

Reviving the Economy of North East, Nigeria through Agricultural Production

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ABSTRACT

North Eastern Nigeria has been facing a lot of challenges since the inception of boko haram insurgents in 2009, which has led to almost a complete fall in the economy of the region that use to be a beehive of agricultural endeavor. This situation has led to this study. The specific objectives were to identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; Analyse the likely constraints that respondents might face when returning to farming in the study area; Access the aspect of farming the respondents wants to go back into: and Determine ways in which agricultural production can be used to revive the economy of the north east. Data was collected using a well structured questionnaire, using a two stage sampling technique of first purposive selection of the IDP in FCT and randomly select 200 respondents but had a return of 182 valid for the analysis of the study. Data were analysed by the use of likert type scale and descriptive statistics. It was found that the constraints face by youth that hinders their involvement in agriculture were environmental degradation, lack of basic infrastructure, lack of modern agricultural equipment, lack of land/land tenure system, lack of credit facilities and poor incentives/ incomes. To achieve the economy revival through sustainable agricultural production, continuous remediation of the degraded environment and also youths should be motivated to take up agriculture through provision of inputs, credits, training and land for large scale farming.

Keywords: Reviving Economy, North East, Nigeria, Agricultural Production

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

North Eastern Nigeria has been brought to its knees owing to the inglorious activities of Boko Haram insurgents, who have continued to unleash mayhem on Nigerians since 2009. Before the ungodly activities of the deadly sect in the region, the economy of the N/East consisting of 6 States

namely Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, Taraba and Gombe was a beehive of agricultural endeavor. The people of region who are typically farmers in all aspect including fishing and cattle rearing also grow millet, sorghum, and other vegetables and fruits. These food items were transported and distributed across the length and breadth of the country, which automatically made the region a hot spot for food production. Boko Haram, since inception has destroyed unquantifiable lives and properties in the region and beyond, grinding economic and social activities to a halt, as they have also instilled fear in the mind Nigerians. Over the years, owing to the incessant attacks on its inhabitants, resident, particularly in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states fled their homes, with thousands left thousands dead, thus leaving agricultural activities in the region inactive. Ajimade, 2015

The security challenges have in turn affected food production and consequently raised prices

Agriculture, as the “engine house” of world economies needs to be overhauled and serviced in order that the tears of the Nigerian masses may dry up. This can only be possible when the government starts investing substantial capital into the sector. Agriculture is the key to reviving Nigeria’s Economy – Dangote, 2016. Nigeria is regarded as one of the most blessed country in the world, widely known for her richness in soil and products. According to forbes1960s, Nigeria was one of the most promising agricultural producers in the world. Between 1962 and 1968, export crops were the country’s main foreign exchange earner. The country was number one globally in palm oil exports, well ahead of Malaysia and Indonesia, and exported 47 per cent of all groundnuts, putting it ahead of the US and Argentina Akinduro, 2016

As Nigeria continues to experience an economic slump because of the fall in crude oil prices in the international market, stakeholders are expressing concern on how to initiate realistic ways

of reviving the country's economy. Economists insist that the country's mono-product economy aptly explains why the negative trend in international oil pricing has caused a downturn in national income Chioma, 2015. Before the oil boom in 1970s, agriculture was the main stay of Nigeria's economy. Each region was known for a particular agricultural produce, the Northern region was known with groundnut pyramid; Western region for cocoa, one of the world best commercial viable seed; the Eastern region was the home of palm nut and cassava, and collectively, the proceeds from this agricultural products made Nigeria the beauty of Africa. Once upon a time, agriculture contributed to over 90% of the country's GDP, which was once upon a time. "In as much as the sector have been neglected for decades, in the current economic dwindling, the government can still revive it for sustainable and national economic building".- M.M Auwall, 2016

Just like the federal government has been talking about resorting to agriculture as alternative to oil-dependent economy, many states of the federation have been keying into the vision. The Plateau State governments, has equally initiated plans to revive the state's economy through agriculture. Nanmwa, 2016

Statement of the Problem

North Eastern Nigeria has been facing a lot of challenges since the inception of boko haram insurgents in 2009, which has led to almost a complete fall in the economy of the region that use to be a beehive of agricultural endeavor.

The people of region were predominantly farmers who export grow millet, sorghum, and other vegetables and fruits. And generate a lot of revenue for the entire country, including fishing and cattle rearing also These food items were transported and distributed across the length and breadth of the country, thereby producing enough food for the nation to eat.

Now the farmers who generate income for themselves and the Nation through agricultural production are leaving in abject poverty and their children are suffering from malnutrition, the security challenges has rendered majority of them homeless

Objectives of the Study

- I. identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
- II. Analyse the likely constraints that respondents might face when returning to farming in the study area;
- III. Access the aspect of farming the respondents wants to go back into: and
- IV. Determine ways in which agricultural production can be used to revive the economy of the north east

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using a well structured questionnaire, using a two stage sampling technique of first purposive selection of the IDP in FCT and randomly select 200 respondents but had a return of 182 valid for the analysis of the study

Analytical Technique

- Descriptive Statistics
- Likert type Scale

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sex: Male 112 Female 70

Age: 20 – 30 are 41 31 – 40 are 46 41 – 50 are 72 and above 50 are 23

Religion: Christians are 102 Muslims are 80

State: Borno 41, Adamawa 46, Yobe 72 and Bauchi 23

Interest in Agric: 181 which is equivalent to 99.45% of the respondents

Majority of the respondents were male which indicate the more active gender that were supposed to be providing food for the household is also displaced which is affecting the economy of the state, majority of the respondents were between age 31 and 50 which is an active stage for a farmer to produce food, all the respondents are from the north east and 99.45% of the respondents use to be a farmer and want to remain a farmer one the opportunity comes.

Likely constraints that respondents might face when returning to farming

As indicated in the study the respondents identify some constraints they might face when going back to farming which may discourage them from engaging in agricultural production activities. The constraints are as shown in table 1 below:

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Fear of invasion by the terrorist again	171	92.42
Lack of infrastructure and modern agricultural equipment	170	67.42
Lack of credit facilities and Poor incentives from the Government	168	65.15
Malnutrition and inadequate health care for women and	132	56.81

children		
Fear of herdsmen	72	54.54
Lack of commitments from the Government	69	40.91
Inadequate security	63	14.39

Access the aspect of farming the respondents wants to return to

In accessing the aspect of farming activity the respondents showed up interest in the study identifies that majority of the respondents want to venture into crop production of groundnut, millet,

,Maize and rice production which are the major crop been exported out of the country and generates a lot of income to the country's economy. The aspect of farming the respondents' wants to go back into is as shown in Table 2 below

Agricultural production	Frequency	Percentage
Crop Production (G.nut, Maize, Millet, Sorghum and Rice)	163	43.23
Cattle rearing	46	16.15
Poultry farming	22	16.67
Fish farming	20	13.54
Pig farming	4	6.25
Snail farming	2	2.6
Horticulture	1	1.56

Ways in which agricultural production can revive economy in the north east

The respondents have suggested some strategies that can help reviving the economy of the

North east as Security is the key issue with about 91.21% of the respondents sees as their major need. The Strategies is as shown in Table 3 below

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate Security	166	91.21
Provision of infrastructure	132	84.38
Provision of improved varieties, herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers	112	80.21
Creating the awareness on stock route to avoid conflict with herders	32	29.2
Access to land	32	79.2
Access to Credit	30	75.52
Political will	16	24

II. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that though the respondents are very much willing to go back into agriculture but there are lots of constraints holding them back which majorly is the fear of terrorist invasion again This implies that the government should focus more on security in the north east so as to boost the economy of the area and Nigeria at large through export of agricultural products.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

Government should and private individual should make security every ones responsibility just as the Nigerian military and the civilian JTF has been doing.

Government should focus more on agricultural production in the study area

Government should stimulate agricultural production by credit facilities and proper access to land.

Government should provide adequate infrastructures in the environment

Adequate awareness should be given to the member of the public on stock route for adequate cattle rearing and avoidance of Farmer/herdsmen conflict

Community and political leaders should encourage the people of the north east to summon courage and return back to their villages' home as there is no place like home.

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