COVID-19 LOCKDOWN AND THE CHALLENGES OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG HOUSEHOLDS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN ZARIA AND SABON-GARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The restriction of people's movement during Covid-19 lockdown has affected the abilities of many families in securing, either from their own production or through purchases, adequate food for meeting the dietary needs of their members in Zaria and Sabon-gari Local Government Areas of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Thus, the study was intended to find out how the lockdown has affected households ability to access food during lockdown in the two selected areas. The study used two (2) different but complementary methods of data collection (Qualitative and quantitative).Eight (8) communities were systematically randomly selected, the population of the study comprised of households heads and ward heads, a total number of four (400) hundred households were selected for the quantitative data, and eight (8) ward heads were as well chosen for the qualitative data. The findings revealed that majority of the households were faced with the challenges or shortage of food during the period of the lockdown. The study recommended that affected families should be supported with food and financial aid to enable them reactivate their activities for the survival of their households.

Key Words: Covid-19, food insecurity, lockdown, Sabon-gari, Zaria

INTRODUCTION

The restriction of people's movements due to the outbreak of Corona Virus (Covid-19) in Nigeria and beyond has brought about series of challenges to many households in accessing the three (3) square meals. The lockdown has affected the abilities of many households to secure, either from its own production or through purchases, adequate food for meeting the dietary needs of its family members. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2021) posits that when there is no reported indication of food access problem or limitation it therefore means there is high food security but when there is one or two reported indications of typical anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house, little or no indication of changes in diet or food intake it on the one hand means there is marginal food security. However, if there is a reported

indication of food access problems or limitation it therefore means there is food insecurity.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formally called 2019-n CoV) (Cleveland, 2022), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubel Province, China (CDC, 2019).Africa started to prepare for the introduction of the first cases that would eventually arise from its close connection to China, a primary trade partner and host to more than eighty thousand (80.000) African students (Monde, 2020).Nigeria recorded its first index case of the virus on the 27Th of February, 2020, in Lagos. To curtail the spread of the virus , measures were recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) which were adapted by many countries, Nigeria inclusive. As part of the measures to curtail the spread of the virus, it has led to ultimate shutdown of the global economy in April, 2020 (Joshua, 2021). The Lockdown affected all the economic activities in Nigeria and indeed globally, as many countries devised measures to cope with the debilitating effects of the infections (Joshua, 2021). According to World Bank Report (2020), 60 million individuals living below $2 per day would be pushed to extreme poverty due to Covid-19 Lockdown. The report further stated that, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) each will have Five (5) million and Two (2) million people pushed into poverty. The Pandemic is threatening the food security of billions of people in addition to the already existing challenges of food security (Vos, 2020).

Several African countries adapted various economic and social support programmes to their people (Mustapha, 2020).The lockdown introduced in the country sometimes in the first quarter of the year 2020 due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has brought about high level of food insecurity or challenges among many households in Zaria and Sabon-Gari Local Government Areas of Kaduna State in particular and Nigeria as at large. Almost seven (7) out of every ten (10) households had challenges in accessing their daily meals due to the introduction of Covid-19 lockdown (Nuhu, 2021).

However, from the forgoing discussion it is obvious that the pandemic is new not just in Nigeria and other African States but it is equally new in the United States, United Kingdom and other European states. It is also clear that there is deficiency or inadequate literatures that explained the causes, nature and forms of the

pandemic World Wide because it is a new development which emerged in the late 2019 and early 2020. Above all, there is equally lack of sufficient socio-economic literatures on the causes, nature, forms and dynamics of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria and Kaduna State in particular. Although there are few studies in the said area conducted in Nigeria by Nigerians, there is still the need to looked at it from different angles more importantly its impacts on households accessibility to food. It was therefore against these background that the study was conducted with the view to finding out on how the lockdown deterred households accessibility to food in Zaria and Sabon-Gari Local Government Areas of Kaduna State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Covid-19 pandemic that has spread rapidly and extensively around the world since late 2019 has had profound implications for food security and nutrition. The unfolding crisis has affected food systems and threatened people's access to food via multiple dynamics (FAO, 2020). In a related study conducted by Loostra (2020) titled 'Vulnerability to food insecurity since the Covid-19 lockdown', one of its findings revealed that the number of adults who are food insecure in Britain is estimated to have quadrupled under the Covid-19 lockdown. Another finding from the same studied further showed that income losses arising from the Covid-19 crisis have had an immediate impact on food insecurity. The study and its findings conducted by the author was basically concerned with the with the feelings and experiences of the impacts of Covid - 19 pandemic on the people of UK not Nigeria.

Similarly, in another study conducted by Kevin (2020) titled 'Assessing Food Insecurity Among United States of American's Adults During Covid-19 Pandemic', one of its findings revealed that person's in poor health and those with higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms have higher food insecurity odds. The findings of the Kevin's study just like the previous one reflected on the feelings and experiences of the European people not that Nigeria or any of the Afroican states. Nigeria and UK or US differed in a number of ways (culture, beliefs and traditions}. These may also affect their ways of understanding Covid-19, its meaning and consequences to them.

In the same vein, in a related study conducted by Kabir (2021) titled 'Consequences of Covid-19 Lockdown on People's Means of Livelihood in Rigasa Community'. One of its findings revealed, that majority of the households means of livelihood were crippled due to stay at hope and it has affected their ability in accessing food.

Although the study was conducted in Rigasa Community in the same Kaduna state, the study employed the used of in- depth interview in findings answers to its objective which is grossly inadequate in terms of coverage. The study should have also employed the used of both qualitative and quantitative means of eliciting information from community members hence it will promotes more opportunities to more people (respondents) to expresses their feelings or experiences of the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Based on the highlighted lacuna or gap in the existing literature, the study was intended to fill in the gap by conducting study that truly reflect the beliefs, traditions and understanding of what it means to the understanding of the impact of the challenges of Covid-19 in Zaria, Sabon-gari in particular and Kaduna state and Nigeria as a whole. Also for the sake of eliciting more informations or data on the subject matter, the study employed the used of quantitative and qualitative means of data collection. The study and its findings will also provide basis for comparative analysis on the understanding of the subject matter between nations.

Methodology

Two (2) different but complementary methods of data collection were used for the study i.e the Quantitative and the Qualitative methods. Zaria and Sabom-Gari Local Governments Areas were purposefully selected. These areas were chosen because they were also part of the lockdown areas; also the proximity that the researcher has with the study locations. The two (2) areas were again sub-divided into three (3) clusters each. Zaria has four (4) clusters namely:Tudun-Wada, Gyallesu, Tukur-Tukur and Zaria City. Sabon-Gari equally has the clusters as follows:Samaru, DogonBauchi, Dogarawa and JushinWaje, which were all systematically randomly selected for the study.Fifty (50) households were again randomly selected in each of the eight (8) clusters making the total of four (400) households. Family or household heads were purposively selected as the unit of response under the survey. According to 2006 population and housing census, Sabon gari has a population of 393,300 while Zaria has a population of 736,000 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). In each of the two Local Government Areas the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula ie n=N/(1+ N(e)2). Where: e= margin error =0,05, N=Total population, n= sample size. Thus the sample size of the

study is four hundred (400), two (200) hundred from each of the two (2) Local Government areas in the state.

On the other hand, one (1) ward head in each of the eight (8) selected clusters were chosen for the indepth interview.Data obtained from the survey conducted were translated into numerical codes and were processed and interpreted according to the study objectives using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while data obtained from the interview that were conducted were transcribed, analysed and equally interpreted according to the objective of the study.

Results

This section highlighted on the opinions of four hundred (400) respondents on their understanding or knowledge of food insecurity or shortages experienced by different households due to Covid-19 lockdown enforced in their areas. Also, data obtained from the in-depth interview conducted was used to complement the ones fromthe survey, and both were analysed and interpreted according to the objective of study.

Table 1: Respondents opinions on food insecurity/ shortage among households due to Covid-19 lockdown

Item	Opinion of the respondent	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Do you have enough food in your store during the lockdown?	117	29.3	283	70.7
2.	Do you agree that there was food insecurity/shortage during the lockdown period in your area?	385	96	15	4
3.	Were you affected by the food challenges/ shortage during the lockdown?	279	69.5	121	30.5
4.	Do you know of a household that lacked food during the lockdown in your area?	257	64.3	143	35.7
5.	Do you know of people that beg for food during the lockdown in your area?	213	53.3	187	46.7
6.	Were you aware of any form of food donation from government or private individuals to the people in your area during the lockdown?	221	55.5	179	44.5
7.	If you are aware, do you agree that the food donated were sufficient enough to the people during the lockdown?	35	8.7	365	91.3
8.	Do you have a choice as to the kind of food you had eaten during the lockdown period?	110	27.5	290	72.5

Source: Survey, 2021

Item one(1) on the table above revealed that majority of the respondents (70.7%) did not have enough food in their stores during the period of lockdown as against the minority (29.3%) that have food in their stores during the lockdown. In an interview conducted on ward heads in the one of the communities selected for the study, he said:

> *most of the people in the area depends on daily work/wages to buy food and maintains households, but with the lockdown/ restriction in people movements had made it difficult for people to even access food or even stored it during the lockdown (1D1, 2021).*

Similarly in his opinion, one of the community leaders from another area pointed out that;

> *not all people have money to even buy food for a complete week, the one that have food in their stores may be salary earners or farmers who might have harvested their produce for the year (IDI, 2021).*

Item two (2) on the table above indicated that majority of the respondents (96%) agreed that there was food shortage among households as at the time of the lockdown in their areas, while only a very few (4%) disagreed with the position of the majority on the same issue. Similarly in his opinion, a ward head in one of the areas visited for the study posited that:

> *many households run into food shortages because of the restrictions in people movements area due to lockdown, even with your money at hand that you wanted to buy food you may not see the sellers due to the restriction like I said (IDI, 2021).*

To further confirmed the statement of the ward head, a community leader from a different location narrated that:

> *there was food shortages in the community generally, because people were not allowed to carry out their businesses, the few goods that were stored for sale was grossly inadequate for the buyers and as such the prices of same food items went up in places were you may find*

them. All these has contributed to the shortages of food among many households in particular and the community at large (IDI, 2021).

Item three (3) on the table above revealed that most of the respondents (69.5%) were affected by food shortage during lockdown, only few (30.5%) were not affected in the areas under study. In an interview conducted on one of the community leader on one of the areas visited, he stated his position by saying that:

I was not affected , but I know of many that were affected because they came to me asking for food to feed their family members (IDI, 2021).

Another leader in one of the community visited for the study opined that:

I am lucky to be a farmer, I didn't experienced food shortage because I stored enough food after harvesting from my farms (IDI, 2021).

Item four (4) on the table above revealed that many of the respondents (53.3%) were aware or even seen situations in which people begged for food during lockdown, while (46.7%) claimed to be unaware of the situation of community members begging others for food due to Covi-19 lockdown in their areas. In his opinion, one of the ward head narrated that:

I am very much aware, many people came to me personally asking for food or even money, saying that all that they have had finished in the caused of feeding (IDI, 2021).

To add value to the statement made by the ward head, a community leader from one of the areas visited said that:

you know because of our position in the community, many people discusses their issues freely with us, we know many of their problems including that of the challenges they faced in terms of feeding. Some of them don't even need to tell you that they need to be assisted with food, but based on their explanations you can deduced that they needed to be helped (IDI, 2021).

Item five (5) on the table above pointed out that most of the respondents (95.5%) were aware of food donations given to some community members in their areas (4.5%) were not aware. Similarly, in an interview conducted on one of the ward head in one of the community visited, he said:

> *Palliatives like rice, indomie, sugar, salt etc were given by government and some wealthy few in our mixed. Although palliatives were given, only few were able to accessed it (IDI, 2021).*

Item six (6) on the table above showed that majority of the respondents (91.3%) claimed that food donations were given during the lockdown ill adequate, while the very (8.7%) of the respondents claimed that food donations were sufficiently given in their areas. A community leader when asked to comment, he said:

> *although food donations were given to cushion the effect of the restriction of people movements or the lockdown, but the donations that were given could not go round to what was needed in our community (IDI, 2021).*

Similarly in his words, a ward head argued that:

> *you know we have many households around, many of them with larger family sizes that heavily depended on daily income for feeding their members, the little donations that were given cannot solve the needs of most of these households. In short, the food donations that were given during the lockdown was not sufficient enough, in fact there are a number of households who did not even collected any of the donations in our community (IDI, 2021).*

Item seven (7) on the table above showed that most of the respondents (72.5%) did not have a choice in the kind of food they took during the lockdown, while a very few (27.5%) showed a contrary opinion that they had choice as to the kind of food they took during the lockdown. In his narration, a community leader in one of the areas visited, said:

> *how can a poor man has a choice of what to eat, they took anything that came to their way to survive. Most of these people depends on others to assist them, in such a situation would they have a choice?(IDI, 2021).*

All these implied that majority of the households in the studied areas were faced with food shortages due to restrictions in people's movement as a result of Covid-19 lockdown.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study conducted was primarily aimed at finding out the impacts of Covid-19 lockdown on households accessibility to foods, it is evident that there was food shortages among majority of the households in the areas selected for the study. This correspond tothe findings of a study conducted by David (2021), titled "Impacts of Covid-19 lockdown on people's businesses in Samaru community". One of the findings showed that, many people were unable to feed their families due to a fall in the level of their income because of restrictions in people's movement in the area. Similarly in a study conducted by Kabir (2021), titled "Consequences of Covid-19 lockdown on people's means of livelihood in Rigasa Community", one of its findings revealedthat many people were finding it difficult to feed their families because the little money they used in running their businesses were used up in feeding their families during the period of lockdown.

However, these findings are mostly in tandem with the Neo-Malthusian assumption, that food security can only be achieved in the environment where households has available supply and means to get adequate food to maintain nutritional needs of its members. That food security and sustainable development are intrinsically linked (Scanlon, 2003). This implied that majority of the households in the studied areas were unable to accessed food due to stay at hope policy instituted during the lockdown period.

Majority of these studies were conducted in the US and UK reflecting their people's life styles and experiences during the era of Covid-19 pandemic. The need to examine the impact of the challenges of food insecurity on households in Zaria and Sabon-gari Local Government areas of Kaduna State prompted this study. The study was also conducted for the sake of comparative analysis of people's experiences during the pandemic in both US, UK and Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion therefore, it is evident that Covid-19 lockdown in the areas selected for the study has brought about series of challenges to majority of the households in accessing their daily means. It is evident that many households faces challenges in accessing their daily meal, the capital used in running daily businesses also went down because they only spent out of it daily without anything coming due to restriction in people's movements. It is on these basis that the study recommended the following measures:

Government, wealthy individuals and organizations should help the affected families with food assistance to be used in sustaining their families. With this, it will go along way in reducing the challenges of food shortages in the study areas in particular and the State at large.

Also in the area of financial challenges faced by the households, government, wealthy individuals and organizations should help the affected families with financial assistance to the affected households to help them reactivate their businesses.

1) Generally, It is also recommended thatgovernment, wealthy individuals and organizations should partner together through research to find out a more permanent solution or cure to the virus in the state, country and the world at large. More funds should be committed to research with the view to identifying the causes, nature, forms as well as permanent solution to the virus or disease.

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