

Food Insecurity in Ekiti State: Evidence From NBS-NLHS

**A State-Based Policy
Document on Food Insecurity
for Poverty Eradication**

August, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The persistence of food insecurity in Ekiti State represents a complex challenge that has been exacerbated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report, drawing on data from the National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS2020-2023), provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of food insecurity across the state's 11 local governments and offers a strategic framework for addressing this urgent issue.

Food insecurity rates vary significantly across the local governments, with the highest reported in Moba (66%) and the lowest in Ado Ekiti (26%). These disparities highlight the heterogeneity of challenges faced at the local level, necessitating tailored solutions. Factors contributing to these rates include economic instability, agricultural productivity, market accessibility, climate change, infrastructural deficiencies, and governance.

The impact of severe hunger is notable, with percentages ranging from 17% to 57% across different local governments. Post-COVID-19 recovery strategies are imperative and must prioritize agricultural revitalization, improved food distribution networks, and social safety nets. The economic recovery must include support for smallholder farmers, investment in agro-industries, and job creation to address the root causes of food insecurity sustainably.

Policy implications are broad and call for a multi-sectoral approach. Investment in modern farming techniques, market infrastructure, climate resilience, and policy reforms are critical to improving food security. Furthermore, the establishment of social protection programs, educational initiatives, and consistent policy implementation will be key to mitigating food insecurity.

In conclusion, the NLPS data demands immediate and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to implement strategies that not only alleviate current levels of hunger but also build a sustainable food security framework for Ekiti State. The objective is not merely to address the symptoms but to forge a resilient food system capable of withstanding future socio-economic and environmental challenges, ultimately ensuring the right to food for all residents of Ekiti State.

INTRODUCTION

Food insecurity represents a critical global issue affecting millions, a challenge that extends far beyond the simplistic notion of hunger. It encompasses the intricate interplay between the availability, accessibility, and proper utilization of food, influenced by a matrix of economic, social, and environmental factors. Recognizing this multifaceted crisis, the United Nations has placed food security at the forefront of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG 2 ambitiously aiming to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by the year 2030. This goal underlines a collective resolve to achieve a world where everyone has access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food.

In Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, the struggle against food insecurity is intensified by economic fluctuations, including unstable oil prices and currency valuation, which undermine the citizens' ability to purchase sufficient food. The state of Ekiti, with its predominantly agrarian landscape, mirrors this national challenge. While rich in agricultural diversity with crops like yam, rice, cassava, and cocoa forming the backbone of its economy, the state is yet to fully harness this potential. Modern farming techniques are scarce, and many farmers adhere to less productive traditional methods. Compounding this, inadequate storage and processing facilities lead to significant post-harvest losses, further diminishing the food supply and farmers' incomes.

Moreover, the specter of climate change looms, with altered rainfall patterns and rising temperatures impinging on crop yields, thereby jeopardizing food security in the State. In the face of these challenges, Ekiti State also presents a canvas of opportunity. Initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable farming practices and bolstering agribusiness, such as the Ekiti Knowledge Zone, ABUAD Agro-Tourist Farm, and ABUAD Industrial Research Park point toward pathways for agricultural enhancement and the realization of the State's food production capacities.

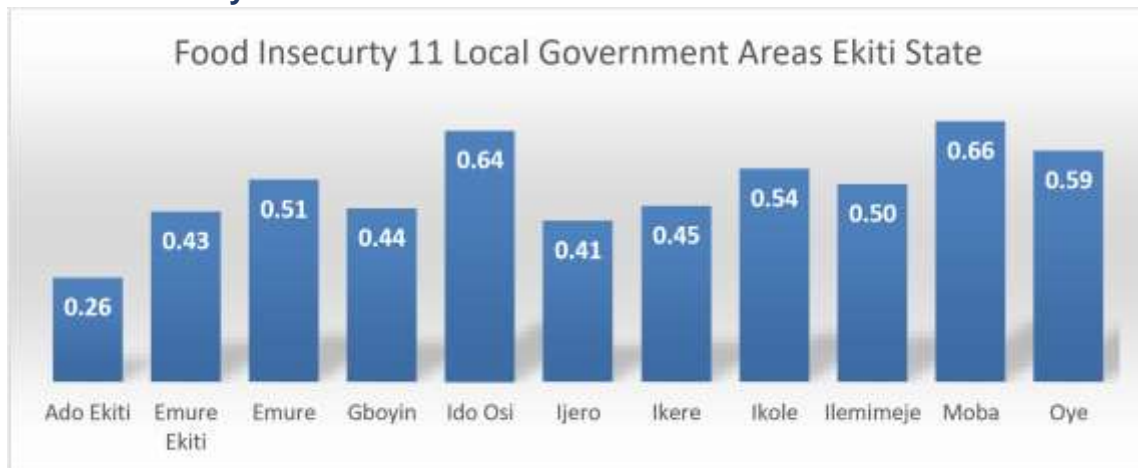
Central to understanding and navigating the landscape of food insecurity in Ekiti State is the National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS2020-2023). This survey serves as a barometer for the region's food security status, capturing data over time to reflect both the immediate and evolving trends affecting food access and consumption patterns. The longitudinal data collected is indispensable, providing a basis for informed

policymaking and intervention strategies that are grounded in the lived realities of Ekiti's populace.

The insights gleaned from the NLPS2020-2023 underscore the critical need for targeted policy development and the implementation of strategies that are acutely attuned to the distinct needs of Ekiti's local governments. Such data-informed approaches are vital for crafting effective agricultural and food security policies, ensuring that every resident of Ekiti State moves towards a future free from the pangs of hunger and the uncertainty of food insecurity.

The primary objective of this paper is to critically analyze and elucidate the current state of food insecurity in Ekiti State, utilizing data from the National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS2020 -2023). By examining the survey's extensive data, the paper aims to identify the key factors contributing to food insecurity in the region, including economic, environmental, and social elements. This analysis will not only provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced but also offer insights into potential solutions and policy recommendations to effectively address and mitigate food insecurity in Ekiti State, thereby contributing to the broader goal of achieving food security in Nigeria.

Food Insecurity in Ekiti State



Authors Calculation from NLPS

The above data shows the percentage of food insecurity across the 11 local Governments in Ekiti State, as reported by the National Longitudinal Phone Survey, the findings reveals a considerable variation in the prevalence of food insecurity, ranging from 26% to 66%. This data provides an important indicator of the disparities

within the state and possibly reflects the influence of local conditions and policies on food security.

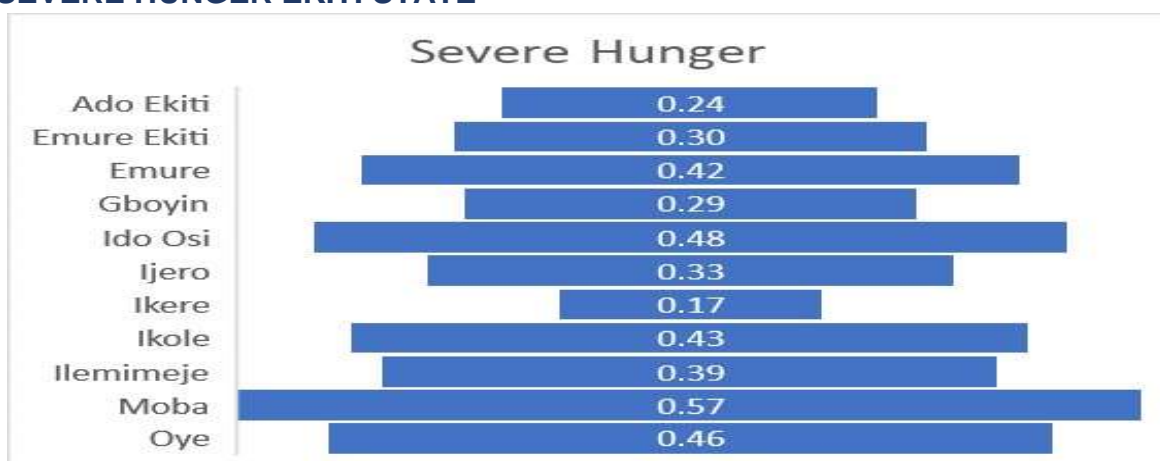
Ado Ekiti, the state capital, shows the lowest percentage of food insecurity at 26%. This could be attributed to better access to markets, a higher concentration of wealth, and the availability of government and non-governmental food assistance programs. Urban centers often have more resources and infrastructure to combat food scarcity issues.

In contrast, Moba leads with the highest reported food insecurity at 66%. This substantial figure indicates a severe problem that may stem from factors such as agricultural underproduction, unemployment, poor infrastructure, or lack of effective food distribution systems. Similarly, Ido Osi and Oye are facing high levels of food insecurity, with over half of the surveyed population affected.

The data points for Emure, Gboyin, Ikere, and Ijero reflect a situation where close to half of the population is experiencing food insecurity. These numbers are alarmingly high and suggest that a significant portion of the population lacks reliable access to sufficient food. Ikole, Ilemimeje, and Emure Ekiti present slightly higher rates, which could indicate more acute local challenges or less effective coping mechanisms.

This variance across the local governments suggests that while food insecurity is a state-wide concern,

SEVERE HUNGER EKITI STATE



Authors Calculation from NLPS

The table provided seems to reflect the percentages of the population experiencing severe hunger in the various local governments of Ekiti State in the post-COVID-19

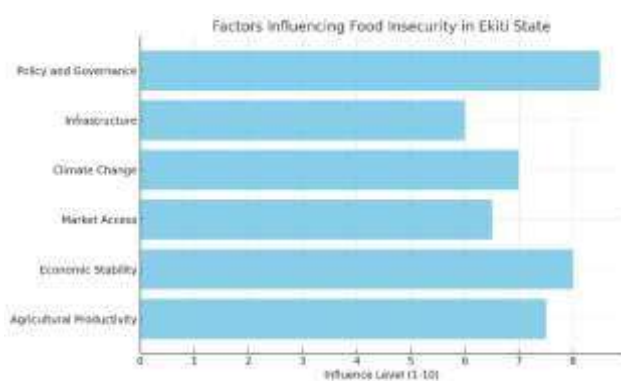
era. The data shows that severe hunger is a significant problem, with figures ranging from 17% to 57%.

In the post-pandemic landscape, where economies and food systems have been disrupted globally, these figures are particularly concerning. The pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities in food supply chains, employment, and health services, leading to increased food insecurity. In Ekiti State, local governments such as Moba (57%), Ido Osi (48%), and Oye (46%) exhibit high levels of severe hunger, indicating a critical need for targeted food assistance and sustainable interventions.

Conversely, Ikere reports the lowest percentage at 17%, suggesting that certain areas may have been more resilient to the pandemic's impacts or had stronger food security measures in place before or during the pandemic. However, even the lowest percentage represents a significant portion of the population facing acute food deprivation, which can have lasting effects on health and socio-economic well-being.

Ado Ekiti, despite being the state capital with presumably better resources, reports 24% of its population experiencing severe hunger. This illustrates that urban settings are not immune to the challenges of food security, especially in the aftermath of COVID19, which has strained the urban poor's livelihoods.

Factors Influencing Food Insecurities in Ekiti State



The chart presented visualizes the factors influencing food insecurity in Ekiti State, assessed on an influence level scale from 1 to 10. The factors listed, such as Agricultural Productivity, Economic Stability, Market Access, Climate Change, Infrastructure, and Policy and Governance, each play a critical role in determining the food security status within the state.

Policy and Governance, along with Economic Stability, are shown to have the highest influence levels, indicating that the effectiveness of governance and economic conditions are crucial determinants of food security. This suggests that improvements in policy-making and economic management could significantly enhance food security in Ekiti State.

On the other hand, factors like Agricultural Productivity, Market Access, Climate Change, and Infrastructure also have substantial influence. Enhancing agricultural yields, improving market systems, adapting to climate change, and developing infrastructure are necessary steps to mitigate food insecurity.

In the post-COVID-19 era, where these factors have been further stressed, their influence on food insecurity is likely more pronounced. Recovery efforts need to be comprehensive, addressing each of these areas to ensure resilient food systems for the future.

Policy Implication

The policy implications of food insecurity in Ekiti State are multifaceted, requiring a holistic approach to ensure that all residents have reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. Given the data on food insecurity and severe hunger in the region, several policy recommendations can be considered:

1. **Agricultural Investment and Modernization:** Policies should prioritize investment in agricultural technology and infrastructure to improve productivity. This includes providing subsidies for modern equipment, improving irrigation systems, and supporting research into crop varieties resistant to climate change impacts.
2. **Economic Diversification and Stability:** Diversifying the economy can reduce reliance on volatile sectors and create more stable income sources. Policies could promote agro-industrialization, which would add value to raw agricultural products and create job opportunities.
3. **Enhanced Market Systems:** Developing better market infrastructure and transportation can reduce post-harvest losses and ensure that food produced in rural areas reaches urban markets. Policies could focus on improving road networks and establishing regional food distribution centers.

4. **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation:** Policies must address the impact of climate change on agriculture. This might include promoting sustainable farming practices, supporting afforestation programs, and setting up early warning systems for adverse weather events.
5. **Social Protection Programs:** Implementing and expanding social protection programs such as food assistance, cash transfers, or subsidized healthcare can mitigate the immediate impact of food insecurity on the most vulnerable populations.
6. **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Policies should support education campaigns that promote nutritional awareness and encourage diverse diets. This can help prevent malnutrition and promote the consumption of locally produced food.
7. **Research and Data Collection:** Continued investment in research and data collection is critical. Policies should support systems that regularly monitor food security indicators to inform decision-making and adjust strategies as needed.
8. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Food security is an issue that requires cooperation across various sectors. Policies should encourage collaboration between government, non-governmental organizations, private sector stakeholders, and international partners.
9. **Policy Consistency and Implementation:** There must be a concerted effort to ensure that policies are not only well-crafted but also consistently implemented. This requires establishing clear goals, accountability mechanisms, and regular evaluation of policy outcomes.

Addressing food insecurity through these policy recommendations could lead to improved health outcomes, economic growth, and social stability in Ekiti State. It requires the commitment of local, national, and international stakeholders to ensure the right to food for all residents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the data from the National Longitudinal Phone Survey paints a clear picture of the urgent need for action in addressing food insecurity in Ekiti State. The

post-COVID-19 era presents both challenges and opportunities to reshape food systems to be more resilient and equitable. Comprehensive recovery strategies must prioritize the revitalization of the agricultural sector, enhancements to food distribution networks, and the provision of social safety nets for the most vulnerable. Economic measures that support smallholder farmers, foster the growth of agro-processing industries, and generate employment will also play a pivotal role in the sustainable mitigation of hunger. Tailored interventions that consider the unique circumstances of each local government will be essential for effectiveness, especially in areas with the highest rates of food insecurity. Policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders must collaborate to ensure that the interventions not only address the immediate concerns of hunger but also contribute to the establishment of a robust food security system that can endure future economic and environmental challenges. The end goal is clear: to secure a future where every resident of Ekiti State has access to sufficient, nutritious food, and the specter of hunger is banished to the past.

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