Enhancing Sustianable Food Security through Indigenous Mechanism in Community Policing

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Abstract	Review Article

The paper focused on one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which is sustainable food security, in an attempt to better the lots of the people because it is believed that once hunger is managed, poverty loses its grip. Since food security is a global issue, that have bedeviled the people in this part of the world by insurgencies, open grazing, there appears not to be any hope insight, hence, the topic of enhancing sustainable food security via African Traditional Protective Medium is considered. The qualitative research adopted phenomenological research method on a focused group stakeholder which are farmers, traders of farm produce, traditional rulers local security guards and police officers through the use of lead question and structured interview in ten selected agrarian communities in Ondo State. Findings revealed that the use of local security and indigenous mechanism will build confidence trust, openness, sincerity and accountability among stakeholders, the scheme have significantly boost food production and supply. African Traditional Protective Medium in the form of sweeping, bush clearing, aimless wondering and endless wrestling between and among the invaders as well as ghost security enhanced adequate protection which gave immediate responses and simultaneous judgements to offenders better than conventional policing. Sequel to the findings, a combination of conventional policing and indigenous mechanism were recommended to guarantee an enhanced and sustainable food security in Ondo State.

Keywords: Sustainable-food-security, indigenous mechanism, community policing

INTRODUCTION

Of all essential needs in life, air food and water appear to be the most basic requirement of all needs. This is probably ecause human and other animals could survive without cloth or shelter, but none will be able to survive without air, food and water hence, these are referred to as physiological needs. The continual provision of these basic essentials particularly produced from rural areas where basic social amenities are lacking and people are bedeviled with insecurity and gross neglect. The need to imbibe and mobilise native intelligence control to enable members of various remote communities take charge of their safety and ensure an uninterruptible food production in Ondo State.

Food is one of mankind's basic necessities, essential for sustainable growth and other vital functions within the ecosystem. The reliability of food production is closely linked to food security, which can be enhanced through local control and community policing. Local control involves the management of security structures within a community by its residents through community policing systems. According to Peng and Berry (2018), food security refers to the availability of sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets individuals' dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle. They classified food security into four dimensions:

1. Availability of food at the national level.
2. Accessibility of food for households.
3. Utilisation of food by individuals.
4. Stability, which can be viewed as a time dimension influencing all levels.

Full food security requires all four dimensions to be intact (Peng & Berry, 2018). A deeper understanding of food security challenges led to a shift in emphasis away from mere availability towards a broader approach. The Food Agriculture Organisation's (FAO)definition of food security evolved to include ensuring vulnerable individuals have access to available supplies, reflecting a better understanding of agricultural market functions

under stress and how at-risk groups struggle to obtain food. Economic access to food was incorporated into the idea of food security (Berry, Dernini, Burlingame, Maybeck & Conforti, 2015). In 1983, the FAO redefined food security as "ensuring that all people have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need."

Sustainable food systems combine sustainability and food security. Sustainable foods are "protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources" (FAO, 2021). A sustainable food system prioritizes ensuring food security and nutrition for all without jeopardizing the economic, social, and environmental foundations for future generations (HLPE, 2017). Climate change is widely recognized as a threat to the sustainable future of food security.

Security is a delicate and multifaceted concept that holds various meanings for scholars, analysts, policymakers, and organizations globally. Fundamentally, security pertains to the existence of peace, safety, happiness, and the preservation of human and physical resources, as well as the absence of crises or challenges to human dignity, all of which promote the development and progress of any civilization. The concept of security has evolved since the Cold War, influencing various schools of thought in security studies. Security encompasses dimensions such as psychology, finance, information access, public safety, defense, and military affairs. Mohammed and Isma'ilu (2021) argue that the introduction of community policing in Nigeria is necessary due to rising crime rates and general instability. The primary goal of community policing is proactive rather than reactive crime prevention. Community policing in Nigeria predates colonialism and focuses on self-help and a bottom-up approach to local concerns, particularly in security and crime management.

Community policing, as a concept, originated in the United States post-World War II. However, the Nigeria Police followed the British semi-military traditional structure introduced by the colonial administration. The practice of community policing in Nigeria stemmed from popular distrust of the police, leading Mr. Tafa Balogun, the former Inspector General of Police, to implement measures to enhance police-civil relations in 2003. Mr. Balogun introduced a Police Complaints Bureau and Human Rights Desks in all State Police Commands with the assistance of the British government as part of his reform efforts.

The US Department of Justice, in its 2009 report, described Community Oriented Policing Services as a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies supporting the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that contribute to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. Food insecurity is closely linked to poor health, with low-income populations experiencing higher rates of food insecurity. A supportive neighbourhood social environment may protect against food insecurity, while negative neighbourhood social factors, such as rape, banditary, intolerance and crime of all sorts could increase the risk (DiFiore et al., 2022).

The undercurrents of insecurity in Nigeria are changing due to the ongoing clashes between local farmers, including female farmers and herdsmen. Ogele (2020) contends that Fulani herdsmen often cause conflicts by overgrazing on cultivated and uncultivated land, destroying valuable crops and also raping female farmers on their farmlands. Farming communities have been forced to abandon their crops and agricultural products to protect themselves from rape and death by marauders. The resulting destruction has significantly impacted Nigeria's inflation rate. In April 2024, the food inflation rate reached 40.53% year-on-year, a significant increase from the 24.61% recorded in April, 2023 (Nairametrics, 2024).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Several programmes and policies had aimed to promote sustainable food security, many communities have continued to face challenges relating to food accessiblility, quality, and safety. These challenges are exacerbated in communities with high crime rates and low levels of trust in the police, as fear disrupts food systems, whereas, there are known indigenous mechanisms that had lived with us traditionally, but, which western systems had eroded. Examining how local control can contribute to long-term food security and investigating the interplay between community-led traditional indigenous mechanisms and food security, determine the specific pathways through which these two sectors intersect, and develop integrated policies that harness the strength of indigenous mechanism to improve food security is imperative. Understanding these links

will enable policymakers and community leaders to create and implement comprehensive measures that address both security and food-related issues, resulting in more resilient and sustainable communities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to provide answers to the following Research Questions:
- Does local control in traditional indigenous mechanism have any significant influence on trust and cooperation?
- Do community policing through indigenous mechanism have any significant influence on food security outcomes?
- Does the use of indigenous mechanisms in community policing differ in any way from the conventional practices?
- What strategies may be suggested for combining indigenous mechanisms in community policing with food security programmes to improve sustainability of food security?

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was a phenomenological type of research. The population comprised of all residents in the study area, particularly, traditional leaders, farmers, traders and security operatives in remote parts of Ondo State. The sampling technique adopted in this study was a focused group. The justification for the focused group technique is that participants were strategically selected based on their category which are producers/ farmers consumers, distributors, law enforcement agents and community leaders. The sample size for this study was eighty-two (82) participants randomly selected across ten agrarian communities under consideration. A constructed lead question which enabled participants to express their views was the instrument for data collection.

RESULTS

Category of participants	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional Leader	10	12.2%
Trader	22	26.8%
Farmer	30	36.6%
Local Security	10	12.2%
Police officer	10	12.2%
Total	82	100%

Research Question 1: Does local control in traditional indigenous mechanism have any significant influence on trust and cooperation?

Local control in traditional indigenous mechanism and security strategies built confidence trust, openness, sincerity and accountability among dwellers of remote community in Ondo State as there were no longer 'orders from above' to truncate or destruct their labour in security relating matters. Unlike sometimes ago when order of degree emanating from the State or Federal to let go of captured criminal and as a result, boosts the morale of Local Security operatives to be at their best as there labour received immediate compensation and recompense

Research Question 2: Do community policing through indigenous mechanism have any significant influence on food security outcomes?

Indigenous mechanism through community policing greatly affected the activities of local farmers and traders as well as that of the communities and traditional heads in restoring peace, harmony and cooperation among the people. All the network involved in the food production and supply chain were able to go about their legitimate businesses without fear of the men of the underworld who invade to steal, destroy, rape, kidnap and kill in the farmland and the villages. Therefore, the trust and confidence reposed on the scheme have significantly boosted food production and supply in the State.

Research Question 3: Does the use of indigenous mechanism in community policing differ in any way from the conventional practices?

The use of indigenous mechanisms greatly

differs from the conventional practices of intelligence gathering. The use, according to Oborowei, Ayelala, Sango, Lerun, Ale, Kukubaku and Ogun among others give immediate responses to matters and simultaneous judgments. Unlike the conventional method in which suspects are detained for investigation, wasting useful time thereby, denied justice, because justice delayed is justice denied.

Research Question 4: What strategies may be suggested for combining indigenous mechanism in community policing with food security programmes to improve sustainability?

From the ascent indigenous mechanisms, the strategies of sweeping, bush clearing, aimless wondering and endless wrestling between and among the invaders as well as ghost security will also go a long way to scar invaders away perpetually and restore all the needed peace and safety among rural dwellers, thereby attracting more people to take up agricultural ventures, leading to increase in food production and supply in Ondo State.

DISCUSSION

The opinions expressed by respondents on local security operatives were in no way different from the US Report of 2009, despite their ignorance of such document. Local control in community policing and security strategies according to Asaolu (2024), Odudu (2024) and Aluko (2024) built confidence, trust, openness, sincerity and accountability among dwellers of remote community in Ondo State as there were no longer "orders from above" to truncate or destrupt their labour in security relating matters. Unlike sometimes ago according to Agbomabiwon (2024), when order of degree emanating from the State or Federal to let go of captured criminal and as a result, community policing boost the morale of Local Security operatives to be at their best as there labour received immediate compensation and recompense.

Furthermore, as the result of the confidence, trust, openness, sincerity and accountability built by community policing initiatives among dwellers of remote communities in Ondo State, the activities of local farmers and traders as well as that of the communities' traditional heads are greatly affected in restoring peace, harmony and cooperation among the people. This programme according to Abdulkadir (2024) and Abefe (2024) have increased food cultivation and supply. Their opinion is in line with the submission of FAO (2021), that the security of life and properties in areas of production will increase the steady supply of food chain.

Moreover, indigenous mechanisms greatly differ from the conventional practices of intelligence gathering. Traditional divination and oracle stance would not take thirty minutes to arrest culprits, whereas police investigation could take several years, thereby punishing the wrong person (Odudu, 2024). In the view of Asaolu (2024), Alonge (2024) and Olorogun (2024), the use of Oborowe, Ayelala, Sango, Lerun, Kukubaku and Ogun among others, give immediate responses to matters and simultaneous judgments thereby, serving as deterrents to others nursing evil ambitions.

The Nigerian society have multiple means of protecting whatever is considered sacred. Such methods could be deployed to the farmland and food production centres to ensure uninterruptible food supply. According to Abraham (2024), Adegoke (2024), Abdulkadir (2024) and Agbomabiwon (2024), the use of indigenous mechanisms such as sweeping, bush clearing, aimless wondering and endless wrestling between and among the invaders will ensure peace and constant production of food chain. As well as serve as a big caution to erring deterrents. Thereby, assisting in stemming crime.

CONCLUSION

The problem of food security needs to be tackled headlong. This is because it threatened the major fabrics of human existence and survival. It is a major task of the Sustainable Development Goal that must be achieved. It is high time nations bring to bear, their wealth of experiences and competencies to nib in the bud poverty, hunger,
malnutrition, impoverishment while promoting a crime free global society. Recognizing traditional institutions of States will go a long way to promoting a saner society which members of the United Nations aspire to build.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above, the following recommendations are hereby advanced:
1. all categories of stakeholder should be involved in community related matters to bring about social inclusiveness.
2. community policing should be at the control of indigenes and not foreigners to restore the trust and confidence of rural dwellers.
3. African Traditional Protective Medium (ATPM) should be imbibed at all levels.
4. adoption of a combination of conventional policing and indigenous mechanisms is strongly suggested for effective security of lives and properties.

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S/N	NAME	SEX	CATEGORY	AGE	COMMUNITY
1	Chief Asaolu Boyo Charles	Male	Community Leader	76	Uso
2	Chief Odudu Kayode William	Male	Community Leader	74	Ipele
3	Abdulkadir Otefon	Femle	Trader	47	Elegbeka
4	Abefe Odeyemi	Male	Trader	39	Ayede-Ogbese
5	Abraham Kyei	Male	Police	48	Ago-Panun
6	Adegoke Abolarinwa	Male	Police	52	Owena
7	Agbomabiwon Afeez	Femle	Local Security	45	Ipoke
8	Olorogun Peter	Male	Local Security	51	Lipakala
9	Alonge Jennet	Femle	Farmer	42	Ajagba
10	Aluko Omolayo	Femle	Farmer	38	Amurin

Among others.

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