



A Survey on Growing Cult Activities and Food Insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The persistent occurrence of cult wars and activities with their attendant effects on food security led to this study on growing cult activities and food insecurity in Ekpeye ethnic nationality, Rivers State. Three research questions and objectives were used to guide the study. The theoretical framework adopted by this study is the anomie theory propounded by Robert K. Merton. This study used the survey research design to elicit data from respondents, with a population of one hundred and thirty thousand (130,000) people. The sample size was four hundred (400) people generated through the Taro Yamane method. The respondents selected were farmers, traditional rulers, business owners/traders and youth representatives. Four (4) communities were selected for this study viz: Ogbologbolo, Ombor, Odiemudie and Oyigba. The purposive sampling technique, quota sampling and accidental sampling techniques were used. The instrument used was a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using charts, mean and standard deviation. Findings of this study revealed that cult activities have negatively impacted agricultural production and that agricultural activities in the area were almost completely suspended as a result of cult activities. Secondly, the struggle for supremacy among the cult groups affects the development, security of farmers as well as food security.

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Introduction

The primary objective of Nigeria's agricultural revitalization is to diversify the country's economy by transforming agriculture into the engine of economic growth while also eliminating hunger. A country that is not hungry is food secure (FMARD, 2016). It is critical to imply that food security has become a national priority for the country, given that the vast majority of the country's more than 200 million people are food insecure. Food insecurity, also known as nutrition insecurity, is a widespread problem in Nigeria, despite the country's favourable agro-ecological assets. Nigeria as a country has a total landmass of 92.4 million hectares, of which approximately 32 million hectares, or 34.63 percent, are cultivated. As a result, Nigeria lacks both the capacity and capability to meet the food and nutritional needs of its burgeoning population. As a result, Nigeria's food insecurity and frequency of malnutrition are among the worst in the world (Fadare, et al. 2019). Nigeria's food and nutrition crisis has been deteriorating. According to FAO (2019), there were 9.1 million undernourished Nigerians between 2004 and 2006. Between 2016 and 2018, this number climbed by 281.32 percent to 25.6 million persons. The primary threat to the agricultural industry is insecurity, as seen by Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen operations in the north, as well as cult activities in Nigeria's southern region. Not only are farming tasks impossible to conduct in an unsafe environment, but additional difficulties arise. Cultism has become a significant threat to farming communities as a result of repeated attacks on these communities, often resulting in fatalities. When it comes to conceptualising this concept, According to Ajayi, Haastrup, and Osalusi (2010), cultism is a ritual practised by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy, and initiation formalities, as well as their mode of operation, are conducted in secret and kept secret, with their activities having a detrimental effect on both members and non-members. According to Aibieyi (2015), cultism dates all the way back to 1952, when a group of six friends founded the Pirates Confraternity at the then-University College Ibadan (now the University of Ibadan) in order to address alleged tribalism and elitism in the university at the time. Udoh and Ikezu (2015) continued by stating that these cult groups metamorphosed into other groups both on and off university campuses with goals in opposition to the primary goal that motivated their creation. Today, multiple cult groups have formed in various sections of the country, and these groups have recruited a large number of teenagers for an unknown purpose. The majority of its members have equally accepted with equanimity to carry out all that has been delegated to them. This could be as a result of swearing an oath or being threatened with death if they act contrary to the cult group's norms. Numerous scholars have identified several of these reasons as variables that predispose youngsters to cultism. According to Ajayi (2010), peer pressure, family background, societal decadence, educational standards deterioration, and militarization of the Nigerian polity are all elements that predispose young to cultism. In a similar vein, Udoh and Ikezu (2012) highlighted corruption, parental involvement in cults, fractured families, and difficult economic circumstances as contributing to the prevalence of cultism in Nigeria.

As cult activities increase, food insecurity and other development concerns increase as well. Emeodu & Eyina (2021), as well as Eigege and Cooke (2016), asserted that insecurity results in the retrogression of domestic agricultural productivity, the displacement of farming communities, and the obliteration of access to regional markets. This backdrop led to this study to investigate on growing cult activities and food insecurities in Ekpeye ethnic nationality, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The direct impact of insecurity on food production is substantial, as Ilo (2019) recognised when they recognised that it erodes farming capacity and increases the risk of skyrocketing food costs, all of which intensify poverty and hunger and herald an imminent nationwide food catastrophe. Numerous unethical elements' actions, such as cult activities, have contributed to the pervasive insecurity.

Today, cult groups commit a variety of horrific acts, most notably in Ekpeyeland. These activities violate the norms and values of the society in which they operate, as well as those of other societies. Muyiwa (2004), in a research on the transformation of confraternities to cults in Nigeria, concluded that cult members engage in extortion, theft, armed robbery, maiming, rape, murder, and drug usage. Members of cults are active in the recruitment of new members, as well as the murder and maiming of fellow students at higher institutions. To carry out these actions and assure their protection, certain groups have converted farmlands into camps where they can live and commit atrocities. These terrible cult-related acts in Ekpeyeland have resulted in a variety of losses, including human life, property, and business closures. Numerous lives, property, and crops have been lost in Ekpeyeland as a result of cult violence. Graduates who are expected to be future leaders have fallen prey to trigger-happy fanatics.

Property worth millions of Naira has been damaged in communities in Ekpeyeland as a result of cult violence. Additionally, Adewale's (2005) paper, *Violence in the Citadel: The Threat of Secret Cults in Nigerian Universities* asserted that cult-related actions have resulted in the sacking of several villages as residents escape for protection. This is similar to the scenario in Rivers State's Ekpeyeland. Prior to the advent of cultism in the region, the inhabitants of Ekpeye were renowned for their agricultural skill and ideal security. Ebah (2021), who conducted a study on cult activities in Ekpeye, reported that farmers abandoned their fields during the severe cult activities in Ekpeye land because the majority of farmers or employees were slain, people were forced to flee, fled voluntarily, or were involved in the conflict. This resulted in a labour scarcity and a decrease in the number of persons planting and harvesting, as well as some substandard production and food shortages. As a result of the cult-related problem, the tie between the people and their culture eroded, and the region became socially crippled. More specifically, dread of being kidnapped by cults who have transformed farmlands into camps prevents farmers and fishers from participating fully in agriculture. According to Punch Newspaper's December 30, 2016 report, the Ekpeye ethnic nationality in Rivers State's Ahoada East and Ahoada West Local Government Areas has lost over 400 members to cult-related homicides.

One of the leaders in the area and a former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Chief Chibudom Nwuchiein 2016 disclosed this when he paid a solidarity visit to the late EzeEkpeye-Logbo HRM Eze Robinson O. Robinson to mark the Yuletide at his home town in Odieroke Community, in Ahoada West Local Government Area:

That, those community's in Ekpeyeethnic nationality experienced great shock over the cult killings in their areas. He furthered that peace had returned because of the amnesty programme of the Rivers State Government.

It was also noticed that on June 30, 2019, the traditional policing strategy of the Ekpeye people paid off again as two hundred (200) youths from different cult groups renounced cultism, just as they surrendered to traditional Oath as prescribed by the people under the leadership of the Ekpeye reagent HRM Eze Felix who doubles as the EzeIgbuUpata III of Upata Kingdom.

The leaders of Iceland, Greenland and Avengers were identified with their members who renounced their membership of cult and its related vices. Despite being subjected to traditional Oath to ascertain if their repentance was genuine, the situation worsen as communities like Ogbogbolo, Obodhi, Odiemudie, Oyigba, Ombor, Ebrass, Olokuma, have been taken over by cultists. They dictate what happen in the communities and beyond. Ekpeye people live in fear because any community that they remember, they mobilize to that community with heavy arms and ammunition and the people that are mainly farmers are after their lives, not their farms which have resulted in food insecurity. The community leaders are no longer residents at home for fear of being kidnapped that is why the local vigilante cannot function to resist the cultists because of no direction coupled with fear of death since

their weapons cannot withstand that of the cultists.

On the part of the government, it has tried to revolutionize security by introducing in the Nigerian police the following viz. Anti-Cultism unit, Anti- Kidnap unit, Rapid Response Team, Intelligence Response Team, Special Weapons and Tactics Team, to curb the excesses of cultists in Rivers State and indeed in Ekpeyeland but their activities are becoming more legitimate keeping Ekpeye land on hold of their farming activities, besides, the farmlands are camps of different units of these cult groups. The question here is, does it mean government policy is not comprehensive enough to tackle this menace? Does it mean the security of peoples' lives and property is politicized? Or does it mean security is not funded adequately? The attacks in Ekpeyeland of Rivers State have claimed so many lives and business activities, which include farming thereby leading to food insecurity. It is thus in this light that this study wishes to investigate growing cult activities and food insecurity in Ekpeye ethnic nationality, Rivers State, as studies by other scholars failed to link growing cult activities to food insecurity in the area of study. This gap is what this study seeks to fill. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Can one establish the existence of cultism and if it can cause food insecurity in Epkeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State?
2. What are the factors that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State?
3. What solutions can result ina reduction in cult group activities to ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. to find out the existences of cultism and if it can cause food insecurity in Epkeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State;
2. to identify the factors that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State;
3. to proffer solutions that can result ina reduction in cult group activities to ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

This study applied Robert K. Merton's Anomie theory. Merton's 1938 anomie, reaffirmed in 1954, presupposes that the majority of people attempt to pursue culturally acknowledged goals. Anomie occurs when an entire group of people or individuals are denied access to these goals. As a result, aberrant behaviour such as rebellion, retreat, ritualism, innovation, and/or conformity develops. For example, if society does not supply enough jobs at a decent salary, many people will resort to criminal methods of making a livelihood. Thus, Merton believes that deviation and crime are mostly the product of anomie, a state of societal instability. This situation explains the condition of rising/growing cult activities in Ekpeyeland. When this occurs, a study by Emeodu and Elem (2020) shows that it hypnotizes development. Emeodu (2019, 2021) pointed out that insecurity emanating from cult wars for supremacy have led to farmers and people abandoning their areas to safer area. An extrapolation of this reflects what happened in Ekpeye where farmers and community people deserted the area due to cult activities, at the end led to food security menace.

Conceptual Review

The concept of cultism has not enjoyed the blessing of a universally acceptable definition. This implies that the concept enjoys an eclectic meaning and is defined by numerous authors to suit their environments. Thus, cultism, according to Dupuy and Rustad (2018), is a ritual practised by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy, and initiation formalities, as well as their mode of operation, are conducted and maintained in secret, with their activities having a detrimental effect on both members and non-members. In a different light, Ogumbameru (2004) defined cultism as any sort of organisation whose activities are not only kept secret from others, but also occur at odd hours of the day and frequently contradict established norms and values of everyday life.

The definition of cultism cannot be completed without incorporating Ogunade's definition in Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), who defined cult as an enclosed organisation or group devoted to a common goal, and defined cultism as the act of these cult groupings. Given this view, any activity conducted by a cult group is considered cult activity. Cult activities include extortion, armed robbery, maiming, rape, and murder, as well as the usage of drugs.

In the Niger Delta, it appears as though a razor-thin boundary exists between militants and cultists. For example, Ukiwo (2007) documented the progressive mobilisation of several Ijaw youth cult groups against the federal government in response to perceived marginalisation. Regardless, there are numerous incidents or cases of murder, kidnapping, and armed robbery that have been attributed to cult groups, particularly the Icelanders (also known as Deywell) and Greenlanders (also known as Deygbam), who appear to be the most notorious of all the cult groups in Rivers State. Other factions include the Red Squad, the KKK, the Mafia Lords, the Germans, and the Vultures. For example, as a result of frequent attacks and reprisals, primarily by Icelanders and Greenlanders, untold numbers of lives have been reported lost in numerous communities, most notably in Rivers State's Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Emohua, Ahoada East and West, Ikwerre, and Obio/Akpor local government areas (LGAs) (Iheamnachor, 2016). Studies exist that revealed that as the activities of these cult activities increase; they are bound to affect food security.

Food security is the state of being able to eat enough food to live a healthy and productive life (World Bank, 2001). Food security, as defined by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Africa in 1986, is "a scenario in which all people have physical, social, and economic access to adequate food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life at all times." Food security is contingent upon agricultural production, food imports and donations, employment possibilities and incomes, intra-household decision-making and resource allocation, health care utilisation and compassionate practises (Maxwell and Frankenberger, 1992). Food security, according to the World Bank (2001), is comprised of three components: food availability, food accessibility, and food affordability. Food availability for agricultural households entails guaranteeing sufficient food output for the households. However, it should be stressed that simply making food available is insufficient; individuals, particularly low-income households, must also be able to purchase it. Thus, food security refers to the physical and economic access of all household members to sufficient food without undue risk of losing access. Food security has evolved beyond the strict biological necessities for living. Thus, food security entails multiple domains, including agriculture, society, the environment, employment and income, marketing, public health and nutrition, and public policy (Pottier, 1999). Numerous efforts have been made to establish a link between expanding cult activities and food security. Simmons (2013), for example, asserted that numerous facets of the relationship between food, hunger, peace, and conflict have been thoroughly investigated and recorded. To begin, there is no doubt that cult war and violence have a significant negative influence on hunger and food security. This was followed by the existence of this, which resulted in high food costs and a lack of food

access. Thirdly, he stated that there is evidence that food security and improved rural livelihoods can help mitigate and prevent violence, as well as help secure durable peace. However, nothing is known about the nature and strength of this link. Cult conflict imposes tremendous and multifaceted costs, including direct human suffering and severe socioeconomic disruptions that obstruct economic and social growth greatly. Indeed, the detrimental consequences of cult activity have been considerable. These range from inadequate human and infrastructure development in the state to the loss of billions of naira in numerous towns, a phenomenon dubbed capital flight by experts such as Chukwu (2018). The majority of conflicts primarily affect rural areas and their inhabitants, with significant consequences for agricultural productivity and rural lives. This is especially true for civil conflicts, which have surpassed all other forms of violent conflict in recent years. Conflict can deplete food supplies, disrupt people's access to food, and restrict families' access to food preparation facilities and health care, all of which increase uncertainty about meeting future food and nutrition demands (Simmons, 2013). While the causal effects vary by conflict zone, the following characteristics are frequently observed: conflicts disrupt food production by physically destroying and plundering crops and livestock, harvests and food reserves; they prevent and discourage farming; they disrupt food transportation systems; they destroy farm assets and capital; they conscript or entice young men to fight, diverting them from farm work; and they suppress income-earning lives.

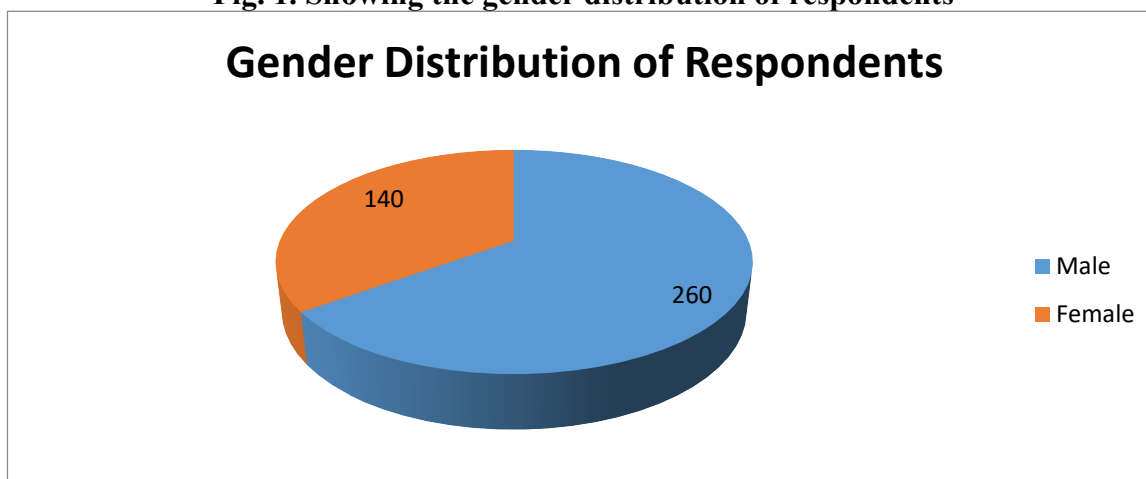
Methodology

The survey research design was used by the researcher to get the view, opinion and perception of the respondents. The area of study is Ekpeye ethnic nationality, Rivers State, with a population of 130,000 people (Hometome cited in Ebah, 2021). The sample size for the study is 400 generated through Taro Yamane Formula. Given this, respondents selected for the study are farmers, Civil Servants, Chiefs, Business owners and Youth representatives. Four Communities selected for the study are Ogbologbolo, Ombor, Odiemudie, Oyigba communities. This selection was done using the purposive sampling technique due to their vulnerability to cult activities. Thus, quota sampling was used to allocate 100 samples to each community to arrive at a sample size of four hundred. The purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used to distribute questionnaires to respondents and a questionnaire was used for data collection. Hence, charts, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis.

DATA PRESENTATIONS AND ANALYSES

Bio-Data of Respondents

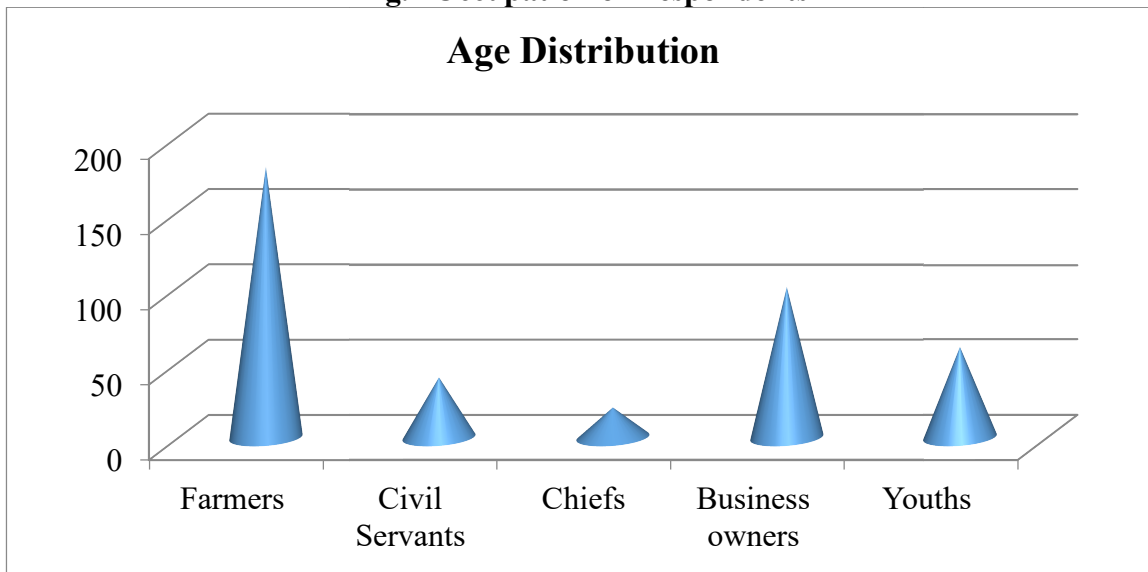
Fig. 1. Showing the gender distribution of respondents



Source: Research Fieldwork, 2022

The above table explains the gender distribution of respondents. The male respondents are 260, while female respondents are 140. This chart implies that more male respondents are represented than females.

Fig.2 Occupation of Respondents



Source: Research Fieldwork, 2022

The above figure explains the occupational distribution of respondents. Thus, the Farmers have 180 respondents, Civil Servants have 40 respondents, Chiefs have 20 respondents; business owners were 100 respondents while Youths have 60 respondents. The farmers were chosen more to represent more in the study.

Research Question One: Can one establish the existence of cultism and if it can cause food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State

Table 1: Presents Statistical score for the existence of cultism and food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
1	Have there been a clash between cult groups in your area	3.40	0.91	SA
2	Does the clash between cult groups brought about death that placed fear on people’s lives	3.60	0.67	SA
3	Do you think that cultists in your area during their rival clash attack other innocent members of the community	3.25	0.84	SA
4	Did people fly the community due to persistent cult activities for their safety	3.23	0.73	SA
5	Do farmers abandon their farms during the crisis caused by cult activities and their crops yielded poorly	3.32	0.96	SA

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The table above shows scores for the existence of cultism and food insecurity in Epkeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State. Hence, item (1)Have there been a clash between cult groups in your area, had the following mean and SD scores (M=3.40 & SD= 0.91). Also, item (2)onthe clash between cult groups brought about death that placed fear on people’s lives had the following Mean and SD scores

($M=3.60$ & $SD= 0.7$). Item (3) that that cultist in your area during their rival clash attack other innocent members of the community had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.25$ & $SD= 0.84$). Item(4) that people flew the community due to persistent cult activities for their safety, had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.23$ & $SD=0.73$). Again, item (5)that farmers abandon their farms during the crisis caused by cult activities and their crops yielded poorly had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.32$ & $SD= 0.96$).

By implication, it means that all the items constitute or support the existence of cultism and it has caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State. The result of the study is about Adekola and Enyiche (2017) that the presence of cult activities have led to people migrating to another area and this affects farming activities and agricultural produce. Again, the findings correlate with the study of Adeniyi (2017) who reported how some communities in Rivers State including Ekpeye people deserted. Iheamnachor (2016) concurred, stating that cult groups have taken over and are administering the affairs of various villages in Rivers State. According to him, cultists have assumed control of towns, determining who gets hired and which business operates in the area. These factors have resulted in circumstances where residents flee their areas for fear of being murdered or kidnapped. And as this occurs farmers also desert and their farm produce becomes low. Currently, Emeodu (2021) whose study was on indigenous people established that the cult crisis brought about the insecurity of which farmers were unable to access their farms. Given this incidence of growing cultism, it has been observed that the cult activities in Ekpeyeland of Rivers State, Nigeria is having a serious negative impact on the people of the area, as it prevents them from engaging in crop production at optimal levels. In recent times, insecurity in the area has negatively impacted agricultural production. Agricultural activities in the area are almost completely suspended as a result of cult activities. The devastation, that cult activities have caused, is not only obvious but also far-reaching in its impact on agriculture.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State?

Table 4.2.1: Present statistical Score on the factors that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
6	Youth Unemployment	3.55	0.54	SA
7	Poor Empowerment Scheme by the government	3.57	0.63	SA
8	Get rich quick syndrome exhibited by youths	3.52	0.54	SA
9	Struggle for supremacy	3.75	0.61	SA
10	Political undertone	3.35	0.59	SA
11	High level moral decadence	3.73	0.57	SA

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The table above shows scores on the factors that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State. Thus, Item (6) on Youth Unemployment had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.55$ & $SD=0.54$). Again, item (7) on Poor Empowerment Scheme by the government had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.57$ & $SD= 0.63$). Also, item (8) on Get rich quick syndrome exhibited by youths had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.52$ & $SD= 0.54$). Item (9) on Struggle for supremacy had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.75$ & $SD= 0.61$). Item (10) on Political undertone had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.35$ & $SD= 0.59$). Finally, Item (11) on High-level moral decadence, had the following mean and SD scores ($M=3.73$ & $SD= 0.57$). By implication, it means that all the items constitute or are in support that they are factors

that facilitated the operation of cult groups that have caused food insecurity in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality. Emphasizing the struggle for supremacy, correlate with the findings of Emeodu and Elem (2020) that struggle for cult supremacy affects development. Njoku (2019) also suggested that conflict arising from cult activities breeds poverty as many abandoned the area for safety. This explains the situation in Epkeyeland where cultist who struggle for supremacy brought about insecurity and the people's farmland became their camps. Also, another factor was youth unemployment. Given the anomie, strain and general strain theories of Durkheim (1893), Merton (1939) and Agnew (1992), explains that when individuals fail to achieve societal legitimate goals, they may seek alternative measures to achieve it, which may be through illegitimate means. As this illegitimate means exist, it leads to various occurrences of crime and insecurity. Because crime exists through cult activities, Stewart (2004) posited that it affects development. This situation is the reason for the food security menace experienced in Ekpeyeland in Rivers State.

Research Question Three: What Solutions can result in a reduction in cult group activities to ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State?

Table 4.2.3: Present statistical score for solutions to reduce cult group activities to ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
12	There should be massive youth employment	3.26	0.74	SA
13	Effective community policing	3.34	0.72	SA
14	Poverty alleviation programmes	3.75	0.67	SA
15	Improved agricultural training and practice	3.01	0.69	SA
16	Prosecution of politicians who desire to align with cultists to be favoured during election	2.98	0.94	A

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The table above shows scores for the solutions that can result in a reduction in cult group activities to ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality, Rivers State. Thus, item (12) on massive youth employment had the following mean and SD scores (M=3.26 & SD= 0.74). Item (13) on effective community policing had the following mean and SD scores (M=3.34 & SD=0.72). Again, item (14) on poverty alleviation programmes had the following mean and SD scores (M=3.75 & SD= 0.67). Item (15) on improved agricultural training and practice had the following mean and SD scores (M=3.01 & SD= 0.69). Item (16) on Prosecution of politicians who desire to align with cultists to be favoured during the election had the following mean and SD scores (M=2.98 & SD= 0.99). By implication, it means that the results are in support that they are solutions that can result in a reduction in cult group activities that can ensure food security in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality. Given that growing cult wars have led to food insecurity, the findings suggested continuous support for community policing/ vigilantism. This was in conjunction with the study of Nweze (2010) Emeodu (2021), Bansel(2021) and Adiele (2021) that the indigenous security, local vigilante or community policing have helped in curbing crime in the areas where they are situated.

Additionally, the report recommended enhanced agriculture and training. Thus, in addition to modernising the agricultural sector, an emphasis has been made on the development of high-quality crops through the revolutionization of seed types, fertiliser distribution networks, irrigation systems, and general agronomic techniques. It is widely understood that bringing this noble goal of agricultural revitalization to fruition will require collaboration between many government entities to provide the infrastructure essential to create a suitable agricultural environment.

Conclusion

There is no way the country can boost production or achieve competitiveness if its citizens feel unsafe symbolically, physically, or psychologically. National insecurity has wreaked havoc on Nigeria's agriculture sector. This resulted in the displacement of millions of farmers from their ancestral agricultural communities; others are continually fearful for their lives and thus unable to engage in farming operations optimally. The direct consequence is decreased productivity and associated deficits, both of which exacerbate the paradoxes surrounding agricultural production in Nigeria and food security prospects. In conclusion, what the Nigerian government must do to stay on track with its agricultural sector repositioning plans is to address the insecurity that plagues farming communities. If food insecurity is not addressed, it will have a far-reaching effect on Nigeria's security structural design. Food insecurity can either cause or be a consequence of national insecurity in many contexts. In other words, national insecurity can exacerbate food insecurity, as the disruptive activities of cults and other communal crises eroding national security demonstrate. This vicious cycle might continue indefinitely, resulting in complicated security scenarios that eventually weaken and undermine the state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Massive employment of graduates in the study area should be tackled to reduce youth involvement in cult activities. This will help in engaging youths meaningfully thereby preventing them from associating with their fellow peers that can easily cajole them into becoming cult members through wrong orientation.
2. Like the graduate counterpart, the provision of skill acquisition programmes will help to engage the non-educated youths thereby providing a source of living for so many non-graduate youths in the region.
3. Farming and agricultural activities should be supported by Government, to help tackle food insecurity
4. Government must be sincere in tackling cultism by ensuring that those granted amnesty and return to crime should be stamped out to serve as a deterrent to intending ones which will prevent cult groups from carrying out their nefarious activities.

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