



# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

## INSECURITY CHALLENGES AND FOOD PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT :

The most pressing issue in Nigeria today is food and human insecurity. Food insecurity was caused by human insecurity as a result of incessant kidnapping and farmer/herder clashes which prevented so many farmers from partaking in agricultural activities. This study examined the effect of insecurity on food production/food insecurity in selected rural communities in Edo State with a sample of 350 respondents purposively selected for the study. The research concentrated on three rural areas in each of the three senatorial zone in the state. In Edo South focus was on Iyowa, Okada and Ogida communities, Edo central attention was on Uromi, Irrua and Igubeen communities, Edo North attention was on Afuze, Uzairue and Agenebode Communities. The study employed both tables and percentages to analyse the data obtained through questionnaire while correlation and regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis formulated. The findings reveal that poverty rate, crime rate and government expenditure on internal insecurity has significant influence on food production/food insecurity in selected rural communities in Edo State. The study recommended amongst others that government, which is tasked with safeguarding people and property, should carry out this duty by making sure that significant resources are allocated to combating this threat. They should remember that food production has its roots in rural communities, even if much of the effort is presently focused on urban areas.

Keywords: Insecurity, farmer, food, government, communities.

### Introduction

A lot of low-income nations still have problems with food and nutrition security even though we made a lot of progress in the first millennium development goal (MDG) of ending extreme poverty worldwide. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that 381.4 million out of 650.3 million people suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2019 come from nations experiencing violent conflict (FAO, 2021). Furthermore, nations experiencing war, insecurity or other forms of conflict account for around 75% of children under the age of five who have stunted development (FAO et al, 2021). According to numerous studies, such as those conducted by Von Einsiedel et al. (2017); Schillinger et al. (2020); Qayyum, Anjum, and Sabir (2021); Menton et al. (2021); Hamoodi (2021); Okunlola and Okafor (2020); George, Adelaja, and Awokuse (2021) opined that disruptions such as political instability, natural disasters, pandemics, or conflicts greatly hinder social, economic, and human development. In addition to undermining "No poverty (goal 1)," "Zero hunger (goal 2)," "Good health and well-being (goal 3)," "Responsible consumption and production (goal 12)," and "Peace, justice, and strong institutions (goal 16)." These disturbances also threaten the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

### Statement of Problem

Conflict is part of human life which cannot be removed totally but might be decreased when people decide to understand each other differences which in most circumstances lead to peaceful co-existence. The insecurity farmer issue in the South-South Nigeria cannot be an exception to the above statement if effort is made by the different parties to mediate between the herdsman and their host communities. The Fulani herders from history have had a lengthy association with the southerners without any turmoil. What is remarkable however, is how this peaceful relationship abruptly became soured. The herders in the past were known to handle their enormous cows with a plain stick but how advanced weapons like AK 47 and other armory came to their hands is what the problem is. Again, whether it is the herders 'who has been living with the southerners for ages are actually perpetuating this heinous offence on the people or criminals pretending to hide under the guise of herdsman is another issue that is begging for answers. For obvious reasons, the conflict between farmers and herders cannot be fully halted. The livelihood of all stakeholders is fully reliant on common aspect of environment. A farmer relies on crop output for existence whereas a herder considers his herd as his life since life is meaningless without his animals. He feels that farmer's encroachment on his grazing areas and routes is a call to war (IRIN, 2009). At the present, the only option left to utilize is to hunt for a route of peace to prevent/manage escalating insecurity which have led to loss of life and property. Prevention is better than cure. There is need to comprehend the reality and need of coexisting in a society for mutual advantages. The increasing number of kidnappings in various areas of human endeavour is worrisome.

Curbing this menace by the authorities will ensure calm atmosphere devoid of kidnapping and the fear of the locals to access their farm will definitely help salvage food insecurity. This forms the basis or rationale for this study.

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## Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of insecurity challenges on food production: Evidence from Rural Communities in Edo State, Nigeria. Specific objectives are:

1. To examine the extent to which poverty rate influence food production in rural communities in Edo State
2. To investigate the extent to which increasing crime rate influence food production in rural communities in Edo State
3. To examine the extent to which government expenditures on internal insecurity influence food production in rural communities in Edo State

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## Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were formulated.

1. Poverty rate has no influence on food production in rural communities in Edo State.
2. Increasing crime rate has no influence on food production in rural communities in Edo State.
3. Government expenditures has no influence on internal insecurity on food production in rural communities in Edo State.

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## Literature Review

### Insecurity in Rural Communities in Edo State

Insecurity in Edo State has created a lot of heat with the rural communities fearful of venturing onto their farmlands to complete their agricultural chores. Attacks by criminal elements among the Fulani cattle herders have taken place nearly in every village in the State in the form of abduction and physical attack on farmers in their farmlands. Since Nigeria practiced the government of the people by the people and for the people in 1999, the nation has been plagued with persistent security difficulties, uppermost among them being insurgency, electoral violence, abduction and most recently, faceoff between herders and farmers among others. The northern section of the nation and the central belt have had a number of homicides stemming from herders and farmers. Amnesty International data suggest that endless number of victims has been murdered due to herdsman-farmer violence (Godwin, 2018; Duru, 2016). One reason that has fuelled and permitted this bastardized behavior (insecurity) is the escalation and rising proliferation of small guns and light weapons in Nigeria. In the past, herders were known to manage their livestock with a short piece of wood from one spot to another. Recently, the converse is the situation, where herdsman are now fully armed with sophisticated ammunitions while claiming to grow cattle's and unleash fear on the armless farmers (Adebanwi, 2009). It is worth highlighting that earlier, agricultural producer and the pastoralist groups had a pleasant and solid affiliation that allowed the local populations to work together for years (Olayoku, 2014; Okeke, 2014). This symbiotic connection made people depend on one another for existence, and it provided the yardstick for trade among them and has led to progress (Shettima and Tar, 2008: 163). The Peasant farmers and the herders had a long heritage and economic link, yet there were reasons of disagreement existing between both groups that were handled by both groups amicably. Agriculture no question is the backbone of any economy particularly rising countries like Nigeria. The activity of agriculture involves two aspects: crop production and animal husbandry. The two dimension of agriculture enjoys a symbiotic interaction that affect them favorably and adversely owing to the fact that crop production give feeds to animals and animals on the other hand creates excreta which might function as manure for food production. Due to the fear of getting abducted or murdered by criminals portraying themselves as herders, local farmers are not able to harvest their crops consequently enabling the produce to be destroyed at the fields. This situation has ramifications on the value chain as the urban people rely on the rural populations for food production and other items which might act as raw materials for industry. No doubt farmer herder's issue has bad impact on food/agricultural product in the southern part of Nigeria to other part of the country leaving the local people to wallow in hunger and their quality of life being decreased since they are primarily agrarian.

### Food Insecurity

Nigeria is the most populated nation in Africa. The overall population as at 2018 was 198.1 million with expectations for steady rise owing to high fertility rate and improved child and maternal mortality (NBS, 2018; CBN, 2018). The difficulty confronting the nation is how to feed her people. Nigeria has an ever-expanding requirement for food in order to fulfill the food and nutrition needs of its people and attain food security. The present problem is that Nigeria lacks both the capacity and aptitude to produce enough food to feed its people despite its good agro-ecological settings. In other terms, Nigeria is food insecure. Agaptus (2019) quoted FMARD (2016) that Nigeria still imports roughly [US] \$3 to \$5 billion worth of food yearly, notably wheat, rice, fish and other products, including fresh fruits. The rising population implies that more and more resources would be committed to food imports in order to fulfill the fundamental food demands of the nation.

### Food Insecurity in Nigeria

All the five causes of global food insecurity are prevalent in Nigeria, in addition to the following:

- i. Pervasive insecurity. This is a major factor in Nigeria's food insecurity, as bandits, terrorism and kidnapping/abduction have caused many smallholder and commercial farmers to either abandon their farms or to considerably scale down farming activities. Also, where some agricultural output is generated, there are logistics constraints in moving this to either the processing centres or the retail markets for delivery to the table;

- ii. Poor agricultural infrastructure, which relates more to all-year farming and processing to both enhance output and preserve the output through different seasons and assure stable prices;
- iii. Poor coordination of food policies among the government agencies concerned. The disconnect at times results in large output of perishable agricultural produce for which there are no matching storage and/or processing facilities. As well, special agricultural funding programmes are not properly sequenced with other value chain activities. These combine to make crop cultivation unsustainable;
- iv. Limited scope for agribusiness, as substantial agricultural activities are yet to be operated as real business. In recent years though, a good number of entities are establishing plantations, either in response to government intervention in particular value chains like rice and cassava or identification of opportunities in the growing population that is becoming more spatially concentrated in the urban areas; and
- v. Some measure of sub-national resistance to the Federal Government's school feeding programme, either for political differences, inadequate commitment of resources and wrong priorities. In research conducted by the World Health Organisation, it was indicated that out of 160 countries surveyed, 142 had health and nutrition programmes in schools as an important component of food security.

### *Causes of food insecurity in Nigeria*

In Nigeria, the cost of agricultural goods, especially mainstays of many African diets, have increased substantially during the previous six years. The costs of maize and wheat have doubled and the price of rice has already reached historic heights. The reasons contributing to higher prices and subsequent food crisis are many and complicated. Most issues however, may be viewed of as having implications on the availability of food and/or the demand for food. The present food crisis in the simplest words comes as a consequence of Fulani herdsmen/farmers disputes, Boko Haram sect and abduction which are rampant in the nation currently. The people of Nigeria want for high supply of food to fulfill the fast rise in the population. Also, the availability of food may be impacted by land and water limits, under investment in rural infrastructure and agriculture, lack of access to fertilizer and irrigation, trade regulations and weather disturbances. Factors that impact the demand for food include growing energy costs and conversions of agricultural areas to bio fuel production, population expansion, globalization of food markets and changing appetites. Some additional aspects include like assault by pests, climate and host of others which are readily handled by pesticides and irrigation projects in the State. But the escalation of the conflicts has graving implications for both the lives of farmers and agricultural output.

### **Implication of insecurity on food production**

- i. **Low productivity:** Persistent attacks on farms contribute largely to the decline of food production in the State. It was estimated that the conflict had led to the destruction of crops running to millions of naira in the State. According to the AFAN secretary, so many hectares of farmlands have been destroyed. The majority of our members have been groaning of the menace of herdsmen attack on their crops. Most of the farmers in the state have witnessed heavy destruction of their crops in the last few years be it in the southern, western and northern part of the country. He mentioned that the destruction of crops by cattle occurs every year. The secretary pointed out that a lot of destructions have been done to farmers' crops to an extent that some farmers have abandoned farming for other businesses in town. According to him, "some farmers relied on loan obtained from banks to farm and at the end of the day, had their crop destroyed by the cattle of herdsmen". He noted that some of the destructions were intentional and they usually occurred in the night when farmers would have returned home. We can consider the conflict between farmers and herdsmen as an agricultural war as it affects crop production in the State (Adubi, 2021).
- ii. **Deficient food for consumption:** According to the state secretary of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), "some of their members were lost to the attacks, while others have suffered permanent injuries." According to him, if things keep going this way, people would have to endure hardship. Not to mention the entire country, there won't be enough to support their family. The majority of them are peasant farmers who rely only on farming for their livelihood.
- iii. **Little financial income:** Farmers are now living in poverty as a result of debt that has reached millions of naira. The rise in food costs, which makes food expensive for people to buy, is caused by the current instability. Many were unable to purchase enough food to meet their family's requirements. Farmers are unhappy when migratory herdsmen's actions ruin their means of subsistence. Farmers' financial stability has been weakened by the country's rising insecurity, since they are unable to support their families and send their kids to school. The price of food staples has significantly increased as a result of the conflict. Some households lack the funds necessary to purchase food from the market. Some people just consume what they can buy at the market, which has an impact on the general welfare of the average citizen. Some products, such as cassava, yam tuber, and maize, are now selling for prices that are out of reach for the average consumer.
- iv. **Economic and social progress:** The continuous attacks on farmlands have hindered socio-economic development of the nation. Some farmers have abandoned farm for the fear of attack by herdsmen/kidnappers. Some women in the villages find it difficult to attend market day because of these undesirable herdsmen/kidnapping attack. The economic profile of the nation has been reduced due to low output of food production because people have lost interest in farming. This by implication means that government will rely more on food importation against exportation of food items that could have boasted the internally generated revenue of the nation (Adubi, 2021).

### **Food insecurity context – Evidence from Edo State**

Banditry and insecurity were previously solely associated with the northeastern region of the country, but in recent years, these threats have spread to other parts of western Nigeria, severely impairing farmers' capacity to cultivate their land and leading to food shortages. Conflict marked by violent attacks, kidnappings, and property devastation has plagued the Northeast since the emergence of the non-state armed group (NSAG) Boko Haram in 2009. The region has become even more unstable due to the emergence of Jama'at Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) breakaway groups and Islamic State West African Provinces (ISWAP). Tensions between farmers and herders have been rising for decades, and since 2011, the conflict has spread into North West and North Central states, where armed banditry and livestock rustling have greatly increased. This has resulted in several violent conflicts, mass abductions, and displacement. With record levels of violence continuing into the early months of 2024, the war reached an unparalleled height in 2021 and severely limited humanitarian access in several states in North West and North Central Nigeria.

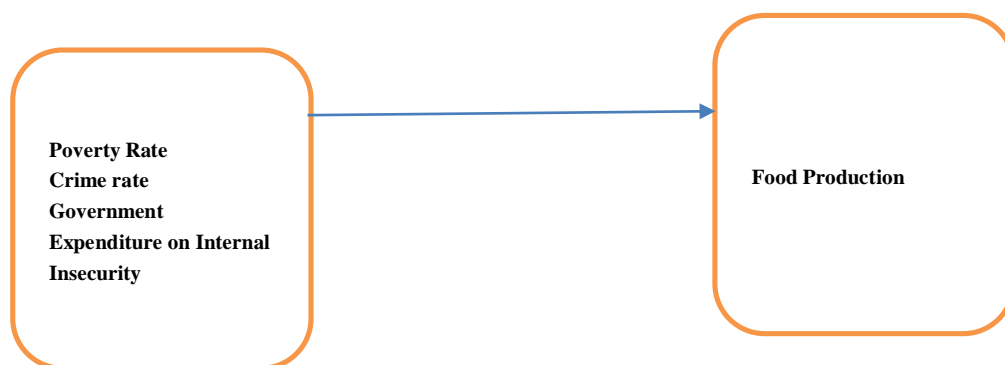
Although there are differences in livelihoods, most rural households still rely heavily on agriculture. Previously a vital region for the production of excess crops, conflict in the north has interrupted agriculture and decreased harvests. These problems are exacerbated by high inflation and economic uncertainty, which lower the affordability of food. The lean season usually begins in June, the current month for this study, when food prices rise. However, in recent years, the lean season has started earlier as households use up their food supplies sooner. Even during the post-harvest phase (September to January), insecurity hinders the distribution of excess food, isolates communities, and restricts market access and the flow of products. The seasonal cycles of food availability have been upset by these compound shocks, resulting in high levels of demand all year round.

THE WHISTLER had previously reported that food inflation surged by 40.87 percent, and that headline inflation in June reached an all-time high of 34.19 percent. THE WHISTLER's analysis of the data revealed that throughout the reviewed time, states were not all subject to the same inflationary pressure. With food inflation of 47.34 percent, Edo surpassed Kogi State as the most costly state, the survey said. Cross River, Kwara, and Ekiti food inflation rates were 45.28 percent, 44.57 percent, and 44.50 percent, respectively, while Kogi's was 46.37 percent. By 2024, The Government of Nigeria and its partners revealed the October 2023 Cadre Harmonisé research on food insecurity, which estimates that 26.5 million Nigerians are experiencing high levels of food insecurity. Additionally, almost 9 million kids are at risk of experiencing acute malnutrition or wasting. A startling 2.6 million of these youngsters may suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and need urgent nutritional care. The Cadre Harmonisé is a food and nutrition analysis effort that carries out research in 26 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) every two years (March and October). The most recent estimate for 2024 shows a significant increase from the 18.6 million people who are now at risk of food insecurity from October to December 2023, thanks to the Government's leadership and the assistance of the United Nations (UN) system. Every civilization experiences insecurity and violence as a result of unemployment and inactivity, two harmful conditions that foster crime, social unrest, and corruption. Growth and progress are negated by insecurity; without it, a state is mired in ongoing anxiety and the threat of violent death. Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher, characterized life outside of society as lonely, impoverished, cruel, and brief. It is only possible to compare the current condition of insecurity under a governor who is so indifferent to the suffering and anxieties of his constituents to Hobe's philosophy of life—without government. As is widely understood, a state or society cannot be safe and prosperous unless its leaders are people-oriented and genuine statesmen and women who have the interests of their constituents at heart. According to those who should know, among other negative effects, insecurity reduces government income, discourages investment, and raises unemployment, all of which have an impact on economic growth. Despite these consequences, Governor Obaseki's Edo State hydra-headed problem is not being addressed by government capital expenditures or security votes on internal security.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Insecurity Challenges

#### Food Production



### Methodology

The study adopted survey research design since it provides a framework for the researchers to gather data at only one moment in time from a sample that has been picked from a preset demographic, the population of this study include all rural communities in Edo State-Nigeria. A sample of 350 respondents were purposively selected for this study. The research concentrated on three rural areas in each of the three senatorial zone. In Edo South focus was on Iyowa, Okada and Ogida communities. In Edo central attention was on Uromi, Irrua and Igueben communities. In Edo North attention was on Afuze, Uzairue and Agenebode Communities. These villages were purposively selected owing to persistent and recent evidence of abduction of farmers by criminal herders. In assessing the data obtained, descriptive and inferential statistical approaches was employed in the research. The descriptive statistics comprise means and standard deviations, while inferential statistics employed include correlation and multiple regression approach. The research instrument for this study will comprises of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. Section A include demographic information of the respondents. Section B elicit information on the influence insecurity on food production/insecurity in Edo State, South - South Nigeria. The inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regression approach) was utilized to test the hypotheses of the investigation. The tests was run at 5% level of significance. Hypothesis were tested with the usage of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

The model for this study is formulated from the conceptual presentation of various determinants of food production this model, therefore, stated functionally as insecurity challenges (IC) = f (Poverty rate (PR), Crime rate (CR), Government expenditure on internal insecurities (GEII).

$\mu$  = error term denoting other factors not captured in the functional relationship. The econometric model is derived thus:

$$FP_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 PR_i + \alpha_2 CR_i + \alpha_3 GEII_i + \mu_i$$

Where FP, PR, CR, GEII had been defined earlier.

$\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4$  where the coefficients of the explanatory variables of interest to be estimated,  $i$  is the number of respondent ranging from 1, 2

.....n.

Apriori Expectation.

$$\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4 > 0$$

This research employed regression analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science to test the hypothesis formulated. The table below displayed the pilot test conducted on the independent and dependent variables utilized in this study. The Cronbach alpha value for all the variables lies between 0.82 and 0.89 which is quite acceptable because in general the Alpha value of 0.7 is considered useful for any study.

#### Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher administered 350 questionnaires of which 334 questionnaires were returned filled with 95% response rate.

#### Social Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1

Social Demographic	Response	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	234	70.1
	Female	100	29.9
	Total	334	100.00
Age	18-24	23	6.9
	25-30	44	13.2
	41-50	123	36.8
	51-60	35	10.3
	60 and above	109	32.6
	Total	334	100
	Primary School Leaving Certificate	154	46.1
	SSCE	143	42.8
	Higher Qualifications	37	11.1
	Total	334	100
Occupation	Farming	129	38.2
	Pastoral farming	54	16.2
	Civil servant	14	4.2
	Others	137	41.4
	Total	334	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The social demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study were analyzed. Out of the total 334 respondents, 70.1% were male, and 29.9% were female. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (90.7%) were between the ages of 60 and above, while smaller percentages (6.9%) were between 18 and 24. This is so because good number of farmers these days falls within the old people while the youth do not see food production as a good and lucrative venture. Regarding educational level, the highest percentage of respondents (46.1%) held primary school leaving certificate (PSLC), followed by 42.8% with SSCE, 11.1 out of the total respondents hold other higher qualifications. The occupation of the respondents was also examined to know how insecurity challenges has ravaged various sectors of the economy. 129 respondents representing 38.2% of the total respondents were farmers, pastoral farmers were 16.2%, civil servant constituted 4.2% of the total respondents while other occupation amounted to 41.4% of the total respondents. This goes to show that farmers and other farming related occupation are the worst hit and this has affected food production adversely and hence the current food challenges.

**Table 4.2 Poverty Rate (PR)**

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Does increase in poverty perpetuate crime in the society.	122 (36.5%)	154 (46%)	10 (3%)	20 (6%)	28 (8.4%)	3.54	1.26	High perception
2	Poverty prevents people from making meaningful economic contribution to the society.	45 (13.5%)	114 (34%)	79 (23.7%)	56 (16.8%)	40 (11.9%)	1.82	1.16	Low perception
3	Increase in the rate of poverty has tremendously affected food and agricultural production in Nigeria.	109 (32.6%)	76 (22.8%)	88 (26.3%)	40 (11.9%)	21 (6.4%)	3.48	1.23	High perception
4	Poverty insecurity can lead to lower food production in the country.	79 (23.7%)	189 (56.6%)	30 (8.9%)	15 (4.5%)	16 (4.8%)	3.69	1.25	High perception
5.	Poverty in any society has a great link to crime which has affected development in most sectors in the society especially agriculture.	142 (36.5%)	64 (46%)	10 (3%)	90 (6%)	28 (8.4%)	4.00	1.50	High perception
	Weighted average						3.31	1.28	

Source: Authors computation from SPSS 20.0

In table 4.2, Does increase in poverty perpetuate crime in the society was the research question and the following responses were received: 122 respondents representing (36.5%) of the total respondents strongly agreed, 154 respondents representing (46%) agreed, 10 respondents amounting to 3% of the respondents were undecided, 6% of the respondents disagreed while 28 respondents representing 8.4% of the total respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. A mean impression of 3.5 suggesting a strong link between poverty and crime in the society.

In the same manner, poverty prevents people from making meaningful economic contribution to the society was another research question which elicited responses as follows: 45 (13.5%) strongly agreed, 114 (34%) agreed, 79 (23.7%) undecided, 56 (16.8%) disagreed while 40 (11.9%) strongly disagreed. A mean of 1.16 was obtained suggesting that the above research question was not true in reality. The fifth research question on this segment was poverty in any society has a great link to crime which has affected development in most sectors in the society especially agriculture. 142 (36.5%) strongly agreed, 64 (46%) agreed, 10 (3%) were undecided, 90 (6%) agreed and 28 (8.4%) strongly agreed with the assertion. Again, a high mean of 4.00 indicates that poverty has a great relationship which has affected the growth of agriculture and food production in Nigeria. Research question 3 and 4 analysis were presented in the table above.

**Table 4.3: Increasing Crime Rate (CR)**

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
6	A society infected with crime cannot develop successfully both in the agricultural sector and other sectors of the economy.	111 (33.2%)	98 (29.3%)	23 (6.9%)	67 (20.1%)	35 (10.5%)	3.85	1.56	High perception
7	Increasing crime rate especially kidnapping can prevent farmers from going to farm to plant and harvest.	167 (50%)	98 (29.3%)	15 (4.5%)	30 (8.9%)	24 (7.3%)	3.53	1.10	High perception
8	Many farmers are victim of crime	88 (26.3%)	124 (37.1%)	25 (7.5%)	34 (10.2%)	63 (18.9%)	3.63	1.25	High perception

	occasioned by kidnapping while in their far.								
9	The fear of kidnapping and ransom payment has discouraged so many farmers from going to farm thereby resulting in food shortages.	77 (23.1%)	114 (34.1%)	25 (7.5%)	74 (22.2%)	44 (13.2%)	3.56	1.26	High perception
10.	Many farmers in the rural areas in Edo State has been kidnapped and ransome paid by their family to secure the release of the victim (s).	79 (23.7%)	189 (56.6%)	30 (8.9%)	15 (4.5%)	16 (4.8%)	3.76	1.88	High perception
	Weighted average						3.67		

**Source: Authors computation from SPSS 20.0**

In table 4.3, the first research question was ‘a society infected with crime cannot develop successfully both in the agricultural sector and other sectors of the economy’. The responses obtained were as follows: 111(33.2%) respondents strongly agreed to the question, 98 (29.3%) agreed, 23 (6.9%) were undecided, 67 (20.1%) disagreed with the assertion while 35 respondents representing 10.5% of the total respondents strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.85 was obtained giving the impression that majority of the respondents were in support of the issue raised. Increasing crime rate especially kidnapping can prevent farmers from going to farm to plant and harvest, the responses were as follows: 167(50%) respondents strongly agreed to the question, 98 (29.3%) agreed, 15(4.5%), 15(4.5%) were undecided, 24(7.3%) disagreed and 24(7.3%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.52 was obtained. Many farmers in the rural areas in Edo State has been kidnapped and ransom paid by their family to secure the release of the victim (s). this was the last research question in this segment, the responses obtained were as follows: 79 (23.7%) strongly agreed, 189(56.6%) agreed, 30(8.9%) were undecided, 15 (4.5%) disagreed while 16(4.8%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.76 was obtained.

**Table 4.4: Government Expenditure on Internal Insecurity (GEII)**

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
11	Government funding in fighting insecurity in cities and rural communities is not adequate.	131 (39.2%)	66 (19.8%)	23 (6.9%)	67 (20.1%)	47 (14.1%)	3.55	1.16	High perception
12	Lack of/ inadequate funding of security personnel like vigilante and other security personnels has fueled insecurity in rural communities in Edo State.	166 (49.7%)	48 (14.4%)	15 (4.5%)	30 (8.9%)	75 (22.5%)	3.83	1.20	High perception
13	Farmers will be more comfortable in returning to their farm when security from killer herdsmen and kidnapping id guaranteed.	88 (26.3%)	122 (36.5%)	25 (7.5%)	36 (10.8%)	63 (18.9%)	3.93	1.38	High perception
14	Government funding can help resolve the issues of insecurity especially in rural communities.	83 (24.9%)	101 (30.2%)	32 (9.6%)	74 (22.2%)	44 (13.2%)	3.56	1.26	High perception
15	The use of internal or community security officers who	192 (57.5%)	46 (13.8%)	65 (19.5%)	15 (4.5%)	16 (4.8%)	3.66	1.88	High perception

	understand rural areas is greatly advocated for.								
	Weighted average						3.71		

Source: Authors computation from SPSS 20.0

In table 4.4 above, the first research question was ‘Government funding in fighting insecurity in cities and rural communities is not adequate which elicited the following statistics: 131(39.2%) strongly agreed with the assertion, 66(19.8%) agreed, 23 (6.9%) were undecided, 67(20.1%) disagreed while 47(14.1%) strongly disagreed with the issue raised. A mean score of 3.55 was obtained leaving an impression that govt funding in combating insecurities like kidnapping and armed banditry that affect food production is not adequate. Second research question was ‘Lack of/ inadequate funding of security personnel like vigilante and other security personnels has fueled insecurity in rural communities in Edo State, the responses obtained were as follows: 166(49.7%) strongly agreed, 48 (14.4%) agreed, 15(4.5%) were undecided, 30(8.9%) disagreed while 75(22.5%) strongly disagreed. Again, a mean score of 3.83 was obtained which was quite high. The use of internal or community security officers who understand rural areas is greatly advocated for. 192(57.5%) strongly agreed, 46(13.8%) agreed, 65(19.5%) were undecided, 15(4.5%) disagreed while 16(4.8%) strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.66.

**Table 4.5 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.854 <sup>a</sup>	.658	.644	.48717	1.738

Source: Extracted from SPSS 20.0

An overview of the data's regression analysis may be found in the model summary. The regression model in this instance demonstrates that the predictor variables included in the study account for around 85.4% of the variation in the result variable. The predictor variables may collectively be responsible for around 85.4% of the variability seen in the outcome variable, according to the R-square value of 0.658 which suggests a moderate level of prediction accuracy. The average difference between the actual values and the values predicted by the regression model is represented by the standard error of the estimate, which was reported as 0.48717. It acts as a gauge of how accurately the model predicted the future. The reported Durbin-Watson value of 1.738 is within the acceptable range (usually between 0 and 4), indicating that the residuals do not have any discernible autocorrelation. The analysis's chosen regression model's accuracy and goodness of fit are evaluated overall in the model summary. It shows that the model's predictions are quite accurate and that the predictor variables explain a sizable portion of the variance in the outcome variable. The ANOVA test was utilized to determine the overall significance of the model based on this premise.

**Table 4.6 ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	28.398	3	9.466	45.930	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	21.598	91	.237		
Total	49.995	93			

a. Dependent Variable: FP

b. Predictors: (Constant), PR, CR, GEII.

Source: Authors computation from SPSS 20.0

The ANOVA table provides information on the analysis of variance for the regression model performed on the dependent variable FP (food prouction). It presents the sum of squares, degrees of freedom (df), mean square, F-statistic, and significance level (Sig.). In this case, the regression model shows a significant overall effect on the dependent variable, as indicated by the significant F-statistic of 45.930 and a corresponding p-value of .000 ( $p < .001$ ). This suggests that the predictor variables collectively have a significant impact on explaining the variance in youth employment.

The regression model's ability to explain the variance is reflected in the sum of squares between groups (regression), which is 28.398. The degrees of freedom for the regression are 3, indicating the number of predictor variables included in the model. The mean square for the regression is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the corresponding degrees of freedom, resulting in a value of 9.466



In summary, the ANOVA table confirms that the regression model including the predictor variables (PR, CR, GEII) has a significant overall effect on the dependent variable FP. The significant F-statistic suggests that the model is a good fit for explaining the variance in food production.

**Table 4.7 Correlation Analysis**

		FP	PR	CR	GEII
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.251*	.313**	.333
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013	.002	.001
	N	334	334	334	334
PR	Correlation Coefficient	.251*	1.000	.419**	.313
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013		.000	.000
	N	334	334	334	334
CR	Correlation Coefficient	.313**	.419**	1.000	.452
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000		.0002
	N	334	334	334	334
GEII	Correlation Coefficient	.431	.324	.422	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.000	
	N	334	334	334	334

Source: Extracted from SPSS 20.0

The correlation coefficient between food production (FP), is not statistically significant at the conventional significance level of 0.05. However, the correlation coefficient between youth food production (FP), poverty rate (PR), crime rate (CR), Government expenditure on internal insecurity have a strong positive relationship. The correlation coefficients and p-values for poverty rate (PR), crime rate (CR) and Government expenditure on internal insecurity follow a similar interpretation pattern as described above for food production.

**Table 4.7 Regression Summary**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.084	.524		2.069	.000
PR	-.010	.080	-.010	-.124	.003
CR	-.002	.078	-.002	-.024	.001
GEII	-.004	.088	-.003	-.126	.000

Source: Authors computation from SPSS 20.0

#### PR (Poverty Rate)

The unstandardized coefficient for PR is -0.010. This suggests that for a one-unit increase in poverty rate, there is an expected decrease of 0.010 in the food production score, holding all other predictors constant. Also, the t-value of -0.124 is statistically significant ( $p = 0.003$ ), indicating that poverty rate is statistically significant to food production. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that poverty rate has no influence on food production.

#### CR Crime Rate)

The unstandardized coefficient for CR is -0.002. This means that for a one-unit increase in increase in crime rate, there is an expected decrease of 0.002 in food production. Score, holding all other predictors constant. Again, the t-value of -0.024 is statistically significant ( $p = 0.001$ ), suggesting that crime

rate have a significant impact on food production in this model. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that crime rate has no influence on food production.

#### **Government expenditure on internal insecurity (GEII)**

The unstandardized coefficient for **GEII** is -0.004. This suggests that for a one-unit increase in Government expenditure on internal insecurity, there is an expected decrease of 0.004 in the food production score, holding all other predictors constant. Also, the t-value of -0.126 is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that poverty rate is statistically significant to food production. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that Government expenditure on internal insecurity has no influence on food production.

#### **Summary Findings**

- i. Poverty rate has significant influence on food production in selected rural communities in Edo State.
- ii. Crime rate has significant influence on food production in selected rural communities in Edo State.
- iii. Government expenditure on internal insecurity has significant influence on food production in selected rural communities in Edo State.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study focused on how food production in some rural areas in Edo State, Nigeria, is impacted by insecurity. Three villages from each of the three geopolitical zones—Edo South, Edo Central, and Edo North—were the subject of the research. The poverty rate, rising crime rate, and government spending on internal insecurity were used to gauge the level of insecurity. The results of the data analysis showed that all three of the variables utilized to measure insecurity problems were statistically significant. Food insecurity and insecurity are closely related because insecurity, which manifests itself in the form of poverty, abduction, and a rising crime rate in society, has a significant impact on food production and insecurity. Farmers will be deterred from visiting their farms in a town plagued by terrorism and abduction, for example, since the whole amount of farm revenue cannot cover ransom when it is adopted on the farm. Therefore, the high cost of food in Nigeria, particularly in Edo State, the subject of this study, was mostly caused by issues with insecurity. Nigeria has serious problems with food security, which are made worse by rising violence, unstable economic conditions, and unusually high costs for essential foods. When individuals feel physically, mentally, and symbolically unsafe, the nation cannot increase production or become competitive. Nigeria's agricultural operations have been severely disrupted by insecurity. Millions of farmers have been uprooted and relocated from their ancestral agricultural areas, while others are unable to fully participate in farming operations because they live in constant fear for their lives. Declining productivity and the resulting shortages are the immediate results, which exacerbate the inconsistencies in Nigerian agriculture output and the likelihood of food loss.

The study therefore makes the following recommendations to ameliorate the current food insecurity:

- i. Food plays a vital role in human existence as it promotes human development and wellbeing. Apart from those brought on by the fluctuating currency rate and the elimination of the fuel subsidy, which has raised living expenses in the nation, food insecurity and poor food production will also contribute to increased poverty. The government should endeavour to guarantee a society free from terrorism, abduction, and intimidation in order to foster a secure agricultural environment and lessen rural poverty.
- ii. Studies have shown that there is a 12% rise in violent crime for every 1% increase in food insecurity. Families experiencing food poverty may resort to criminal activity as a means of obtaining the funds required to buy food. Therefore, all levels of government and well-meaning Nigerian groups should support social programs that attempt to reorient people's minds away from crime.
- iii. The government, which is tasked with safeguarding people and property, should carry out this duty by making sure that significant resources are allocated to combating this threat. They should remember that food production has its roots in rural communities, even if much of the effort is presently focused on urban areas.

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