

## INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AMONG RURAL COMMUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL

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### Abstract

*Serious threats of insecurity have bedevilled Nigeria in the recent past. Nigeria a hitherto peaceful nation is today saddled with insecurity challenges ranging from, terrorist attacks, kidnapping, herdsmen attacks, indigene-settler crisis to mention just a few. This research paper has specific interest of North Central Nigeria as its area of study. Using primary data the paper tries to find out the level of prevalence of insecurity in North Central Nigeria, factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering in North Central Nigeria and ways of improving intelligence gathering in North Central Nigeria. At the end of the study, the paper amongst other things recommends urgent need for provision of more security personnel and rural infrastructure in Northern Nigeria, increased collaboration of security agents with traditional, religious institutions and the general public on issues of intelligence information in rural communities, proper orientation and education of all those involved in intelligence gathering, as well as training and retraining of security personnel on modern technological methods of intelligence gathering.*

**Keywords:** Intelligence, Insecurity, kidnapping, Herdsmen attacks, Indigene-settler crisis North-Central Nigeria.

### Introduction

Nigeria is a strategic nation in the African sub-region and also a stabilizing country in the socio-political existence of the African sub-region. However, in the recent past, Nigeria has been bedevilled with challenges of insecurity. As the situation worsens, it is pertinent to wonder where Nigeria's security apparatus got it wrong especially in the area of intelligence gathering with regards state of intelligence infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria. Though Nigeria has seemingly recovered from the civil war which lasted from 1967 to 1970, the country is still threatened by the ongoing Islamic insurgency in North-east Nigeria, youth militancy in the Niger-Delta region, kidnapping, banditry and hostage, herdsmen attack on farmers among other challenges which are currently confronting Nigeria's sustainable development (Charles and Ibeh, 2008).

In recent years, Northern Nigeria has experienced a surge in insecurity, characterized by activities such as terrorism, insurgency, communal clashes, and banditry (Ani, and Onyebuluwa, 2016, Okechukwu and

Ogochukwu, 2018). These security challenges have posed a significant threat to the region's stability, socio-economic development, and the overall well-being of its inhabitants. Addressing and resolving these security issues requires a deep understanding of the underlying causes and effective intelligence gathering.

Intelligence gathering in the circle of security has become very important factor for the stability of any nation in the world. Lack of intelligence gathering and security infrastructure in any society pose a major challenge to decision makers, communities and groups around the world. Intelligence gathering plays a crucial role in the management and mitigation of security threats. It involves the collection, analysis, and dissemination of relevant information to relevant stakeholders, such as law enforcement agencies, security forces, policymakers, and government officials. Timely and accurate intelligence is essential in formulating effective strategies and policies to tackle insecurity effectively.

Intelligence gathering is a critical tool used by countries worldwide to tackle insecurity and address various threats. For example nations such as The United States has a robust intelligence apparatus, including agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). These agencies collect and analyze intelligence to counter terrorism, cyber threats, espionage, and other security challenges. Also, United Kingdom has a long-standing tradition of intelligence gathering and has agencies like the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Security Service (MI5), Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), and Defense Intelligence (DI). These agencies collaborate to gather intelligence on various security concerns, including terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats. Israel is renowned for its intelligence capabilities and has agencies like Mossad (focused on foreign intelligence gathering), Shin Bet (internal security), and Aman (military intelligence). These agencies gather intelligence to counter terrorism, monitor regional threats, and protect national security interests. Russia has a sophisticated intelligence apparatus, including agencies like the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), Federal Security Service (FSB), and Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU). These agencies gather intelligence on domestic and international security threats, including terrorism, cyber threats, and political instability.

In Africa, most states including Nigeria are facing numerous challenges in terms of security and intelligence gathering stemming from political instability, limited resources, weak institutions, transnational threats, technological gaps, linguistic and cultural diversity, information sharing and collaboration, as well as a lack of public trust. These challenges hinder the effective collection and analysis of intelligence necessary for addressing complex security issues.

The purpose of this research is to critically appraise the challenges associated with intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria and how they contribute to the prevailing insecurity. By examining the state of intelligence gathering, the research aims to identify gaps, highlight shortcomings, and propose recommendations for improvement.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Northern Nigeria has been grappling with significant security challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, communal clashes, and banditry. These issues have resulted in the loss of countless lives, the displacement of communities, and the disruption of socio-economic activities. However, there are several challenges and limitations that hinder the process of intelligence gathering in the region.

One of the primary problems is the inadequate state of intelligence gathering infrastructure and

capabilities. Northern Nigeria lacks robust technological systems, such as surveillance equipment, communication networks, and data analytics tools, which are essential for efficient and timely intelligence gathering. The lack of adequate resources and investment in intelligence infrastructure hampers the collection, analysis, and dissemination of crucial security information.

Furthermore, intelligence agencies in the region face numerous challenges in gathering and analyzing relevant security data. These challenges include limited human resources, insufficient training and capacity-building programs, and a lack of coordination and information sharing among different security agencies. The absence of standardized protocols and procedures for intelligence gathering further compounds the problem, leading to inefficiencies and gaps in the security apparatus.

The prevailing socio-political, cultural, and economic factors also contribute to the challenges of intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria. The region's diverse ethnic and religious composition, coupled with historical grievances and identity-based conflicts, create complex dynamics that hinder trust, cooperation, and information sharing among communities and security agencies. Socio-economic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities, also fuel the grievances and motivations that contribute to insecurity, making intelligence gathering more challenging.

These challenges in intelligence gathering have severe implications for the ability to prevent, detect, and respond to security threats effectively. Without timely and accurate information, security forces and policymakers are hindered in their decision-making processes, making it difficult to develop and implement targeted strategies to counter insecurity. As a result, the security situation in Northern Nigeria continues to deteriorate, perpetuating a cycle of violence and instability.

Addressing these challenges and improving intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria is crucial to effectively tackle the prevailing insecurity. By identifying the specific problems hindering intelligence gathering, this research aims to provide insights and recommendations that can guide policymakers, security agencies, and relevant stakeholders in formulating and implementing strategies to enhance intelligence capabilities, bridge existing gaps, and ultimately address the security challenges faced by the region.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions are used as a guide to our investigation:

1. What state of intelligence gathering infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria?
2. What factors are responsible for poor intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria?
3. What can be done to improve the level of intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria?

## **The objectives of the Study are:**

1. To assess state of intelligence gathering infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria;
2. To determine factors are responsible for poor intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria;
3. To find ways of improving the level of intelligence gathering in North Central Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Intelligence Gathering**

Intelligence gathering is putting together information which has been processed and is targeted at some specific policies used to recognize, assess and mitigate at certain security threat [Ashok, JLT, 2000] for Alemika (2002) intelligence gathering is bringing together reports on particular issues and they can be classified into current and forecast intelligence reports. He further opines that it is an outcome of several processes which include collection, evaluation, analysis, integration and interpretation of information available to policy and decision makers concerning security and development.

Laronthial(2000) Intelligence gathering is the putting together of information that meets the stated needs of policy makers, he also states that such information is usually collected, refined and narrowed down with the aim of meeting specified objectives. He observes that such information gathered is of great importance to security since it is collected, analysed and disseminated to the relevant authorities. Enahoro (2010) in his submission states that nation needs strong instruments of intelligence gathering strategy to enable them fight threat of insecurity. Intelligence gathering is the collection of relevant information by security operatives from various security agencies either through overt or covert means, documentation and analysing such information as well as offering advice to relevant authority to forestall either actual or perceived security threats.

### **Insecurity**

Security is the safe guarding of material condition that makes human living sustainable, such conditions include, optimal safety, livelihood, health, education, employment, food security and general balance in life (Okoli and Orinya 2013). Genyi (2013) observes that security goes beyond military considerations but embraces economics, political and social dimension of family, community local and national life, he further observes that the security of a nation must take cognizance of citizens living in peace with access to basic human needs and participating in societal affairs with general freedom and fundamental human rights. Also, (Ani and Onyebukua 2016) note that security has a multidimensional and comprehensive approach which also deals with civil, social, cultural, political, environmental and economic sectors of the economy. On the other hand, Ayegba, U.S. (2016) posits that the traditional perspective of security focuses mainly on the military and the defence of the nations territorial and sovereign integrity. Also, (Aliyu, 2012) notes that a nation state has security when it is free from military threats or political coercion. He also observes that security challenges are not the same as every nation has its own peculiar security challenges. This definition goes with the per-cold war traditional definition which is limited to military capability and warfare.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Area**

The study was carried out in the North Central region of Nigeria. The North Central States comprise of Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. (F.C.T). The states selected at one time or the other have had very serious challenges of insecurity, from Banditry, kidnapping, indigence settler crisis, farmer herder crisis, militia crimes, bombings, terrorist attacks and several multidimensional conflicts.

### **Targeted Population of Study**

The targeted population of study were the indigenes resident and general people living in those areas. The respondents were security personnel, farmers, academia, civil servants and the general in habitats of the area of interest from 18 years and above.

### **Data Collection**

The data for this research work was collected through primary sources. The primary methods include questionnaires and discussions. Six research assistants were hired and briefed on a temporal basis, one for each state. The questionnaires comprised of two sections. Research questionnaires administered comprised of both open and close ended questions. The number of questionnaires administered were 600 copies. Each state had one hundred copies. For the questionnaires, out of 600 copies, 328 questionnaires were filled and returned successfully. This therefore, makes the rate of return of questionnaires 54.7% rounded up to 55%.

### **Data Analysis**

The data for demographic variable was analysed through simple frequencies and simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for research questions while linear regression analyses targeted at 0.005 level of significance was used in test of hypothesis.

## Results

**Table 1: Demographic Attributes of Respondents**

### State of Residence

State of Residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Benue	110	33.5
Nasarawa	82	25.0
Plateau	32	9.8
Kogi	29	8.8
Niger	25	7.6
Kwara	23	7.0
FCT	27	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

The table 1 shows State of Residence of respondents. Based on percentage distribution by State of residence; 110 (33.5%) of the respondents are from Benue, 82(25.0%) of the respondents are from Nasarawa, 32(9.8%) of the respondents are from Plateau, 29(8.8%) of the respondents are from Kogi, 25(7.6%) of the respondents are from Niger, 23(7.0%) of the respondents are from Kwara while 27(8.2%) of the respondents are from FCT.

**Table 2: Sex of Respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	222	67.7
Female	106	32.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

Table 2 shows sex of respondents. Based on percentage distribution by sex; 222(67.7%) of the respondents are males while 106(32.3%) of the respondents are female.

**Table 3: Age Bracket of Respondents**

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-30 years	39	11.9
31-43 years	114	34.8
44-56 years	128	39.0
57 years and above	47	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

Table 3 shows age bracket of respondents. Based on percentage distribution by age bracket; 39(11.9%) of the respondents are from an age range of 18-30 years, 114(34.8%) of the respondents are from an age range of 31-43 years, 128(39.0%) of the respondents are from an age range of 44-56 years, 47(14.3%) of the respondents are from an age range of 57 years and above.

**Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Single	86	26.2
Married	172	52.4
Divorced/Separated	28	8.5
Widow/Widower	42	12.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

Table 4 shows marital status of respondents. Based on percentage distribution marital status; 86(26.2%) of the respondents are single, 172(52.4%) of the respondents are married, 28(8.5%) of the respondents are divorced/separated, 42(12.8%) of the respondents are widow/widower.

**Table 5: Educational Attainment of Respondents**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
None	73	22.3
Primary	29	8.8
Secondary	85	25.9
Tertiary	141	43.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

On table the level of educational attainment of respondents was presented. Based on percentage distribution by educational attainment; 73(22.3%) of the respondents have no formal education, 29(8.8%) of the respondents are have primary education, 85(25.9%) of the respondents have secondary education, 141(43.0%) of the respondents have tertiary education.

**Table 6: Occupation of Respondents**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Security personnel	82	25.0
Farming	48	14.6
Civil servant	89	27.1
Others	109	33.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2023

Table 6 shows occupation of respondents. Based on percentage distribution by occupation; 82(25.0%) of the respondents are security personnel, 48(14.6%) of the respondents are farmers, 89(27.1%) of the respondents are civil servants, 109(33.2%) of the respondents belong to other forms of occupation.

## Results and Discussion of Findings

### Research Questions

**Research Questions 1:** What is the state of insecurity and intelligence gathering infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria?

**Table 7:** Showing Respondents responses on the state of insecurity and intelligence gathering infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria.

S/No	Level of prevalence of insecurity	A (%)	D (%)	U (%)
8	Insecurity in my State is very common and a daily problem with poor intelligence gathering.	259(79.0)	69(21.0)	-
9	Militia Herdsmen attack on farmers is a major security challenge in my State	228(69.5)	99(30.2)	1(.3)
10	Bandits' attacks on farmers are a major security challenge in my State	240(73.2)	83(25.3)	5(1.5)
11	Terrorism and insurgency are major security challenges in my State	225(68.6)	101(30.8)	2(.6)
12	Kidnapping for ransom are major security challenges in my State	219(66.8)	107(32.6)	2(.6)
13	Armed robbery is a major security challenge in my State	248(75.6)	77(23.5)	3(.9)
14	Militia and cult related crimes are major security challenges in my State	217(66.2)	108(32.4)	3(.9)
15	Political and communal crises are major security challenges in my State	216(65.9)	109(33.2)	3(.9)

Table 7 consists of the state of insecurity and intelligence gathering infrastructure and capabilities in Northern Nigeria. Based on the percentage distribution; all the respondents agreed on the items on level of prevalence of insecurity. Where 259(79.0%) of the respondents agreed that insecurity in their States is very common and a daily problem, 248(75.6%) of the respondents agreed that armed robbery is a major security challenge in their States, 240(73.2%) of the respondents agreed that bandits' attacks on farmers are a major security challenge in their State. This implies that there is insecurity in their States which is very common and a daily problem occasioned with armed robbery and bandits' attacks on farmers as major security challenges.

Results above implies that there is a high prevalence of insecurity in the North central state of Nigeria.



This goes in line with Ise (2017) who observes that insecurity emanating from the Jos crisis has claimed a lot of lives and properties worth millions of naira is destroyed and has resulted in several attacks on both Christians and Muslims. He observes that this crisis remains a great threat of insecurity to the cooperate existence of not just North Central Nigeria, but Nigeria as a whole. To buttress this, Ojewole (2021) notes that there were 1,412 incidents of conflicts of insecurity and 7,399 deaths across North Central states of Nigeria, he also observed that the escalating insecurity has deeply unsettled their local economics basically agriculturally inclined.

North central Nigeria has been faced with multidimensional insecurity challenges, these trends of insecurity have recently escalated leading to displacement, these insecurity challenges include ethnic conflicts, nomadic herders and sedimentary farmers as well as banditry and kidnapping, they cut across interreligious tensions displacing populations of people across North Central Nigeria.

**Research Questions 2:** What factors are responsible for poor intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria?

**Table 8:** Showing respondents views on factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria

S/No	Factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering	A (%)	D (%)	U (%)
16	Illiteracy	249(75.9)	79(24.1)	-
17	Poor family upbringing/socialization/ cultural issues	202(61.6)	125(38.1)	1(.3)
18	Unemployment	214(65.2)	109(33.2)	5(1.5)
19	Carefree attitudes and negligence of the people	194(59.1)	132(40.2)	2(.6)
20	Lack of security presence in many areas	197(60.1)	129(39.3)	2(.6)
21	Unprofessional attitudes of many security personnel	245(74.7)	83(25.3)	-
22	Poverty	203(61.9)	124(37.8)	1(.3)
23	Difficult terrain	217(66.2)	106(32.3)	5(1.5)
24	Poor leadership	202(61.6)	126(38.4)	-

Table 8 consists of factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering. Based on the percentage distribution; all the respondents agreed on the items on factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering. Where 249(75.9%)of the respondents agreed that illiteracy is of the factors responsible for poor intelligence gathering, 245(74.1%)of the respondents agreed that thereare unprofessional attitudes of many security personnel leading to poor intelligence gathering, 217(66.2%)of the respondents agreed that difficult terrain is responsible for poor intelligence gathering. This implies that there is illiteracy, unprofessional attitudes of many security personnel and difficult terrain as responsible for poor intelligence gathering.

The findings in the above table reveal that illiteracy, unprofessional attitude and difficult terrain are the major causes of poor intelligence gathering in North Central Nigeria. This goes in line with (Okotie, 2008) who observes that security agents in Nigeria have abysmally failed to address violent crisis on insecurity challenges due to illiteracy, poor academic qualifications and poor academic exposure which has affected their intelligence gathering techniques.

Also, Akale, and Ibeh(2018) note that intelligence gathering services in Nigeria have failed due to negligence and unprofessional attitudes displayed in gathering preventive and early warning intelligence reports which would have assisted Nigeria military and security agencies in foiling and combating

possible threats of insecurity. In a similar vein, (Nwagboso and Nwagboso, 2021) submit that most security agencies in Nigeria especially members of the police force are compromised of their professional duties due to poor remuneration, non-payment of salaries/duty allowances, poor work environment which in turn results to poor outcomes thereby compounding issues which leads to escalation of the level of insecurity in not only North Central Nigeria but Nigeria in general. Oluwole(2021) in his submission, notes that the vast rugged terrain areas of very dense vegetation complemented with thick forest and hilly rocks make good hiding places but on the negative side distort intelligence gathering activities.

**Research Questions 3:** What can be done to improve intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria?

**Table 9:** Showing respondents take on ways to improve intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria.

S/No	Ways of improving intelligence gathering	A (%)	D (%)	U (%)
25	Aggressive education and enlightenment on security issues in rural areas	201(61.3)	126(38.4)	1(.3)
26	Massive recruitment and displacement of security to rural areas.	193(58.8)	130(39.6)	5(1.5)
27	Crucial roles of the family, religious, traditional institutions as well as CSOs to security related issues	229(69.8)	99(30.2)	-
28	Government strong political will to addressing basic needs of the people	178(54.3)	148(45.1)	2(.6)

Table 9 consists of ways of improving intelligence gathering. Based on the percentage distribution; all the respondents agreed on the items on ways of improving intelligence gathering. Where 245(74.1%) of the respondents agreed that there is need for crucial roles of the family, religious, traditional institutions as well as CSOs to security related issues, 201(38.4%) of the respondents agreed that there is need for aggressive education and enlightenment on security issues in rural areas. This implies that there is need for crucial roles of the family, religious, traditional institutions as well as CSOs to security related issues, and more so need for aggressive education and enlightenment on security issues in rural areas.

The findings in the table above, reveals the need by all stakeholders to educate and enlighten the rural community on issues concerning security and intelligence gathering. This goes in line with Amaraegbu(2013) who notes that insecurity exists because the perpetrators' go unchecked, this is because the locals lack orientation and have not been convinced to trust the government enough to offer intelligence information to security operatives, such information includes but is not limited to hideouts and general activities of perpetrators of insecurity, this is as a result of mistrust, suspicion and fear that characterises the relationship between security operatives and the civilian population in volatile areas hence, the need for proper briefing, enlightenment, education and orientation for the locals is encouraged.

Also, (Alemika, 2012) further buttresses the need for education and proper enlightenment of all groups and communities- especially in rural areas when he observes that the Nigerian Intelligence Service cannot survive without creating good relationship with local communities and habitants of the area since the locals are the ones to allow free and efficient information that will prevent attacks by early warning signals, He further posits that when locals do not have proper orientation and enlightenment they are scared to divulge important information which would have hitherto deterred impending insecurity threats.

In the same vain, Chile and Tsafa (2016) opines that individuals need security awareness, alertness, and

enlightenment because individuals within a community, understand their communities better and when alert can report suspicious behaviours which can lead to actionable intelligence leading to disruption of attacks, thereby curbing threats of insecurity.

Research Hypotheses

**Research Hypothesis:** What can be done has no significance to improving intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria.

**Table 10: Analysis of Mean and standard deviation on improving intelligence gathering**

S/No	Ways of improving intelligence gathering	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
36	Aggressive education and enlightment on security issues in rural areas	2.6098	.49477	Accepted
37	Massive recruitment and displacement of security to rural areas.	2.5732	.52533	Accepted
38	Crucial roles of the family, religious, traditional institutions as well as CSOs to security related issues	2.6982	.45975	Accepted
39	Government strong political will to addressing basic needs of the people	2.5366	.51152	Accepted
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.57</b>		

*(Mean Scores above 2.50 as Accepted while mean scores Below 2.50 as Rejected)*

Table 10 reveals that all the items on ways of improving intelligence gathering mechanism in North Central Nigeria have a mean score above the mean cut-off of 2.50. This indicates that what can be done has significance on improving intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria. There hypothesis 2 which states that what can be done has no significance to improving intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria is rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The studyassesses the level intelligence gathering in Northern Nigeria presently faced with insecurity ranging from armed robbery, banditry, farmer herder crisis among other challenges. The research study, also reveals that the state of security intelligence and infrastructure capabilities is poor while factors such as illiteracy, unprofessional attitudes, poor terrain/rural infrastructures among others were cog in the wheel of intelligence gathering for peace, stability and wellbeing of thepeople.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the research study. The following Recommendations are made:

1. there is urgent need for provision of more security personnel and rural infrastructure in Northern Nigeria,
2. increased collaboration of security agents with traditional, religious institutions and the general public on issues of sharing of intelligence in rural communities;
3. proper and improved orientation and education to family and community members on intelligence gathering.
4. Modern equipment, new techniques and scientific methods should be deployed intelligence gathering.
5. The National Orientation Agency (N.O.A) should be encouraged to do more in its enlightenment campaigns; they should be targeted at church, mosques, traditional institutions and schools on the important role they must play if intelligence gathering will succeed in helping incidences of insecurity in North Central by reduced to the minimum if not completely stopped.
6. Need for security agents to maintain and improve on professional and ethical issues of confidentiality for public/community thrust on information sharing.

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