Impacts of Boko Haram Insurgency on Agricultural Activities in Gujba Local Government Area, Yobe State, Nigeria.

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Abstract:

The study was conducted between the months of November-December 2018 to assess the impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural activities in Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe state, Nigeria. Six towns namely Buni Yadi, Gujba, Goniri, Katarko, Mutai and Wagir formed the study locations. These towns were the major agricultural strongholds of the Local Government. The study considered impacts of the insurgency on farming after the return of residents to these towns after almost two years of exile in other places as a result of displacement by the militants’ activities (2016-2018). Descriptive Survey design involving mixed methods was used in which a total of 394 respondents participated. Closed-ended questionnaire and Structured Interview methods were the instruments of data collection. Results on the respondents’ demographic characteristics indicated that the majority of the people were married young men within the age group of 26-35 years. Bulk of them was crop farmers (40.1%) and those engaged in handy works such as carpentry and trading (31.2%). More than 50% of the respondents did not possess any formal western education. Results also indicated that, at first (2012-2016) Boko Haram insurgency had really had a toll on all normal human activities in the area including farming to the extent that crop and animal production virtually came to a standstill and many farmers went into exile for a period of two years (2014-2016). But with the restoration of relative peace in 2016 as a result of which many of the displaced people returned to these towns, agricultural activities especially crop production gradually picked up which led to a good bumper harvest in 2018. However, many returnees still depend on food aids being distributed by a number of Non-Governmental Organisations. Besides, crop trading has been found to have improved greatly. Unfortunately, impacts of the insurgency on livestock production are still felt across the Local Government Area as many livestock farmers have completely relocated to other places considered safer to graze their animals which led to a significant decrease in the number of animals especially cattle in these areas. Thus, it was concluded that, with decisive developmental projects and concrete insurgency
combating efforts, all agricultural activities can be fully revived in these areas and the recent threat to food security can be addressed. It was further recommended that governments at all level should be more proactive in combating insurgency in these areas and beyond and provide the basic infrastructural requirements required by the people in order to encourage them to go back to farm so that agricultural activities can get back to track as usual.

**Key words**: Impacts, Boko Haram, Agricultural activities, Gujba, Yobe state.

**Introduction**: The Advanced English Dictionary defined insurgency as rebellion; revolt; the state of being insurgent. Insurgent means one or several people who take up arms against the local state authority or a participant in insurgency. People engage in insurgency for various reasons such as politics, tribal or ethnicity, religion and so on. Thus, engaging in insurgency under the umbrella of religious creed or doctrines can be described as religious insurgency. Insurgency has become a threat to global peace and security in the 21st century due to the fact that it constitutes the highest contributor to humanitarian crises in the form of rise in human casualties, internally displaced persons, refugee debacles, food insecurity and the spread of various diseases (VanCreveld, 1996: 58). Many scholars attributed the cause of insurgencies to many factors; Some scholars have argued that most of the conflicts in developing countries are caused by the prevalence of poverty. According to the deprivation theory, “aggression is always a consequence of frustration” and “frustration always leads to aggression” (Leeds 1978 cited in Awojobi 2014). “The poor are led to violence owing to their relative deprivation and needs” (Odumosu 1999 cited in Awojobi 2014). Frustration, lack of income and unemployment have prompted the youths in the northern Nigeria to become foot soldiers of Boko Haram (Awojobi 2014). Insecurity, terrorism, conflicts and violence are caused by the high poverty rate in most societies (Gurr 1970 and Burton 1997 cited in Awojobi 2014). Empirical evidence from the works of Collier and Hoeffler (2002) cited in Awojobi (2014); Bellows and Miguel (2006) cited in Awojobi (2014); Ford (2007) cited in Awojobi (2014) indicated that poverty was the major cause of conflict in Africa. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) examined conflicts in Africa, from their findings; they noticed the interface between income and conflict. Rice et al. (2006) cited in Awojobi (2014); Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Fearon (2004); Walter (2004) cited in Awojobi (2014) subscribed to the notion that poverty helps to extend conflicts once it started. Evidence has shown that when income drops there is a tendency for conflict to surface or reignited. Where ever it exists, insurgency of whatever nature comes along with various forms and degrees of consequences. According to Omilusi (2016), the multi-dimensional impacts of insurgency and armed conflicts in Nigeria are diverse including national insecurity, socio-economic impacts, collapse of infrastructure/humanitarian crises, as well as impacts on diplomatic relations. According to Stewart (2004:4) cited in Omilusi (2016), some development costs are obviously associated with insurgencies; people who join the fighting forces, who are killed or flee, can no longer work productively; schools, power stations and/or roads that are destroyed reduce the productive capacity of the economy. There are also more complex interactions between events associated directly with war (fighting, movement of people, deaths, physical destruction, international embargoes, and military expenditures) and developments in the macro and micro economy which mostly lead to adverse changes in individual entitlements, both economic and social. It has been noted that the costs of crime are tangible and intangible, economic or social, direct or indirect, physical or psychological, individual or community. In fact, it is from the cost that the consequences of crime are derived. The cost...
of crime can be incurred as a result of actual experience of criminal activities, when there is physical injury, when properties are stolen, damaged or destroyed. Besides, as a consequence of the prevalence of crime in society, the demographic composition may be altered through mass movement of people from crime-prone areas to areas perceived to be relatively crime-free. This can also lead to brain-drain and other socio-economic problems (Adebayo, 2014:483) cited in Omilusi (2016).

Boko Haram is a local name given to the dreaded so called Islamic militant group operating mainly in the north eastern region of Nigeria. Boko Haram is a Hausa statement, which upon translated into English mean “Western education is forbidden. The word “Boko” in Hausa language means western education, and “Haram” is an Arabic language which means “forbidden”. However, seeking western education is compulsory upon all muslims and associating such insurgencies to the religion of Islam is very wrong because the teachings of Islam strongly prohibit all forms of insurgencies against constituted authorities. Hence, militants who claim to have engaged in militancy for Islamic reasons are really ignorant or have misunderstood the true teachings of Islam.

Although Boko Haram insurgency is not the first major militant group in Nigeria, it still remains the deadliest group. Different militant groups such as the Maitatsine Islamic fundamentalist sect, Odua People’s Congress (OPC), Bakassi Boys, Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) as well as the Niger Delta militants had been militant groups that operated at different times in different parts of the country. It is on record that Boko Haram has been operating under the name Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization with Mallam Lawal as the leader since 1995 but leadership of the group shifted to Mallam Mohammed Yusuf when Mallam Lawal left Nigeria to continue his education in Saudi Arabia (Ekanem and Ejue, 2012 cited in Beatrice, 2015). It is the leadership of Mallam Mohammed Yusuf that allegedly opened the group to political influence and popularity. Mohammed Yusuf founded a non-violent Islamic sect known at that time as “Yusufiya” movement in Maiduguri the capital of Borno state in the early years of 2000 which preached anti-western education doctrines in Maiduguri and in many other cities and towns around Borno state. The group later turned violent and launched its first attack in July, 2009 in Maiduguri. It was after the killing of its leader Mohammed Yusuf in the 2009 attack that the group earned its present name “Boko Haram”.

The first attack by the group Boko Haram in Yobe state was in November, 2011 when the group attacked Damaturu the Yobe state capital. Since then, incessant attacks by the group became more prominent attacking many Local Government Areas in Yobe State. The hard hit Local Governments by the Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe state were Gujba, Potiskum, Gulani, Geidam, Babbangida and Gashua. Consequently, the multi-dimensional impacts of the insurgency continued rising leading to the complete displacement of people from their towns especially from the town of Buni Yadi, the capital of Gujba Local Government Area which was completely vacated for more than two years without a single resident in it. According to Agomuo (2011:48 cited in Beatrice, 2015) what started around 2006 in the far flung North East geopolitical zone of the country as a child’s play, has become a national disgrace and of international concern. The emergence of the deadly group, whose activities assumed a worrisome dimension in 2009, has continued a reign of terror in parts of the country. The inhuman activities of the Islamist sect, have unsettled the Nigerian nation to the extent that ample time and socio-economic cum political resources that ought to have been channeled to the development of the entire country is being wasted on various efforts geared towards checkmating and possibly, annihilating the insurgency in the North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Agreed that the North-east is the epicentre of the insurgency but its effect reverberates through the entire country and has constituted a major source of underdevelopment to Nigeria.

Background to the Study:
Conflicts and insurgencies of different nature and causes prevail in many parts of the African continent.
Some of these conflicts have sadly led to a massive loss of lives and property and to environmental destruction with dire consequences for agricultural production and food shortages. The impacts of Boko Haram insurgency are so numerous and cut across all aspects of life especially in the north eastern part of Nigeria (Beatrice 2015).

Many rural areas in the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency namely Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states have been rendered unsafe for human habitation, pushing hundreds of thousands of farmers out of their lands. It should be noted that, bulk of the farmers in northern Nigeria are rural dwellers and rural areas happened to be the hardest hit areas by the Boko Haram insurgency. Recent estimates put the number of people killed and displaced by the conflict as approximately 17,000 and 2.5 million respectively. This has seriously affected all forms of livelihood activities including agricultural production. In a region known for its debilitating poverty, aridity and periodic cycle of drought and famine, the Boko Haram insurgency has further sown the seeds of famine (Shetimma, 2016).

According to Abubakar E. S. et al., (2017), more often than not, insecurity constituted by Boko Haram in Adamawa state of Nigeria has to a large extent tampered with tens of thousands of people whom major activities is farming. The protracted violence in the affected zone has forced large scale farmers to abandon their farming activities in search for their dear lives. This has to some extent crippled economic activities and hence led to reduction in internally generated revenue of the state. The mass displacement of people have resulted to poor harvest in the Northern and some central part of Adamawa state; mainly Mubi North, Mubi South, Michika, Madagali, Maiha, Hong and Gombi Local government areas of the State. In addition, rising prices of food and other services in Adamawa have always been linked to high rate of insurgency in the state. There are challenges to low productivity, mass displacement, and decrease in internally generated revenue of the state. Consequently, farming activities in many parts of these states were seriously hampered by the insurgency leading to very significant drop in crop production which in turn led to food security.

Perhaps, the most important insurgency related socioeconomic impact that could lead to the greatest humanitarian crises in the world was its impacts on food security. It is unfortunate that populations across the world have faced various degrees of food shortages, some with very damning humanitarian consequences. The World Bank defined food security as a condition where everyone has access to sufficient food to live a healthy and productive live (World Bank 1986 cited in Henry, 2017). The Africa Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID 2015 cited in Henry, 2017) defines it as a situation when everyone has physical, social and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs, produce and stay healthy. In fact, food security is when there is food sufficiency with no hunger or fear of starvation. Several indicators are associated with food security. These include availability, access, adequate utilization and stability of food supply at all times (Dubagat 2013 cited in Henry, 2017).

There are four major dimensions of food security: availability of food, access to food, adequate utilisation of food, and stability of food supplies at all times (FAO). Over the past two years, farmers in Yobe state and in many parts of the North Eastern parts of Nigeria, particularly Adamawa and Borno states were no longer able to farm for security reasons especially for fear of attacks by the dreaded Boko Haram sect who continued to unleash untold havoc in the part country. This insurgent activity has in turn affected food production and consequently raised prices of foods that are majorly cultivated in these places like maize, sorghum, corn, beans, peanut, pepper, tomatoes and onions. Besides, it is noteworthy that this same part of the country has been known for mass rearing of cattle, which made meat available to other part of the nation but today, the story is not the same. The gravity of the crisis has brought about decline in productivity which in turn led to escalation in the prices of Agricultural output and reduced the per capita income of thousands of farmers.
Reports by scholars showed that, with the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009, it had negatively impacted agricultural activities in many areas where the insurgent activities are concentrated especially in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states as a result of which the contribution of agriculture to the nation’s GDP was seriously affected. Hitherto, agriculture accounted for over 60% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Francis and David, 2012) According to Adebisi et al., 2017, due to the numerous impacts of the Boko Haram insurgency, average mean of agricultural output to Nigeria’s GDP dropped from 37.050164 in 2009 to 20.996397 in 2013. An evaluation made in the study of the descriptive statistics i.e. the mean scores of the agricultural output from 1994 to 2003 and the output from 2004 to 2013, it was noted that a difference (7.06395739) existed between two groups, as the output from 1994 to 2003 had a mean score of 36.1452229 while the output from 2004 to 2013 had a reduced mean score of 29.0812655. Furthermore, as the numbers of years for 1994 to 2003 output were ten (10) years, while the numbers of years for 2004 to 2013 output were ten (10) years, the observed difference of 7.06395739 in their mean of their total performance scores could be as a result of the difference in reduction in the output in 2004 to 2013, which could not be avoided due to insecurity. This implies that the output was affected between 2004 to 2013 compared with 1994 to 2003.

**Statement of the Problem:**

Since the first attack on Damaturu the capital city of Yobe state by the Boko Haram group in November, 2011, insurgent attacks became daily occurrences in many towns across the state especially in agricultural stronghold areas of Potiskum, Gulani and Gujba Local Government Areas leading to devastating drawbacks in agricultural practices with resultant impacts on socioeconomic status of thousands of peasant farmers. Such impacts included killings, rape, abductions/kidnappings, infrastructural destruction, flows of refugees, financial crises, decrease in national security, food insecurity, decrease in national GDP, as well as decrease in international investments. However, food insecurity was perhaps one of the major impacts that caused one of the greatest humanitarian crises in all areas bedeviled by the Boko Haram insurgency. Boko Haram insurgency led to massive displacements of many hundred thousands of rural farmers and resulted in high levels of food insecurity in northeast Nigeria. Certainly, food availability or abundance makes a nation more secured especially with regards to issues of social security and people’s lives and livelihoods become threatened when they are deprived of this privilege. Already poor and vulnerable host communities have absorbed large numbers of people fleeing violence, placing considerable pressure on fragile agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, while the insecurity has severely disrupted markets and food availability. Staple food crop prices are extremely high due to inflation and its pressure on the national economy. Food consumption level across the many Boko Haram stricken communities of Yobe state is in crisis situation. In some area, many households are facing extreme food deficits, resulting in high acute malnutrition. Besides, agricultural sector which is the backbone of the economies of Yobe state has been crippled by the 7 year long insurgency by the Boko Haram group and food insecurity is still at extremely high levels especially in Yobe state as well as in Borno and Adamawa states due to decreased land cultivation, lack of access to seeds, farming tools land among other factors.

Yobe state is generally an agrarian region with more than 80% of its citizens engaged in small-scale subsistence farming and contributes about 0.42% to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Economy of the state is largely driven by agriculture. Food crops such as millet, sorghum, beans, and maize are grown by small – scale farmers while cash crops mainly grown by peasant farmers include groundnut, sesame, cotton etc. The state has some of the largest cattle markets in West Africa (YOSERA, 2015). Gum Arabic of high grade is also available in Yobe state. The state produces over 80% of the total national output of gum Arabic. According to Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (2016), more than 80 percent of the rural
population in northeast Nigeria depends on crop or livestock farming.

Because of its distinct vegetation cover favourable for agricultural activities, Gujba Local Government Area happens to be an agricultural strong hold in Yobe state and considered as one of the food baskets of the state with over 60% of its population being farmers. However, consistent attacks on many towns by the dreaded Boko Haram group have led to displacement of many rural farmers from these places thereby leading to significant draw backs in agricultural activities affecting both crop and livestock productions. Many major towns in Gujba Local Government Area which were well known for agricultural activities including Gujba, Katarko, Mutai, Wagir, Goniri and Buni Yadi were at one time or the other completely deserted for more than 2 years. Certainly such an unprecedented displacement of people who were mainly peasant farmers could have significant impact on agricultural activities not only on the affected areas but on the state and the nation at large.

Consequently, crop production was seriously affected due to reduced land cultivation resulting in shortage of stable food crops such as maize, sorghum, corns and beans as well as increase in the prices of these crops. Moreover, livestock farming was more or less affected by the insurgency as many animal rearers who were mainly nomadic herdsmen have relocated to remote places considered to be safer. Thus, many returnees to these towns after two years of exile now survive on food Aids from some international Non-Governmental Organisations such as the Action Contre la Faim popularly known as Action against Hunger (ACF), the World Food Programme (WFP), Catholic Relieve Service (CRS) and the Red Cross Society among others. Thus, it is against this background that this research study was conducted with the aim of assessing the impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural production in Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe state.

**Study Area:**

Gujba is one of the 17 Local Government Areas in Yobe state with its capital at Buni Yadi. It lies in the southwestern part of the state at 11°29’52”N 11°55’51”E occupying an area of 3,239 Km² with a 456 meters elevation above the sea level and a population of 130,088 at the 2006 census. It lies mainly in the dry sahel savannah belt where conditions are hot and dry for most of the year. However, the area has a relatively thicker vegetation cover compared to many other parts of the state. The hottest months being March, April and May when temperatures range between 30°C – 42°C. Rainy season is usually short and lasts 120 days from June – September and annual rainfall range is normally 500m – 1000m. ([www.nigeriaroute.com/yobe.php](http://www.nigeriaroute.com/yobe.php)).

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**Figure 1: Map of Yobe state showing Gujba Local Government Area**

**Materials and Methods:**

The study was conducted between the months of November-December, 2018 which covered impacts of the insurgency on agricultural activities particularly crop and livestock production from 2016-2018. It made use of the Descriptive Survey design involving mixed methods. A total of 44,231 comprising of local inhabitants of the six study locations formed the target population of the study was. Slovène’s formular for determining sample size
was used to select the 394 respondents who participated in the study which comprised of crop and livestock farmers, traders in crops and livestock as well as village and ward heads. The sample size proportion for the study areas is shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Sample size proportion**

| S/N | AREA       | POPULATION | SAMPLE SIZE |
|-----|------------|------------|-------------|
| 01  | Buni Yadi  | 24,755     | 220         |
| 02  | Mutai      | 3,344      | 30          |
| 03  | Wagir      | 4,546      | 40          |
| 04  | Gujba      | 3,700      | 33          |
| 05  | Katarko    | 4,008      | 36          |
| 06  | Goniri     | 3,878      | 35          |
| TOTAL| 44,231     |            | 394         |

Source: Field work, 2018.

Similarly, Purposive and Snowball sampling techniques were also used to sample the respondents. To collect quantitative data for the research study, a researcher made closed ended questionnaire with Likert’s scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used while a structured Interview Guide was also used to collect qualitative data from some of the respondents especially the Village Heads, Ward Heads, traders as well as crop/livestock traders. All data collection procedures were self-administered. Similarly, quantitative data was analyzed in SPSS Version 20 using Descriptive Statistics while thematic method was used to analyze qualitative data.

**Results and Discussions:**

**Demographic characteristics of the respondents:**

In order to clearly understand the nature of the impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural activities in the six localities selected for the study, rudimentary knowledge of characteristics of the local residents of these areas ought to be studied also especially with respect to their age, level of education, occupation marital status and so on.

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

| VARIABLES         | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| **SEX**           |           |            |
| Male              | 320       | 81.2       |
| Female            | 74        | 18.8       |
| **Age**           |           |            |
| 20-25 yrs         | 36        | 9.1        |
| 26-30 yrs         | 104       | 26.4       |
| 31-35 yrs         | 113       | 28.7       |
| 36-40 yrs         | 58        | 14.7       |
| 41-45 yrs         | 50        | 12.7       |
| 46-50 yrs         | 13        | 3.3        |
| Above 50 yrs      | 20        | 5.1        |
| **Tribe**         |           |            |
| Fulani            | 108       | 27.4       |
| Kanuri            | 134       | 34.0       |
| Hausa             | 87        | 22.1       |
| Kare Kare         | 33        | 8.4        |
| Others            | 32        | 8.1        |
| **Occupation**    |           |            |
| Crop farming      | 158       | 40.1       |
| Livestock         | 36        | 9.1        |
| Irrigation        | 35        | 8.9        |
| Fuel wood harvesting | 27    | 6.9        |
| Others            | 123       | 31.2       |
| Fishing           | 15        | 3.8        |
| **Marital status**|           |            |
| Married           | 275       | 69.8       |
| Single            | 96        | 24.4       |
| Divorced          | 23        | 5.8        |
| **Level of education** |   |   |
| Arabic            | 196       | 49.7       |
| Primary certificate | 83     | 21.1       |
| Secondary certificate | 79     | 20.1       |
| Diploma/NCE      | 23        | 5.8        |
| HND/Degree        | 13        | 3.3        |
| Post graduate     | 0         | 0          |
| **House hold size** |   |   |
| 1-5 members       | 86        | 21.8       |
| 6-10 members      | 113       | 28.7       |
| 11-15 members     | 80        | 20.3       |


Demographic characteristics of the respondents as shown in the table above indicates that the majority of the respondents (81.2%) were male and majority of whom 28.7% and 26.4% were within the age groups of 31-35 and 26-30 years respectively. Besides, Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups were also found to be the majority; 27.4% and 34.0% respectively. Other tribes were represented by only 8.1%. As it is the case in many traditional rural African communities, the majority of the respondents 40.1% were crop farmers while a good number of them 31.2% were engaged in other trades such as carpentry and trading. Despite being an area hitherto well known in livestock farming, only 9.9% of the respondents were found to be livestock farmers because majority of them have relocated to other places as a result of the insurgency. Besides, a good number of the respondents 8.9%, 6.9% and 3.8% were engaged in irrigation, fuel wood harvesting and fishing respectively. Similarly, 69.8% of them were married and the majority of them (49.7%) did not possess any formal western education. Only 9.1% of the respondents possessed post-secondary qualifications. However, the majority of them 48.2% have stayed in the area for more than 10 years.

**Demographic characteristics of respondents**

| Number of years in the area | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1-5 yrs                    | 45                    | 11.4       |
| 6-10 yrs                   | 89                    | 22.6       |
| 11-15 yrs                  | 70                    | 17.8       |
| 16-20 yrs                  | 86                    | 21.8       |
| Above 20 yrs               | 104                   | 26.4       |

**Impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on crop production:**

It should be noted that this study investigated the impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural activities after the return of residents to the 6 towns selected for the study after almost 2 years of exile. From 2014-2016, Buni Yadi, Goniri, Wagir, Katarko, Gujba and Mutai towns remained completely deserted when residents fled to other towns to escape from attacks by the dreaded group. However, towards the end of 2016, people began to return to their residents when relative peace was restored in these towns. With the prompt intervention of government as well as other NGOs, activities picked up immediately. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (October 2016) shows for the first time since August 2015, a total number of IDPs below 2 million – 97 percent of whom declared that their displacement was due to the Boko Haram insurgency. One-quarter of these were displaced in 2016, with the majority displaced in 2014. Almost half of those surveyed noted food as their biggest unmet need. Since August 2015, a total of 958 549 returnees from within and outside Nigeria have been recorded, with an increase of about 48 000 returnees since August 2016 (FAO, 2016).

For almost one year after the return of residents to these once deserted towns, agricultural activities did not pick up as returnees were busy trying to settle down by fixing up destroyed infrastructure such as housings. During this times, majority of the returnees heavily depended on food aids to survive. Many of the internally displaced people in the north-eastern part of Nigeria face enormous difficulties in meeting their food and non-food needs. Assessments in late 2014 alone in Gombe, Yobe and Adamawa states, revealed that vast areas of southern Yobe and Borno and northern Adamawa were under-cultivated and/or not harvested during the May to December main farming season as a result of attacks and conflict-related fears orchestrated by the Boko Haram insurgency in the area. Many of the internally displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria can only secure a single meal a day. They have abandoned their farms, agricultural activities and homes due to insecurity (Henry, 2017). In Nigeria, 50 percent of crops and 47 percent of livestock consumed by the south were produced in northern states (Jessica, 2014).

However, at the onset of rainy seasons in 2017, agricultural activities especially crop production gradually picked up in most of these areas although according to the respondents the population of...
farmers at that time was very low as many farmers did not return or could not cultivate their lands due to lack of farming inputs, poverty or out of fear of attacks by Boko Haram members at farmlands most of which were far away in the bushes. Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States which are the epicenter of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria also happen to contain the largest farm lands in the country dominated by different kinds of farmers. These States produce stable foods such as corn, cowpeas, rice, millet, tomatoes, yams, onion, fish and livestock. The fear of Boko Haram has prevented farmers from cultivating their farm land and the few that did have lost their farm products to the terrorists who set them ablaze, killing the farmers and destroying their products. These States are closer to Niger, Chad and Cameroon where agricultural business activities were booming especially in area of export of groundnuts and groundnut oil (Mustapha, 2015). These activities are now becoming history due to Boko Haram attacks.

Obviously, at first, Boko Haram insurgency had really made very significant impacts on agricultural activities in the areas studied especially on crop production and livestock farming. This was further proven by the respondents who stated that, 2 years ago, number of local farmers in these areas dropped significantly and many farmlands were abandoned while the few farmers who managed to return could not cultivate their lands. It should be noted that, analysis of demographic characteristics of the respondents shows that majority of the local people (40.1%) were crop farmers hence; drop in their population could be catastrophic to crop production.

Although, even prior to the advent of insurgency in these areas, agriculture as the main occupation of many local residents faced numerous problems which the farmers managed to curtail. According to Jessica (2014), Nigeria hold great potential to increase agricultural productivity in its northern regions, but severe episodes of conflict in these areas have compounded the already existing challenges to production, e.g., low rainfall, poor soils and lack of access to credit and services. Henry (2017) stated that the Sahelian climatic conditions of northern Nigeria and Cameroon have had a negative impact on food production for a long time and explain why, from the colonial period, the British and French invested in agriculture in northern Nigeria and northern Cameroon respectively. This already precarious situation has been compounded by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has engulfed this region since 2009. People have fled from one settled area to another for security and the tactics employed by Boko Haram have not been environmentally friendly. This has seriously affected food and cash crop production in this region.

Nigeria’s northeastern corner in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states has faced the bulk of attacks by Boko Haram militants since 2009, and the violence is ongoing and spreading to neighboring Chad and Cameroon. In Nigeria, 50 percent of crops and 47 percent of livestock consumed by the south were produced in northern states (FAO). Consequently, crop production dropped significantly as a result of which prices of crops such as corn, sorghum and maize which were mainly the stable food crops in these areas skyrocketed. The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) further stated that, inflationary pressures in the national economy have pushed the prices of staple food crops extremely high across the three northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe; and these are expected to rise further. Besides, Gujba has been one of the agricultural mainstays in Yobe state. However, according to the people, population of farmers is now growing gradually as new farmers migrate to these towns to take advantage of the situation. Majority of these outside farmers were rich who could buy lands from other poor farmers and could afford the exorbitant prices of farm inputs and labour. This case was found to be more prominent in Buni Yadi unlike in the other five areas studied where it was gathered that the population of indigenous farmers was quite encouraging because majority of them had returned.

Furthermore, it was discovered by this study that one of the main reasons that led to poor performance of indigenous farmers in these areas was the distribution of food aids to the residents of these towns by many
Non-Governmental Organisations such as the World Food Programme (WFP), Action Against Hunger (ACF) and so on. Many residents in these areas get enough of what to eat with their families from these organisations as a result of which many farmers abandoned farming activities. This scenario was found to be more prominent in Buni Yadi and Katarko towns. However, according to the respondents, other reasons to which the reluctance of farmers in these areas to farm could be attributed to were the scarcity and hike in the prices of fertilizer, improved seeds, labour as well as fear of attacks by Boko Haram. Moreover, upon return to their towns after almost two years of exile, many of the farmers who managed to return were faced by abject poverty, depression and fear of what will happen next. It should be noted that, poverty has been cited by a number of scholars as one of the root causes of Boko Haram insurgency in the north east of Nigeria. Thus, its prevalence can fuel the crises and hamper efforts to bring militants’ activities to an end in these areas.

Obviously, the cost of farming had greatly increased in these areas with resultant increase in the prices of food crops, a situation which the residents attributed to Boko Haram insurgency, farming activities especially crop farming is gradually resuscitating now in almost all the study areas. This was further made possible by the arrival of some farmers from other places to farm in these areas majority of whom taking advantage of the reluctance and inability of many indigenous farmers to farm. Consequently, prices of food crop especially the stable foods in these areas such as sorghum, corn, maize and beans have relatively dropped especially with the bumper harvest recorded in the 2018 farming season. Consequently, at present, trade in crops at the Buni Yadi main market is at its peak. This market has been an epicenter where farmers from all parts of Gujba Local Government Area and from other places brought their farm produce for sale and crops were traded and conveyed to different parts of the country and beyond. Two years ago, this market was nothing more than a grave yard. Certainly, crop production in northern Nigeria contributed immensely not only to the economies of the North but also to many states in southern Nigeria.

The crisis in the North has also affected the supply of food items such as vegetables, beans, yams, groundnuts, potatoes, carrots, onions and beef to the southern states of Nigeria (Onwusiribe et al. 2015:218 cited in Henry, 2017). Although the southern states of Nigeria are also engaged in the production of food, there is not always enough to meet their food needs. They have over the years relied on imports and additional supplies from the north to augment supply and their daily food intake. The insurgency has drastically reduced food production in the northern states with the multiplier effect being a reduction in the number of trucks conveying food from the north to the southern markets and beyond. As a result, there has been food insecurity not only in the northern states of Nigeria but also in the southern states and other parts of Africa, such as parts of Chad that have traditionally relied on food from northern Nigeria for survival. Food insecurity is therefore not limited to the north-eastern region of Nigeria (Henry, 2017).

Although different countries may face different consequences as a result of insurgency, the Brookings report by Henry (2014) outlined some insurgency challenges common to Nigeria and Mali as follows. The report stated that, each country faces different contexts, types of conflict, and different potential trajectories for the future, AGI’s research found that there are a number of challenges common to both countries. One of the biggest challenges faced by the crop, livestock and agricultural services value chains in these two conflict scenarios was a reduction in human mobility. The agriculture sector requires farm laborers to travel to fields where they are exposed to attacks by insurgents. Markets where agricultural products are bought and sold are also targets due to the amount of money and appropriable products exchanging hands. Livestock markets such as cattle...
or camel markets are particularly under threat of attack because the unit cost per animal is very high. However, some farmers were able to maintain their agricultural investments demonstrating some resilience to the conflict situations. Interestingly, the fisheries sectors in both countries were more resilient than other types of agricultural production. Besides, this study had it from some of the respondents that in some instances, crop and livestock farmers in these areas also negotiated for their safety with the insurgents. Farmers actually paid insurgents for safe bus transport to fields. In Nigeria some farmers moved their livestock within their compounds very near their houses and crop farmers diversified into animal rearing as well (Henry, 2014).

With respect to the impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural activities, the situation was found to be the almost similar in all the 6 areas studied. Population of indigenous farmers had dropped significantly, cost of farming had increased and prices of farm implements had also increased, many farm lands have been abandoned and land cultivation had dwindled also. In turn, all of these cumulatively affected the farmers’ productivity significantly. However, it was gathered that, in Mutai, Wagir, Katarko and Gujba towns the number of abandoned farmlands were very negligible because after the return to these towns, indigenous farmers were able to cultivate their farms fully unlike in Buni Yadi and Goniri towns where a considerable number of farmlands were abandoned due to fear of Boko Haram attacks. But the situation has improved at present due to timely intervention by the Federal government of Nigeria and many other Non-Governmental Organizations by providing food aids, necessary infrastructure and farming tools all of which boosted the productivity of many poor returnee farmers which in turn greatly assisted in reviving crop production in these areas. In addition, the arrival of many farmers who migrated to these areas from other places or invested heavily in crop production in these areas have also assisted towards the resuscitation of agricultural activities in Gujba Local Government Area. Thus, it can be said that, at present crop production in many parts of Gujba L.G.A. has relatively improved.

Figure 2: Photo taken at the Buni Yadi market in December, 2018 showing heaps of bags of corn being traded

Source: Field work, 2018.

Figure 3 below shows a comparison of questionnaire responses obtained on farmers’ productivity, level of crop production, level of livestock production and level of trade in farm produce in the areas studied. With regards to farmers’ productivity, Mutai, Wagir and Katarko had the highest number of respondents who agreed that the productivity of farmers in the areas had greatly improved with 80%, 77% and 76% respectively while 67% was recorded in Gujba town. Lowest levels of farmers’ productivity were recorded in Goniri and Buni Yadi towns with 51% and 55% respectively. In Buni Yadi for instance, this could not be unconnected with the reluctance of many rural farmers to farm as a result of their heavy dependence on food aids distributed by a number of NGOs. In addition, many of the rural farmers in Buni Yadi engage in other economic activities from which they earn their sources of survival e.g. civil service. Besides, similar results were also obtained in these towns with respect to the present level of crop production. Response rates on levels of crop production of 88%, 79%, 85% and 65% were...
recorded in Mutai, Wagir, Katarko and Gujba towns respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest number of respondents who agreed that the present level of crop production was satisfactory was recorded in Goniri and Buni Yadi towns with 58% and 54% respectively. Possibly, this could be attributed to the fact that most of the bushes around these towns where majority of the farms were located fall within or near the axis of Sambisa forest where activities of the dreaded Boko Haram group are concentrated. Thus, many farmers find it very difficult to cultivate their remote farmlands out of fear of attacks by members of the militant group.

Responses obtained with regards to the level of trade in farm produce in some of the studied areas was found to be encouraging especially trade in food crops, the farmers attributed this progress to the very good bumper harvest recorded in the 2018 rainy season. In this respect, 86% and 77% of the respondents in Katarko and Buni Yadi towns attested to this. It should be noted that Buni Yadi and Katarko towns were the relatively biggest towns with bigger markets where trade in farm produce normally take place even before the advent of the militant Boko Haram in the area. Thus, crops from many smaller towns including Goniri, Mutai, Gujba and Goniri towns were brought to Buni Yadi for sale. This could possibly be the reason why responses on trade in crops were found to be very low in Goniri, Mutai, Gujba and Goniri towns. Similarly, the situation with regards to rate of land cultivation and level of crop production were found to be very encouraging in all the towns. More than 70% of respondents in all the towns agreed that the rate of land cultivation and level of crop production were also high and encouraging.

![Figure 3: Comparison of some farming related issues in the study areas](image)

**Impacts of Boko Haram insurgency on livestock farming:**

Obviously, the hardest hit farming activity in the areas studied was livestock farming. From figure 3 above, it can be seen that responses obtained on whether livestock farming had improved were very low in all the studied areas where 24%, 21%, 34%, 22%, 33% and 23% were recorded in Mutai, Wagir, Katarko, Goniri, Gujba and Buni Yadi towns respectively. Surely, this unfortunate development could be attributed to the scarcity of grazing fields as many of the livestock farmers could not go far into the bushes to graze their animals out of fear of attacks by members of the Boko Haram sect as a result of which majority of them moved away with their
animals to more remote areas considered to be safer to rear their animals. Consequently, this trend led to an unprecedented decrease in the number of animals reared in these areas especially cattle.

From the data obtained, impacts of the insurgency on livestock farming still prevail in these areas. Although livestock farmers in these areas comprised of nomadic herdsmen and the non-nomadic livestock farmers both categories were seriously affected. Since the return of residents to these towns in late 2016, livestock farming activities still remain very low. According to the respondents, many nomadic herdsmen have since migrated along with their animals mostly cattle to other safer places where they could freely graze these animals while the non-nomadic ones have either relocated their animals to other places or have sold off the animals and ventured into other economic activities mostly trading. This unfortunate development could not be unconnected with the inability of the livestock farmers to graze their animals which were mainly cattle far in the bushes out of fear of attacks by members of the dreaded group. It several instances, uncountable number of livestock farmers were attacked and killed by members of the Boko Haram group in the bush while rearing their animals. In most of these cases, many herds of cattle were also confiscated by these terrorists.

Meanwhile, since members of the dreaded Boko Haram are now known to be involved in cattle rustling, many livestock farmers including the non-nomadic ones have shunned animal rearing because according to them presence of herds of cattle attract Boko Haram members who usually come at nights and drive away with them large herds of animals especially cattle. Consequently, prices of animals such as cattle, goats and sheep have skyrocketed significantly in these areas. Besides, the rising cost of animal feed and the scarcity of grazing lands have also contributed to the unprecedented fall in livestock rearing in these towns. The situation was similar in all the areas studied. Similarly, this had also greatly affected trade in livestock in these places. The Buni Yadi main cattle market which used to be of international standard where animals especially cattle were traded and conveyed to different parts of the country as well as to other countries has now shrunk into a mini livestock market where goats were mainly traded. The very few respondents, who claimed that they still manage to rear animals, do so just to sustain their families because they could not venture into any other occupation. According to them, they do so by hiring their cows to harrow farmlands or by milking them to sell the milk. However, scarcity of forage and the high cost of animal feed is taking a toll on them and could dwell on this activities. Besides, the situation with regards to livestock farming was found to be still threatened in all the areas studied. More than 80 percent of the rural population in northeast Nigeria depends on crop or livestock farming. The Boko Haram insurgency has led to massive displacements and high levels of food insecurity in northeast Nigeria. Already poor and vulnerable host communities have absorbed large numbers of people fleeing violence, placing considerable pressure on fragile agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, while the insecurity has severely disrupted markets and food availability (Adebisi et al., 2017).

The bombing of bridges and roads have made land transportation risky and difficult. Movements of goods and man have hence been restricted. Animal husbandry is a common farming business in the north especially with nomadic cattle rearers who have to move from one place to another to feed the cattle. Other farm animals need to be fed to grow well for business and most of the animals’ food are obtained from farm products. Insecurity has led to drastic reduction in agricultural output and increase in prices in other parts of the country (Sahara reporters, 2015, Kathleen, 2014 cited in Adebisi et al., 2017). Besides, most of the animal farmers who normally trek through the bushes to convey their animals mostly cattle for sale in markets especially at the Buni Yadi animal market find it very difficult now to do so as a result of fear of cattle rustling and attacks by the dreaded Boko Haram group. Consequently, this phenomenon also led to scarcity of animals in many of the animal markets as well increase in their prices.
**Conclusion:**

Based on the findings made by this study, Boko Haram insurgency had negatively impacted many agricultural activities in many parts of Gujba L.G.A. including the studied areas. But, with the restoration of relative peace in many parts of the state especially from 2017 to date, crop production is gradually picking up as considerable number of rural farmers have returned to their settlements and are fully engaged in active farming activities. This had led to a relative increase in the rate of crop production as well as trade in farm produce in the Local Government Area. In addition to the restoration of relative peace which laid foundation for the resuscitation of farming activities in these areas, other factors such as prompt intervention by the Federal government of Nigeria and those of other NGOs especially the Red Cross Society, Action Against Hunger (ACF), World Food Programme (WFP) among others had also contributed towards this success. However, the situation with regards to livestock farming is still not encouraging. Certainly with the employment of decisive developmental projects and concrete insurgency combatting measures, all agricultural activities including livestock production will surely be restored.

Although the findings of this study indicate a considerable improvement in agricultural activities especially crop production, a lot has to be done in order to tackle the menace of food insecurity believed to have been sparked by the Boko Haram insurgency which in turn affects the north eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe states as well as the whole nation in general. According to FAO (2016), food insecurity is still at extremely high levels due to a lack of access to seeds, farming tools, land and water among other factors. In the worst affected and least accessible areas of Borno and Yobe, reaching people remains a major challenge because of restricted access due to high levels of insecurity. An FAO Seeds Security System Assessment indicated that the insurgency has negatively impacted on both the formal and informal seed system in the northeast states. Also in the Food Security Sector, agriculture-based livelihoods remain weakly funded. By missing the current dry season, many IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host communities will continue to rely on expensive food assistance. This will have a broad negative impact – lack of economic and employment opportunities, and possible harmful consequences including youth radicalization and enrolment in armed groups, resulting in continued civil unrest.

Besides, the organization also confirmed that it is seeking USD 25 million to tackle food insecurity among returnee, internally displaced and host communities between September 2016 and May 2017. Funding is urgently needed to support irrigated vegetable production and micro-gardening in the dry season, as well as rebuild livestock systems. In addition, FAO is seeking funds now to provide critical agricultural inputs to farmers in time for the 2017 main rainy season. We must act now to rapidly restore food security and combat severe hunger and malnutrition.

**Recommendations:**

1. Surely, the most fundamental tool for the resuscitation of full agricultural activities in this areas is the restoration of peace hence; governments at all level should strive hard to ensure that complete peace returns to all of the insurgency stricken places.
2. Governments at all levels, NGOs and all other stakeholder should work out modalities to ensure that the menace of dependence on food aids that contributes to reluctance to farm by many farmers is eradicated.
3. Financial assistance in any form should be given to these peasant farmers in order to boost their productivity
4. Farming inputs such as fertilizer, improved seeds, herbicides, insecticides etc. should also be made available at highly subsidized rates to these rural farmers to boost their productivity
5. Animal feeds and all other inputs required by livestock farmers should also be made available to livestock farmers in order to revive livestock farming in these areas.
6. Poor road conditions need to be rehabilitated in order to ease transportation of goods and
animals in these areas with the aim of boosting trading of crops and animals.

7. Governments and other NGOs should provide all the necessary infrastructure needed by returnees to these areas especially housing and potable water supply in order to address the long term depression in them and strengthen their spirits to farm.

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