



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

COVID-19 lockdown in south-east Nigeria: Evidence-based findings to support need for food systems transformation

JOHNNY OGUNJI¹, CHINWE OGUNJI², STANLEY IHEANACHO¹, MICHAEL OLAOLU³

¹*Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Nigeria*

²*Alex-Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Educational Foundations, Nigeria*

³*Alex-Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Agriculture, Nigeria*

Abstract

Outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) late 2019 brought the whole world to a state of pandemonium. The infection was declared as a pandemic by World Health Organisation in March 2020. As a way to curtail the rate of infection, countries imposed lockdown. Unfortunately the lockdown bolstered the problem which the infection has already caused. Economic activities became stranded, lives, livelihoods and hunger exponentially elevated in the society. Low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria was highly affected. The data collated during a survey of 1209 households (urban and rural locations) in five states of South-East Nigeria during the COVID-19 lockdown is laying credence to the importance of food systems transformation. Radimer/Cornel hunger scale was used to determine the Household hunger. Chi-square test was done to confirm the significance ($p < 0.05$). The study revealed that in Abia State, the prevalence of hunger among households before COVID-19 pandemic was 99.6%, while during COVID-19 lockdown, hunger prevalence rose to 100%. On the other hand the prevalence of hunger among households before COVID-19 pandemic in Enugu State was 31.8%, while during COVID-19 lockdown, hunger prevalence rose to 99.6%. The situation in Abia and Anambra States shows that there were no much changes in the household hunger situation as only 0.4% change was observed. In Enugu State it is note-worthy that the observed change was 67.8%. It was also observed that covid-19 lockdown significantly affected food prices. More than 90% of respondents confirmed that food was more expensive during the lockdown. Unfortunately, hunger situation was bad before the COVID-19. This can be related to lack of food and poor food systems. On the premise that food systems involve production, processing, distribution, and consumption, this study observes that transforming food systems in South East Nigeria is inevitable.

Keywords: Covid-19, food systems, hunger prevalence, lockdown, South-East Nigeria