

INSECURITY AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN TARABA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Insecurity incidences such as Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, farmers/herders' crises, cattle rustling, ethnic crises, amongst others have grown worst in Southern Taraba. This has resulted to mass suffering and killings among the people with the government unable to arrest the situation. With government unsuccessful efforts, it is therefore desirable to assess insecurity coping strategies adopted by people of Southern Taraba amidst heightened insecurity. Specifically, the study assessed the nature of insecurity experienced by the people and investigated the coping strategies adopted to contend with insecurity. The study adopted rational choice theory. A sample of 400 respondents were drawn from a population of 1,071,500 people across Southern Taraba using cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Instruments for data collection were questionnaire and key informant interview. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics whereas qualitative data was analysed in content form. Findings revealed the nature of insecurity experienced in Southern Taraba to include kidnapping, indigene/settler crises, religious violence, activities of "area boys", ethnic clashes. Findings identified insecurity coping strategies adopted by the people of Southern Taraba to include self-defense, use of community youths to defend territory, being vigilant at all times, avoid going to distant farms, community patrol. The study recommends that, the federal, state and local governments should collaborate and beef-up security in Southern Taraba to checkmate the activities of kidnappers, area boys, and instigators of religious/ethnic violence, amongst others.

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Introduction

Security lies at the heart of the prosperity of any nation. It is an essential factor of human life. It allows everyone to have a sense of certainty and assurance. A secured environment is critical to every society since it affects all aspects of development in a country and is necessary to the realisation of human rights. It is the responsibility of government to provide adequate security to her citizens and nation at large. However, the security situation in Nigeria has deteriorated from 2010 to date. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023), the Boko haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria have killed over 350,000 people as of the end of 2020. Many people have been held hostage, including the kidnapping of about 276 girls in secondary school in a community in Chibok, Borno State in 2020. It is estimated that more than 154,000 people in the north east have fled to neighboring Cameroun and Chad as refugees; some are living in IDP camps, without proper shelter, food and good living condition. Most people in the north east cannot go to the farms for fear of been kidnapped by the Boko haram fighters, their source of livelihood, which is farming has been disrupted.

In Taraba State, the security situation is worst, from Boko haram insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, farmer/herder crisis to cattle rustling and ethnic communal crises. These incidences have worsened the security situation in the state, resulting in mass suffering among the people, especially women and children, many people have been killed. For example, ISWAP committed two suicide attacks in Taraba State on April 20th and 22nd, 2022, killing six people and injuring 28 others (Sahara Reporters Newspaper, June, 2022.). Many people have also been displaced from their homes and their farms. The situation has been exacerbated by conflict induced food insecurity and malnutrition. Families lack basic infrastructure and are yet to have any level of self-reliance after being exposed to prolonged development deficits because of a crisis that removed their meager sources of livelihood. This setback in human development will definitely require decades to recover from.

The Taraba State government in her efforts to ending insecurity especially in the most-troubled Southern part, has instituted some measures. Akinola (2020) for instance noted that, the government has synergised with relevant security operatives and traditional rulers to tackle the incessant security out-breaches in the state. Even with this intervention in place, various ethnic groups have decried heightened insecurity in the area and call for immediate arrest of

the ugly situation. In the past, several curfews most especially in Wukari and Takum were enforced in order to checkmate the excesses of insecurity in the area, still without much to be desired. Also, several government panels and commissions of inquiry and independent inquiries have proffered sterling recommendations for the control of insecurity, but government's subsequent inaction has often stalled these well-intentioned commission solutions. With all these unsuccessful efforts, it is therefore desirable to assess insecurity coping strategies adopted by people of Southern Taraba. Specifically, the study assessed the nature of insecurity in Southern Taraba and coping strategies adopted by people of Southern Taraba to cope amidst insecurity.

Theory

The study adopted rational choice theory. The theory originated in the 18th century and can be traced back to political economist and philosopher, Adam Smith (Boudon, 2003). The basic premise of rational choice theory is that the decisions made by individual actors will collectively produce aggregate social behaviour. Thus, each individual makes a decision based on their own preferences and the constraints (or choice set) they face. Sociological critiques such as Pierre Bourdieu fiercely opposed rational choice theory as grounded in a misunderstanding of how social agents do not continuously calculate according to explicit rational and economic criteria. Despite these criticism, rational choice theory remains central in its application to insecurity and coping strategies.

Individual adaption of coping strategies can be as a result of the nature of insecurity that is been experienced at the moment and in a particular area. Choices as well as coping strategies vary depending on the insecurity situation at hand. Certain group of people may adapt a different strategy to cope amidst insecurity to the other within the same domain. This could depend sometimes on the strength and knowledge of the people and frequent occurrence of the scourge. In Southern Taraba, different types of insecurity are been experienced such as kidnapping, indigenes/settlers' crises, ethnic violence, farmers/herders' crises, activities of area boys, secret cults, militia groups, amongst others. Thus, people in the area adapt different coping mechanisms as to the nature of insecurity they faced. These coping strategies are use of self-defense, use of community youths to defend territory, being vigilante, avoid going to distance farms, community patrol, vacation of conflict areas to safer places, amongst others.

Method

This study adopted descriptive research design. This type of design that aims to obtain information to systematically describe insecurity and coping strategies among people in Southern Taraba. The study setting is Southern Taraba. It is one of the political divisions of Taraba State. The local government areas that constitute this zone are Donga, Ibi, Takum, Ussa and Wukari Local Government Areas. The choice of this setting is made out of the fact that it has been the predominant insecurity or crises prone area in Taraba State. The population of this study comprised of residents of Southern Taraba. According to population project as at 21st March, 2022 released by the National Population Commission (NPC), Southern Taraba has population figures of 1,071,500 people, distributed across the affected local government areas as follows: Donga = 209,400, Takum = 211,700, Ibi = 132,600, Ussa = 143,000 and Wukari = 374,800 people. The population of the study also includes personnel of formal and non-formal security outfits in Southern Taraba such as the police, civil defence, military, hunters and vigilante groups. Thus, the sample of 400 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination (Yamane, 1967).

This study adopted cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select the desired number of respondents. Cluster sampling was used to group Southern Taraba along with the already existing local government areas such as Donga, Ibi, Takum, Ussa and Wukari Local Government Areas. Purposive sampling was used to select headquarters of the five (5) sampled local government areas such as Donga, Ibi, Takum, Lissam and Wukari. Simple random sampling was then used to select 80 respondents from each of the five (5) local government headquarters, thus bringing the number of sampled respondents to 400. Two methods of data collection such as the questionnaire and key informant interview were used in this study. Questionnaires were administered on community members, while Key informant interviews were conducted with personnel of formal and non-formal security outfits in Southern Taraba such as the police, civil defense, military, vigilante groups and also some community leaders/members such as village head, woman leader, youth leader, students, farmers and teachers. A total number of 20 key informants were sampled for the study. This includes two key informants per each of the sampled category of persons. Data collected from the field was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Results

The Nature of Insecurity Experienced by People of Southern Taraba

Table 1: Nature of insecurity experienced by people of Southern Taraba

Nature of insecurity	Frequency (N=348)	Percentage (%=100)
<i>Communal/ethnic violence</i>	263	76
<i>Kidnapping</i>	307	88.2
<i>Religious violence</i>	284	82
<i>Farmer-herders' crises</i>	259	74.4
<i>Armed robbery</i>	164	47.1
<i>Area boys</i>	268	77
<i>Indigene/settler crises</i>	291	84
<i>Secret cult</i>	247	71
<i>Militia group</i>	252	72.4

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Table 1 above presented a multiple-choice response data on nature of insecurity experienced by the respondents in the study area. The result showed that kidnapping was the foremost insecurity experienced by people of Southern Taraba. This result was indicated by 88.2% (307) of the respondents.

In an interview, a key informant stated:

... cases of kidnapping are actually rampant in Ibi, we have been trying our best to ensure that incidences of kidnapping are reduced, but the support we are getting from the victims' relations are not in such a manner that can help us carry out full operation, and again certain things are not put in place by the police force to assist us with adequate equipment to fight this scourge, but in Jalingo which is the headquarters, they have trackers and people lodge and pay for their complaints, if we have such cases here in Ibi and signal them at the headquarters much attention is not given because expenses involved are more than the victims' relations income... (A Male Key Informant, NPF, Ibi LGA, Taraba State, 2023).

It can be deduced from the above result that kidnapping is perpetrated in Southern Taraba. In such operations, people are held hostage under uncaring conditions such as forest reserved areas, uncompleted buildings, underground houses, and also bitten by rain and mosquitoes for the purpose of paying ransom for their release in a price of five to ten million and atimes more. If such demands are not met by relatives, some are tortured even to death. This finding coincides with Shehu (2023) who observed that in recent years, Nigeria has seen a sharp increase in kidnappings. This has seen Nigerians pay billions of Naira in ransom to secure the release of their loved ones at the hands of kidnappers.

Another type of insecurity experienced in Southern Taraba was identified as indigenes/settler's crisis. This data was attested by 84% (291) of the respondents.

Another key informant stated:

... political conflict is serious issue that has troubled the terrain for a very long time, there is tussle between the Jukun, Tiv and other emerging tribes during elections. The Jukun feels they are the dominant and indigenes of Wukari, therefore, they should be in the helm of affairs political leadership, in fact these crises are enormous... (A Female Key Informant, NCSC, Wukari LGA, Taraba State, 2023).

It can be construed from the above result that indigenes/settlers' crisis is ravaging Southern Taraba and the crisis is multidimensional in nature. It erupts between ethnic groups due to access denial to grey areas for grazing herds, land to farm, right to settlement and religious affiliations. This is why Ekanem and Okafor (2022) stated that due to its natural endowment, especially the central and southern part of the state, it becomes an attractive zone to the migrating herdsmen and pastoralists. It also serves as an economic gateway to southern Nigeria from the northeast, in the area of transportation of cattle and other products to the south. Thus, being a fertile land and a gateway, Taraba State, (especially Southern Taraba) is now a hotspot for ethno-religious crisis among various groups of people living in it. This shows an outburst of indigenes/settler's dichotomy which because of complete fear of seizure of land and dominance had laid sway to ethnicity and religious crises.

The above table also presents data on religious violence as one of the deathliest insecurities faced by people of Southern Taraba. This data was represented by 82% (284) of the respondents. The above result implies that Southern Taraba has suffered one form of religious violence to another since creation. This shows that the conflicts are always around the people which pose a serious threat to both the government and youths. The major basis for the religious battle in Southern Taraba is mostly anchor on power tussle and domination claim by the minority. This result relates with Akpa and Nebeife (2017) who observed that with the Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999, Southern Taraba and Taraba State at large appears to have endured recurring ethno-religious violence, leading to killings, destruction of lives, business investments, and properties worth several millions of Naira.

Another insecurity in Southern Taraba was identified by 77% (268) of the respondents as area boys. From the above result, it can be construed that 'area

boys' is another phase of insecurity in Southern Taraba and by extension semi-urban and urban centres in Nigeria. They are mostly referred to as 'agboro' and are loosely organised gangs of street children, teenagers and youths, composed typically of males, who operate on the streets of major cities. They set themselves up as informal security guards in areas where they live but often use the control that gives them to engage in petty criminal activity such as drug dealing and extortion. This result collaborates with Ikuomola et al. (2009) that the nomenclature of area boys can also mean touts, Alaayes, Agberos, omo onile, they are generally considered deviant youths who use extortion, exploitation, petty crimes and sometimes violent means to earn income.

The data on Table 1 above shows that 76% (263) of the respondents identified communal violence as a serious security threat in Southern Taraba.

A key informant stated:

...conflict in Takum Local Government Area in recent times is between Kuteb and Chamba, but before now, Kuteb and Tiv, Chamba and Tiv, then Fulani and Tiv had clashed. The Kuteb people have been conflicting with the Chamba people over the throne of chief of Takum since the death of Ukwé Ali. The Kuteb has claimed to be the ruler of Takum while the Chamba also make claim to the same throne. The role of the elites in politicising the issue has contributed to the continuous conflict between these ethnic groups... (A Male Key Informant, Community Leader, Takum, Taraba State, 2023).

It can be presumed from the above findings that denial of access to certain privileges and possessions can easily result to pandemonium which has been the case in Southern Taraba since its creation. This result coincided with Offor et al. (2018) that there exist myriads of conflicts in Nigeria, and these conflicts arise majorly from the struggle in the ownership of land (especially around communal boundaries). Thus, in defence of community pride, properties and its inhabitants, communities engage in feuds where in most cases lead to full-scale war with attendant consequences, allowing for management mechanisms. This position of the authors holds in affirmative because Wukari and Takum Local Government Areas in Southern Taraba borders with Benue State which has high conflict tendencies.

The above data also shows that farmer-herders crisis was another aspect of insecurity experienced by people of Southern Taraba, Thus, this data was represented by 74.4% (259) of the respondents.

Notably, a key informant stated:

...the people in Kpambo village, Ussa Local Government Area are majority of farmers, they are not pastoralists who travel long distances to graze their cattle, the nomads we have living in our communities have been peaceful, still, new groups of nomads came and undermined the peace we used to enjoy in the area (A Male Key Informant in Kpambo Village, Ussa LGA, Taraba State, 2023).

From the above result, it can be deduced that farmer-herders crisis occurs as a result of destruction meted out on farmers' crops on the one hand and on the other side, the obstruction by farmers in preventing the herders from grazing on their crops. This result agrees with Brottem (2021) that the most common trigger of farmer-herder conflict is crop damage caused by passing livestock. The author noted that as the West and Central African region's rural population has grown dramatically, many herders have seen their grazing lands put into cultivation making their livelihoods more challenging.

The above table presents data on militia group as a form of insecurity in Southern Taraba as constituted by 72.4% (252) of the respondents. Activities of militia groups within the geopolitical zone has given sleepless nights to the residents of the area. From the above result, it can be learnt that kidnapping is highly perpetrated in Southern Taraba and perpetrators are militia groups constituted among ethnic groups that are domicile within the area. These groups carry out nefarious activities giving rise to total fear among residents of the area, which has equally made traveling along the zone appalling especially in the heat of such incidence by the militias. It is also understood that attacks by an ethnic militia group against a particular tribe is responded by that ethnic militia group in defence of its people and territory, however, it remains uncertain whether militia gangs are wholesomely in defence of its people. This result is in consonance with Bivan (2021) who noted that like their Jukun neighbours, the Tiv ethnic group, found mainly in Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau States, seem to have an armed self-help group for conflicts. As is the case with their neighbours, its existence cannot be dissociated from the Jukun/Tiv decades-old crises. Bivan (2021) further stated that unlike the emergence of other armed self-help groups that claim to seek the interests of a particular ethnicity, the existence of a militia-styled group with affiliations to the Tiv ethnic group appears more plausible as a result of the activities of late Terwase Akwaza, also known as Gana – a dreaded militia leader, which he observes could also be seen in a different light.

Table 1 above further presents data on secret cult as a form of insecurity in Southern Taraba. This data was constituted by 71% (247) of the respondents.

From the above data, it can be inferred that cultism is a solemn security threat in the area. It is noticed that the activities of this group have expanded because of the emergence of tertiary institutions such as Federal University Wukari, Kwararafa University and other private tertiary institutions within Southern Taraba. This is an indication that cultism is carried out in institutions of learning among the youths. According to Ajayi et al. (2010), the origin of cultism is traced to the Seadog confraternity, founded by Wole Soyinka and six others at the foremost University of Ibadan in 1952. The peaceful and non-violent confraternity set up then, in the 1980s, metamorphosed into a secret cult whose activities have been characterized by some bizarre and violent activities.

Insecurity in Southern Taraba also includes armed robbery. Although it is difficult to determine whether those involved in armed banditry also apply themselves in the armed robbery because they overlap, armed robbery occurred on the highways linking the zone with Benue State. The above result implied that armed robbery incidences are also prevalent in Southern Taraba. In places where conflicts are bound, there are tendencies of people indulging in other different crimes. This is the situation of Southern Taraba where ethnic conflicts have been fought for decades mostly especially between the Tiv and Jukun tribes. Even though others are noticed too such as Hausa/Jukun, Kuteb/Jukun, Kuteb/Tiv, and Tiv/Fulani but the intensity is not as compared to Tiv and Jukun. This has been the genesis of other emerging crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, militia, gangsterism, political thuggery, to mention these few.

Insecurity Coping Strategies Adopted by People of Southern Taraba**Table 2: Insecurity coping strategies adopted by the respondents**

S/N	Insecurity coping strategies	Frequency (N=348)	Percentage (%=100)
1.	Vacation to safe places	307	88.2
2.	Staying indoors and avoid unnecessary movement	213	61.2
3.	Seek financial and material assistance from political leaders, elites and relatives	274	79
4.	Self-defense	339	97.4
5.	Avoid going to distant farms	318	91.3
6.	Being vigilant (watchful) at all times	329	95
7.	Holding peace and reconciliation meetings	292	84
8.	Pray to God for intervention	159	46
9.	Mobilise people to campaign and protest against crises	260	75
10.	Community patrol	311	89.3
11.	Use of community youths to defend territory	331	95.1
12.	Report incidences of attacks to the nearest law enforcement agencies	288	83
13.	Use of security to escort and head operations	255	73.2
14.	Avoid friendship with strangers	264	76
15.	Involve in other ventures	186	53.4
16.	Engage in small-scale farming	293	84.1
17.	Mounting roadblocks	247	71
18.	Taking legal action	104	30

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Table 2 above presented data on coping strategies adopted by the respondents amidst insecurity in Southern Taraba. The data is a multi-choice response and was presented as such. Consequently, 97.4% (339) of the respondents adopted self-defense mechanism during insecurity in Southern Taraba, 95.1% (331) of the respondents said they made use of community youths to defend their territory as an insecurity coping strategy, 95% (329) of the respondents indicated that they were vigilante at all the times, therefore it became a way for them to cope in the midst of insecurity in Southern Taraba, 91.3% (318) of the respondents specified that they avoided going to distance farms, thus they only limited themselves within the surrounding as a way to survive conflicts and crimes in the study area, while 89.3% (311) of the respondents said that they embarked on community patrol in order to cope with the insecurity nature of the area.

Further to the above data, 88.2% (307) of the respondents noted that they vacated to safe places where there was serenity in order not to experience insecurity, 84.1% (293) of the respondents said they engaged in small-scale farming at the backyards of compounds in order to survive hunger in the midst heightened insecurity in the area, 84% (292) of the respondents held peace and reconciliation meetings in order to reduce tension and anxiety among them, 83% (288) of the respondents said they reported incidences of attacks to security officers that were deployed to the area for peacekeeping, while 79% (274) of the respondents sought financial and material supports from their political leaders, elites and close relatives to cope with insecurity in the area.

Also, 76% (264) of the respondents indicated that they avoided making friends with people unknown to them, in this way, they were able to cope with conflicts and crimes that were perpetrated in the study area, 75% (260) of the respondents mobilised campaigns and protests against crises as a strategy to reduce them and its reoccurrences, 73.2% (255) of the respondents adopted the use of security operatives to escort and even lead them during operations as a strategy to survive diverse crises in Southern Taraba, 71% (247) of the respondents in order cope in the core of insecurity in the area mounted barricades along routes, while 61.2% (213) of the respondents stayed indoors which made them avoid unnecessary movement. With this strategy, they were not affected by the conflicts that broke out in the area. Again, 53.4% (186) of the respondents involved themselves in other ventures apart from what they used to do in order to cope with the insecurity situation in the study area, 46% (159) of the respondents prayed fervently for God's intervention in the crises, while 30% (104) of the respondents took legal action against acclaimed perpetrators.

The above data shows that insecurity in Southern Taraba is awfully high and security operatives are not committed to protect community members from being attacked and harmed, and also that the respondents have previously experienced little or several of such attacks, and would not want a repetition of the experiences. They therefore defend themselves in order not to be completely wiped out of their communities. Ekechukwu et al. (2022) in their study on insecurity and coping strategies in public secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria, found out that employment of self-defensive measures is one among the strategies adopted by teachers. The data also indicates the importance of youth to community building. They defend their community in times of conflicts. United Nations Development Programme (2023) in one of its five ways young people are contributing to their communities stated that in a world that is constantly evolving, the role of youth in shaping the future of their

communities is more crucial than ever. From advocating for social cohesion and peace to leading initiatives for gender equality, young people are taking charge and making a significant impact.

It can be deduced from the above result that been vigilante is an important strategy to cope in the midst of tension arising from conflicts, and other crimes such as political thuggery, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and the like. Even in ordinary life situation, when someone is watchful or careful, there are tendencies for the person to achieve rewarding results or greatness. Therefore, this coping strategy is useful to members of communities hence its adoption. This result is in treaty with the philosophy of the Wilson Police Department (2023), that preventing crime is preferable to dealing with crime after it has occurred. Crime prevention concentrates on the dual concept of eliminating or minimising criminal opportunities, whenever possible, and encouraging citizens to be responsible for their own security and that of their communities.

According to one of the key informants:

...it was not easy abandoning my yam farm just like that, I anticipated that, that season I was going to harvest not less 4,000 big tubers of yams, and I had planned to do so many things with the sale I get from it, I wanted to finish roofing my house, pay children school fees, assist some of my relatives who were also helping me on the farms, then also send something to my inlaws, but that wasn't achieved, infact, it was at the height of the conflict between Jukun and Tiv Wukari, I abandon it just like that, though it was painful but I am still alive to cultivate even more than what I used to do... (A Male Key Informant, Farmer, Wukari LGA, Taraba State, 2023).

From the above result, it can be deduced that in the height of crises or crimes in the society, individuals are prone to lose a lot of properties only to be alive. This shows how life is more precious than any other thing. It also tells that one will be alive to achieve greatness, not becoming extinct before such enormity can be achieved and at the same time it amounts to backwardness of the individual and immediate community. That is why in almost all conflict or insecurity prone zones, there is less development due to destructions caused by the crises, and unwillingness of the people to rebuild due to the intensity of the conflicts.

From the above result, it can be inferred that communities in Southern Taraba have put in place modalities to tackle insecurity in the area. Thus, the adoption

Table 3 :The effects of reproductive health awareness on menstrual health hygiene among adolescents in Benue State

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	SD	D	X	stdv
1.	Reproductive health awareness helps me to manage my menstrual period properly	123 (32.6)	115 (30.5)	26 (6.9)	86(22.8)	27 (7.2)	3.26	1.38
2.	Awareness on reproductive health and menstrual hygiene management help adolescent girls to mitigate stigma and shame	187 (49.6)	73 (19.4)	17 (4.5)	55 (14.6)	45 (11.9)	3.72	1.032
3.	By knowing about their reproductive health and menstrual hygiene adolescent girls are enabled to take better and more informed decision on their sexuality/sexual life	226 (59.9)	92 (24.4)	11 (2.9)	38 (10.1)	10 (2.7)	4.01	.983
4.	Reproductive health awareness enables adolescent girls to access different menstrual products	192 (50.9)	68 (18.0)1	15 (4.0)	92 (24.4)	10 (2.7)	4.16	.712
5	It helps me to precautionary measures within my reach easily	(84) 24.1	(241)69.1	(24) 6.9	-	3.2	3.2	1.38
6	It helped me handle issues of infectious diseases	(44)12.6	(103)29.5	(34) 9.7	(146)48.1	2.2	2.2	.924
7	It helped me to manage myself whenever I see my menstrual period	(12)3.4	(84)24.1	(108)3 0.9	(145)41.5	4.1	4.1	.712
8	It helped me to know the kinds of sanitary pads to use when I see my period	123 (32.6)	115 (30.5)	26 (6.9)	86(22.8)	27 (7.2)	3.26	1.38
9	It helps to know that menstruation in early adolescence is normal	187 (49.6)	73 (19.4)	17 (4.5)	55 (14.6)	45 (11.9)	3.72	1.032
10	It helps me to Know sanitary products exits for menstrual protection	226 (59.9)	92 (24.4)	11 (2.9)	38 (10.1)	10 (2.7)	4.01	.983

Source: Field Survey, 2023

of community patrol mechanism is an indication that such modalities will be effective in controlling crimes in the area. The use of indigenes in the formation of community patrol shows that top secrets of the communities in combating crimes are hold in trust. In-line with the above result, Oyibokuve (2023) investigated the effect of community policing as supportive strategy in combating security challenges in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. The results of the study revealed that police inefficiency positively and significantly influences human insecurity in the country. This data further signifies that evacuation of people during conflicts, crimes or wars is a coping mechanism that has saved lives and properties that would have been destroyed. As Southern Taraba is in this feast of insecurity, more damages may have exploded if the people did not relocate to more nonviolent area. This finding coincided with the televised ACNN news of June 4, 2021 that hundreds of people living in towns and villages around Abuja have relocated to safer location for fear of being kidnapped by bandits.

The above data implies that in insecurity situation, all aspects of life are affected, there is serious challenge of starvation because the people are unable to farm, therefore it becomes difficult to feed. At this point, they improvised by

looking internally to rely on anything in order to survive the effects of the conflicts or crimes. From the above result, it can be presumed that the strategy of peace and reconciliation in coping with insecurity was not effective because of ethnic intolerance.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, the study concluded that the nature of insecurity experienced in Southern Taraba were kidnapping, indigenes/settlers' crises, religious violence, activities of area boys, communal or ethnic violence, farmers-herders' crises, militia groups and secret cults. The study further established that insecurity coping strategies adopted by the people of Southern Taraba were the use of self-defense, use of community youths to defend territory, being vigilante or watchful at all times, avoid going to distance farms, community patrol, vacation of conflict areas to safer places, and engage self in small-scale farming. Other insecurity coping strategies adopted by the respondents were holding peace and reconciliation meetings, reporting of incidences of attacks and other crimes to the closest law enforcement agent, seeking financial and material assistance from political leaders, elites and relatives, amongst others.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends as follows:

- i. The federal, state and local governments should collaborate and beef-up security in Southern Taraba to checkmate the activities of kidnappers, area boys, and instigators of religious/ethnic violence.
- ii. Religious/ethnic tolerance should be encouraged among the people of Southern Taraba.
- iii. The Taraba State Emergency Management Agency should provide relief materials and shelter to those affected by crises resulting to extreme poverty and displacement from their ancestral homes.

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