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Library support services to displaced farmers in Benue State for enhanced food production.

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the effect of food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state and the support services offered by libraries during the emergency circumstances of displaced farmers in Nigeria and Benue State in particular. This study sought to establish the effect of food shortage in Benue state caused by displacement of farmers. The study proposes that libraries cannot afford to close down their services of providing information to the users about the plights of farmers and the effect of these crises on food shortage. During displacement, libraries can provide mobile services and relevant information sources that would satisfy the information needs of internally displaced farmers. The study findings established that food shortage in Benue State was as a result displacement of people who are mostly farmers. The study reviewed Strategies which librarians can adopt to remain relevant in the face of food shortage caused by displacement of farmers. Majority, of the studies were conducted in other fields, thus creating a gap in research of the role of librarians on

this matter. We conclude that, while food systems were exempt, they were not immune to the fact that food shortage is caused by displacement, protecting food supplies should be a priority alongside the displacement of the farmers involved. Based on the findings, strategies such as Creation of sensitization, Use of Social media networks, engaging relevant stake holders, were identified as ways in which librarians can adopt to reach out to displaced farmers.

Keywords: Library services, displaced Farmers, Food shortage

Introduction

One of the major concerns across the globe is on food shortage and its effect on farmers, as the United Nations World Food Program UNWFP warned that the number of people facing food shortage has double by the end of the displacement of farmers. Following the outbreak of crises in many parts of the world and its widespread to many nations globally, a lot of countries have shut down their economy as most of the people displaced are predominately farmers.

There was already a shortage of food supply for Nigeria's growing population even before the outbreak of crises in some parts of the country and Benue state in particular.. WHO in 2018 reported that Nigeria is burdened by three key malnutrition indicators: anemia, overweight, and stunting. WHO further defined malnutrition as the deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. Most often than not, the average Nigerian has misconstrued malnutrition to mean hunger, which however is an important predisposing factor to malnutrition.

In addition, the relatively poor performance of the agriculture sector in Nigeria has resulted in rising imports of food to cater to the need of the growing population of the nation. The nation faces gross food security challenges. (Obadofin, 2020)

To gauge the expected effect for Nigeria, we interviewed key informants including government officials, private sector actors, and development partners. We also reviewed news reports, public announcements, and security updates related to farmers. This review revealed that the farmers impact is transmitted via three major impact channels, with potentially significant adverse effects on household incomes, demand for goods and services, and the economy's output in 2020.

The first major impact channel is the expected shortfall in federal budget revenue due primarily to the plunge in oil prices. Likewise, on the expenditure side, there are substantial unanticipated spending needs associated with displacement of farmers in the form of increased cost in food stuff, new stimulus packages for businesses, and increased importation of food to

the country. The second channel is the expected decline in private remittances into Nigeria as food shortage affects the well-being of Nigerian workers living abroad and remitting income back home. The third channel is the impact of domestic policies that restrict exportation of food and crippling business activities, particularly in Benue state. These measures imposed, simultaneously, a demand-side shock as people were only permitted to buy essential goods and a supply-side shock as only essential businesses were permitted to operate.

Food security is a phenomenon which is multidimensional with economic, environmental and social aspects. Unfortunately, the greater share of the population of the undernourished is located in the developing countries. Although the total population of the food insuring people in Asia outweighs that of Africa, 18 out of 23 nations where undernourishment is prevalent are from Africa. (The Challenges of Food Security in Nigeria, 2017)

Though a grand measure to curb food shortage, the crises is having an economic effect that has led to tightening of credit access to farmers, limited access to inputs for farmers, limited access to transport services to transport food, and border closures limiting food imports. These constraints are beginning to have a ripple effect on food production and transportation, leading to a hike in food prices and limiting the population's access to nutritious food. (Obadofin O. H., 2020) Twin crises, floods and maize shortages, come just after movement restrictions and financing difficulties caused by displacement containment measures complicated spring planting.

Some farmers and economists said it could push Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, into a food crisis. Rice is the country's staple grain, and chicken is a core protein. (Floods, food shortages threaten to push Nigeria into food crisis, 2022) Millions of Nigerians may be caught between a rock and a hard place, should federal and state authorities shut down the nation in a desperate bid to contain the crises that bedeviled farmers.

To adequately rein in the menace, government officials urge people involved in the crises to shield their swords and embrace peace. It is a move that has witnessed deserted streets in several parts of the world, as governments enforce curfews in affected area and people are relocated to come and live in camps for safety away from their places of origins. Unlike developed countries, however, the Nigerian society is wired differently. A prolonged displacement of more than half the population, could mean an invitation to starvation. (Ibirogb, 2020)

Libraries are called the information centers, and librarians are information providers. A Library has to serve as an information center. Information providers can provide information about any emergency, disaster, etc. Libraries are being designated as an essential information source of any institution or organization and have focused on the role of libraries that we can serve during emergencies. Most of the attention has gone to the medical institutions, natural weather and human disaster as opposed to incessant displacement of farmers, but the libraries and librarians can do an impressive job to give the right information. The biggest role of libraries can play in a national response to the emerging displacement of farmers threat is as information specialists. All the national food storage centers of the countries are being updated on their sites constantly (websites). One of the biggest roles that libraries can fill in the national response to food shortage is that of information literacy specialists who can locate, gather and evaluate the information and Libraries have places to go for help. We can see another source of misunderstanding around agricultural terminology in debates about food shortage.

Food shortage is seen as the inability to have access to the right quantity and quality of food. The availability and affordability becomes a problem to the people.

Libraries can help inform clients about survival strategies and give a rational definition. The African Library and Information Association & Institutes and New York Public Library have published some instructions and suggestions to libraries and librarians on their websites about food shortage.

Library staff can localize plans now to reach out to the country's agricultural sector to see if there is anything you can do to assist their efforts. Collect information from the reliable and right sources that are simply understood by clients. Disseminate awareness of disinformation using neutral. Be very careful about the dangers of disinformation from open-sources like social media or from single-topic sources that support confirmation bias. Also, be careful about the explicit design messages being unintentionally transmitted. Help clients to recognize the terminologies being used. Food shortage has a precise and little approach in terms of displacement. Coordinate with agricultural sources on local implementation. Staying away from crises and living in harmony the best defense and is a good idea at all times. shapes and forms for the benefit and protection of our users and communities, without causing undue As librarians, we owe it as a duty to make accessible all relevant information about this disease in all panic. Further, Librarians can show typical preventative procedures by Providing needed information to the people, engaging the necessary stake holders on the way forward to prevent such occurrences.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is effect of food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state: the role of the libraries. Specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the effect of food shortage by the displacement of farmers in Benue state.
2. To examine the role of the librarian during food shortage in Benue state
3. To identify the factors that brought food shortage during displacement of farmers in Benue state
4. To proffer solutions to food shortage food during displacement of farmers in Benue state.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the effect of food shortage by displacement of farmers in Benue state?
2. What is the role of the librarian during food shortage in Benue state?
3. What are the factors that brought about food shortage during displacement of farmers in Benue state?
4. What are the solutions to food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state?

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive survey design. Survey research design is chiefly concerned with the present, but sometimes considers past events and influence as they relate to current situations, (Eboh,2009). It gather data collected based on the effect of food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state, Nigeria: the role of the libraries. The survey method is mostly appropriate because it is unique in enhancing the development of education process and good for handling data from heterogeneous population. The study effect of food shortage in Benue state caused by displacement of farmers: the role of librarian. The targeted are all librarians in Universities in Benue State, this is because the population is not explosive and can

be managed. Librarians at Federal university of Agriculture is estimated at forty-four(44), librarians at Benue State University is estimated at fifty-three(53) and those at University of Mkar is estimated at seventeen(17), bringing the total population to one hundred and fourteen(114). The instrument for the study is structured questionnaire titled “Effect of food shortage in Benue state caused by displacement of farmers: the role of the librarian. The instrument for the study is made up of twenty (20) items.

This involved collecting and analyzing data to access the accuracy of an instrument was used to measure and perform the survey. The instrument to be used by the researcher was taken to the validators for proper validation and approval. The data for this study was collected using the questionnaire. The researcher employed the direct delivery technique in the administration of the questionnaire by visiting University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State University and University of Mkar, Mkar where the questionnaires were administered to the respondents and allow them time to complete after which the copies were collected back. This is done so as to ensure a high return rate. The data collected were descriptive statistics analysis to generate frequencies and percentages to answer the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is the effect of food shortage by displacement of farmers in Benue state?

S/NO	Items point	SA	A	UND	D	SD	Mean	Decision	
1	What is the effect of displacement on food	20	120	10	80	20	3.6	Accepted	
	Is there shortage of food in Benue state	60	140	20	30	-	2.8	Accepted	
	Is displacement the reason for food shortage	100	90	-	20	20	3.8	Accepted	
	Do you feel any shortage of food as a result of displacement	80	68	10	30	25	2.9	Accepted	
	Do you think displacement and food shortage have any link	50	150	10	30	-	3.80	Accepted	
	Overall mean	3.42							

The table presents the frequency and means response of the respondent on the effect of food shortage by displacement of farmers. Five (5) questions were presented to the respondents; all the question items were accepted on the effect of food shortage by displacement of farmers. These effects include effect of displacement, shortage of food shortage, reasons of

food shortage, and the link between displacement and food shortage. The overall mean was 3.42 an indication that there is effect of food shortage in Benue state.

What is the role of the librarian during food shortage in Benue state

S/no Items	YES	NO
Do librarians sensitize people about food shortage	35%	65%
Do librarians create awareness on about displacement and food shortage	35%	70%
Is there awareness about food shortage by librarians	40%	60%
Is there any materials in the library on food shortage and displacement	30%	70%
Do librarians provide the required information on food shortage	50%	50%

The table presents the percentage response on the role of librarians during food shortage in Benue state. Five (5) items were presented to the respondents, 55% said yes and 45% said no to the question items on librarian role during food shortage in Benue state. 65% of the respondents say yes to sensitizing people about food shortage while 35% respond no. on the creation of awareness about displacement and food shortage 30% of the respondents said yes and 70% said no. Furthermore, 40% said yes to the awareness about food shortage in Nigeria and 60% said no. while 30% said yes to materials on food shortage in libraries and 70% said no. It was observed that required information has 50% affirmation and 50% said no.

What are the factors that brought about food shortage during displacement of farers in Benue state.

S/NO	Items	SA	A	UND	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Displacement is the reason for food shortage	80	140	-	25	5	4.06	Accepted
2.	Displacement is not the reason for food shortage	100	110	10	20	-	4.20	Accepted
3.	Little or no awareness is the cause of food shortage	50	150	10	20	-	3.80	Accepted
4.	Poor economy is the reason for food shortage	100	130	10	10	10	4.28	Accepted
5.	Lack of preparedness towards food shortage	130	100	-	20	-	4.36	Accepted
	Overall mean						4.14	

The table represents the frequency and the mean response of the respondent on the factors that brought food shortage in Nigeria. Five (5) items were presented to the respondents, five of the items were accepted based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. Among the accepted question items are displacement as the reasons for food shortage, displacement as not the reason for food shortage, awareness to the cause of food shortage, poor economy as the reason for food shortage and lack of preparedness towards food shortage. The overall mean was 3.55 an indication that displacement is the reason for food shortage in Nigeria.

What are the solutions to food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue?

S/NO	Items	SA	A	UND	D	SD	Mean	Decision	
1.	Improved awareness on displacement and And food shortage in Nigeria	80	140	-	25	5	4.06	Accepted	
2.	Economic planning towards food shortage	100	120	10	20	-	4.20	Accepted	
3.	Improved attitude towards food shortage	50	150	10	30	10	3.28	Accepted	
4.	Provide adequate food to Nigerians	100	130	10	10	-	4.28	Accepted	
5.	Increase food supply during displacement	30	30	30	100	60	2.40	Rejected	
Overall mean								3.55	

The table represents the frequency and means response to which are the solution to food shortage caused by displacement in Benue state. Five (5) question items were presented to the respondents where four (4) were accepted and one (1) rejected. Among the accepted ones are improve awareness of displacement and food shortage in Benue state, economic planning on food shortage, improved attitude towards displacement of farmers and providing adequate food to Nigerians. However, the question item on increase food supply during Covid-19 was rejected. This implies that there is need increase food supply during displacement of farmers in Benue state. However, the overall mean is 3.62. This indicates that there are possible solutions to food shortage caused by displacement in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Findings of the study shows the response in the role of librarians in Universities in Benue State on food shortage caused by displacement of farmers. Four (4) questions items were presented to the respondents, 55% said yes and 45% said no to the question items on the impact of food shortage in Nigeria. 30% said yes to the role librarians play in sensitizing and creating awareness about food shortage in Nigeria and 70% respond no. On the factors that bring about food shortage during Covid-19 40% said yes while 60% responded no meaning poor economy and lack of preparedness is the reason for food shortage during displacement of farmers. Furthermore, 30% of the respondents said yes to increase in food supply while 70% said no. it was observed that there was low awareness about displacement of farmers and food shortage in Benue state.

Findings also revealed respondent on the role of librarians during food shortage in Benue state. Five (5) question items were presented to the respondents; all the questions were presented to the respondents; all the question items were accepted on the role of librarians during on food shortage based on the 2.50 decision point set in the study. The roles include sensitizing people about food shortage, creating aware on the shortage of food cause by displacement of farmers, providing materials and relevant information needed on displacement and food shortage in Nigeria. There is every indication that librarians did not give much awareness on displacement as it cause food shortage in Nigeria.

Findings shows respondent on the factors that cause food shortage in Nigeria. Five (5) question items were presented to the respondents, all the questions items were accepted based on 2.50 decision point set in the study. The accepted questions are; displacement of farmers is the reason for food shortage, displacement not the reason for food shortage, little or no awareness to the cause of food shortage, poor economy is the reason for food shortage and lack of preparedness towards food shortage. All items were accepted. This implies that there is no awareness and preparedness about food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue State. However, the overall mean was 4.14.

This indicates that the factors to food shortage is actually caused by displacement of farmers in collaboration with lack of awareness and preparedness.

Findings final reviewed mean response to the solution to food shortage in Nigeria. Five (5) question items were presented to the respondents which four of the question items were accepted and one rejected. The ones accepted include improved awareness on displacement and food shortage in Nigeria, economic planning towards food shortage, improved attitude towards food shortage, provide adequate food for Nigerians. And the rejected item is increased food supply during displacement. The overall mean is 3.55; this implies that the listed solutions will help reduce food shortage in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the effect of food shortage in Benue state caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state. This is done so through and questionnaires, with particular attention to the factors and solutions to food shortage caused by displacement of farmers. The study identified the factors and solution to food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Libraries should play their role well by creating awareness about displacement of farmers and its effect on food shortage.
- ii. Government should be prepared economically to tackle food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state.
- iii. Awareness should be created to citizens on food shortage caused by displacement of farmers in Benue state.

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