

Refugee Influx in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State: A Sociological Insight into its Impact on Food Security

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ABSTRACT--- *The study examines the sudden and unabated influx of refugee exiles from the cameroun into the border town of Ikom and food security within the Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. In pursued of the study objective, the survey research design was adopted and a sample of 400 respondents was selected from the study population, using the purposive and simple randomization technique from Ikom Local Government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection is a four point likert scale questionnaire structured to accommodate the options of true, completely true, false and completely false. The questionnaire contained 12 items. Data gathered from the field was meticulously while lineal regression was considered appropriate instrument used to analyses the field coded data at 0.05 confidence level. Result revealed that there is a significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study recommends That the Cross River state synergize with the relevant agencies of the Federal Government as well as other international Agencies to stimulate production in ikom through agricultural programmes such as farmers small holders schemes, cassava, banana, yam, plantain plantations schemes, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc. to promote aggressive food revolution within affected areas in order to avert serious food crisis amongst others.*

Keywords--- refugee influx, Food Security, Ikom Local Government Area

1. INTRODUCTION

Forced displacement is one humanitarian issue that has become a worry to governments, international agencies and non-governmental agencies. Globally, according to the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (2017), there are more displaced persons or refugees in the world than any one time in the history of mankind, and the amount of time spent in displacement for any one refugee is on the rise (IDMC, 2016; Ojong, Iji, & Angioha, 2019). According to UNICR (2019), as at May, 2019 there was 70.8 million forcefully displaced people worldwide. 41.3 million are internally displaced in their own country as a result of civil unrest, draught and famine. 25.9 million are refugees in another country and 3.5 million are asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2019). In a world and time where in every 2 second, a person is forcefully displaced a third of refugees, 6.7 are hosted in the world's poorest nation (amnesty international, 2019), the issue here is that it is not the short time impact of displacement that is the problem, but the fundamental medium to long term impact of displacement on the displaced and host countries that should be considered within a broader growth agenda.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2019) Africa has the second highest number of refugees with the continent accounting for 37 percent of the world's 25.9 million refugees. One in every three refugee found in third world nations is hosted in sub-Saharan African, mainly originating from draught related issues or armed conflicts. The effect of refugee influx into host communities especially in third world or developing nations encompasses economic, social and political domain, especially when refugees remain in their place of temporary abode for a protected period of time one dominant impact or consequences of refugee influx, one that is most times cited is the effect they have on the food security of host community.

For more than 26 months, Cameroon has witness some of the worst civil conflict between its military and separatists from northern, English speaking part of the country. This has driven thousands of Cameroon into displacement across the border into Nigeria. According to the UNHCR (2019) Cameroonians refugees, especially women and children continue to enter into Nigeria from the southwest and northwest regions of Cameroon. As of October 2018, the UNHCR (2019 reported that more than 35,000 Cameroonians have crossed the border into Nigeria seeking for asylum. The organization maintained that it has registered 21,291 Cameroonians of which more than 50percents are children (UNHCR, 2019). These refugees are currently in four states Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Cross River State and Benue.

In cross river, the refugees are located in border areas of Obanliku, Ikom, Akamkpa, Etung and Kwande local government area. The refugees, having fled with little possession, their presence in already inprovished communities is putting a strain on food resources. The host communities, who are already suffering from food security and are the first respondents to the situation, who suffer from worsened food scarcity and this situation is bound to worsen in the nearest future. This study is set out to examine the impact of refugee influx on food security in ikom local government area of cross river sate, Nigeria

Objective of the study

- i. Examine the relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

- i. There is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Study area

Ikom, a local government area in cross river state covers 1,861,929 square kilometer of land mass is located in the Central Sensational District of Cross River State. The local government area has its headquarters at ikom town and is bounded to the North-West by Ogoja, North-East, by Boki, to the East by Etung local government area and the south by Obubra. The local government area is made up of eleven political wards. Ikom local government area is situated in the rain forest belt, which promotes the growth of groundnut, cocoa, banana, plantain and vegetables the people are mostly farmers.

Research design

The study adopted the survey research design, the design was adopted because it is the best method of collecting data that will reveal the relationship between variable under study (Attah & Angioha, 2018), and it allows for generalization of the study by selecting a representative sample from a population that has a similar characteristics like the whole population.

Population and sampling

The population of the study includes all members of the host community according to the world population review (2019), the estimated population of Ikom local government area stands at 79,621. The sample size used for this study is 400 arrived at using Tar Yamane sample size determinant technique 0.05 confidence level the purposive and simple random sampling technique was used.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire, structure on a four point likert scale in the options of true, completely true, false and completely false. The questionnaire contained 12 items.

Method of data collection

Data gathered from the study area was appropriately coded and the necessary and appropriate statistical tool applied lineal regression was used to analyses the data coded at 0.05 confidence level.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaires were administered, out of which three-hundred and fifty-four (363) were retrieved, this therefore implies that the remaining thirty (37) copies of the questionnaire were either not completed or were wrongly filled.

Presentation of Research question

To what extent does the influx of refugees relates with food security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria? Frequency and percentages were first used to answer this research question and reported in Table 1 before the data were subjected to parametric statistics to test for statistical significance and reported in Table 2. From Table 1, 354 (97.5%) respondents agreed that Since the arrival of Cameroonian refugees, the price of food items have increase while 9 (2.5%) respondents disagreed. 328 respondents representing 90.3% agreed that The price of food items that people easily purchase are now sold for double the price while 35 respondents representing 9.6% disagreed with that statement.

Also, 354 (97.6%) respondents agreed that We now compete for basic food items with the foreigners while 9 (2.5%) respondents disagreed with that. 346 respondents representing 95.3% agreed that In a long run the presence of the refugees in our community portends great danger as regard food security while 17 respondents representing 4.7% disagreed with that fact. From the response of respondents to the statements in Table 1 we could conclude that, the refugee influx in Ikom relates to food Security

TABLE 1:

| Responses on Refugees and Food Security | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| S/N | Refugees And Food Security | SA | A | D | SD |
| 1 | Since the arrival of Cameroonian refugees, the price of food items have increase | 158 (43.5) | 196 (54.0) | 9 (2.5) | 0 (0.0) |
| 2 | The price of food items that people easily purchase are now sold for double the price | 149 (41.0) | 179 (49.3) | 35 (9.6) | 0 (0.0) |
| 3 | We now compete for basic food items with the foreigners | 108 (29.8) | 246 (67.8) | 9 (2.5) | 0 (0.0) |
| 4 | In a long run the presence of the refugees in our community portends great danger as regard food security | 125 (34.4) | 221 (60.9) | 9 (2.5) | 8 (2.2) |

*percentages are written in parenthesis
Source: Field survey, 2019

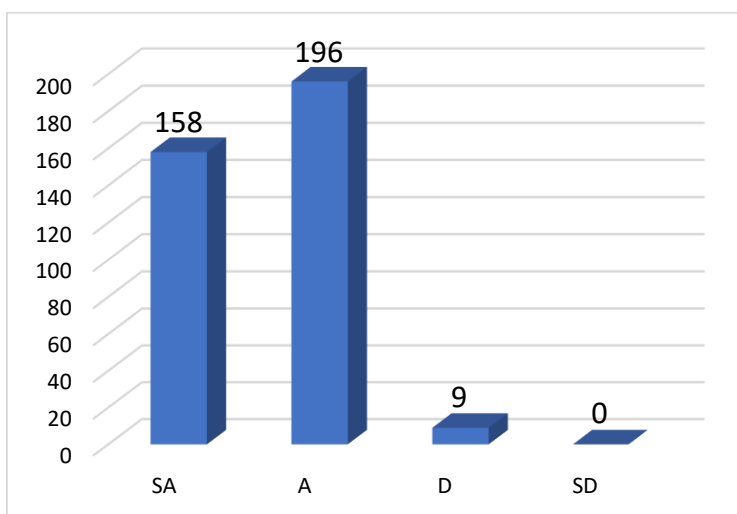


Figure 1: Since the arrival of Cameroonian refugees, the prices of food items have increase

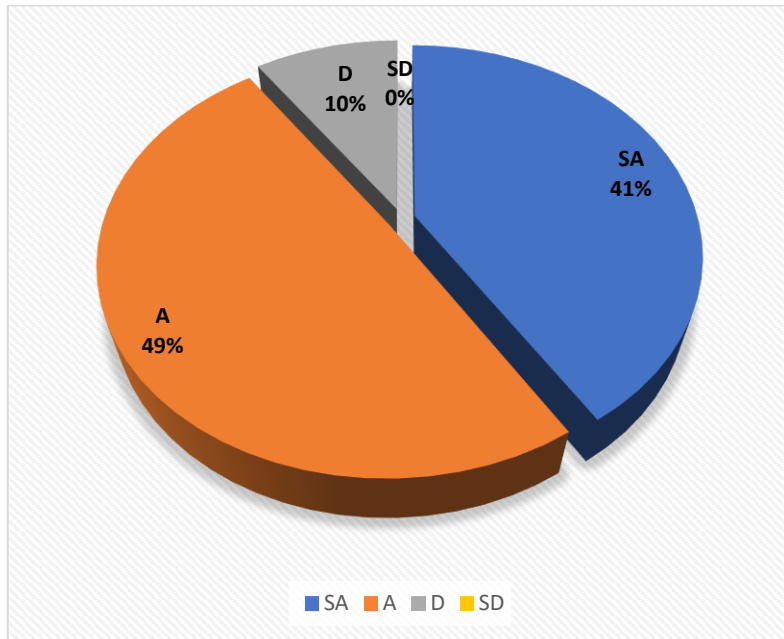


Figure 2: The price of food items that people easily purchase are now sold for double the price

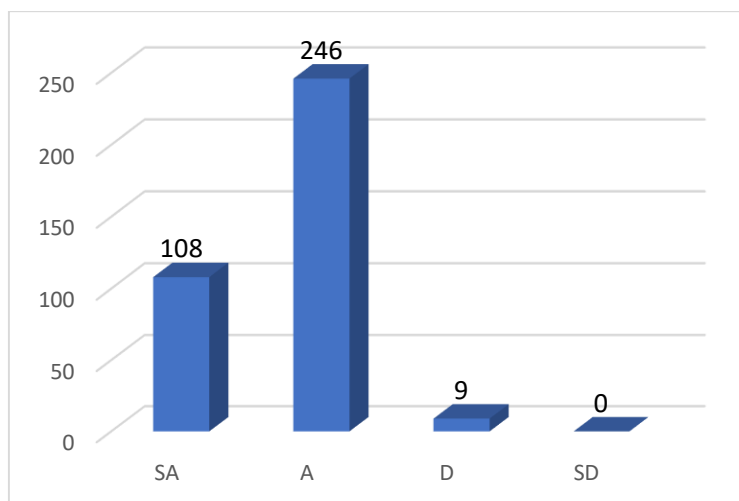


Figure 3: We now compete for basic food items with the foreigners

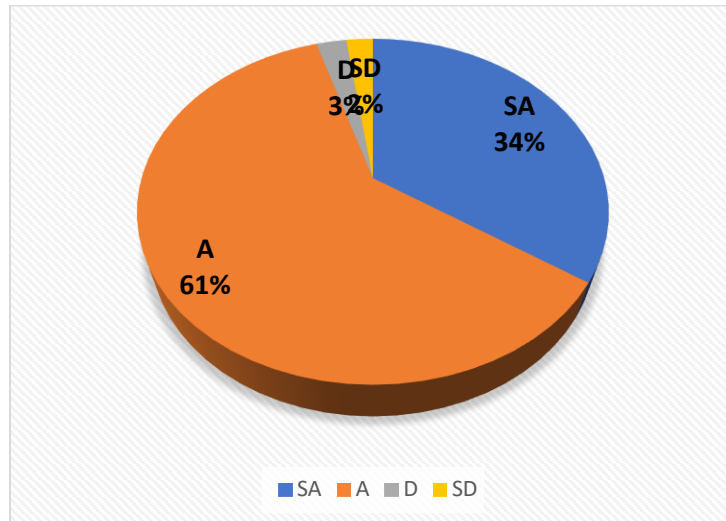


Figure 4: In a long run the presence of the refugees in our community portends great danger as regard food security

Data analysis (Test of hypotheses)

There is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is refugee influx while the dependent variable is Food Security. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Refugee Influx and Food Security

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | r-value | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|------|
| Refugee influx | 363 | 6.63 | 1.22 | 0.811** | .000 |
| Food Security | 363 | 15.00 | 2.55 | | |

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 361; critical r value = 0.098

Source: Field survey, 2019

The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r – value of 0.811* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 361 degrees of freedom. By this result, the null hypothesis which states that, There is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria is rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. The squared correlation $(0.811)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 65.7% of the variance in food security in Ikom is accounted for by Refugee influx. The magnitude of effect is high; this means that refugee influx should be curtailed if improving food security in Ikom is of concern. Therefore, we can conclude that, There is a statistical significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The continuous influx of Cameroonian refugees into Nigerian border towns is increasing the concern for food security. The already increasing population multiplies the enormous pressure on already strained resources and local infrastructure. The findings of this study have shown that the influx of Cameroonian refugees has had enormous negative impact of food security in Ikom, this is because analysis shows that the calculated r – value of 0.811* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 361 degrees of freedom. Based on this finding, the study recommends that;

- i. the Cross River state synergize with the relevant agencies of the Federal Government as well as other international Agencies to stimulate production in ikom through agricultural programmes such as farmers small holders schemes, cassava, banana, yam, plantain plantations schemes, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc. to promote aggressive food revolution within affected areas in order to avert serious food crisis
- ii. the cross river state and Nigerian government need to stimulate production in ikom through empowering the private sector and putting in place enabling environment that enable local production in meeting the demand linked to the presence of the refugees.
- iii. There is need for the refugees to be integrated into the ikom labour market on the basis of the occupational skills that they possess. This can be done by establishing a network between most communities and refugees working in similar industry and also develop appreciate programmer to help assimilate refugees with lower level of skills.

5. REFERENCES

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