Osogbo	25	
	Ogun	Ijebu-Ode	25	50
		Ijebu-Ife	25	
South-East	Imo State	Mgbidi	25	50
		Nguru	25	
	Abia State	Akwe	25	50
		Ohafia	25	
South-South	Edo State	Uhunmwode	75	150
		Igueben	75	
	Delta State	Ika	75	150
		Isoko	75	

Source: Authors' Computation (2010)

Key 1 = Geopolitical Zones
 2 = States
 3 = Communities/LGAs
 4 = No. of Respondents

A multi stage sampling techniques was use in selecting respondents for the study. This first stage was to select two (2) states from each of the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. This gave a total of twelve (12) State out of the present 36 States in the country. The second stage was to purposively select two (2) communities/LGAs from each state, which gave a total of 24 communities/LGAs, the next stage was to select farmers and those involved in agro-allied ventures storage, possessing, and so on, for interview. 996 questionnaires were administered throughout the country, and retrieved 400 for the North 500 for the South this 900, representing 90% response, indicating the high level of interest generated in the study. The 996 is neither too small nor to large since Ihua (2009) admired 90 and Igberaese (2004) administered 1000.

The number of respondents per community/LGA depended on the number available and actively involve in farming and farming related activities at the time of this study. The questionnaires developed from the field were validated using expert judgments from the field of economics, agricultural economics and agricultural extension. The reliability of the instrument was achieved through test-retest. The instrument was first administered to 20% of respondents in communities that were not included in the final sampling. A reliability co-efficient of 0.84 was obtained by the co-efficient of correlation

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

between the two set of observations using the Pearson correlation. To achieve the objectives of the study, questions asked included:

Do you think that Nigeria has produced enough food to feed the people (EF)?

Does Nigeria need to produce more food to feed the people (PM)?

Is there food deficiency and hunger in Nigeria (FDH)?

If yes, freely name the factors you feel are responsible

Bulk Buying by the Rich (BBR)

Wastage in Parties (WP)

Harvest Losses (HL)

Export (EP)

3. Food Insecurity, Poverty and the Export Component Link

According to FAO (1996), food security is a situation when all people at all times have physical and economical access to sufficient, safe and nutrition food for a wealthy and active life. Willespie and Haddad (2001), posits that a household is only food secured if it has reliable access to food in sufficient quality and quantity for all members of the household to enjoy active and healthy life. Thus, the concept of food security has shifted from the mere equation of food production to access and availability, because a country can actually produce more, with its citizens having access to less- a paradox that exist in Nigeria. This is mostly so when a clique lay hold to nation's wealth, with the poor majorities who are engage in food production becoming highly venerable to the action of the rich few. Igberaese (2004) had successfully related a situation where nation's resources (including food) are wasted in ceremonies, perhaps in a year old birthday party of a rich child, while the next door neighbour lives in acute poverty. In a survey carried out in Edo State of Nigeria, the author revealed that what was wasted in weekly ceremonies would be enough to feed the state in another one month. This he believed further impoverish the poor, and lead to intergenerational transmission of poverty. He therefore propounded an internal order model to arrest the wastage and generate income to alleviate poverty.

The 16th and 17th of October every year are international days for food security and eradication of poverty respectively (EBS 2009). The days are met to assess the success or failures of policies to these regards. The main objective of the days is to ensure three square real for every body (EBS 2009). But food is not secured, nor poverty eradicated by the mere declarations of days. They require purposeful policy measures, which must be bias in favour of the poor, in order to redistribute income. So that in actual situation, policies to ensure food security also ensure poverty reduction. For example, a well-feed population is a disease free population and answer to economic growth because it posses the capacity to work for a higher GDP per capital (see Benson, 2004; Edokpa and Okafor 2009).

Away from the issue of poverty is the export component, creating artificial scarcity of food. Export component is the different between export and import (X-M); where X = export M= import. As earlier noted, various publications and media reports between 2006 and 2007 quoted the then president Obasanjo as campaigning Nigeria as the largest producer of cassava in the world. The

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

resultant attraction from foreign buyers was the buy up (X) of cassava to China and other countries', leading to hike in the price of this once most stapled food in Nigeria. Is it not a paradox that a country whose food production feed most West Africa countries through export is itself food unsecured? Is it not a paradox that a country, which cries of food insecurity, would have cassava to feed livestock in China? The only alternative to such unguided export was food importation. Udo (1982) had revealed that food import bill had rose from N47.8 million in 1960 to about W1.5 billion in 1980. Edokpa and Okafor (2009) put the food import bill at about N120 billion in 2001, and that it has since been rising. There is therefore a negative export component as food export value is less that its import value. This huge food import bills, in the face of declining foreign exchange earnings has negative implication for the economy; a decrease in farm income of local producers, leading to a various circle of food insecurity.

Data Analysis and Discussions

The researchers first present a summary of budgets allocation to the agricultural sector overtime to evaluate the seriousness or otherwise of government developing this most important sector.

Table 2: Summary of Budgetary Allocation to Agricultural Sector

Year	Total Budget N'b	Allocation to Agric	% of Total
1990	38.70	1.93	4.98
1991	37.61	0.65	1.72
1992	52.03	0.92	1.77
1993	111.16	2.82	2.54
1994	110.20	3.70	3.36
1995	152.47	6.91	4.53
1996	336.21	5.64	1.68
1997	427.21	8.65	2.02
1998	488.11	9.03	1.85
1999	947.63	12.13	1.28
2000	701.03	13.51	1.93

Source: CBN Annual Report and Statistical Bulletin V. Issues.

The highest percentage allocation to agriculture (4.98%) was in 1990. It has been decreasing except in 1995 with a percentage of 4.53. This is a sector that employees over 70% of the population living in the rural area. It is also expected that storage facilities to minimize harvest losses and the employment of agricultural extension workers are implied in the budget. It explains why little impact has been made in food security even if the farmers had managed to ensure production through traditional means as shown in table 3 below.

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

Table 3: Food Production, Demand, Food Deficit and Import (Million Mt)

Year	Food Production	Food Demand	Food Deficit	Food Import	Wastage
1995	89.23	39.53	0.30	0.57	0.27
1996	93.05	96.27	3.2	3.25	3.25
1997	93.05	99.06	3.53	3.59	3.59
1998	97.64	100.77	3.13	3.27	3.27
1999	100.40	104.60	4.20	4.43	4.43
2000	101.11	106.46	5.35	5.51	5.51

Source: Edokpa and Okafor (2009). Benin Journal of Social Sciences

Despite the declining percentage budgetary allocation to agriculture from 1995, food product still managed to be rising. The rising demand is not because of population increase but the result of bulk buying by the both the rich and exporters, thus the deficit continued to increase with no option than to import despite. All things being equal, the more the population, the more production as reflects in the data. However the increase deficit shows that there is hunger since the problem is how long will Nigeria, a country of abundance continue to import in the face of deteriorating exchange rate (see Edokpa and Okafor 2009), and now with the talk of recovering from the global melt down?

Table 4: Selected National Indicators of Food and Nutrition Security in Nigeria

Stunted	Under Weight	Under Mortality	Life Expectancy	GDP Capital
(1995-2002)	(1995-2002)	(2002)	(2002)	(2002)
43	36	183	52	290

This clearly shows that Nigerian has a high poverty level, resulting from food and nutrition insecurity. As alarming as it seems, there still exists a large number not accounted for. For example, the 183 out of 1000 birth under mortality cannot include those in remote rural areas who had no access to hospitals, and so whose death were not recorded. The researcher now come to the empirical investigation carried out in “purposive sampling” and “slice through the organization”. This is found in tables 5,6 and 7.

Table 5: Indication of Food Production, Deficiency and Hunger in the Northern Part of Nigeria (n = 400)

	1	2	3	Percentage (%) Indication		
				1	2	3
EF	300	90	10	75	22.5	2.5
DM	250	100	50	62.5	25	12.5
FDH	380	20	-	95	5	-

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2010)

Key: 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Undecided, and n = Frequency

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

Table 6: Indication of Food Production, Deficiency and Hunger from the Southern Part of Nigeria (n = 500)

	1	2	3	Percentage (%) Indication		
				1	2	3
EF	350	100	50	70	20	10
DM	300	150	50	60	30	10
FDH	400	50	50	80	20	10

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2010)

Key: 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Undecided, and n = Frequency

Table 7: Indicator of Factors Impacting on Food Deficiency and Hunger in Nigeria

Geopolitical Zones	Frequency	1	2	3	4	Percentage Indicators (%)			
						1	2	3	4
North - West	100	65	55	96	70	65	55	96	70
North - East	150	100	80	140	120	67	53	93	80
North-Central	150	102	96	142	136	68	64	95	91
South - West	100	80	94	94	94	90	97	97	97
South - East	100	98	92	92	98	99	98	96	99
South - South	300	250	250	280	290	83	83	93	96

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2010) Multiple Responses

Key:
 1 = Bulk Buying by the Rich
 2 = Wastage in Parties
 3 = Harvest Losses
 4 = Export

Tables 5 and 6 indicate that Nigeria has produced enough food to feed the nation, though it also indicate that there is need to produce more food. This means that at least, Nigeria is at subsistence level. However, in the face of enough food, on alarming rate of food deficiency and hunger reign supreme, but more in the northern part of the country. This is a great paradox of food abundance and poverty. It should be noted that with such an alarming rate of 95% and 80% food deficiency and hunger in the northern and southern parts of the country respectively, poverty is obviously endemic. It also means that the people are sick, with inability to produce more, leading to more deficiency, hunger, poverty and sickness-a case of cumulative causation (see Wislow: Nurkse 1952: cited in Igberaese 2004).

Table 7 explains the factors leading the country to this sorry state of affairs-hunger in the midst of enough food production. These are factors the respondents freely named as militating against food sufficiency in Nigeria despite the good level of production. Food wasted in party, though rank lowest, is also highly militating against food sufficiency in all the zones, with 55% lowest in North West and 98% highest in South West. This is explained by the high volume of weekly ceremonies by the party loving South West people.

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

Food export ranks highest at 99% in the South East explaining the business minded of the people. This is closely followed by the South West, South-South and North Central at 97%, 96% and 91 % respectively. The percentage is also high in the North East and North West at 80% and 70% respectively meaning that food export dominates in the country. It means that the government has not set it priority right by allowing such volume of export, causing food deficiency and hunger at home.

Over the years, Nigeria has laid so much emphasis on baring importation of one food items or the other without corresponding ban on export, simply to "force" the farmers to produce more of those foods and earn income, to use platos words, "much against their will". Bulk buying by the rich is also found to be significant. This creates artificial scarcity as most of the foods bought in bulk are hoarded in the store rooms of the rich until they get rotten. Added to this is the fact that it encourages over feeding and wastage, as most of the foods end up in the dustbins as remains. This is in the some country where the poor majorities are not able to eat three square meals a day.

Harvest losses also consistently rank high in all the zones, with the lowest at 93% in both North East and South South. In all the community visited, food, especially fruits wasted at harvest is far more than those consumed. This further encourages cheap sales since the poor farmers has no where to store and preserve their products which are far more than enough during harvest seasons. The researchers reason that if government invests heavily in storage facilities in the marl areas, what is wasted could go round the whole year.

4. Implication for Development and Extension

Analysis have revealed that between year 1995 and 2000, Nigeria experienced food wastage of 0.81 million mt. This computation from table 3 would be greatly reduced if storage facilities were in place, which is a challenge for the extension delivery agencies. It is therefore important to encourage farmers to store produce that are not immediately disposed by introducing simple proven storage technologies for their produce to them, as this will be a check to Nigeria's excessive food importation and thus reduce food import bills.

It should be noted that agriculture development can not be achieved in culture of wastage which is inimical to feeding the ever growing population and meeting the Nigeria food export goals. This situation calls for development strategy, There is need to link farmers with sources of knowledge of storage and good quality equipment as well as training institutions such as store product Research Institute of Nigeria.

In line with this, there is need to form farmers co-operative societies as regards storage of produce, this should be achieved with the involvement of agricultural extension agents in all the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) across the country to discuss problems of storage, and programming harvest periods. This calls for strengthening of the research – extension –

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

farmers – input – linkage – system (REFILS), which is necessary if farmers are to be knowledgeable in storage activities through provision of training, creating awareness, access and affordable storage technologies. According to Faborode and Laogun (2008), REFILS not only provide ample opportunities for participatory technology development, it also allows for the identification and appreciation of all stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities and more importantly it allows for a variety of methodologies for extension delivery depending on the prevailing situations.

Also, extension should sensitize government to support farmers by providing infrastructure. And except priorities are well ordered, the implication for development is cumulative poverty resulting from hunger.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Recommendations

The recommendations as follows:

5.1.1 Income Redistribution: A policy to redistribute income; such that would transfer income from the rich segment of the society to the poor segment of the society is desirable. This is to ensure that the poor farmers are no more tempted to sell out their harvests in bulk and at cheap prices, and limit the ability of the rich to bulk purchase food for hoarding, only to rot away in stores and dustbins.

5.1.2 Maximum Investment in Storage Facilities: There should be "high minimum quantum" investment (minimum 'budget) on storage facilities, and to be made available to the rural areas where food is mostly produced in the country. This would secure food and fruits throughout the year, and greatly minimize harvest losses, as well allow producers an option whether to sell in bulk or preserve their foods.

5.1.3 High Limitation on Food Export: There should be high limitation on export of food. The current emphasis of limiting food import at the expense of export should be revised. Government should emplace both incentive and disincentive policies to minimize the export of the staple foods needed domestically since production has not so much exceeded what is required for local consumption. All the unwarranted campaigns of Nigeria being the highest producer of most staple food (as done by then president Obasanjo in 2006-2007) should be stopped in order not to attract forerunners to buy up the foods in the face of just a little more than subsistence.

5.1.4 Entrenchment of Internal Order: This should be an "internal order" or disincentive policy to discourage excessive parties and ceremonies where most of the food produced in the country are wasted. Such disincentive policy, in the form of special taxation targeted at amount of food wasted in these ceremonies. This would make the organizers of such ceremonies ensure that they give only what is just enough for the ceremonies, rather than "living like the Jones" in a form of unhealthy competition of food wastage.

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

5.1.5 Stimulating More Production: Since there is further need for more production of food, even though Nigeria has enough that should at least feed the people, government should redouble efforts in stimulating production, including the use of agricultural extension workers in the rural areas, and the development of these areas. This would discourage immigration to the Urban areas especially when immigrants is with respect to ages, leaving only the unproductive and old people in the rural areas, which affects the labour force in the agricultural sector. This must be done before the floor gate of export is opened.

5.2 Conclusion

Obviously, there is food deficiency and hunger in all parts of Nigeria. This is however not because the country has not produce enough to feed its people, even though there is need for more production, but because of other factors identified as inadequate in distribution, open ended export and unwarranted campaigns, wastage due to bulk buying and hoarding, ceremony and harvest losses due to lack of storage facilities in where these foods are produced. We thus arrived at a paradox of abundance where only a few have access to the food produced.

References

- Anyanwu, J.C. 1997. "Poverty in Nigeria: Concepts, Measurement and Determinants". *Selected Paper for the 1997, Nigeria Economic Society Annual Conference and Poverty. Alleviation in Nigeria. pp 93-111*
- Beson, T. 2004. "Africa's Food and Nutrition Security Situation: Where We Are We and How Did We Get Here?" *202 Paper No. 37. Washington. D.C. International Food Policy Research Institute,.*
- Central Bank of Nigeria. 1994; 1996; 1997; 2001 and 2005. *Statistical Bulletin, Volumes 5,7,8,12 and 16 Respectively*, Central Bank of Nigeria, Abuja.
- Central Bank of Nigeria, 2002. "The Changing Structure of Nigerian Economy and Implication for Development". *pp 31-40*
- Cillespie, S. and Haddad L. 2001. "Attacking the Double Burden of Malnutrition in Asia and Pacific". *ADB Nutrition and Development series No.4. Asian Development Bank and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)*, Manila and Washington D.C.
- Edo Brocating Service "EBS"2009. "EBS Comprehensive News" *16th and 17th October, 2009.*
- Edopa, D.A. and Okafor, F.C. 2009. "Rural -Development: A Link to Food Security in Nigeria". *Benin Journal of Social sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria pp259-269*
- Faborode, H.F.B. and A.E. Laogun 2003. "Research – Extension-Farmer-Input Linkage System in Agricultural Extension: A Comprehensive Treatise". in: Oluyemisi A. Akinyemiju, Dixon; and O. Torimiro (Eds). *ABS Agricultural Systems Ltd. Pp 90 – 103.*
- Food and Agricultural Organisation "FAO", 2003. "The State of Food Insecurity in the World", Rome.

Igberaese & Okojie-Okoedo

- Food and Agricultural Organisation "FAO", 1996, "Rome Declaration on World Food Security", *World Food Summit, November 13-17, 1996 Rome*.
- Igberaese, F.I. 2004. "Africa in Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty: Towards a Radical Model for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD):". *Journal of University of The Gambia Vol. 1 pp 29-30*.
- Ihua, U.B. 2009. "SMEs Key Failure Factors: A Comparison Between the 'United Kingdom and Nigeria". *Journal of Social Sciences, Kamla Raj, New Delhi India. 18(3) 199-207*
- Jankowick, A.D. 2005. "Business Research project", 4th Edition. *Thomson Learning*. London.
- Komires, K. ; Whittington, D. and Wu, X. 2000. "Infrastructure Coverage and the Poor: A Global Perspective, Infrastructure for Development, Private Solutions and the Poor". *Conference Paper, 31 May 2nd June 2000*. London.
- Nigeria Television Authority "NT A" 2006 "Network News, Various Reports..
- Odia, L.O. and Igberaese, F.I. 2009, "An Empirical Investigation of the Impact of Technology on Higher Output for the Growth of Nigerian Economy". *Benin Journal of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria pp 145-148*
- Sanndrs, M. ; Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2003. "Research Method/or Business Students, 3rd Edition, *England Prentice Hall*
- Udo, R.K. 1987, "Planning in Nigeria: The Agricultural Base 1962-1985" *Al.so Journal 14(1): 97-108*