Human Insecurity and Deepening Challenges of Field Research Scholarship in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The paper explores the link between human insecurity and deepening challenges of field research scholarship in the present day Nigeria. Human security encompasses mere physical harm, incorporating a range of socioeconomic and spatial aspects of human existence. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology anchored on the theory of Structural-Functionalism. The paper contends, though research is confronted with a number of problems; the prevalent human insecurity has heightened field research challenges in terms of economic capacity, free movement within the geographic space to initiate and conclude valid research in the light of associated risks and additional costs.*

KEYWORDS -*human security, insecurity, field research, scholarship, structural-functionalism*

I.   Introduction

Every research effort is conducted within a given time, space and associated costs implication. Within this context, conducting a valid field research in Nigeria is not only becoming herculean, but high risk in a volatile security space. The fulcrum of any valid research work is its empirical level or evidence that authenticates it. Arriving at such level of research follows a rigorous route of field data collection, analysis and reporting of evidence-based results that are verifiable. This involves reaching out to the field to gather information from various sources in order to arrive at new findings or validate existing findings. This aspect of intellectual exercise becomes very problematic due to pervasive human insecurity challenges in the country.

Human security in this context encapsulates physical harm, economic and social harm, respectively. It portends insecurity at all levels of human existence. This paper underscores the premise that field research has hitherto faced daunting institutional, economic and social challenges that does not preclude the present hemorrhaging security challenge in Nigeria which has deepened the problems of field research. There has been age-long dictum of problems of research in Nigeria which include: inadequate funding, lack of equipment, lack of facilities and materials, low level of awareness, poor communication network, scarcity of records, absence of attractive condition of service/incentives for the researchers, poor transportation facilities, discouragement resulting from non-implementation of research results, brain-drain [1] *etc.*, some of which cut across human security.The present security challenges in Nigeria has triggered-off and as well, accentuated the challenge of research exercise in the country. These untoward challenges have culminated in affecting the drivefor field studies/ research, reducing the exercise to mere reliance on social media reports, sketchy news updates, and internet sources without thorough empirical investigation and evidence for authentication.

More often than not, the effect of insecurity on field research is seldom mentioned in the discourse of impact of insecurity. The media and academic conferences and journal articles are replete with the economic implications of insecurity in Nigeria, often focusingon discourses on the physical harm, displacements and deprivations resulting from insecurity in the country. Meanwhile, none of these analysis has been dedicated to the discourse on the impact of insecurity on field research, which is a major driver of innovation, clarification of, or revision of old ways of doing things, and conflict resolution in practical terms, including collection of

credible data for the resolution of insecurity itself. Scholars have in various ways acknowledged that insecurity has detrimental effects on the wellbeing of the people manifesting in death, hunger, deprivation, obstruction of economic activities and means of livelihood, food insecurity, health insecurity, closure of businesses, unemployment, internal displacements, general poor standard of living, disruption of industrialization, negative effects on economic growth, receding offoreign investments, igniting capital flight and brain drain *etc.*, and creating atmosphere of general fear and state of pandemonium [2][3][4][5][6]. The discourse on how the insecurity affects field research is paltry and at best conjectured in passing. This study therefore sets to bring to bear the immense impact of insecurity on field research bearing in mind the overwhelming importance of field research in the development of theory and practice of scholarship and innovation and progress of a nation. Ultimately, the study purposes to address the subject matter in the following direction: concept of human insecurity, concept of field research, importance of field research to scholarship, and lastly, the impact of human insecurity on field research scholarship, and concluding remarks.

2.1 Concept of Human Insecurity

The term human insecurity is the reverse form of human security. Human security as documented by the United Nations Development Programme [7] conceptualizes human security from two principal angles: Safety from threats like hunger, disease and repression, and the second being the issue of protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions of one's pattern of daily living at home, job or in the community. The idea of human security shifted emphasis on issue of security from state-centric domain (hitherto conceived narrowly as security of a country's border from external aggression or protection of a country's perceived national interest) to people-centred safety and protection from threats and hurts, which has become the fulcrum of overall societal security. On this note, human security was also classified into the following seven categories: Economic security (threatened by poverty and destitution); food security (threatened by hunger and famine); health security (threatened by injury or disease); environmental security (threatened by pollution, environmental degradation and resource depletion); personal security (threatened by various forms of violence); community security (threatened by social unrest and instability within and between communities, and political security (threatened by political repression)[8]. The whole idea of human security is that it is highly interconnected in that both threats and responses affect each other as each threat feeds on the other. For instance, violent conflicts can result in deprivation and poverty which could also lead to resource depletion, infectious diseases, education deficits *etc.*[9] and ultimately affect field research adversely.

Human insecurity on the other hand serve as an antithesis to human security, which connotes state of danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection amidst lack of safety. Insecurity signifies a "state of fear or anxiety" emanating from real or imagined absence of protection [10]. In fact, Adegbami [2] and Achumba, *et al*[11] simply described insecurity as unavailability or lack of protection and safety in which people are rendered vulnerable to risk and harm. This implies that apart from physical harm; insecurity involves any threat to human existence and survival. For instance, when one is not protected from hunger, poverty, deprivation, or when one lacks access to means of livelihood, there is tendency for such person to be insecure. Insecurity could also be said to have a dual feature: being susceptible to danger or threat of danger on one hand, and condition of exposure to risk and anxiety. These definitions bring us to the notion of vulnerability to threats and dangers when they eventually happen. Thus, when field researchers are rendered vulnerable to the prevailing insecurity, field study is constrained even as the freedom of movement and right of the researcher to carry on field work cannot be guaranteed.

2.2 Concept of Field Research

Field research denotes the process of observation and collection of data in respect of a people, culture and natural environment or natural conditions. It is a study conducted in man's everyday surroundings beyond a controlled laboratory or classroom environment [12][13]. Field research is used in social and natural sciences to collect data about places, people and species in their environment with which to assess how scientific theories interact with real life situations. In essence, field work applies to the field of economics, history, sociology,

anthropology, biology, chemistry *etc.*, with a focus on people, culture, society, physical features of nature and natural environments respectively. Furthermore, field research involves spending some time in a local environment to listen to the people's perceptions, stories themselves and record activities, have the feel and experience of everyday life of the subjects under study to enable the researcher explain the purpose of local institutions, cultural beliefs, indulgence in certain activities, practices, behaviour etc. (National Geographic, 2022[12]). In a typical field research, data could be collected via one or more of these methods: interviews, surveys, focus groups, observation and participant observation (Jacome and Pate, 2014)[14].

3. Importance of Field Research to Scholarship

According to Reed and Bozsog,[15], the importance of field research cannot be overemphasized in that it enables presentation of issues empirically as they were by contextualizing phenomena such as conflicts, cultural practices, species of plants and animals, *etc.* within their ecosystems, societal and cultural realities. By so doing, researchers challenge their preconceived theoretical assumptions as they are confronted with the realities they met on the ground. Thus, without such empirically rigorous means of collecting data, it will be difficult to grapple with a good understanding on why people behave the way they do (including their economic and political behaviour) and make effective policy for control and coexistence. .

In a case of violent extremism for instance, without a thorough understanding the phenomenon from the grassroots or from the scratch, researchers will continue to struggle to understand patterns of violent extremism and develop effective policy responses. Human beings are dynamic even as the society itself, hence there are certain occurrences that mere reading and analyzing of secondary data may not capture, which current field work provides detailed and sufficient information on. This is so because the field researcher is capable of diversifying his primary sources of data while engaging with people in the field, and in the end, he can reconstruct the scenario with ample evidence and fill up existing gaps in literature.

Field research increases the chances of improving and developing societal understanding of phenomena. Researchers being human sometimes come up with preconceived perceptions, biases and assumptions, which they had already internalized via academic literature and media reports. However, when they collect data from primary source in the field, they are bound to change the narratives given their access to better and undiluted evidence on ground. Hence, "field research strengthens academic rigor, theories and methodologies, complements desk research and brings a different vantage point to understanding" phenomena Ultimately, due to the nature of field research which involves movement to gather data from the people spatially, sporadic insecurity is bound to affect it adversely. On this note, the next section is set to utilize the theory of Structural-Functionalism explain the current spate of spiralling insecurity and its impact on field research in the Nigerian context.

4. Theoretical Framework: Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism is a classical theory in sociology whose origin could be trailed to August Comte (1798-1857). Other scholars followed suit in its development. These include Herbert Spencer (1820-1903); Emile Durkheim (1858-1917); Talcott Parson (1902-1971) and Robert Merton (1920-2003) who contributed in different ways to refine and update the theory. The main thrust of Structural-Functional Theory is the emphasis that religion, politics, industries, economy, culture, education, and social order exist as they function mutually to facilitate 'solidarity and stability'. Conversely, whenever there is dislocation or dysfunction in any of the subsystems, it could ultimately impact on the entire system. Here, the society is likened to a living organism. In essence, the same way parts of a living organism are fitted and jointly work to sustain its life, so do parts of the society function together to meet its needs for survival. The various component parts of the society are considered as social institutions, which are strongly fitted into the whole structure while performing specific roles towards sustaining the whole. Embellishing the functionalist theory, Merton [16] included the idea that the roles played by subsystems appear as manifest and latent functions, which have continued to keep the society together. He argued that not every part of the whole play positive roles for the system maintenance. The scholar

therefore contended that any part of the system be it at the group, societal or individual levels could be useful, dysfunctional or non-functional [17].

Applying functionalism to the discourse on Nigeria's insecurity challenge and its impact on field research; insecurity is regarded here as a subsystem of social control of institution of human society that affords a section of the society "functional prerequisites" for the survival of its members. While the interplay of human insecurity prompted by deprivations and exclusion has generated violent crimes such as armed conflict, armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, etc., seemed to have provided informal sources of living or satisfaction for the perpetrators [17][18][19][20]; it has equally contributed to enhancing their survival instincts amidst social exclusion, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Insecurity on the other hand has strained cum stretched the security agencies' capacity to maintain law and order, crime fighting and prevention, culminating in the manifest roles of the security agencies to ensure cohesion and effective system maintenance [21]. Whereas the security agencies play manifest roles to contain insecurity, the latent roles become the implication of insecurity to the effective and smooth conduct of field research in the country thereby constraining its importance to scholarship and national development.

Though Merton 16] and Durkheim [22] have been criticized on account of manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions as all-inclusive in system maintenance, however, the import of their theory of functionalism in this study describes how escalation of insecurity has affected field research in terms of loss of man hours due to movement restrictions. The spate of insecurity across the country has increased the fear and vulnerability of field researchers to abduction, murder, rape, and all manner of assault and battery while on field trip. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, curfews and state of emergency are being imposed in such states as Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa during military operations [23]. Also, fear has been unleashed on the people by the insurgents and bandits alike, affecting the movement and availability of researchers and would be informants and respondents, respectively thereby stifling research works and their outcomes as discussed in details in the next section.

5. Impact of Human Insecurity on Field Research Scholarship

From our analysis of human security, it is not in doubt that broader issues of human insecurity beget the present problem of violent crimes in the country. For example, the violent crime in Nigeria cannot be explained in isolation from human insecurity, because violence has become so vicious in the face of socio-economic, political and environmental insecurity among the people. Being deprived of economic and social wellbeing, the people took to violent crimes as means of survival and as protest to the malicious denial of basic means of livelihood by the Nigerian authorities. These manifest as the complex problems of poverty (economic insecurity), injustice, nepotism, marginalization, corruption and denial of basic rights and privileges (social and political insecurity), lack of access to land and water course (environmental insecurity). It then means that merely fighting violent crime-related insecurity, which is just a symptom of the broader problem of human insecurity, without addressing the root cause, which is human insecurity, makes realization of security a mirage To attest to the above, on April 27 2021, it was reported that Boko Haram militants arrived Geidam in Yobe State and shared cash of about ₦20,000.00 to more than 50 households. This action was preceded by the invasion of the local government by the terrorist group to raze some private and public properties including, telecommunication facilities and police stations, hoisting their flags and distribution of propaganda leaflets to lure the locals into Islamic crusade. The group was merely exploiting the economic and social insecurity in that part of the country to lure the locals into pledging allegiance to them. It follows that having received a cash gift of ₦20,000.00 as against living in misery of less than $1or ₦500.00 per day, the people are bound to jump at such offer and join in perpetuating insecurity [24].

The above explains why in recent times the entire atmosphere in Nigeria is replete with diverse forms of insecurity ranging from terrorism, religious fundamentalism, herders-farmer lethal conflicts, militancy, kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery etc. The capacity of these non-state elements to engage the Nigerian security agencies is startling and renders the nation's security architecture itself insecure. The question is, if the formal security operatives are in themselves insecure, as scores of them have lost their lives in the process of

containing the insurgents and bandits, how could there be meaningful field research work when the armless field researchers are in themselves much more vulnerable to the pernicious attacks by the hoodlums? All parts of the country have been witnessing one form of criminality and insurgency or the other. For instance, the Northeastern Nigeria has been embroiled with the Boko Haram insurgency right from 2002, which was elevated to the level of terrorism from 2011 when they engaged in spate of bombing, suicide bomb attacks of public buildings, churches, motor parks, kidnapping of school children (the case of Chibok girls in 2014 when about 276 girls were abducted from government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State; kidnapping of about 113 school girls at Government Secondary school, Dapchi, Yobe State on February 19, 2018; and the kidnapping of over eighty students from the Federal Government College Birnin-Yauri in Kebbi State in June 2021 are examples of such acts), and women, burning of villages and bombing of military formations; seizure of community lands and displacement of the people, incessant shooting of unarmed citizens, burning of police stations *etc.*[24] [25][26]. In the Northwest, there is pervasive incidence of banditry where villages are sacked, people are held for ransom, gruesome killings of people in the communities, farming is disrupted as people fear to go to their farms, and highways are no longer secure, particularly Kaduna-Abuja highway, etc. In the North Central the herdsmen-farmer conflict has been going on with stories of woeful and gruesome killings going on unabated. Villages and communities are sacked with reckless abandon and houses razed, people are either kidnapped for ransom or killed, among others [26]. Besides, bandits are also on the sprawl kidnapping and carrying out ferocious assaults on people along parts of Niger, Kogi, Nasarawa roads up to the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) and its environs [27].

More recently, the spate of violent crimes has been intensified by various forms of non-state actors in the country, particularly in Northern region resulting from human insecurity [24].While linking violent-crime-related insecurity to the larger issue of human insecurity in the country, series of violent crimes being perpetrated by non-state actors are highlighted. It was reported that in December 11, 2020, about 344 male students were kidnapped from their hostels in Government Science Secondary School Kankara, Katsina State. Again, on December 20, 2020, 80 pupils were abducted from the Islamiyya School, Mahuta, Kaduna State. On February 17, 2021, 27 more students were abducted from GSS College Kagara, Niger State. In the same vein, on February 26, 2021, 279 girls were abducted from Government Secondary School Jangebe, Zamfara State. Other reported incidents include: abduction of 39 students of the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Afaka, Kaduna State on March 11, 2021; further bandit onslaught led to kidnapping of 23 students of Greenfield University, Kaduna State on March 20, 2021. Again, on April 24, 2021, 3 students of Federal University of Agriculture, Markurdi, Benue State were abducted. Just in the last days of March 2022, a Kaduna bound train was attacked by bandits and many passengers were either killed or abducted by the assailants. This was the second time the rail line which was presumed to be the safest route from Abuja to Kaduna since the road has been besieged by bandits was attacked by bandits. Prior to this train attack, gunmen had attacked Kaduna International Airport [28]. This explains the spate of insecurity in the country in which field researchers are to carry out their studies.

In the melee of violence visited on the schools, many states have been forced to close down their boarding schools. The closure of schools in itself is a negative influence on field research because bulk of the human resource which could have been pulled to guide the conduct of field study within an area is usually drawn from among teachers in the local schools being the intellectual conscience within the community. Secondly, the closure of schools increases the number of the already existing 13.5million out-of-school children in Nigeria. Available data reported that about 30% of pupils drop out of primary school and only 54% move over to junior secondary school owing to human security problems of extreme poverty, child labour, early marriage in girls, and above all, physical insecurity such as child abduction, kidnapping and physical harm on the pupils and students alike. Un(interesting) enough, about 80% of out-of-school children resides in Northern Nigeria. Thus, given the crumbling security system, closure of schools, and poverty crippling the northern region, these out-of-school children have become easy targets for terrorist and bandits recruitments [24].

In the Southwestern states there are cases of ritual killings, and occasional raids by herdsmen, particularly in Ondo State. Even the agitation for the Sovereign State of the Yoruba Nation (Oduduwa Nation) led by Sunday Adeniyi Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, in the South West is a case in point,

which led to some security breaches, death, fear and anxiety[29]. The Benin-Ore-Lagos highway has become so unsafe that those who have the where withal scarcely ply the highways by vehicular means except by air plane. The forests have become the den of robbers and kidnappers [30][31].

In the Southeastern Nigeria, the insecurity occasioned by spate of kidnapping, ritual killing and armed robbery have been accentuated by the rise in agitation for the Sovereign State of the Biafra, which was resuscitated by the Leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu has raised a very serious security threat to lives and property of the people. The formation of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) which is the militant wing of the group has pitched the group against the security operatives leading to spate of killings and counter killings, attacks on the security formations such as the police stations, and the correctional facilities in the South East. Worse still, the re-arrest, trial and incarceration of the IPOB leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu has sparked off another dangerous dimension to the security breaches; the case of declaration of sit-at-home order on every Monday in the whole of the South east as IPOB militants seem not have relented in enforcing the sit-at-home order with force of arms, killing and maiming of those who allegedly defied the order. This has led to the flooding of the Southeastern roads with military checkpoints that obstruct movements to a great extent. Some of the students taking their Senior School Certificate (SSCE), National Examination Council missed the Mathematics examination due to the forced sit at home order and accompanying threats issued by the IPOB [32]. In parts of Enugu State, it was reported that some students missed their WAEC examination on 13th September due to disruptions by IPOB militants enforcing sit-at-home order 33]. The situation has remained palpable even when IPOB issued press statements rescinding the sit at home order. There is still fear of terror due to attacks being unleashed on the people every Monday in the Southeast. Some people alleged to be hoodlums have sprung up to enforce the suspended sit-at-home order while unleashing terror on people allegedly defying the sit-at-home in the region. The so-called IPOB militant enforcers have burnt several vehicles and tricycles they intercepted on the roads. Some traders have lost their wares to the attacks on their shops in a looting spree on account of enforcing the already cancelled IPOB's "ghost Monday". Compounding the insecurity situation in the South east region is the mayhem unleashed on the society by the unknown gunmen who attack their targets, including killing of policemen on duty [34].

The South-South region is replete with militant activities, damaging of oil facilities, cultism and kidnapping that unleash mayhem on the people [6]. The youth restiveness is such that create panic amongst the populace as rival cult gangs engage each other in a shooting spree causing restriction of movements for fear of the unknown. It is a question of who knows who is going to be the next victim.

The prevailing situation in the South East where citizens cannot go about their lawful businesses for fear of being killed or maimed by 'unknown gunmen'; amid sit-at-home orders by the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) organization, while elected governments at the state or federal level offered no protection, begs the question of government's competence [35].

Above scenario does not give room for any meaningful field work in the region given the fear of molestation, kidnapping or outright murder by these angry agitators, hoodlums and gunmen. Notable amongst these growing violence in the South Eastern Nigeria was the gruesome murder of Dr. Chike Akunyili, the widower of the former Director-General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Dora Akunyili, and members of his entourage; the razing of the country home of the All Progressive Congress (APC) Chieftain and Special Adviser to the Governor of Lagos State on Drainages and Water Resources, Mr. Joe Igbokwe; killings of civilians; burning of the office of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and Department of State Services (DSS) in Nnewi [35].

In March 2022 alone, when it seemed that the activities of IPOB militants and the Unknown Gunmen have abated, they resumed their violent destruction of property and killing spree in the South Eastern states of Anambra and Imo. Within one month between March and early hours of April 1, 2022, gunmen have attacked five police stations in Imo State. These include, Okwelle Police Station in Onuimo LGA, Omuma Police Station in Oru East LGA, Isu Police Station in Nwangele LGA, Umuguma Police Station in Owerri West LGA killing two policemen and burning several vehicles as well as releasing inmates, and the latest being the Mbieri Police Station in Mbaitoli LGA at about 3.am early morning hours of April 1, 2022 in which parts of the facility was burnt [36]. More so, the house of the Pan Igbo socio-cultural group known as Ohaneze ndi Igbo was razed by

gunmen [37]. On March 31, gunmen burnt down Nnewi South LGA secretariat in Anambra State [38]. Obviously, the damaging effects of the IPOB's sit-at-home order and activities of the unknown gunmen has negative impact on all sectors of the Nigerian state; economic, social, education, particularly field research which involves field trips as movement is usually stultified [39]. A survey conducted by SAHARA Reporters in 2021 reported the category of occupations affected by the IPOB's sit-at-home order cum insecurity in the Southeastern Nigeria. These include transporters, those in the hospitality industry, self-employed persons, artisans, blue-collar formal sector workers, students, and white-collar formal sector workers [40]. A critical look at the affected occupations shows that they are involved in rendering essential services or assisting field researchers directly or indirectly. For instance, the transporters are involved in the movement of field researchers from one target group and place to the other while the hospitality industry is involved in accommodation of field researchers on field trips. Both blue and white collar workers and students are themselves important elements that serve as informed informants and research assistants within the study area, without which, such research trips becomes shambolic.

The above violent crimes have earned Nigeria the position of one of the most dangerous places to live in. In fact, the 2020 Global Terrorism Index identified Nigeria as the third most affected country by terrorism. Besides, the Nigeria Security Tracker recorded about 2,769 violence-related deaths between February 2020 and February 2021 in just one of the northern states. With the increase in kidnapping activities by various armed groups, a recent report indicated that over $18million was paid in ransom for the release of abducted victims of kidnapping between 2011 and 2020 [27].

The issue is that since human insecurity pervades all parts of the country, nobody is spared of its menace, particularly field researchers. A typical example was the case of attacks on two leading archaeology researchers, Professors Abi Derefaka and Stanley Okoroafor, of the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Port who were carrying out some archaeological finds in Cross River State in 2018. The irate youths of the community attacked them and ended disrupting the field research after their rescue by the community leaders. Conducting fieldwork in insecure environments render the researchers vulnerable 41] to risks of direct attacks by hoodlums, victims of stray bullets and land mines set by the insurgents, kidnapping and other forms of molestation.

Human insecurity affect even the time and space of field research work. A major limitation and challenge of a study initiated by the CLEEN Foundation Lagos, edited by Hussaini Abdu and Chigozie Okoro[42] remarked that insecurity was a major challenge during their field work. According to the investigators, insecurity in the field affected the time frame within which the study was conducted. Furthermore, during the Ph.D study carried out by Ndubuisi titled 'Security Implications of Colonial Borders and Ethnicity in Nigeria-Niger Relations, 1960-2015, the spate of insecurity limited the area of coverage for field trips in the Northern fringes [25]. Terrorist activities constrained the researcher from visiting and conducting interviews in some of the border communities straddling Nigeria and Niger in the Northeast axis spanning Giedam, Nguru, Dutse, Damasak and Baga etc. in Yobe and Bornu States of Nigeria; border communities at the epicenter of the Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Furthermore, a supposedly field trip by one Dr. Chidi Pensive Anene of the Department of History and International Studies, Imo State University, carrying out a study on 'Boko Haram Insurgency and the Festering Human Insecurity in the North Eastern Nigeria' in 2019 was cancelled due to security reports on the ferocity of insurgent attacks in the North East. The scholar had to rely only on secondary sources for the study. Similarly, a Ph.D. thesis embarked upon by Iyala, Theodore Obinna on 'Agwa and Its Neighbours: 1960-2000' was short circuited by the spate of insecurity in the Ohaji/Egbema-Oguta area of Imo State. The insecurity caused by intra and inter-communal conflicts which is usually fierce due to the level of destruction of lives and property affected the scholar's free flow of movement to collect data for the study within the study area. The scholar ended up not visiting some historical sites and vital informants that are versed in oral history of the communities under study. Besides, the monthly sit-at-home in the South East had one way or the other affected the field trips, scope of coverage, and by implication limited the scholar's access to data for the study [43]. A more recent study carried out by Nduka, Gregory, a PhD research on 'Ethno-religious Identity and Violence in Northern Nigeria from 1950 to 1999' was affected by insecurity in Northern Nigeria. In a discussion with the researcher, he admitted that due to the incessant farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt

states of Benue, Kaduna, and ethno-religious clashes in Plateau State as well as the Tiv-Jukun conflicts between Benue and Taraba states leading to wanton destruction of lives and property; he could not reach some volatile communities to collect relevant data from the people, which would have raised the confidence level of the deductions, inductions, inferences and generalization derived from the study [44].

Sequel to the above observations, the problem of human insecurity has negatively impactedNigeria's research rating within Africa and beyond. Granted that there are other constraints to field research in Nigeria; there are over sixty-six research institutes in Nigeria in the medical, agricultural, science and technology, education and socio-economic fields, however, they are weakened by the "dilution and redirection of funding for other needs, such as, expansion of higher education and political activities". Much as these factors affect field research adversely, the instability resulting from insecurity in the country has further deepened its research challenges. Nigeria which ranks as the most populous country in the African continent, ought to have had an edge in scientific researches over other countries in the continent but in the actual sense, it is not so. For example, research institutes in Nigeria is presumed to produce less than 0.05 per cent of research publications in reputable international journals whereas South Africa, having a population of about a third of Nigeria's population leads other countries in the continent in research instead of Nigeria given the former's enabling environment for conducting both experimental and theoretical research [45]. As it stands, even if the Nigerian state provides adequate funds and all the necessary equipment and facilities to support and improve field study, with the spate of insecurity in the country, no meaningful progress will be made in that the equipment might not be effectively used, may be abandoned or destroyed with the rate at which public institutions, facilities, equipment, buildings, personnel, communities, are destroyed on daily basis. The fear of unknown is hanging in virtually every part of the country and people are afraid to venture into the field for research for fear of being abducted, killed or maimed.

Conducting field research in a volatile security environment such as Nigeria threatens research outcomes in two major ways: first is the threat of safety and vulnerability of the researchers themselves and second the threat on safety of the respondents or the informants affecting their participation in the research. Thus, the safety and integrity of the researchers, respondents and their communities is paramount for a successful field research to take place. This is germane because when the researcher is scared of reaching out for an in-depth study on one hand, and the respondents are weary of entertaining questions and interviews from the researcher for fear of exposing themselves to harm amidst insecurity; the quality of data is compromised. At the end, such research endeavour becomes difficult to produce authentic, reliable and valid data [15].

6. Concluding Remarks

The study has to a large extent been able to showcase how the problem of human insecurity has contributed in deepening the challenges confronting field research in Nigeria. This work became necessary in the absence of studies devoted solely to the impact of insecurity on field research in the country. The study proceeded by examining the concept of human insecurity, concept of field research, importance of field research to scholarship and impact of human insecurity on field research scholarship. Having examined the fact that human insecurity pervades all aspects of life, it threatens the very conduct and outcomes of field research given the infractions it has posed on the exercise. Field research being a sine qua non for reconstructing and verifying earlier facts and proper understanding of phenomena in the society is very important to scholarship and failure to achieve this important function brings objective scholarship to its lowest ebb. The study has shown that human insecurity as it is in the country has dealt a devastating blow to field research as it stalls the movement of field researchers, research assistants, informants and respondents alike. The insecurity situation in the country renders researchers on field trips vulnerable to attacks, kidnapping and murder; thereby discouraging field trips and frustrates their efforts at arriving at new truths as well and verification of age long assumptions. This in itself deepens the already existing deficient field research in the country and fall short of validity and plausibility of research. It follows therefore, that any research that does not follow the rigors and specified process of data collection, analysis and reporting procedure that produce evidenced-based and verifiable results is a compromised study.

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