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Food Security and Sustainability Strategies: The Case of Eziani Rural Community, Nigeria

Helen N. ANUNOBI
Department of Tourism Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Email, helen.anunobi@unn.edu.ng

Joshua O. UZUEGBU
Humanities Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Email, joshua.uzuegbu@unn.edu.ng
Corresponding Author

Henrietta U. OBIELUEM
Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Email, uchenna.obieluem@unn.edu.ng

John A. OLOIDI
Department of Tourism Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Email, akintunde.oloidi@unn.edu.ng

Kay O. OMALI
Department of Tourism Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Email, obiageli.omali@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

Food insecurity remains central to sustainable rural development. This study examines food sources, factors affecting food security, adaptation strategies and coping mechanisms in Eziani, Nsukka Nigeria. Data were collected using a mixed-method design, including interviews, focused group discussions and household questionnaires with key stakeholders and household members. Thematic and descriptive analysis using percentages and bar charts were utilized. Findings reveal that Eziani's fertile land and favourable climate support planting of peppers, tomatoes, cassava, garden egg, and yams in addition to food processing as primary occupation. The annual new yam festival highlights the community's cultural heritage. Household heads provide food in support of their wives. Climate conditions, economic trends and social conflicts are key threats to food security. Households achieve food security by sun drying, canning and yam storage in barns, along with market purchases, fertilizer application, and improved seeds. Communal networks and strategies, including reducing food intake without compromising quality, also play a vital role in coping during hardships. The study recommends public-private partnerships and NGO-driven poverty eradication and sustainable programs. These efforts can enhance food security, alleviate poverty and support tourism, hospitality and sustainable rural development in Eziani and similar rural communities.

Keywords: Agriculture, food security, household, rural development, sustainable development

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Introduction

Many developing countries are currently implementing local economic and environmental programs to reduce poverty, improve food security, enhance productivity, diversify incomes, and create jobs (Relief Web, 2018). Food and agricultural interventions are vital for year-round nutrition access, household empowerment, healthy diets, and cross-sector collaboration (Berth, 2015). This is because shifting to fallow periods, land restoration, irrigation, and organic practices help to enhance the availability of food (Danso-Abbeam et al., 2015; Yaseen et al., 2015). Food insecurity is caused by problems with availability, stability, accessibility, and use (Saaka, 2016). These problems are driven by high food costs, financial limitations, conflicts, and climate change (FAO, 2018b). Therefore, policies must address both present and future household food access to reduce hunger. As rightly emphasised by Ojo & Adebayo (2012), food remains a primary human need which must be sustained for development. Globally, food security is an important issue that has attracted the interest of various stakeholders. The 2024 World Report on food shows a decline in food security and a possibility of not achieving Zero Hunger before the year 2030. According to Dukka & Saikkia (2018), about 870 million people globally face food insecurity. The tourism industry has encountered numerous obstacles that have adversely affected food security and health, especially in the years following global crises like pandemics, climate change, and unstable economies (Chummun, 2020). Thus, there is a need to enhance the food value chain so as to support the accessibility and improvement of the quality of affordable food (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO. 2024). This is because it will foster economic development, enhance food security, preserve cultural heritage, promote sustainability, which are essential for the growth and resilience of rural communities, the hospitality and tourism industry. Capaldo et al. (2010), argue that policies on food security should be hinged on the capacity of each household to access food. Food is a nutritional requirement for human survival. Being critical for human survival, it fulfils nutritional requirements, provides energy, supports health and well-being, enhances social stability, fosters economic development, and is essential for achieving sustainable development goals (FAO, 2020, IFAD 2020, UN 2015, WHO, 2021). Beyond the accessibility of quality food for the majority of the people, food security includes measures that will avert food shortage, which may result to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies (India's Water and Food Security, 2019; USDA, 2019). Food insecurity can also be attributed to an increase in food prices occasioned by economic challenges, political instability, climatic conditions and communal crisis (FAO, 2018b; Saaka, 2016). A sustainable food system operates at diverse scales—local to global—and ensures fair, equitable access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food. Such a system empowers stakeholders in decision-making, promotes sustainable practices that reduce waste, protect the environment, and manage resources responsibly. It also

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improves livelihoods, upholds rights, operates transparently, and provides access to knowledge for sustainable development (Calzadilla et al., 2013).

Addressing food security requires assessing households' current ability to meet immediate food needs and evaluating their future access to quality food. This approach highlights challenging issues, enabling targeted interventions and long-term resilience (Berthe, 2015; Capaldo et al., 2010). Approximately 70 percent of Nigerians are farmers who rely on agriculture for their sustenance and income, yet many rural communities face significant obstacles to achieving food security (World Bank, 2022). Food insecurity in Nigeria is debilitating; therefore, urgent measures need to be undertaken to arrest the situation. The Eziani rural community in Nsukka, Enugu State, provides a pertinent case study, illustrating both the challenges and opportunities inherent in providing lasting measures for food security in the country. Eziani community in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria has close proximity with Ugbene-Ajima and Ukpabi-Nimbo. Both communities have been attacked by the Fulani herdsmen in 2016 where farmers were displaced from their farm lands resulting to damaging of farm crops, animals, fatalities and loss of valuables (Obi & Nwobi, 2020). Recent threat of attack by the herdsmen has also contributed to the abandonment of farm land. In addition, the land dispute between Obimo and Eziani, the scarcity of water bodies in Eziani has impacted on food security. The research examines the food challenges and adaptation measures for household food in Eziani. The rural community comprises six villages which include: Amaoka, Amaoji, Amaetiti, Amaeze, Akanri and Isi-Iyi. Four of these villages were purposely selected for the study because of proximity to the Igwe's palace, a prominent tourist destination site and to get an insight into some of the concerns on food insecurity. The rural community has the potential for household income diversification and sustainable livelihoods, which are essential for addressing poverty and improving food security. This study focused on stakeholders and household members in four agriculturally based rural communities in Nigeria: Akanri, Amaetiti, Amaoji and Amaoka. Households are those that may be in danger of food insecurity and are therefore crucial for this research as their identification and classification are essential to achieving food security in Nigeria, Africa and globally. Engaging key stakeholders and households helped to address food security challenges and develop sustainable strategies for selected communities. In reality, the provision of means for subsistence to ensure that the people are able to access food remains central to the food security (Ganiyu & Omotayo, 2016). This study aimed to: (i) examine how household source their food, (ii) identify factors affecting food security, (iii) investigate adaptation strategies for food availability in Eziani and (iv) explore coping mechanisms during difficult periods.

Literature review

Food security is increasingly commonly viewed as a condition where quality food is available to the majority of people at affordable price (Disabled World, 2017; IFPRI, 2019; Pérez-Escamilla, 2017). It is crucial in alleviating poverty, especially in countries faced with multiple economic and climatic restrictions (World Bank 2020), and as a result, various development agencies are now making efforts to increase food security by meeting basic needs, finding sustainable solutions, and encouraging innovations. The promotion and encouragement of healthy dietary habits by relevant authorities is seen as a critical objective for maintaining public health, boosting the immune system and mitigating diet-related diseases (Onyenweaku et al., 2022). In other words, food security ensures that people will have quality food to be able to maintain a healthy lifestyle (India's Water and Food Security, 2019; USDA, 2019). Food is essential for healthy living as such it is quite encouraging to analyse food security. Major international organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme, and the World Health Organisation have identified that climate change, economic development, and communal conflict have impacts on food security (FAO et al., 2017, 2018 & 2019). The Nigerian government is currently tackling food insecurity through the provision of farm inputs, provision of subsidised farm machines, securing the farms and the provision of soft loans to farmers, which is part of SDG2 (Ayinde et al., 2020). Nigerians are currently experiencing food challenges occasioned by a number of factors, including communal conflicts (Nkechi et al., 2017; World Bank, 2020; World Poverty Clock, 2020). Kralovec (2020) used a mixed-methods approach to investigate Nigeria's food crisis. The result shows that unfavourable climate, economy and conflict are major causes of the unavailability of food in the country. In another dimension, the standard of living of the people determines the quality of food available to them (Kayode, 2022). Availability of food is central to maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Faithiya, 2024). The study by Gross et al. (2021) shows that people tend to spend quality income in other areas of human endeavour like education, health and transportation at the expense of food. Babatunde et al. (2010) stated that the level of income has a significant positive relationship with calorie intake. As income rises, households can afford a greater quantity and variety of nutritious food, enabling them to meet or exceed daily caloric requirements. Thus, Beyene (2023) opines that food affordability impact positively on the health conditions of the people.

There are above 60 percent arable land in Nigeria; however less than that percentage is used for agricultural purposes. Large populations of rural dwellers are subsistence farmers who find it difficult to meet their basic family needs. Statistics indicate that over 70% of Nigerians who live in households cannot provide quality food thus placing Nigeria among countries with high rate of food insecurity in Africa (FAO, 2005). While exploring food challenges in rural farming community in Mubi North LGA of Adamawa State, Nigeria, Haddabi et al. (2019) studied some communities and observed that educational statues, farm size, farming experience and their disposable income determine their ability to ensure food sufficiency. On the other hand, lack of credit facility, high cost of farm inputs, poor storage facility and labour constitute major stumbling blocks to food sufficiency. Some other studies in Nigeria have focused on climate change impacts, economic pressures and inflation, conflict and insecurity, nutritional deficiencies, systemic vulnerabilities and structural issues (Oderinde et al., 2022; Akerjiir, 2018; Monye, 2024; Obi & Nwobi, 2020; Ogbomah, 2022; The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2024; UNICEF, 2023). However,

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this study explores the perspectives of key stakeholders, family heads and members on food security issues in farm farm-based rural community of Ezani (Good land), southeast Nigeria. Following the reviewed literature, it suggests that there is a paucity of research on food insecurity in Eziani, southeastern Nigeria, where climate change, lack of water bodies, communal crisis have affected food security. This study therefore reviewed the interplay among stakeholders in food security in Eziani community.

Methods

This study adopted a mixed-method research design to collect, present and analyse data. Mixed methods of research integrate these approaches to investigate multifaceted issues, enabling exploration of data trends alongside individual experiences (McLeod, 2024). Mixed methods design is very useful in research questions that require a multifaceted approach that can concurrently explore trends in data and the distinctions of individual experiences. Using triangulation, data were collected from different sources, which were used to confirm, elaborate and clarify the research problems, thereby reducing methodological and individual prejudice, which enhances the acceptability of the research (Decrop, 1999). This method helps the study contribute to the broader challenges and strategies related to food security in rural, agriculturally dependent communities. Basically, the study provides more comprehensive understanding of food security and provides action-driven recommendations for similar rural communities in the world. The study area, located in Southeast Nigeria, spans 1,810 km² between latitudes 6° and 3° North and longitudes 7° and 19° East. It is bordered by Ozzi-Edem (North), Ugbene-Ajima (West), Umuakashi (East), and Obimo (South). Maps of the study area are shown in figs. 1 and 2. The topography features hilly and sloping terrain with earth crust composed of sand and gravel suitable for mining (Amujiri et al., 2022). The area experiences tropical climate wet and dry seasons, influenced by monsoon winds and northeast trade winds from the Sahara

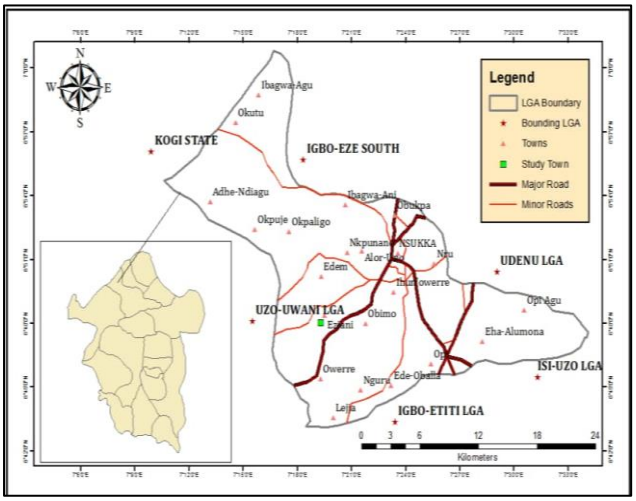

Figure 1: Map of Nsukka LGA showing Eziani

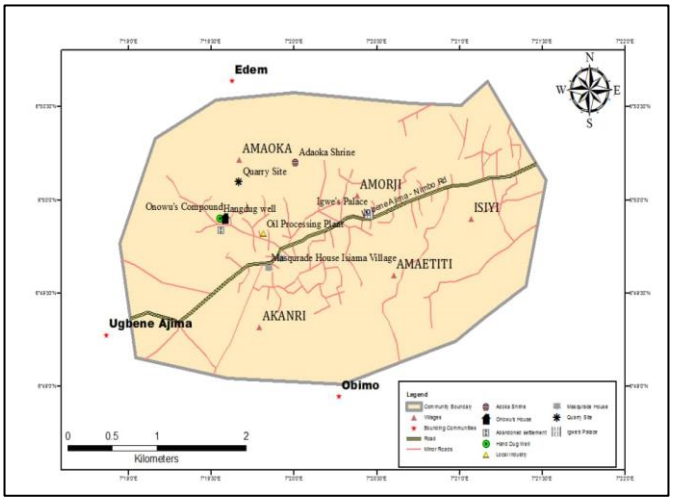

Figure 2: Map of Eziani showing Eziani Communities

Source: Diva Global Information System Nigeria shapefile (2023).

Study population included key stakeholders and household members in Eziani, Nsukka, such as Igwe Cabinet Chiefs, household heads, and other community members. A total of 64 household members, including 10 elders and 10 adults, were purposively selected alongside 20 additional informants. Sampling combined purposive and convenience methods, with researchers directly engaging participants at homes, workplaces, and local destinations. Traditional rulers and village heads of the study villages (Akanri, Amaetiti, Amaoji, and Amaoka) assisted in identifying participants (see Figure 2). According to Bryman (2012), purposive sampling is an absolute sampling technique where participants are deliberately selected based on their relevance to the research topic. Researchers personally approached informants at their homes, workplaces, and local destinations. The researchers used data triangulation through multiple data sources (interviews, field observation, focus group, household members) which were carried out at different locations in the study area. The researchers include scholars such as archaeologists, tourism experts, ethnographers, cartographers and curators. Data collection tools included semi-structured interview guides and questionnaires. The first phase was the focus-group discussions with the Igwe's Cabinet representatives held at Igwe's palace with 20 key stakeholders. The second phase was semi-structured interviews administered face-to-face at various locations with host community members, which focused on food sources, challenges, and strategies for improving food security in Eziani. This helps to highlight the understanding of food security issues. Questionnaires were administered by four research teams to 64 households, i.e., 16 household members each across the four villages, with responses retrieved immediately. The questionnaire assisted in adding credibility to the study by helping the researcher with measurable information about food security issues from different respondents. This gives broader knowledge on food security of which interviews might not offer thereby providing suitable and stronger trustworthiness of conclusions (Dawadi et al. 2021). Data collection occurred between May 20 and November 18, 2023, to minimise frequent visits due to distance and security concerns. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics using Microsoft Excel, in which percentages and bar charts were used to represent data, and thematic analysis that aligned with the study objectives was used through pattern codes. This identifies themes, processes

and relationships (Jennings, 2011). While collecting and analysing data, the researchers search for themes contained in the paragraph based on the empirical data collected. Ethical considerations were observed which included obtaining permission and clarifications from relevant stakeholders before conducting the study

Results and discussion

Household sources of food in Eziani

The in-depth interview with various key stakeholders and household members on food security in Eziani, Nsukka, Nigeria revealed that the community is blessed with fertile land as the name implies, "Eziani" which means "good land". This serves as the basis for food production in the community. The people of Eziani source their food mainly through farming and storage of excess farm produce in barns. An informant alluded to the fact that the community has rich arable land and favorable climate, which support planting of crops like tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*), cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), maize (*Zea mays*) and bitter yam, Triforate yam (Una) and coco yam (Ede).

Figure 3a: Farm site showing tomatoes, garden egg, pepper, corn and fertile soil

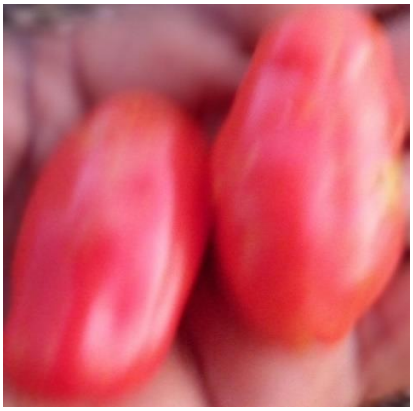

Figure 3b: Yollings tomatoes and pepper

Tomatoes are cultivated twice a year because of the fertile soil (Figures 3a & b). They are cultivated in the mid dry season and the early rains when the weather is favorable for its growth. Also, the crop is planted around March and April when there is moderate rainfall to support its growth. The same weather condition supports the cultivation of yam which is considered as the king of crop. There are certain rituals associated with yam in the community. The people offer thanks to the god of land and other deities for bountiful harvest during new yam festival (*Onwa Ato*). Apart from its cultural value, the festival helps to build social harmony within the community.

Figure 4: Cultivated yam

Figure 5: Yam barn

The highpoint of new yam festival celebration is the harvest of yam, which is an essential crop to the people of Eziani community. In different homesteads, the occasion symbolises the start of the first harvest and consumption of fresh yams, which includes; water yam (*Dioscorea alata*) natively known as "Jinkiti", yellow yam (*Dioscorea cayenensis*), and white yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) locally known as "Ji Agah" (Figure 4). This festival is an opportunity for the community to commune with earth goddess and appreciate it for fruitful harvest, protection, and good health. It also affords them the chance to collectively seek for prosperity in the year to come. Sumptuous meals are prepared particularly boiled yam with chicken sauce "*Jimmiriawa*". Assorted drinks are served amidst dance from different groups while masquerade entertain people at different corners of the community. In Igbo land, yams and other root and tuber crops are stored in barns. Barn is built with tree stem, bamboo sticks, palm leaf and twine. It is constructed to allow good ventilation for the crops stored inside. Healthy yams which are meant to be eaten in the future or as seed plants are selected from the harvest and are tied in rows according to their sizes. A typical yam barn is shown in Figure 5. Yams can be stored in barn for about nine months. Apart from using barn as a means of yam storage in the study area, it helps to sustain the cultural heritage of the people by reminding the younger generation about their traditional method of yam storage especially in the contemporary era. The respondents were asked about how feeding is catered for in the family. About 95% of the respondents were of the opinion that household heads provide grains, then the wife provides the ingredients to cook the foodstuffs acquired from farm produce and others purchased in Ogige Market, which is a major well-known market in Nsukka. Majority of the respondents noted that the time of abundance is all year-round because they store some food for the lean period, while about 30% noted that it is within 6-8months which is between July – December, (Figure 6). May and June were pointed out as the most difficult months because it is the planting season. The study has shown that household in the area experience food adequacy all year round by sun drying, canning, safeguarding yam in the yam barn. The farmers in the community usually layout pepper and tomatoes for sun drying which will be used during the dry season.

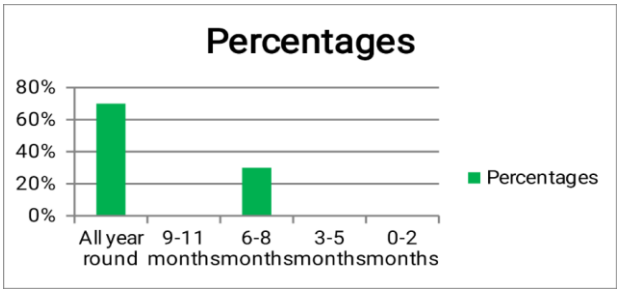

Figure 6: Food Security in Eziani

Local perceptions of food security challenges in Eziani

The respondents are drawn based on sex, age, family size, religion, occupation, marital status, and migrant status. The findings showed that 74.5% of the interviewed persons are male and 25.5% are female. The result suggests that there is male domination in the area. The age of the informants falls between 18 -75 years. The highest household size is seven, with the parents who are mainly Christians, and the adults are more numerous**.** About 90% of the respondent believed that the climate of the area has considerably changed within the last decade and thus has affected their livelihood style. This study was conducted at the time of the planting season when the rain is starting. Although a few informants acknowledged that high sunshine is a major hindrance to their agricultural practices. This corroborates a study Nzeh et al. (2016) carried out in Nigeria, who mentioned that the country is experiencing an increasing number of heat waves, which is hampering the productivity levels of both crops and animals. A number of farmers seek livelihoods on large lands far away from their homes, which exposes them to challenges such as high sunshine and a shortage of water, which makes them to spend more on purchase of tanker water especially during the drought period. Climate change has resulted in fewer water supplies for use in agricultural production. Particularly, *Adaoka* spring is the only natural water body in Eziani. The spring is good for domestic activities but hardly enough for agricultural purposes. During the focus group discussions, it was discovered that the most difficult months for the resource temperate farmers are within February – June. They said that it is the period of farming to get food stocks. More so, about 90% of the respondents reported that the economic trends such as prices of goods and services, cashless policy and change of currency seriously affected their livelihood. They experienced cash and food shortage at this time because they needed cash to buy some foodstuffs.

More so, on the unstable prices of farm produce, the majority of the respondents lamented that they sell their produce cheaply during harvest time because of the lack of storage facilities and buy the same crops at exorbitant prices during the lean season. Because several of them harvest at the same time, they tend to reduce the price and sell at a cheaper price since they are perishable crops. At times, customers may call them that they are coming, only to harvest the crops with hope that they will come but are disappointed and never come to purchase the harvested crops. Such disappointments make them sell the produce at giveaway prices. The price of labor is also increasing as price of things increase. Some of the materials they use in the farm are very expensive like one bag of fertilizer is about N15,000.00 or more and even fowl waste is also costly.

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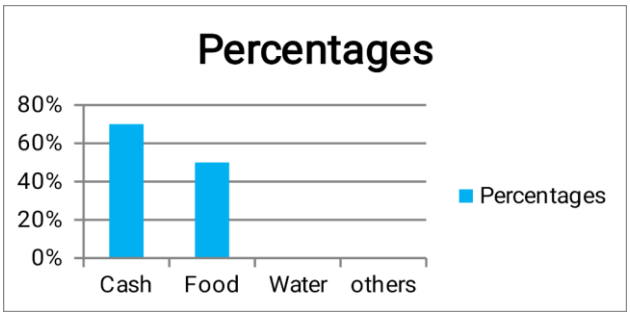

Figure 7: Food security challenges in Eziani

The redesigned Nigerian currency notes which were launched on October 26th, 2022 caused scarcity of cash and created a liquidity which adversely affected businesses. According to Monye (2024) the essence of the redesign was to improve Nigeria's cash policy, encourage digital alternatives and strengthen the currency's integrity. However, the aim was not achieved because Fasua (2023) noted that many would have lost their livelihoods despite the fact that the people in the rural areas are resourceful. The informants were of the opinion that if one does not have cash at hand, he/she will not be able to farm very well and buy farm implements. At times, the money kept for the next planting season are spent when problems arises and at times are eaten up. Farmers are usually paid in cash but the cashless policy and change of currency in Nigeria negatively affected them. The ability to collect and dispense cash was impeded while the transfer of money electronically takes unnecessarily a longer time with additional charges and tariff. This caused significant hardship for the farmers in Eziani. This corroborates Ukoha et al., (2017) which argues that despite the low patronage of cash-less transactions, other factors including the acceptability by the people, qualification of farmers and eases of using e-banking facilities are major setbacks to cash-less economy in Nigeria. Quick and accountable compensation of farmers for loss of crops through e-payments encourages them to recoup their finances and reinvest. Agricultural transactions in cash increases the urgency of encouraging digital payment as the crucial step to encouraging robust local economy especially in areas engulfed in communal conflict. Furthermore, majority of the respondents, about 90% of the respondents see communal strife as an issue that impact negatively on food security because it deprives them the opportunity to utilize their land. The assertions made above align with some studies in the region which outlined the impacts of farmers/ herdsmen clashes in southeast Nigeria (Akerjiir 2018, Ogbomah, 2022). Most of the interviewed persons in Eziani complained of attack on their farmland by the Fulani Herdsmen and their cows. They do not allow them to go and plant in their farm land. Even when they complain about the destruction, the Fulani herdsmen usually shout at them and are ready to fight them. They also had land conflict with the neighboring community Obimo people who claim to be owners of Eziani land. They do not have boundaries with the Obimo people as such, they come with Caterpillar to till their land but the Eziani people uses police to restrain them. The instances mentioned above have been reported to the appropriate authorities. In the midst of shortage of cash, they usually apply for loan to assist them but have not gotten any incentive. The challenges enumerated above have adversely affected their earnings and their ability to move out of poverty.

Adaptation strategies for food security in Eziani rural community,
Staple produce like maize, cassava and yam are for domestic consumption. It shows that it is a sustenance measure adopted by the people. The respondents maintained that women play active role by providing food for the households as a means of adaption strategy. This act by the women is seen as a complimentary effort to assist their husbands feed the families especially during the time of food scarcity and communal strife. About 95% of the respondents noted that their yields substantially increased.

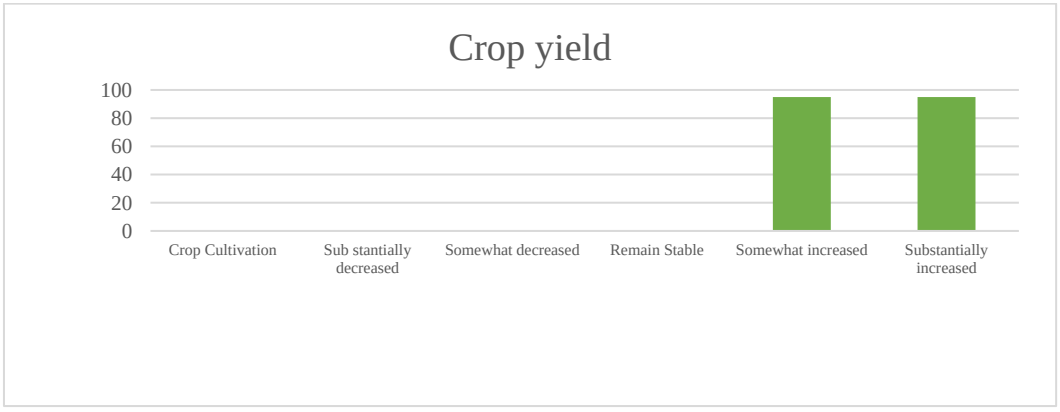

Figure. 8: Crop yield in Eziani

The study suggests that despite some challenges faced by the farmers, there appear to be an increase in crop yield in the last decade. One of our informants noted that if you plant yam three lines and it makes five, it shows some level of increase. They reported fertilizer application despite the high cost, few uses tractor services for early land preparation, the use of good seedlings

leads to bountiful harvest in Eziani. Those interviewed maintained that they sourced their seedlings from previous stock. Other seedlings are sourced through the purchase of improved seeds from the government and fellow farmers. The local farmers prefer seedlings from the previous stock for the next planting season. Subsistence farming and stone mining are prevalent in the study area. Most of the respondents are farmers while a few are into food processing businesses. Other people deal on fire wood sales because of tall trees in the forest. The study shows that the people depend largely on crops they cultivate and the minerals mined within their communities for sustenance. Among the crops they cultivate, yam is regarded by the people as the 'king of crops" because of its cultural and economic value. Yam grows well in Eziani partly because of the fertile soil and clement weather in addition to the availability of barn used for its storage.

Food sustenance strategy

Residents of Eziani adopt several techniques of survival during food scarcity. Some of these methods include sourcing from markets, borrowing of food items and money, sale of valuables including livestock, help from friends and extended family members, donations from local groups, churches, non-governmental organisations and government agencies. Interestingly, using proceed from the sale of livestock to buy staple food crops for the households remains the primary coping strategy adopted by the people. Conversely, the act of money borrowing for the purchase of food is not prevalent as credit facilities are not readily available because members of the community are faced with the challenge. The people also skip meals as a measure for coping during the period of food scarcity. This relates to what Babatunde et al. (2010) stated that income effects the quality and quantity of food consumed. Most of the respondents noted that they require good seedlings, adequate farm inputs, tractor services, and access to credit to help them attain the desired level of food security in the near future. They were of the opinion that the government, NGO's and community-based organisations should assist them in enhancing their food security.

Conclusion

Food security household status, challenges, strategies and coping mechanisms were explored by the key stakeholders, heads, women and members of the household in farm-based rural community of Eziani, Nsukka South-East region of Nigeria. The household heads provide the main food for the family while the women provide other ingredients and prepare food in the rural household. Although the older men and women provide food, the younger people should be more encouraged to support their parents, notwithstanding the level of education, so as to have enough food supply all year-round. The study revealed that food availability is challenged by adverse weather condition, economic trends in form of inflation, high cost of goods and services, change of currency and cashless policy (Monye, 2024). More so, communal conflicts and tribal conflicts affects food security in the farm based rural communities. This implies that addressing food security in rural communities is crucial for the hospitality and tourism sector. This is based on the fact that a stable local food supply enhances authenticity and sustainability in tourism experience and therefore requires an integrated approach that tackles both environmental and socio-economic factors. This will support climate adaptation, stabilise local economies, and resolve conflicts (Akerjiir, 2018; Ogbomah, 2022). Therefore, investing in agricultural infrastructure like irrigation, storage, and access to quality seeds and fertilizers can increases productivity and reduces post-harvest losses. The study notes that the locals experience significant degree of food availability through preservative methods like sun-drying, canning tomatoes, pepper, corn and storing yam in barns to secure food supplies and reduce costs for the next planting season. For the hospitality and tourism sector, these practices ensure a consistent availability of local cost-effective and authentic food products. Strengthening local food preservation and market access can also improve food availability, while supporting community-based initiatives also enhances collective resilience Thus, incorporating these preserved foods into menus and dining experiences can enhance culinary authenticity, support local producers, and promote sustainable sourcing, thereby strengthening community ties and enhancing the overall tourist experience. However, rural households prioritise food security by adopting efficient measures and communal support networks as diversifying income sources into gravel stone extraction and other businesses. Although three square meals are not usually eaten which affects children and adults, the challenging situation does not still reduce the quality of food prepared for the household members. The government, private sectors, NGO's and community-based organisations should support these farms based rural communities to enhance their food security through sustainable practices. For the hospitality and tourism sector, this means more reliable sourcing of regional foods, improved culinary experiences, and stronger community partnerships, which collectively contribute to sustainable tourism development and richer visitor experiences that will foster sustainable tourism development and influence the hospitality sector. Therefore, stakeholders can plan effective interventions to enhance food security, reduce poverty, and promote sustainable rural development in Eziani and similar communities.

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