

Analysis of Poverty and Inequality among Farmers in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study, analysis poverty and inequality among farmers in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa state, Nigeria. Primary data was the main source of information used for the study. It was collected using structured questionnaires administered to the respondents with the help of enumerators. Multi stage purposive random sampling techniques were used in the selection of the 130 respondents for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area. The socio-economic information collected was based on gender, age, educational status, and marital status. The study reveals that, poverty were severe due to the non-availability of social facilities like good roads, portable water, health care facilities among others while, the respondents expended most of their earnings on this social services. it is therefore recommended that government should engaged in adequate human capital development in education and capacity building for the farmers and to also ensure the availability of social infrastructure and other support services to improve the living conditions of the respondents.

Keywords: Poverty, Inequality, Farmers.

Introduction

Despite strong economic growth in Nigeria, 54 percent of the population remains in poverty Hagen-Zanker *et al*, 2012. Of significant concern is the fact that the poverty rate has doubled in the past 20 years. Nigeria is also highly unequal: the Gini coefficient was 43.8 as of 2005 (Ortiz and Cummins, 2011). Income inequality is just one dimension of poverty in Nigeria. Poverty and vulnerability are also highly influenced by social and other factors such as age,

gender, consumption pattern, food, economic participation, political representation among others.

One single goal of economic development is the eradication of poverty while the single measure of injustice, is inequality in income distribution in the less developed regions of the world including Nigeria. It is therefore believed that, income inequality is detrimental to economic growth and development. As part of macroeconomic objectives, government always gives equitable distribution of income and wealth among the citizens a priority.

Inequality according to Madu, 2006 is the dispersion of a distribution in terms of income, consumption or some other welfare indicator such as health facilities, education, good access road, food security or attribute of a population. In Nigeria, the study of inequality is not new. A lot of effort has been devoted to the documentation of differences among Nigerian citizens' standards of living and access to opportunities over the last decades by various authors and institutions. Several of the studies have revealed that inequality is increasing and has led to a growing dimension of poverty in the country (Aigbokhan 2000; Ipinnaiye 2001; Thomas and Canagaraja 2002; Erubami and Young 2003; Oyekaleet *al*2004).

Poverty on the other hands is a phenomenon that has generated a lot of interest in recent times. The term "poverty" does not lead to a straight forward definition. It is a complex universal phenomenon of multiple dimensions (Giroh *et al.*, 2008). World Bank (2004) defined poverty as a condition of insufficient resources or income, where in its most extreme form is the lack of basic human needs such as health services, education, drinking water, access road, electricity, food security among others.

Income Poverty

Majority of the Nigerian population lives in poverty, despite the wealth in the country. Although indications that poverty may be declining (AfDB *et al.*, 2009; NPC, 2010), of significant concern is that, between 1980 and 2004, both rural and urban poverty has been more than doubled, from 28.3% to 63.3% in rural areas and from 17.2% to 43.2% in urban areas (UNDP, 2009). Nigeria's national poverty line states that 54% of the 140 million population lives in poverty resulting to about 75 million people (NPC, 2010), of whom 22% were defined as 'core poor', i.e. extremely poor in 2004 (UNDP, 2009). This is a huge challenge in terms of development and poverty reduction.

Inequality in income and asset distribution, unequal access to basic infrastructure and services and social-cultural norms are key drivers of poverty, vulnerability and inequality in the country (UNDP, 2009). Indeed, Nigeria has high rates of inequality. According to the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP, 2009), inequality increased between 1985 and 2004 (from 43 to 49), although others suggest it has been decreasing (from 49.1 in 1990 to 43.8) (Ortiz and Cummins, 2011): overall, however, it remains high. When adjusted to reflect inequality, Nigeria's Human Development Index value drops significantly, from 0.423 to 0.246 (UNDP, 2010).

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to assess the effects of poverty and inequality on the socio economic characteristics of respondents in Yola North Local Government of Nigeria.

2.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. It comprises of the administrative capital of the state bounded by Yola South from south and West and Girei Local Government from north and east. It lies between latitude 9^o13'44

“North of the equator and longitude 12⁰27’36 East of the green witch meridian. Yola North is bounded from the North to east by River Benue.

There are two marked seasons in the area; these are the dry and wet seasons. The wet season which starts around April/May and last till October with an average annual rain fall of 180mm, the amount increases in August to September from 150mm to 350mm. It starts receiving rainfall in small amount in March with strong and devastating wind storms. The area has a mean annual temperature of 27.8⁰c (Adebayo, 1999)

2.2 Sources of Data and Sampling Techniques

Primary data was the main source of information used for the study. It was collected using structured questionnaires administered to the respondents with the help of enumerators. Multi stage purposive random sampling techniques were used in the selection of the 130 respondents for the study. At the time of administration of questionnaires, any male household head that is not around, his spouse is used as a proxy and in cases where the household head is either divorced, separated, widowed or never married, they were also considered. The data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics that were employed include; the use of mean, median, frequency distribution and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The results from table 1 above revealed that, the socio-economic analysis of the respondents in the study area. This include; gender, age range, educational status, and marital status. However, the results obtained on gender shows that, majority of the respondents which constituted about 75.4 percent were male and numbering 98, while about 24.6 percent accounting for 32 were female. Majority of the respondents in the study area yielding about 58.5 percent fall within the age range of 26-50. Similarly, about 23.8 percent representing 31 respondents fall within the age limit of 0-25 years, while about 17.7 percent accounting for 23 respondents were 50 years and above.

Educational qualification determines the literacy level of the respondent. From the result of the analysis, about 8.5 percent of the respondents constituting 11 had attended adult education, those with non-formal education aggregated to about 6.9 percent constituted 9 respondents. Similarly, about 9.2 percent numbering 12 respondents had primary education, while majority yielding about 33.9 and 41.5 percent accounting for 44 and 54 respondents were those for secondary and post-secondary education respectively.

The results obtained further reveals that, about 51.5 percent resulting to 67 respondents who dominated the sample were unmarried; so also, about 38.5, 6.2 and 3.8 percent numbering 50, 8 and 5 were married, divorced and widowed respectively.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	98	75.4
Female	32	24.6
	130	100
Age range (yrs)		
0-25	31	23.8

26-50	76	58.5
≥ 50	23	17.7
	130	100
Educational Qualification		
Adult Education	11	8.5
Non formal education	9	6.9
Primary Education	12	9.2
Secondary Education	44	33.9
Post-Secondary Education	54	41.5
	130	100
Marital Status		
Single	67	51.5
Married	50	38.5
Divorce	8	6.2
Widowed	5	3.8
	130	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 2 below shows the major crops in cultivation by the respondents in the study area based on quantity, value, expenditure and profit generated as returns from each of the chosen enterprise. It further reveals that, all the crops produced in the study area were profitable with maize leading. The average unit prices for various commodities practiced at the time of the study for a 50kg bags in Nigerian naira were; ₦ 550.00, ₦ 300.00, ₦ 800.00, ₦ 250.00, ₦ 900.00, and ₦ 200.00 respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of Crops Cultivated and the Associated Income

Crop Type	Quantity (kg)	Value (₦)	Expenditure (₦)	Profit (₦)
Maize	6,794	3,736,700	1,822,010	1,914,690
Guinea Corn	2,801	840,300	322,200	518,100
Beans	2,154	1,723,200	965,400	757,800
Rice	8,021	2,005,250	878,600	1,126,650
Groundnut	9,200	8,280,000	4,030,000	4,250,000
Others	11,760	2,352,000	900,000	1,452,000

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The information on table 3 obtained from the descriptive statistics analysis on distribution of respondents based on severity of poverty and living condition shows that, about 31.5 percent, constituting 41 respondents lived in their personal apartments. 3.9 percent resulting to 5 respondents lived in communal homes, while about 11.5 percent of the respondents accounting for 15 respondents lived in rented apartments. However, those that lived in assisted apartments numbering 2 accounted for about 1.5 percent. About 45.4 percent of the respondents constituting 59 respondents who constituted the majority lived in family houses. Similarly, about 6.2 percent yielding 8 respondents earns their shelter under free support system from friends relations, neighbors etc.

The result also demonstrated based on the mode of acquisition of houses that, about 19.2 percent accounting for 25 respondents got their houses as a result of earnings from their farm produce in about 47.7 percent numbering 62 respondents got theirs from inheritance from

either members of their family as defines by the existing customs and tradition of the community in the study area. About 10.8 percent of the sampled respondents build their houses from the savings generated from their various sources and this accounted for 14 respondents. However, for those that acquire theirs from other sources were about 22.3 percent accounting for 29 respondents.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis also revealed that, about 14.6 percent of the respondents resulting to 19 respondents were comfortable in their social wellbeing and living conditions. Only about 19.2 percent were fairly comfortable accounting for 25 respondents. Consequently, majority of the respondents which weighted about 53.1 percent and numbering 69 respondents were living in manageable conditions with the remaining 21.5 percent accounting for 28 respondents were characterized with bad living condition status.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on Severity of Poverty and Living Condition

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Nature of Resident		
Personal	41	31.5
Communal	5	3.9
Rented	15	11.5
Assistance	2	1.5
Family	59	45.4
Free	8	6.2
Total	130	100
Source of Acquisition		
Farm produce	25	19.2
Inheritance	62	47.7
Salary	14	10.8
Others	29	22.3
Total	130	100
Social Facilities Available		
Water supply	19	14.6
Electronics equipment	26	20.0
Transportation	22	16.9
Electricity	17	13.1
None	46	35.4
Total	130	100
Status of Residence		
Comfortable	8	6.2
Fairly Comfortable	25	19.2
Manageable	69	53.1
Bad	28	21.5
Total	130	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4 below shows the distribution of respondents based on the major indicator of poverty in the study area. The poverty indicators used in the study include income, land ownership, education, diseases, health, home ownership, household size, infrastructure, food, age and employment. The study reveals that, about 90.8 percent numbering 118 of the respondents have very high difficult in its income generation and sources, about 30.0 percent constituting 39 respondents encounter hardship in land acquisition. Major poverty indicators that were rated high in the study area according to the analysis were income with about 90.8 percent, education 64.6percent, infrastructure 75.4 percent while food and employment were 85.4 and 68.5 percent respectively.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents based on major indicators of poverty (n=130)

Items	Number of Respondents/Severity	Percentage
Income	118	90.8
Land Ownership	39	30.0
Educationalstatus	84	64.6
Preveling in diseases	42	32.3
Health facility	55	42.3
Home Ownership	41	31.5
Household Size	40	30.8
Infrastructural facility	98	75.4
Food	111	85.4
Age	9	6.9
Employment status	89	68.5

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study assessed the poverty and inequality among farmers in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State using data collected in 2012 through multi stage random sampling of 130 respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area. It is therefore recommended that government should be engaged in adequate human capital development in education and capacity building for the farmer and to also ensure the availability of social infrastructure and other support services to sustainably improve the living conditions of the respondents.

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