

## **Dissecting the Trajectories of Food Insecurity in Katsina State 1999-2023**

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### **Abstract**

Food shortage has been a big problem in Katsina State, Nigeria, for many years. This study examines the nature of food insecurity in Katsina State from 1999 to 2023. The study adopts the Human Security Theory as its theoretic framework of analysis. This study adopts the qualitative research method and data for the study were obtained from secondary sources such as; government reports, books, journals and of course the internet was utilized. The research examines different factors, such as climate change, weak government policies, and security issues, have made it hard for people to get enough food. As a result, people have had to depend more on food brought from outside the state and on help from aid organisations. The study also examines government efforts like the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) and the Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP) to see if they have helped improve food production and supply. Findings show that while the government and other organisations have tried to improve food availability, problems like bad roads, lack of financial support for farmers, and poor market systems have slowed the progress. The research also highlights the role of international organisations in providing food aid and training for farmers. In conclusion, this study suggests that solving food insecurity in Katsina State requires that the government and communities need to work together to improve security, support farmers, and find better ways to deal with climate change, insecurity etc.

**Keywords:** Food insecurity, Food Production, Farmer Support and Food Shortage

### **Introduction**

Food insecurity is a major challenge affecting people all over the world. It happens when people do not have enough food to live a healthy life. The issue of food insecurity has become worse due to problems like climate change, wars, and economic crises (FAO, 2022). While some countries have made progress in reducing hunger, others, especially in Africa, still struggle with food shortages. Katsina State, in northern Nigeria, is one of the places where food insecurity has remained a serious problem for many years (Audu & Adamu, 2021). Food insecurity is a worldwide problem. Millions of people across different continents do not have enough food to eat every day. FAO stated that, about 828 million people worldwide were affected by hunger in 2021. This number has been increasing due to climate change, wars, economic problems, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the worst-hit areas include Africa, Asia, and parts of Latin America.

The causes of food insecurity around the world include poor agricultural production, poverty, conflicts, and natural disasters. Climate change has made things worse by causing droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather conditions. Many developing countries depend on farming, and when farming fails, people do not have enough food to eat. In some cases, food is available, but people cannot afford it because of high prices. International Organisations like the UN, FAO, and WFP have been working to reduce hunger. They provide food aid, support farmers, and help countries develop better food policies. However, despite these efforts, food insecurity remains a big challenge, especially in Africa.

Africa is the most affected continent when it comes to food insecurity. Many countries struggle with hunger due to poor farming systems, conflicts, and economic problems. FAO, more than 280 million people in Africa suffer from hunger. Countries in the Sahel region and the horn of Africa are among the most vulnerable. One of the biggest causes of food insecurity in Africa is climate change. Many parts of the continent experience long droughts and unpredictable rainfall, making it difficult for farmers to grow crops. Another major issue is conflict, wars and terrorist activities in countries like Somalia, South Sudan, and Nigeria which forced people to leave their homes and farming activities, leading to food shortages.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, faces serious food insecurity challenges. While some parts of the country produce enough food, others struggle with shortages (Matemilola, 2017). Northern Nigeria having vast arable land for farming and agriculture being the major employer of labour is one of the worst-affected regions. The major causes of food insecurity in Nigeria include poor farming practices, conflicts, and economic instability. The Boko Haram insurgency and armed banditry have made it difficult for farmers to work on their lands (International Crisis Group, 2022). Many rural communities in northern Nigeria have been displaced due to attacks, making food production difficult.

Nigeria has tried several programmes to improve food security, including the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) and the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP). These initiatives aim to help farmers with financial support and better technology. However, challenges such as corruption, poor implementation, and lack of infrastructure have limited their successes. Poor government policies and corruption have also contributed to food insecurity. In some cases, food meant for the poor does not reach them due to mismanagement. Katsina State, in north-western Nigeria, is one of the states affected by food insecurity (Ladan, & Matawalli, 2020). The state relies heavily on farming, but many challenges have made food production difficult. Some of the main problems include climate change, insecurity, and poor government policies. One of the biggest issues in Katsina State is desertification. The northern part of the state is experiencing desert expansion, which reduces the amount of land available for farming. Additionally, rainfall patterns have become unpredictable, affecting crop yields.

Another major problem is insecurity. Armed banditry and kidnappings have forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands. As a result, they are unable to grow crops or take care of their livestock. This has led to food shortages in the state and increase in prices of food in local markets. The government has made efforts to address food insecurity in Katsina State through agricultural programmes and security operations. However, these efforts have not been enough to solve the problem completely. Many farmers still lack access to good seeds, fertilizers, and farming equipment. In addition, many rural areas do not have good roads to transport food to markets.

Food insecurity is a serious issue that affects people at different levels, while the world has made progress in fighting hunger, many countries, including Nigeria, especially northern states like Katsina, face major challenges in ensuring food security due to climate change, conflicts, and economic issues. This study aims to examine the historical trajectory of food insecurity in Katsina from 1999 to 2023 focusing on the causes, the effects, and the efforts made to solve the problem.

### **Theoretical Framework/Working Theory**

This paper is predicated on the *Human Security Theory*. The Human Security Theory is a way of looking at security that focuses on protecting people rather than just protecting countries. In the past, security was mostly about protecting a country from external attacks, such as wars. However, human security is different because it focuses on the safety and well-being of individuals. It includes things like access to food, healthcare, education, and protection from violence (UNDP, 1994). The idea of human security became popular in the early 1990s when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced this concept in its 1994 Human Development Report. The report argued that security should not only be about protecting countries from military attacks but also about ensuring that people have food, good health, and protection from poverty and violence (UNDP, 1994). The proponents of this theory include; Amartya Sen, an economist and philosopher and Mahbub ul Haq, an economist who helped introduce the concept of human security in international discussions (Haq, 1995).

The Human Security Theory is important for understanding food insecurity in Katsina State because food security is one of the key elements of human security. According to the UNDP (1994), food security means that people should have access to enough food at all times. However, in Katsina State, many people do not have enough food due to problems like climate change, armed conflicts, and economic hardship. One of the main threats to food security in Katsina State is violence and insecurity caused by banditry and farmer-herder conflicts. Many farmers cannot go to their farms because of fear of attacks, leading to low food production (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2022). This shows that security is not just about protecting borders but also about protecting people from threats that affect their ability to feed themselves. Another issue is climate change, which has caused unpredictable rainfall and desertification in Katsina State. Many farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture, and when the rains do not come on time, their crops fail, leading to food shortages (IPCC, 2022). The theory also highlights economic

security as an important part of human security. Many people in Katsina State live in poverty and cannot afford to buy enough food, even when it is available in the market. High food prices and low incomes make it difficult for families to feed themselves properly (World Bank, 2021).

Even though the Human Security Theory helps explain food insecurity in Katsina State, it has some weaknesses. One major criticism is that the concept of human security is too broad. It includes many different issues like food, health, environment, and personal safety, which can make it difficult to focus on specific solutions (Paris, 2001). Some scholars argue that security should be clearly defined to make policies more effective. Another weakness is that the theory does not provide clear solutions to security problems. While it explains the need to protect people, it does not suggest specific policies on how to achieve that. For example, in the case of Katsina State, knowing that insecurity and climate change affect food security is useful, but the theory does not say exactly how to solve these problems (Newman, 2010). Lastly, the theory relies too much on international organisations like the United Nations and the World Bank to promote human security. In reality, governments at the local and national levels play the biggest role in addressing food insecurity. In Nigeria, the government has introduced programmes like the Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP) to help farmers, but challenges such as corruption and poor implementation have affected their success (FAO, 2022).

Despite its weaknesses, Human Security Theory helps in understanding food insecurity in Katsina State because it focuses on protecting people from threats like hunger, conflict, and poverty. The theory helps explain why food security is a key part of human security and why problems like violence and climate change must be addressed to ensure people have enough food.

## **Methodology**

The study is a qualitative study that depends on secondary source of information such as books, journals, magazines and of course the internets to dissect, analyze, and synthesize the trajectory of food insecurity in Katsina State. The study area is Katsina State which is located in North – West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It was created out of the defunct Kaduna State on 23rd September, 1987 and like the former Katsina Province of old Northern Nigeria. Katsina State borders Kaduna State to the south, Jigawa and Kano States to the East, Zamfara State to the west and shares an international border with Republic of Niger to the North (KIPA, 2023). The State has a projected population of approximately 10, 368,500 (NPC, 2022). Katsina State features a varied topography that includes plains, hills, and plateaus. The northern part of the state is characterized by a gently undulating landscape with some rocky outcrops, while the southern areas are marked by the Kankara Hills and portions of the Wase Plateau. The terrain is generally flat but has some hilly areas, especially in the south eastern part where the Kafur and Jibia hills are found. The two major rivers, the Jimi and the Rafin, play a role in agriculture and local ecosystems.

## Conceptual Clarification

**The Concept of Food (In) Security;** Food security means that people have enough food that is safe, nutritious, and available whenever they need it. According to FAO, (2006), food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. This definition highlights three important aspects: food must be available, people must be able to access it, and it must be nutritious. In the context of Katsina State, food security is a major issue due to problems like poor rainfall, insecurity, and poverty, which make it difficult for people to get enough food. There are four key pillars of food security, which help in understanding the food situation in Katsina State. The first is food availability, which refers to the presence of enough food in an area, either through local farming, imports, or food aid (FAO, 2013). The second pillar is food access, which means that people must have the money or resources to get food (World Bank, 2021). The third pillar is food utilization, which refers to how the body uses the food consumed. People need a balanced diet to stay healthy (FAO, 2022). The last pillar is food stability, which means that food security should be consistent over time. Food insecurity on the other hand is the opposite of food security,

**The Concept of Food Production;** Food production refers to the process of growing crops and raising animals for people to eat. According to FAO (2006), food production includes all activities involved in planting, harvesting, processing, and distributing food. It is an essential part of food security because when enough food is produced, people can have access to affordable and nutritious meals. Smith et.al., (2013) defined food production as the process of cultivating plants and livestock for human consumption, which encompasses the agricultural practices, systems, and technologies utilized to produce food, including but not limited to the management of land, water, and biological resources. Similarly, food production can be described as a critical component of food systems that encompasses the entire process of producing, processing, and distributing food, thereby influencing food security, nutrition, and public health at the local and global levels (Kearney, 2010).

**The Concept of Food Shortage;** Food shortage happens when there is no enough food available for people to eat. According to (FAO, 2006), food shortage occurs when the supply of food is lower than the demand, making it difficult for people to get enough to eat. Food shortage can be caused by different factors, including poor agricultural production, natural disasters, conflicts, and economic problems. Food shortage is closely linked to food insecurity because when food is scarce; prices go up, making it harder for poor families to afford enough to eat (World Bank, 2021). According to FAO (2017) food shortage can be defined as a situation in which the availability of food is insufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of a population, leading to hunger and undernutrition. This can occur due to various factors, including insufficient agricultural production, supply chain disruptions, and socio-economic inequalities. Again, food shortage refers to a condition where individuals or communities lack the economic and physical access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for

an active and healthy life, often exacerbated by poverty, conflict, and natural disasters (Webb & Diekmann, 2015).

**The Concept of Farmer Support;** According to Anania, (2018) farmer support refers to a set of policies, programs, and initiatives designed to enhance the economic viability of farmers, including financial assistance such as grants, loans, and subsidies that help stabilize farm income and reduce vulnerability to market fluctuations. Farmer support encompasses "the provision of technical assistance and advisory services aimed at improving agricultural practices, increasing productivity, enhancing food security, and promoting sustainable farming techniques (Davis & Goldberg, 2009). Farmer support is defined as initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable farming practices that protect the environment, conserve natural resources, and enhance resilience to climate change, often including training and access to eco-friendly technologies (Pretty, 2008).

### **A Historical Overview of Food Insecurity in Katsina State**

Food insecurity in Katsina State, has been a growing concern from 1999 to 2023. This period has seen various challenges that have affected the availability and accessibility of food for residents (Otekunrin, Mukaila, & Otekunrin, 2023). In the early 2000s, Katsina State's agriculture-based economy faced difficulties due to erratic rainfall patterns and limited access to modern farming tools. These issues led to reduced crop yields, making it hard for families to secure enough food (Sani & Abdullahi, 2024). As the years progressed, the situation worsened with the emergence of armed banditry and kidnappings. These security threats disrupted farming activities, as many farmers were forced to abandon their lands out of fear for their safety which significantly decreased food production, contributing to food insecurity in the State.

Economic factors have also played a role in exacerbating food insecurity. High inflation rates and rising food prices have made it increasingly difficult for families to afford basic food items. The closure of land borders further strained food supply chains, leading to shortages and increased costs in local markets (Gregory, Ingram, & Brklacich, 2005). Recent surveys indicate alarming rates of malnutrition among children in Katsina State. For instance, a 2023 survey reported a stunting rate of 44.2%, wasting at 9.4%, and underweight prevalence at 30.2% among children. These figures highlight the severe consequences of prolonged food insecurity on the health and development of the younger population.

The persistent rise in malnutrition rates in Katsina State suggests that more needs to be done. Food insecurity is not just about providing emergency food aid but also about ensuring a stable and long-term supply of nutritious food for everyone. One of the main challenges is that food is either too expensive or unavailable. Many families, especially in rural areas, cannot afford to buy enough food because of high inflation, low incomes, and poor access to markets (World Bank, 2021). Another critical area that needs attention is security. Many farmers have abandoned their lands due to bandit attacks and kidnappings. Without safety, farming activities cannot continue, and food shortages will persist.

## **Impact of Food Insecurity on Communities and Livelihoods**

Food insecurity has had serious effects on communities and livelihoods in Katsina State from 1999 to 2023. When people do not have enough food or cannot afford to buy food, it affects their health, education, economy, and overall well-being. Food insecurity in Katsina has been caused by climate change, economic instability, insecurity, and poor agricultural practices (FAO, 2022). The impact of these challenges has made life difficult for many families, especially those in rural areas who depend on farming for survival.

One of the most serious impacts of food insecurity is malnutrition and poor health. When people, especially children and pregnant women, do not get enough food, they become weak and more vulnerable to diseases. Malnutrition has been a major problem in Katsina, with high rates of stunting, wasting, and underweight children (UNICEF, 2022). Lack of proper nutrition also affects pregnant women, increasing the risk of complications during childbirth and high infant mortality rates. Many hospitals and health centers in Katsina have reported cases of severe acute malnutrition, which can lead to death if not treated in time (WHO, 2021).

Food insecurity has also affected education in Katsina State. When children do not get enough food, they struggle to concentrate in school, leading to poor academic performance and high dropout rates. Some children are forced to leave school to help their families find food or work on farms (World Bank, 2021). Hunger makes it difficult for students to focus in class, and in many cases, parents prioritize finding food over sending their children to school. In some communities, school feeding programs have helped keep children in school, but these programs are not always available or consistent (Katsina Mirror, 2024).

The economy and livelihoods of people in Katsina have also been negatively affected by food insecurity. Many farmers, who make up a large part of the population, have suffered losses due to poor harvests, insecurity, and rising costs of farming inputs (FAO, 2022). Armed banditry and kidnappings have forced many farmers to abandon their lands, reducing agricultural production and making food more expensive (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2022). When farmers cannot produce enough food, traders and market sellers also suffer because they have less food to sell. This has led to job losses and increased poverty levels across the state.

## **Policy Responses toward Addressing Food Insecurity**

Food insecurity has been a major problem in Katsina State, affecting many communities and making life difficult for residents. To address this issue, the government, international organisations, and local stakeholders have introduced different policies and programmes aimed at improving food availability, affordability, and accessibility (FAO, 2022). These efforts focus on agriculture, nutrition, security, and economic stability to ensure that people have enough food to eat. However, while some policies have provided relief, food insecurity remains a serious challenge, requiring more effective and long-term solutions.

The Katsina State Government has launched initiatives to support farmers by providing fertilizers, improved seeds, and modern farming tools. Programs like the Central Bank of Nigeria's Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP) have facilitated access to loans and farming inputs, enhancing productivity. However, many small-scale farmers continue to face challenges due to high costs of farming materials, inadequate irrigation systems, and insecurity in rural areas. To combat malnutrition and hunger, the Katsina State Government, in collaboration with UNICEF, distributed 7,000 cartons of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) in 2024 to assist severely malnourished children. School feeding programs were also introduced to improve nutrition and encourage attendance in public schools. Despite these efforts, not all affected children are reached, and funding challenges often hinder the effectiveness of food aid programs.

In response to banditry and kidnappings that have forced many farmers to abandon their lands, the Nigerian government has deployed security forces to protect farming communities. Additionally, local security groups have been formed for self-defence (National Security Report, 2023). While these measures have had some success, insecurity continues to pose a significant challenge, preventing many farmers from returning to their fields.

There are different policies that were introduced to reduce food insecurity in Katsina State, including agricultural support, food aid, security improvements, and economic reforms. While some of these policies have provided relief, the problem is not fully solved. There is a need for more investment in modern farming techniques, better security, stronger nutrition programs, and economic empowerment to achieve long-term food security in Katsina. Policymakers must work closely with local communities, farmers, and international organizations to create lasting solutions that will ensure sustainable food access for all residents.

## **Conclusion**

Food insecurity in Katsina State from 1999 to 2023 has significantly impacted the health, economy, education, and security of its residents, driven by factors such as climate change, economic challenges, insecurity, and poor agricultural practices. This has led to widespread malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant women, resulting in stunted growth, wasting, and underweight conditions. The government and international organizations have made efforts to address these issues through initiatives like the Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP) to support farmers, as well as food aid and school feeding programs for malnourished children. Security measures have been put in place to protect farmers from banditry and kidnappings, but their effectiveness has been limited. Despite these efforts, food insecurity remains a pressing challenge in the state.

## **Recommendation**

To address food insecurity in Katsina State, strong and long-term solutions are needed. The government, farmers, international organisations, and local communities must work together to ensure that food is available, accessible, and affordable for everyone. The following



recommendations focus on improving agriculture, security, economic policies, and nutrition programmes to tackle food insecurity in the state.

- i. To enhance food supply, agricultural production must be improved by providing farmers with better seeds, fertilizers, and modern tools. The government should invest in irrigation systems to enable year-round crop growth and promote the adoption of modern farming methods, like mechanized and climate-smart agriculture, to increase production and minimize losses.
- ii. To strengthen security in farming communities, the government should deploy more security forces to protect farmers from bandit attacks and kidnappings, which have led to decreased food production. Supporting and training local security groups can further enhance community safety. By ensuring farmers feel secure, they will be more likely to return to their farms and contribute to increasing food production. Enhanced security is essential for alleviating food scarcity in the state.
- iii. Economic policies should help reduce food prices and increase incomes. High inflation has made it difficult for many families to buy enough food, even when it is available. The government should introduce price control measures to keep food affordable and support small businesses and traders to improve the food supply chain.
- iv. Improving food storage and distribution systems is essential to reduce crop losses due to inadequate storage facilities and poor road conditions. The government should invest in better storage centers, food processing industries, and improved road networks to ensure food reaches markets before spoiling. Enhancing these systems will help minimize food waste and increase overall food availability in the state.

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