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**IMPACT OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS ON FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION IN NASARAWA WEST SENATORIAL ZONE (2014 – 2023)**

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**Abstract**

*Ethnic conflicts have emerged as a critical issue affecting food production and distribution in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone, Nigeria. The recurrent clashes among ethnic groups have led to instability, disrupting agricultural activities, food supply chains, and access to markets. The problem of food insecurity has become more pronounced as farmers face challenges in cultivating their land and transporting their produce. These conflicts have worsened poverty, malnutrition, and general socio-economic development in the region. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of ethnic conflicts on food production and distribution in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone from 2014 to 2023. The study adopted Edward Azar's Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) Theory as a framework of analysis, which emphasizes the underlying social, economic, and political grievances that drive prolonged conflict within societies. By employing a survey research design, data was collected from affected communities, including farmers, market traders, and conflict victims. The findings revealed that ethnic conflicts significantly affected agricultural productivity and the distribution of food in the region. Many farmers abandoned their farmlands due to insecurity, leading to reduced food production. Distribution channels were disrupted, resulting in food shortages and increased prices in local markets. The study further found that lack of government intervention and poor conflict resolution mechanisms exacerbated the situation. Based on the findings, the study recommends improved conflict resolution initiatives, greater government involvement in addressing grievances, and the provision of security to protect farmers and food supply chains. Additionally, peacebuilding efforts should be intensified to foster social cohesion and prevent further escalation of ethnic conflicts in the zone.*

**Keywords:** Conflicts, Ethnic Conflicts, Food Production, Food Distribution.

**1. Introduction**

Ethnic conflicts remain a critical issue in Sub-Saharan Africa, significantly affecting socioeconomic development. Nigeria exemplifies this challenge, as ethnic tensions fueled by political, economic, and cultural factors often escalate into violent clashes that disrupt livelihoods. In the Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone, comprising Karu, Keffi, Kokona, Nasarawa, and Toto LGAs, persistent ethnic conflicts over the past decade have severely impacted food production and distribution, essential to local survival and economic stability.

Ethnic conflicts in Nasarawa West primarily stem from disputes over land ownership, natural resource access, and political marginalization. The region hosts diverse ethnic groups, including the Gbagyi, Agatu, Alago, and Fulani, who compete for fertile agricultural land and water. Tensions, intensified by demographic pressures, climate change, and the proliferation of small arms, often lead to violent confrontations. Additionally, displaced persons from neighboring states and armed groups have exacerbated the situation, with weak governance failing to mediate disputes effectively (Ojo, 2020).

Agriculture, the economic backbone of Nasarawa West, has been severely disrupted. The

region, known for producing maize, rice, millet, and yam, has experienced significant declines in food production due to ethnic violence. Farmlands and crops are frequently destroyed during clashes, forcing farmers to abandon fields. This disruption has caused food scarcity, increased prices, and labor shortages as displaced farmers cannot engage in essential agricultural activities (Audu, 2021). Moreover, violence has damaged agricultural infrastructure, including storage facilities and irrigation systems, while livestock theft and destruction further reduced food production capacity (Omokhoa, 2022).

Food distribution systems have also suffered due to ethnic conflicts. Violent clashes have damaged transportation networks, making it difficult to transport food from rural areas to markets. Traders and distributors often avoid conflict zones, fearing attacks. The breakdown of social cohesion has created “no-go zones,” fragmenting markets and isolating communities. This situation has exacerbated food insecurity, with rising prices and shortages disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly (Ibrahim, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires conflict resolution mechanisms, improved governance, and targeted agricultural interventions. Tackling the root causes of ethnic conflicts, including resource competition and political marginalization, is vital for restoring peace and ensuring food security in Nasarawa West. Only through these measures can the region rebuild its food production and distribution systems, fostering socioeconomic stability.

Ethnic conflicts present a significant academic problematique, particularly regarding their impact on agricultural systems in conflict-prone regions. Scholarly discourse emphasizes the critical role of agriculture in ensuring food security, economic development, and social stability in Sub-Saharan Africa (Audu, 2021). The ideal situation would involve harmonious coexistence among diverse ethnic groups, equitable access to resources, and efficient agricultural production and distribution systems. Such conditions would enable the Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone, known for its agricultural potential, to contribute meaningfully to local and national food security.

However, the current situation in Nasarawa West is far from this ideal. The region has experienced persistent ethnic conflicts driven by land disputes, resource competition, and political marginalization among ethnic groups like the Gbagyi, Alago, Agatu, and Fulani (Ojo, 2020). These conflicts have led to violent clashes that disrupt farming activities, destroy infrastructure, and displace communities. As a result, agricultural productivity has declined, food prices have risen, and food insecurity has worsened, particularly for vulnerable populations (Omokhoa, 2022).

Efforts have been made to resolve these conflicts, including peacebuilding initiatives, government interventions, and community dialogue. However, these measures have been largely ineffective due to weak governance structures, inadequate resource allocation, and the persistence of underlying grievances (Ibrahim, 2021). Despite these efforts, the region continues to experience cycles of violence, further exacerbating the challenges to food production and distribution.

This study is essential to address this gap in knowledge and provide evidence-based insights into the root causes and consequences of ethnic conflicts on agriculture.

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the impact of ethnic conflicts on food production in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone.
- ii. To analyze the effects of ethnic conflicts on food distribution and access within the affected communities in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Definitions**

#### **2.1.1 Conflicts**

Conflict is a pervasive phenomenon in human societies, defined as a state of discord or disagreement arising from differences in values, interests, or needs between individuals, groups, or nations (Coser, 1956). It is a natural outcome of social interaction, yet its intensity and impact vary depending on the context and the factors involved. Conflicts can be broadly categorized into interpersonal, organizational, and

societal conflicts, with each type carrying unique dynamics and implications. Ethnic conflicts, as a subset of societal conflicts, arise from tensions and rivalries between distinct ethnic groups and are often driven by competition for resources, political power, or cultural dominance (Gurr, 1993).

The theoretical foundations of conflict studies suggest that conflicts are inevitable in diverse societies but can be managed or mitigated. The Protracted Social Conflict theory by Edward Azar (1990) highlights how unmet basic needs, such as security, identity, and participation, often escalate disputes into long-term conflicts. In the context of ethnic conflicts, resource competition and exclusionary policies exacerbate grievances, leading to violence and social instability.

While conflict can have constructive outcomes, such as fostering dialogue and change, its destructive effects often outweigh the benefits, particularly in cases of prolonged ethnic violence. Ethnic conflicts can destabilize economies, disrupt social cohesion, and undermine governance structures (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). In agricultural regions, conflicts directly impact livelihoods by destroying farmlands, displacing farmers, and creating barriers to market access, thereby exacerbating food insecurity and poverty (Audu, 2021).

### 2.1.2 Ethnic Conflicts

Ethnic conflicts are a form of violent discord between different ethnic groups, often driven by social, political, economic, or historical factors. These conflicts, which have occurred throughout history, are typically marked by group identity issues, resource competition, and power struggles. In many cases, ethnic conflicts can escalate into widespread violence, leading to loss of life, displacement of populations, and long-term social and economic consequences.

Ethnic conflicts often arise from a combination of deep-seated grievances and immediate triggers. One of the primary causes is identity politics, where ethnic groups mobilize around shared characteristics such as language, culture, and religion to seek recognition or political power. This can lead to feelings of exclusion,

especially when one group dominates political institutions and resources, marginalizing others.

Another significant factor is resource competition, especially in regions with limited natural resources like land, water, or minerals. When different ethnic groups compete for control over these resources, it can exacerbate existing tensions. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflicts between agricultural and pastoralist communities are often driven by competition for fertile land and grazing rights (Brosché & Höglund, 2016).

Political exclusion is another trigger for ethnic conflict. When governments fail to provide political representation or access to resources for certain ethnic groups, it fosters resentment. The lack of inclusion in political processes can lead to disenfranchised groups turning to violence as a means of expressing their frustrations and asserting their rights (Cederman, Wimmer, & Min, 2010).

Ethnic conflicts have profound social, economic, and political impacts. On a social level, they often lead to the breakdown of community structures and social trust, making it difficult for different groups to live together peacefully after the conflict. This social fragmentation can last for generations, as mistrust and fear become ingrained.

Economically, ethnic conflicts can be devastating. In many cases, they lead to the destruction of infrastructure, a decline in foreign investment, and a disruption of trade. This is especially true in agrarian societies, where ethnic conflicts often disrupt food production and distribution systems. In places like Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, the agricultural sector was heavily affected as farmers were killed or displaced, leading to widespread food insecurity (Prunier, 1997).

Politically, ethnic conflicts can weaken state institutions and lead to the emergence of failed states. Prolonged conflicts may undermine the rule of law, as governments become preoccupied with managing violence rather than governing effectively. In countries like Somalia and South Sudan, ethnic conflicts have contributed to the collapse of state authority and the emergence of warlordism and militia rule (Lindley, 2010).

Ethnic conflicts are particularly prevalent in Africa due to the continent's complex ethnic diversity and colonial legacy. Many African countries are multi-ethnic, with dozens or even hundreds of ethnic groups living within their borders. This diversity, while enriching in many ways, has also led to tensions when different groups vie for power and resources.

### 2.1.3 Food Production

Food production refers to the processes involved in cultivating crops and raising livestock to meet the dietary and nutritional needs of populations. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including land preparation, planting, harvesting, processing, and distribution, which are critical to sustaining livelihoods and ensuring food security. Food production is a cornerstone of human survival and economic development, particularly in agrarian economies where agriculture is a primary source of income and employment (FAO, 2021).

The concept of food production extends beyond mere cultivation to include efficient resource management. Land, water, labor, and technological inputs are key determinants of agricultural productivity. Sustainable food production systems aim to optimize these resources while minimizing environmental degradation. Practices such as crop rotation, organic farming, and integrated pest management are essential components of sustainable production strategies (Altieri, 2018).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, food production is heavily influenced by environmental, social, and economic factors. Climate change, for instance, exacerbates food insecurity by reducing agricultural yields through erratic weather patterns, droughts, and floods (IPCC, 2019). Similarly, conflicts over land and resources, as seen in regions like Nasarawa West in Nigeria, disrupt farming activities and hinder the ability of local communities to produce sufficient food (Ojo, 2020).

Advancements in technology and improved agricultural practices hold significant potential for enhancing food production. Mechanization, high-yield crop varieties, and precision farming techniques have been identified as key drivers of increased productivity

(World Bank, 2020). However, the adoption of these technologies in developing regions remains low due to financial, infrastructural, and policy constraints.

Understanding food production within a broader socio-economic and environmental context is vital for addressing global food security challenges. It requires integrated approaches that combine technological innovation, equitable resource distribution, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

### 2.1.4 Food Distribution

Food distribution is a critical component of food systems, involving the movement of food from production sites to consumers. It encompasses transportation, storage, processing, and market access, ensuring that food reaches intended destinations efficiently and equitably (FAO, 2022). Effective food distribution systems are essential for maintaining food security, stabilizing markets, and promoting economic development, particularly in regions reliant on agriculture.

In ideal circumstances, food distribution systems function seamlessly, supported by robust infrastructure, reliable transportation networks, and market linkages. This ensures equitable access to food across rural and urban areas, reducing disparities and enhancing societal well-being. However, disruptions to food distribution systems—caused by factors such as conflict, poor infrastructure, or climate-related events can lead to severe food insecurity and economic instability (World Bank, 2023).

In conflict-affected areas, food distribution becomes particularly challenging. Violence disrupts transportation networks, destroys storage facilities, and displaces key stakeholders, such as farmers and traders. The breakdown of trust between communities often leads to the fragmentation of markets and the creation of inaccessible "no-go zones," further exacerbating disparities in food access (Ibrahim, 2021). Additionally, conflict zones frequently experience heightened logistical challenges, as roads and bridges are damaged, and security concerns hinder movement.

In recent years, technological interventions have been suggested as solutions to improve food

distribution. Innovations such as digital platforms for market access, mobile storage units, and satellite mapping for supply chain optimization have been explored to enhance efficiency and resilience (WFP, 2023). However, these solutions require significant investments and stable governance structures to succeed.

Understanding food distribution challenges in conflict-prone areas, like Nasarawa West, is essential for designing interventions that ensure equitable access to food and promote long-term stability. Addressing these challenges requires a multidisciplinary approach, integrating infrastructure development, conflict resolution, and stakeholder collaboration.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Nalah, Daniel, and Baba (2021) examine the perception of people on ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State. The objectives of the study were based on the four hypotheses to include: there will be no significant difference between the socio-cultural influences of ethnic groups on ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State; there will be no significant differences between the influence of educational level on socio-political struggles and ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State; gender inequality in economic stability will have no significant influence on ethnic conflict among people living in Nasarawa State, and there will be no significant differences between religious influences on ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State. A survey research design was adopted, and 150 samples were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique. A structured, designed questionnaire as an instrument was used to collect data and data was analysed through descriptive statistics to analyse mean and standard deviation, and t-test independent to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that: (i) socio-cultural factors influence the ethnic groups (tribes) differently, resulting in ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State; (ii) the level of educational attainment does not determine the involvement in political struggle and ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State; (iii) gender inequality influences economic instability and contribute to ethnic conflict among youth in Nasarawa State; and (iv) religious

differences is not the reasons for ethnic conflict in Nasarawa State. It was recommended that gender equality and gender role be prioritised in every societal, economic, and political affair. There should be no or little dichotomy in societal representation between the ethnic minorities and ethnic majority groups (tribes) living within the Northern, Southern, and Western Nasarawa state.

Ernest, Salau, and Abdulhameed (2021) analysed the impacts of violent conflicts on the economies of rural communities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Primary data were collected from the respondents using a structured interview schedule, while focus group discussions (FGD) sessions were employed to assess effects of conflicts on communities. Data were analysed using simple descriptive statistics, alternative resource cost estimation (ARCE) and content analysis while the Likert scale was used to measure the perception of respondents towards the causes of conflicts. There were six (6) major categories of conflicts identified in the area. These categories were communal conflicts, ethnic conflicts, resource conflicts (most often land conflicts), politically motivated conflicts, conflicts due to traditional chieftaincy, and the conflicts between state forces and militia groups. Expansion of agro-pastoralism (4.6) and Extensive sedentism (4.5) were very serious factors that were perceived to lead to conflicts. A total of ₦2,289,859,549 worth 30.28% of the State's 2018 IGR (Internal Generated Revenue) were lost in these conflicts.

Al Chukwuma and Damian (2021) investigated Communal Conflicts in Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria: A Socio-Contextual Rethink. Nasarawa State in North Central Nigeria has been notorious for communal conflicts. Such conflicts have often assumed complicated dimensions reflective of the social dynamics of the state. Oftentimes, the conflicts are framed in terms of identitarian differences and contestations, whilst the underlying drivers derive essentially from the socio-structural dynamics of the conflict context. By way of mixed research that is predicated on a combination of field and desk sources, this article interrogates the contemporary manifestations of communal conflicts in



Nasarawa State through the combined lenses of liberal political ecology and conflict analysis. The article observes that the ethno-primordial cleavages of the focal state have provided veritable pretexts for the prevalence of communal conflicts, making such conflicts problematic to understand as well as resolve. The outcome of the analysis indicates that communal conflicts in the focal state have been both dynamic and opportunistic, often feeding into the existing primordial and structural fault-lines to assume multiple complications.

Sarki Noma (2022) Studied Implications of Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict on Food Security in Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Peace is one of the preconditions for development to flourish in any nation of the world. This study examines the implications of the Herdsmen and Farmers conflict on food security in Doma Local Government of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A social survey design was adopted. A survey of 381 respondents was drawn, using multi-stage sampling techniques involving electoral wards, towns/villages, main streets, houses, households, and individuals. Primary and secondary data were utilized in the study. Primary and secondary data were utilized in the study. The primary data were generated through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using tables; frequency, percentage, and in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim. The results indicate that destruction of crops and trespasses on farms were the most causes of Herdsmen and Farmers conflict and has negatively impacted the area.

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

The Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) Theory, developed by Edward Azar in 1990, serves as the theoretical framework for analyzing ethnic conflicts and their impacts on food production and distribution in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone from 2014 to 2023. Azar's theory focuses on prolonged conflicts within multi-ethnic societies, where the state's inability to meet basic human needs such as security, political participation, and economic opportunities leads to violent conflicts.

Azar posits that structural conditions, such as weak governance, inequality, and poor resource distribution, are primary drivers of these conflicts. Ethnic grievances are fueled by competition over scarce resources, which in turn disrupt social and economic activities, including food production and distribution. This theory is relevant to Nasarawa West's ethnic conflicts, where competition over land and resources between ethnic groups has hindered agricultural productivity and food supply chains. However, PSC has been critiqued for oversimplifying complex conflicts by overemphasizing ethnic divisions without accounting for broader political and economic factors. Despite this critique, the theory effectively explains how unresolved ethnic tensions in Nasarawa West have led to the disruption of food production and distribution, contributing to food insecurity in the region.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed a survey research design to assess the impact of ethnic conflicts on food production and distribution in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone from 2014 to 2023. Data was collected from various stakeholders, including farmers, market traders, and victims of conflicts across the affected communities. The questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection due to its ability to gather structured and quantifiable information.

The sample size of 400 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula (1967), which provides a scientific approach to sample size determination for large populations. This sample adequately represents the study population, ensuring that the data collected reflects the experiences and challenges faced by individuals in conflict-prone areas. The focus on these key respondents helped capture the multifaceted effects of ethnic conflicts on food production and distribution, particularly disruptions in agricultural activities, food supply chains, and market accessibility. The gathered data was subjected to statistical analysis to evaluate the extent of the impact and to formulate evidence-based conclusions on the challenges posed by ethnic conflicts to food security in the region.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

To generate the primary data, questionnaire were drawn for the sample population of the study. Since the sample size was 400, therefore copies of questionnaire were distributed to all the respondents. Out of the copies of questionnaire distributed, 345 representing (86.25%) was dully filled and returned while 55 representing (13.75%) copies of questionnaire were not returned.

In all, the 315 copies of questionnaire returned represent (86.25%) of the total copies of questionnaire distributed. This, in the opinion of the researcher is highly representative to make informed and reliable conclusion or judgment on the subject matter of the study. The table below gives the detailed description of the copies of questionnaire distributed and those returned.

##### Questionnaire distributed and returned

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	345	86.25
Not returned	55	13.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Field survey, 2024

#### To examine the impact of ethnic conflicts on food production in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone

How has ethnic conflict affected food production in your community?

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Significantly decreased food production	153	44
Moderately decreased food production	90	26
No significant impact on food production	75	22
Increased food production	27	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the impact of ethnic conflict on food production in the community reveals significant adverse effects. A majority (44%) of respondents indicated that food production had significantly decreased due to ethnic conflicts, while 26% reported a moderate decrease. Only 22% observed no significant impact, and a mere 8% noted an increase in food production. These findings suggest that ethnic tensions disrupt

agricultural activities, leading to lower yields and food insecurity. The results underscore the need for conflict resolution strategies to mitigate these effects and support sustainable food production in the community.

#### What specific aspect of food production has been most affected by ethnic conflict

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Farmland availability	176	51
Labor force	75	22
Access to farming inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizer)	68	20
None of the above	26	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the survey data reveals that farmland availability is the most significantly impacted aspect of

food production due to ethnic conflict, with 51% of respondents identifying it as a primary concern. This is

closely followed by labor force availability at 22%, indicating that the conflicts have not only limited access to land but also disrupted the workforce necessary for agricultural activities. Access to farming inputs, such as seeds and fertilizer, affected 20% of respondents, highlighting challenges in acquiring essential resources for farming. Overall, the data underscores the

detrimental effects of ethnic conflicts on agricultural productivity and food security.

### **To analyze the effects of ethnic conflicts on food distribution and access within the affected communities in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone**

How has ethnic conflict impacted food distribution within your community

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Significantly disrupted food distribution	139	40
Moderately disrupted food distribution	88	25
No impact on food distribution	60	18
Improved food distribution	58	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of ethnic conflict's impact on food distribution within the community reveals significant disruptions. Approximately 40% of respondents reported that food distribution was significantly disrupted due to ethnic tensions, while 25% indicated moderate disruptions. A smaller portion, 18%, noted no impact, suggesting that some aspects of food distribution remained stable. Interestingly, only 17% perceived improvements in food distribution,

highlighting that ethnic conflicts have generally led to challenges in accessing food. Overall, the findings underscore the detrimental effects of ethnic conflict on food distribution, affecting community stability and food security.

### **What challenges to food access have you experienced due to ethnic conflict**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Increased food prices	80	24
Scarcity of food supplies	158	46
Limited access to markets	74	21
No significant challenges	33	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of challenges to food access due to ethnic conflict reveals significant concerns among respondents. Increased food prices were reported by 24% of participants, highlighting the economic impact of conflict on food affordability. Scarcity of food supplies was the most pronounced issue, affecting 46% of respondents, which points to disruptions in production and distribution. Limited access to markets was noted by 21%, indicating difficulties in obtaining food due to conflict-related barriers. Only 9% reported no significant challenges, suggesting that the majority experienced adverse effects. These findings underscore the pervasive impact of ethnic conflict on food security in the region.

### **4.1 Discussion of Findings**

The study reveals a significant adverse impact of ethnic conflicts on food production and distribution in Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone from 2014 to 2023. Ethnic clashes in the region, particularly among the Tiv and other indigenous groups, have led to the destruction of farmlands, displacement of farmers, and the disruption of agricultural activities. These conflicts resulted in a decline in food production as displaced farmers could no longer access their farmlands, leading to reduced crop yields and increased food insecurity. Empirical evidence supports these findings, showing that ethnic conflicts in rural areas often disrupt farming cycles, limit access to agricultural inputs, and hinder



labor availability (Adamu & Haruna, 2020). Studies by Usman (2021) also corroborate that conflict-affected regions tend to experience higher food prices and distribution challenges due to insecurity, as transport networks and supply chains are often disrupted. Furthermore, the displacement of populations exacerbates food shortages, as fewer people are available to cultivate and harvest crops.

These findings align with the Protracted Social Conflict Theory, which emphasizes that protracted conflicts result in long-term socio-economic disruptions, including negative impacts on food systems. Thus, ethnic conflicts in Nasarawa West severely hindered food production and distribution, posing serious challenges to food security in the region.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals significant challenges to agricultural productivity and food security in the region. Ethnic conflicts in the zone, driven by disputes over land ownership, political power, and resource control, have disrupted farming activities, leading to reduced crop yields and livestock losses. Farmers were often displaced from their lands during periods of heightened tension, and this displacement severely affected both food production and the distribution chain.

The findings highlight that transportation of food products to markets was frequently hampered by insecurity, further exacerbating the situation. Conflict-

induced destruction of infrastructure, including roads and storage facilities, worsened the distribution challenges, leaving many communities food insecure.

Moreover, the persistent ethnic conflicts fostered distrust among communities, making collaboration in agricultural ventures and food trade difficult. The study concludes that unless urgent peacebuilding measures are undertaken, the agricultural potential of Nasarawa West will remain underutilized, prolonging food scarcity in the area.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There should be increased efforts to implement effective conflict resolution mechanisms that address the root causes of ethnic conflicts and foster dialogue among the affected communities.
- ii. The government must take a more active role in addressing grievances related to resource allocation, land disputes, and other underlying issues that contribute to ethnic tensions, ensuring equitable distribution of resources.
- iii. Adequate security measures should be put in place to protect farmers, agricultural workers, and food distribution networks from violence, ensuring uninterrupted food production and supply across the zone.

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