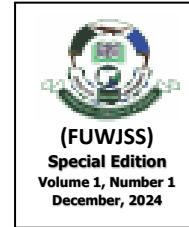


**PHYSICAL INSECURITY AND HUNGER IN
KATSINA-ALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Physical insecurity is a scourge that has bedeviled the Nigerian society in recent times. This has had devastating consequences on the socio-economic development of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. This paper attempts to describe consequences of physical insecurity and hunger on the social and economic development of Katsina Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional survey design where 318 respondents were selected for the study using Taro Yamane sample size determination. The study results reveal that poverty, parental negligence, and hunger are primarily responsible for the rise of physical insecurity in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. Results also indicate that physical insecurity has manifested in violent communal conflict, displacement, destruction of infrastructural facilities, destruction of farm lands/farm produce and disruptions of business operations; thereby aggravating hunger in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between physical insecurity and the rise of hunger in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. The study recommends that the Benue State Government should dethrone and prosecute traditional rulers indicted for fueling insecurity in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. Also, governments at all

levels should provide employment to youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.

Keywords: Physical insecurity, hunger, Katsina-Ala, employment, traditional rulers

Introduction

Physical insecurity is a critical issue that has hampered industrialization and sustainable development in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large. Nigeria which is perceived as the giant of Africa has witnessed an unprecedented incidences of physical insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani Herdsmen; Boko-Haram Insurgencies, Armed Robber Attacks, kidnapping, political/religious crisis, murder, destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants, Child Abduction/ Trafficking. The presence of physical insecurity within the shores of Nigeria has scared away a lot of socio economic activities through launching of violent attacks, destruction of industrial firms, killing of farmers and destroying their farm lands, acts of terrorism resulting to increase in hardship and subsequently hunger. According to world food programe (2024), 26.5 million people across Nigeria are currently facing acute hunger.

Ever since the return of the country to democratic governance in 1999, Benue State has been facing one form of physical security challenge or the other. Thus, the degeneration of insecurity in the state has become a major issue of concern to the citizenry, and the government of Benue due to the destructive dimensions the issue has taken. From 1999 till date, the state has witnessed and continues to witness different threats to its security (Adegbami, 2013). According to Achumba and Akpor (2024), Corrupt Political leaders are often voted into offices which they convert those public offices for their own selfish gains. They also promote physical insecurity through selfishness and bad governance. Often, sadly, these crops of bad political leaders oppress and deny the general society of its development. According to Adagba, et al (2012) and Egbewole (2013), procurement of weapons for inordinate political ambitions, frustration and infrastructural decay occasioned by bad leadership, fraudulent cooperation given to criminals by the traditional rulers,

parental negligence and high rate of unemployment were considered to be the determinants of physical insecurity in the society. Achumba et al (2013), maintained that inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training, poor attitudinal and behavioral disposition of security personnel, and lack of expertise by security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations contributes to the rise of physical insecurity in the society. The continue practicing of activities of physical insecurity in Benue State does not only discourage local or foreign investments but has also greatly giving rise to the increase in hunger as it is witnessed in various local government areas of the State. According to world food program (2024), Benue state hunger statistics has been on the rise due to the high rate of physical threats occasioned by youths on the industrial and agricultural hub of the State. In 2017, 10% of Benue's population suffered severe hunger, in 2018, it rose to 10.40%, by 2019 it became 12%, in 2020 it was 12.70 %. Between 2020 and 2022, on average, 21% of Benue's population experienced hunger.

Katsina Ala which is known for its agricultural prowess has been taken over by physical insecurity. Food security has been affected by persistent violence attacks, armed banditry and kidnapping. According to Benue State Emergency Management Agency (2024), physical insecurity witnessed in katsina Ala axis has caused damages to local and foreign investments, it has also contributed in the widespread destruction of farmlands which has continued to diminish harvests and increase the risk of hunger for families across the state.

In a proactive step to address the menace, both the ministries of Agriculture and finance in Benue State (MABS, 2021) noted that agriculture currently employs about 60 per cent of the labour force and has contributed in the 40% income generation in the State making it a major socio-economic activity especially in the Sankera and Minda regions respectively. However, the physical insecurity activities in katsina Ala axis have forced famers to abandon farms and close markets due to risks to their lives, thereby posing a huge threat to food security, income generation and socio-economic development in the axis and the state in general. It is worthy to note that agricultural production has a multiplier effect on economic development. For example, some farm produce serves as raw materials in the value

chains for agro-allied industries while their byproducts have various uses including poultry and fish feeds as well as other applications. In addition, physical insecurity has caused the outright closure of many businesses specifically in the areas where a threat to security has become a daily occurrence (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015).

According to Anekwe, Ndubuisi-Okolo, Anigbogu (2015) and Agber (2024), Katsina Ala have been plagued by numerous security challenges for the last two decades. This insecurity has adversely affected its socio economic development and has manifested itself through hardship and hunger. Benue State Government and Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) employed various kinetic and non-kinetic measures in addressing these myriads of security challenges. Kinetic efforts are those that require security forces to conduct combat operations while non-kinetic efforts include a broad set of options to include infrastructure development, economic stimulus and humanitarian aid. Benue State Government at various intervals had granted Amnesty Program to militia with the aim of bringing sustainable development in the affected axis. With all the efforts made to suppress the menace of physical insecurity in Katsina Ala axis in Benue State, it remains unabated. It is to this extent that the study is interested in examining physical insecurity and the rise of Hunger in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria

Conceptualizing Physical Insecurity and Hunger

The Concept of Physical insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety that is caused by physical presence of weapons and attack or threat on human existence (Isaac, Murat and Ohida, 2019). The term physical insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety that is occasioned with arms or threat of life due to absence or lack of protection (Beland, 2005). Insecurity is from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune (Achumba, et. al.,

2013). Insecurity is continually on the increase thereby engulfing all the inhabitants of Nigeria as the government faces insurmountable pressure to guarantee the security of lives and properties of its citizens (Adegbami, 2013). The insecurity in Nigeria ranges from kidnapping and activities of terrorist and human trafficking in the South-South and the South-East, high level of arms robbery in the Southwest and the activities of political vanguards, Islamic extremist in the North. In Yobe state, the incidences of the insecurity that occurred are multifaceted and multidimensional. Activities of political vanguards, killings by hired assassins by political and business opponents and the Islamic extremism by Boko Haram group are a few cases in point. It is however important to be noted that all these forms of insecurity are induced by politicians (Adagba, Ugwu, and Eme, 2012; Lister, 2012). They also maintained that it is no longer a sect of Islamic militants, but has the support of discontented politicians and their paid gangsters

According to Adegbami (2013), hunger is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. Achumba, et. al (2013), maintained that hunger is the distress associated with lack of food, it is the threshold for food deprivation or undernourishment. Agber (2024), argued that hunger is defined as a condition in which a person does not have the physical or financial capability to eat sufficient food to meet basic nutritional needs for a sustained period. Egbewole (2013), defined hunger as the periods when people experience severe food insecurity meaning that they go for entire days without eating due to lack of money, access to food, or other resources.

Theoretical Framework

General strain theory of crime is adopted to examine physical insecurity and the rise in hunger in katsinal ala LGA of Benue State, Nigeria. General strain theory of crime was developed by Robert Agnew (1992). The theory also argued that individual commits crime when they fail to achieve positive value, cultural goals and Moral Discipline. The failure of an individual or a group of people to achieve socially valued success goals and Societal discipline can cause strain which also results into crime .The theory also argued that strain producing situation present negative stimuli. Adverse events or life

situations can cause strain. These could be such experience as being a victim of criminal attacks, child abuse, school problems, deceit, prostitution, armed robbery and problems with peers or verbal threat against one. As the individual who face negative experience attempt to respond to this situation by seeking revenge against those afflicting him results to crime.. A merit which general strain theory has is that being a more comprehensive perspective is that it has the potential to explain a wide variety of criminal and delinquent acts not excluding aggressive conducts, drug abuse, and offences against property. General strain theory is also able to explain crime in all social strata or classes of society.

General strain theory of crime is adopted to examine physical insecurity and rise of hunger in katsina ala local government area in Benue State, Nigeria. This is because of the core argument of the theory which states that individual/people in the society commit crime when they fail to achieve positive values and cultural goals. When a person is treated in a way he does not want to be treated in a social relationship, he tends to experience anger and frustration which may lead to criminal behavior, this criminal behavior will manifest through vandalisation, robbery, threat to lives and destruction of farm yields as it is currently been witnessed in katsina ala LGA. Because people no longer feel secured, farmers relocate for their lives, business entrepreneurs run away, laborers relocate to relatively secured communities making the affected place empty and hunger sets in. The explanatory value of the theory to the phenomenon under investigation is valid because physical insecurity is the product of inability to achieve positive value, cultural goals and moral discipline. The members of the society who fails to get to the societal approved or recognize ladder automatically becomes the societal nuisance and play a contributory role in frustrating the normal functioning and existence of the society. Such people become trouble makers such that they don't see anything good in development, they turn to be catastrophic through illegally collecting of dues from business men and women, collecting of matching ground from intending investors, forcefully collecting of plenty bags of farm produce from the owners making it very difficult for a legitimate operation of business and

farming activity thereby encouraging fold up and relocation. Ones this is carried out, hunger becomes the other of the day.

Research Methodology

This paper adopted Katsina local government area of Benue State as the study setting due to the incessant cases of insecurity witnessed and reported by official media houses. This study adopted a survey research design. The study purposively selected Katsina ala local government area of Benue State due to the current security challenges that has bedeviled the area. Katsina Ala local Government area is made up of twelve (12) council wards and in order to give equal chance of been selected, the study used simple random sampling technique, all the names of the council wards were written on pieces of papers, squeezed and shook, seven (7) out of (12) council wards were selected. The study reached out to the selected council wards and collected data from households through a systematic technique where every 10th household of the population is selected and data collected. 700 households were covered and 4000 members were in those selected households. Questionnaire was used to generate data for the study. Taro Yamane sample size determination formula was used and 318 was arrived at as the total number of sample size for the study. Data was analyzed quantitatively and presented in frequency and simple percentages, while chi square was used to test the relationship that exist between physical insecurity and hunger in katsina ala local government area of Benue State

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Attributes of the Respondents

This section discussed the socio-demographic characteristic of respondents Variables considered include sex, age and occupation.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Variables of Respondent

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Sex		
Male	298	93.7
Female	20	6.3
Age		
18-23	98	30.8

24-29	102	32.1
30-Above	118	37.1
Occupation		
Student	50	51.7
Business	60	18.9
Civil Servant	40	12.6
Police	30	9.4
Farmers	138	43.4
Total	318	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In respect to sex, available data indicates that 298(93.7%) were males and 20(6.3%) respondents were females.

In terms of age, the results indicated that 98(30.8%) of the respondents were between age 18 and 23, 102(32.1%) were between age 24 and 29. while 118(37.1%) respondents were 30 and Above.

In regards to the occupations, the results showed that 50(51.7%) were students whereas 60 (18.9%) of the respondents were business people, while 40(12.6%) were Civil Servants. 30 (9.4) were police officers while 138 (43.4) were farmers.

Table 2: Causes of physical insecurity in Katsina ala

Causes	Frequency	Percent
Poverty	55	17.3
Local thugs gaining support of traditional rulers	60	18.9
Sponsorship of thugs by Politicians	135	42.5
Parental negligence	68	21.4
Total	318	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Data on Table 2 above showed that 17.3% (55) indicated poverty to be responsible for the rise of insecurity in the study area while 18.9% (60) showed that thugs were gaining support from traditional chiefs. While 42.5% (135) maintained that sponsorship thugs gain from politicians was responsible for insecurity in sankera. 21.4% (68)

argued that parental negligence is the product of insecurity in sankera axis.

This finding corroborates previous investigations into the causes of the rise of insecurity in Sankera axis. According to Achumba and Akpor (2024), Corrupt Political leaders are often voted into offices which they turn such public offices for their own selfish gains. Often, sadly, these crops of bad political leaders oppress the people with the looted money. In Sankera axis, politicians have trained thugs and hooligans which have later turned into armed robbers, kidnappers, drug pushers and have been equally dumped by these same politicians that trained them after elections these set of trained thugs are the ones constituting a serious threat to the current insecurity challenges that has bedeviled the sankera axis.

Table 3: The relationship that exist between physical insecurity and hunger in Katsina ala

Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Physical insecurity brings about violence and displacement which gives rise to hunger	101	37.8
Physical insecurity leads to destruction of infrastructural facilities resulting to hardship and hunger	50	15.8
Physical insecurity discourages investments which affects business operation and increases the rate of hunger	65	20
Physical insecurity contributes in the destruction of farmlands and farm produce that ignites hunger	102	32
Total	318	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Data on Table 3 above showed that 37.8% (101) indicated that physical insecurity brings about violence and displacement which gives rise to hunger in katsina ala while 15.8% (50) showed that physical insecurity leads to destruction of infrastructure resulting to rise in hunger in katsina ala. While 20% (65) said that physical insecurity discourages investments which affects business operation and increases the rise in hunger in katsina ala. 32% (102) maintained that physical insecurity contributes in the destruction of peoples farmlands which ignite hunger in Katsina-Ala.

This finding corroborates previous investigations into the relationship between physical insecurity and hunger rise in katsina ala. One of the implications of security challenges in katsina ala is in the area of businesses and investments. Insecurity makes investment unattractive to business investors. Problems emanating from physical insecurity have continued to have a destructive effect on businesses and investments. Physical Insecurity has been discouraging and preventing investors from transacting and investing in rich economy of katsina ala. Chinese Yam floor company came to operate one of their plants in the axis, but were discouraged by incessant kidnap of their workers, killing of their staff and heavy extortion from those trained thugs. It has also caused the relocation of businesses and investments from katsina ala to other relatively secured areas in Benue State. In addition, physical insecurity in katsina ala has resulted to the destruction of farmlands thereby discouraging farming activities and paving way for increase in hunger (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015).

Table 4: Measures to be put in place to end physical insecurity in Katsina

Measures	Frequency	Percent
Politicians should avoid blame game and work as a team to end insecurity in katsina ala	100	31.4
Harmonious working relationship between traditional rulers and subject should be encouraged	98	30.8
Government should sanction any traditional ruler that is found fueling the crises.	70	22
Security operatives should be periodically swapped to discourage harmonious relationship with bandits	50	15.7
Total	318	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Data on Table 4 above showed that 31.4% (100) mentioned that politicians should avoid blame game but rather work as a team to end insecurity in the affected axis. While 30.8% (98) argued that

harmonious working relationship between traditional rulers and subjects should be encouraged. 22% (70) mentioned that insecurity will be addressed if government sanction traditional rulers found fueling the crises. While 15% (50) posited that security operatives should be periodically swapped to avoid cordial relationship with bandits.

This finding corroborates previous investigations into insecurity and socio economic development of katsina ala. According to Jirbo (2023), insecurity in katsina ala is fundamentally based on political misfortunes. He maintained that political actors who were desperate for powers sponsored militia and thuggery in the axis. He further argued that the traditional institution which is supposed to be the custodian of the rich heritage of the Tiv nation is desperate enough to make wealth and at the same time very economical with truth. Security is sacrosanct and it must be assured before economic and infrastructural development will take place. Sincerity and readiness on the side of both the politicians, traditional rulers and concerned stake holders such as Army, Airforce and other Security operatives will be an everlasting solution to insecurity in katsina ala.

A Chi-Square-based test of the significance and strength of the association between physical insecurity and the rise of hunger in katsina ala local government area indicated that there is significant and strong relationship between the two variables (see Table 5 below)
 Table 5: Chi-square Test of physical insecurity and the rise of hunger in katsina ala local government area

	Value	Df	Asp.sig (1-sided)
Pearson	1801.922	12	.000
chi square	181.932	12	.000
Likelihood ratio member of valid cases	318		

Symmetric Measures

Value	Approx. Sig
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Phi		1.807	.000
Nominal by	Cramer's V	.650	.000
Nominal	Contingency	.665	.000
Coefficient			
Number of Valid Cases		318	

The above statistical test found that the value of Chi-square (X^2) in the association is 1801.922 at the degree of freedom (df) of 12 and P value of 0.000. Since P-value is less than 0.05, it means that the variables are significantly associated. Furthermore, the measured strength of the association between physical insecurity and the rise in hunger in katsina ala showed the Contingency Coefficient value of 0.65 indicating that the association is very strong. This implies therefore that physical insecurity is responsible for the rise of hunger in katsina ala local government area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The preceding discussions have shown that insecurity is an ill wind of social phenomenon, which blows no one any good. In its aftermaths both its perpetrators and victims are losers. The presence of physical insecurity in any environment constitutes threat to food security, lives and properties, hinders business activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifle and retard socio-economic development of any society. Therefore, government, families, religious organizations and traditional rulers at all levels should rise to the occasion through adoption of proactive measures to drastically reduce or eliminate the monster so as to launch our society on the path of all round sustainable development. This can only be achieved through patriotism.

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that since the carrot approach used by the government has failed in returning peace in katsina ala local government area, the government need to step up physical security measures around the axis via the provision of security facilities and the development of stringent measures such as prosecution of criminals, amputation of both hands of the criminals and organizing a community public shaming to be meted out on security defaulters especially the thugs trained and

sponsored by unpatriotic politicians. This implies that Government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through training, modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, logistics and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.

The study discovered that the traditional rulers in katsina ala have worked cooperatively with bandits to continue distorting members of the public. They also play the role of middlemen between the criminals and some desperate politicians, based on this finding, the study therefore recommends dethronement of any king that involves himself in any criminal activity. The study further recommends excommunication against such a king found guilty of been responsible for insecurity against the supposed protected subjects.

Parental negligence was discovered to be responsible for the insecurity in katsina ala, the study recommends that the Tiv traditional council should make it mandatory that any parent that failed to give good training to his or her children and is also hiding the ill deeds of his or her children should face stigmatization. The affected family should also be considered as an evil family, the Tiv traditional council should also make it as a matter of necessity to ensure that such an evil family is completely and forcefully isolated from the rest members of the society.

The study discovered that poverty and crime work hand in hand. Any place where there is poverty, crime will be activated which will subsequently give a fertile ground for insecurity to grow. This has happened in katsina ala for long now. The study therefore recommends that the government should provide jobs to the youths directly and indirectly. This is how it will be done. Directly, the government should engage the youths in white collar jobs, this will keep them busy and engaged as well. Indirectly, the government should make farming fancy and attractive. Seedlings, fertilizer, loans, tractors and agricultural trainings should be made available to ease farming. This will play the role of pulling poverty out and will go a long way in reducing idleness, this will reduce the rate of insecurity in the affected axis.

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