

Poverty among Farming Households in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the evidence and alleviation strategy of absolute poverty among households in Osun State, Nigeria. Relevant literatures were obtained, accessed and assessed to serve as guide to this study. In order to accomplish the study objectives, a total of 105 respondents were selected through random sampling techniques. The data obtained were analyzed using Descriptive statistics, FGT 1984 poverty index and Probit regression model. The study revealed that majority of the respondents in the study area were male 66.7%. It was also discovered that the mean age was 41.4years. Larger percentage of 85.7 of the respondents were married It was also discovered that the mean household size was 6 people in the house. Respondents who reached tertiary level of education had a greater percentage of 51.4. A large percent of 70.5 were found to be natives of the study area. The result for primary occupation showed that 47.6% of the respondents in the study area were civil servants and a larger percentage of 73.3 earned between N5,000 and N100,000 per month with a mean of N99,245.80k. The study showed that the poverty incidence (Po) was discovered to be 99%, the poverty depth/gap (P1) was found to be 98.9% and the poverty severity (P2) was 98.8%. Size of household of the respondents was significant at 5% which indicated that it had great importance in determining poverty in the study area and was positive implying that the higher the household size the higher the probability of being poor. Household income and primary occupation were also significant at 1% level and the two were negative implying that the higher the income of the household and the more the household involved in their primary occupation the lower the probability of being poor in the study area.

Key words: Incidence of poverty, poverty depth, severity of poverty, primary occupation and probit regression model.

1. Introduction

Poverty is a problem for both developing and developed countries all around the world. Poverty is a plague afflicting people all over the world and it is considered one of the symptoms or manifestations of underdevelopment. "Poverty is a situation where people have unreasonably low living standards compared with others; cannot afford to buy necessities, and experience real deprivation and hardship in everyday life." (McClelland, 2000). Alamu (2005) observed that until recently, poverty was understood largely in terms of income or a lack of one. To be poor meant that one could not afford the cost of providing a proper diet or home. But poverty is about more than a shortfall in income or calorie intake. It is about the denial of opportunities and choices that are widely regarded as essential to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self esteem and the respect of others. Poverty is a vicious cycle that keeps the poor in a state of destitution and utter disillusionment.

Poverty is the main cause of hunger and malnutrition, which are aggravated by rapid population growth, policy inadequacies and inconsistencies or weak administrative capabilities, unhealthy food storage and processing techniques (Sanni, 2000). Okuneye (2001) pointed out that the social dimension of poverty is largely a gender issue since the greatest weight of poverty is borne by women household heads and children from poor homes. However, he further explained that the conventional notion depicts poverty as a condition in which people are below a specified minimum income level and are unable to provide or satisfy the basic necessities of life needed for an acceptable standard of living.

Globally, extreme poverty continues to be a rural phenomenon despite increasing urbanization. Of the world's 1.2 billion extremely poor people, 75 percent live in rural areas and for the most part they depend on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related activities for survival. A considerable research has been carried out on the issue of poverty alleviation and its long run social and economic effects in developed as well as in developing countries (Olaniyan, 2007). Since poverty alleviation is considered as an important issue of economic development in the literature, attempts have been made to alleviate poverty by increasing the level of income of household. It has also been declared goal of every government policy in Nigeria and the least emphasis has been placed at micro or regional level poverty alleviation. It is amazing to note that various poverty alleviation strategies have been adopted by successive governments in Nigeria, but their level of social impact leaves much to be desired.

Observers have unanimously agreed that these programs have failed to achieve the objectives for which they were established (Ovwasa, 2000; Adesopo, 2008; Omotola, 2008). UNEP (2011) research has shown that by increasing investment in natural assets that are used by the poor to earn their livelihood, the shift towards a green economy enhances livelihood in many low-income areas. Annan (2010) observed that in programmes aimed at tackling poverty, specific goals have been created and efforts concentrated or focused on meeting those targeted goals. Through this approach there has been some progress in poverty reduction since 1970, although it has not been spread equally over the different parts of the world. Most of the decline in poverty took place in East Asia, notably in China. In developing countries, infant mortality was cut by more than 40% and adult illiteracy by 50%.

2. Statement of the Problem

The issue of whether or not a household is poor is widely recognized as an important, though crude indicator of a household's well being. This is reflected in the central role the concept of poverty plays in analysis of social protection policy. In recent years, however, the term vulnerability has come to be widely used alongside poverty in discussions of poverty alleviation and social protection strategies (Oni and Yusuf, 2006). In Nigeria, the problem of poverty has, for a fairly long time, been a cause of concern to the government (Nwaobi, 2003). As a result, the government's efforts at combating the menace actually started immediately after the attainment of independence in 1960 (Ovwasa, 2000; Omotola, 2008). Nwaobi (2003) observed that the initial attention was focused on rural development and country planning as a practical means of dealing with the problem. He further noted that the failure to adequately implement these programs can be seen as the precursor to most of the present causes of poverty in Nigeria. Garba (2006) submits that the past attempts to alleviate poverty in Nigeria, which dismally failed, can be grouped into two distinct time frames or eras: pre-SAP and SAP/post-SAP. Obadan (2001) notes that anti-poverty initiatives of the pre-SAP era were essentially ad hoc. The measures focused more on growth, basic needs, and rural development approaches.

During the same era, the government sought to fight poverty through certain institutional mechanisms, such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), Green Revolution, Low Cost Housing, River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Strategic Grains Reserves Program (SGRP), Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), and Rural Banking Programme (RBP) (Garba, 2006; Omotola, 2008). Some people believe that poverty result from lack of adequate resources on global level, resources such as land, food and building materials that are necessary for the well being or survival of the worlds' poorest people (Munroe, 2003).

The upsurge of poverty is manifest in the kind of house the poor live, cloths, shoes, or slippers the poor put on and the food they eat. Juxtaposing the plight of the poor and corrupt leaders and politicians who contribute in no mean measure to most of the socio-economic, political and religious woes that plagued Nigeria, one will find out a wide gap between, be it in accommodation, cloths, cars, landed properties, health care, education and food, all these the corrupt leaders can afford with ease with plenty to spare while the poorest continue to wallow in eternal penury (Faustinus, 2011). The consequences of this poverty manifest itself in the form of increasing early mortality, diseases and malnutrition, prostitution, child labour, displacement and forced migration, the violence of social breakdown, state social control and fractional war, acute risk and uncertainty, environmental degradation and vulnerability, as well as a loss of existential material security (Amin, 2004).

According to Garba (2006), all the poverty alleviation initiatives in Nigeria since independence have yielded very little fruit.

He claims that the programs were mostly not designed to alleviate poverty, they lacked clearly defined policy frameworks with proper guidelines for poverty alleviation, they suffered from political instability, interference, policy, and macroeconomic dislocations, they lacked continuity, and they are riddled with corruption, political deception, outright kleptomania, and distasteful looting. The specific objectives of the study are to: determine the absolute poverty of the respondents, analyze the determinants of absolute poverty among households and identify the poverty alleviating strategies among households in study area.

3. Theoretical Framework

World Bank (2005) carried out a study on Nigeria. The study identify poverty in rural communities as related to poor physical facilities, food insecurity, obsolete agricultural practices, poor nutritional value, little access to savings and credit, general inability to educate children due to high cost, inadequate diet and homes without amenities such as latrines, bathroom and kitchen, irregular water supply and electricity as well as the inability to cloth oneself. Maghori (2008) observed that in the traditional setting, poverty was understood as material deprivations, as living with low income and low consumption which manifest by way of poor nutrition and poor living conditions. However, income poverty does not exist alone rather it is often times associated with so-called human poverty-low health and education levels.

Gore (2002) explained the concept of all-pervasive poverty. According to him, poverty is all pervasive, where the majority of the population lives at or below income levels sufficient to meet their basic needs, and the available resources, even when equally distributed, are barely sufficient to meet the basic needs of the population. He reiterates further that pervasive poverty leads to environmental degradation. This is because people eat into the environmental capital stock to survive. This, in turn, undermines the productivity of key assets on which the livelihood depends. It should also be noted that where extreme poverty is all-pervasive, state capacities are necessarily weak. Aigbokhan (2008) revealed that poverty is defined as a state of long-term deprivation of well-being, a situation considered inadequate for decent living.

Singer (2009) noted that extreme poverty does not entail just having unsatisfied material needs or being undernourished. It is often accompanied by a degrading state of powerlessness. Even in democratic and relatively well-governed countries, poor people have to accept daily humiliations without protest. Often, they cannot provide for their children and have a strong sense of shame and failure. According to Chambers (2006), five clusters of meanings were given to poverty. The first is *income-poverty* or its common proxy (because less unreliable to measure) consumption-poverty. When many, especially economists, use the word poverty they are referring to these measures.

The second cluster of meanings is *material lack or want*. Besides income, this includes lack of or little wealth and lack or low quality of other assets such as shelter, clothing, furniture, personal means of transport, radio or television, and so on. This also tends to include no or poor access to services. A third cluster of meanings derives from Amartya Sen, and is expressed as *capability deprivation*, referring to what we can or cannot do, can or cannot be. This includes but goes beyond material lack or want to include human capabilities, for example skills and physical abilities, and also self-respect in society. A fourth cluster takes a yet more broadly multi-dimensional view of deprivation, with material lack or want as only one of several mutually reinforcing dimensions. Townsend(2006) supported that People can be said to be in poverty when they are deprived of income and other resources needed to obtain the conditions of life—the diets, material goods, amenities, standards and services—that enable them to play the roles, meet the obligations and participate in the relationships and customs of their society.

4. Methodology

The study was carried out in Ilesa west Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria. It lies on Latitude 8.92°N Longitude 3.42°E. Its headquarter is in the town of Oja Oba (Ereja Square) on the outskirts of the city of Ilesa . It has an area of 63 km² and a population of one hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty five people (103,555) at the 2006 census. The Local Government Area is predominantly a homogeneous society comprising mainly the Yorubas. It has an area of 114km² of land and size and it is located on 19⁰30^L south of the equator and 5⁰-57⁰ West of the Greenwich meridian. The data used in the course of this study were mainly primary data which were collected through the administration of well-structured and validated questionnaires. The population of the study consists of farmers in Ilesha West Local Government Area of Osun State.

Multi-stage random sampling was used to select respondents within the Local Government Area. The villages in Ilesha West Local Government Area are as follows; Ilaje, Ibala, Ilo, Ayegunle, Isokun, Omi iru, Omi eran, Ereja, Ita ofa, Igbogi, Idasa, Omi oko, Odo esira, Egbe idi, Ijoka, Itakogun, Biladu, Omofe and Odo iro. The first stage involves selection of some villages from the above villages. The last stage involved random selection of respondents from each village, 15 farmers from Ilaje, 15 farmers from Idasa, 15 farmers from Ilo, 15 farmers from Ayegunle, 15 farmers from Omi iru, 15 farmers from Omi eran, 15 farmers from Omofe because the villages are of the same size. Thus, 105 respondents were interviewed across Ilesha West Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria.

The analytical techniques used in this study were, Foster Greer and Thorbeck (FGT) 1984 and Probit regression model. Following Foster et al (1984), poverty line was computed as the 2/3rd of the mean per capita annual expenditure of all members of the sampled households. The FGT index allows for the quantitative measurement of poverty status among subgroups of a population (i.e., incorporating any degree of concern about poverty) and has been widely used (Kakwani, 1990). The headcount ratio measures the ratio of the number of poor individuals or simply measures the poverty incidence (i.e., the percent of the poor in the total sample). The analysis of poverty incidence using FGT measure usually starts with ranking of expenditures in ascending order $Y_1 \leq Y_2 \leq \dots \leq Y_n$:

$$P\alpha = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^q \left(\frac{Z - Y_i}{Z} \right)^\alpha$$

- σ = Non-negative poverty aversion parameter, which can be 0 for poverty incidence, one for poverty gap or two for poverty severity.
- Y_i = The per capita expenditure of ith household.
- n , = The total number of sampled households,
- q = The number of households below the poverty line.
- Z = Poverty line.

The PROBIT procedure computes maximum likelihood estimates of the parameters and C of the probit equation using a modified Newton-Raphson algorithm. When the response Y is binary, with values 0 and 1, the probit equation is

$$p = \Pr(Y = 0) = C + (1 - C) F(\beta X)$$

Where:

- B is a vector of parameter estimates
- F is a cumulative distribution function (the normal, logistic, or extreme value)
- X is a vector of explanatory variables
- P is the probability of a response
- C is the natural (threshold) response rate

The probit model that was estimated using the LIMDEP 7.0 statistical package can be stated as:

$$P_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + \beta_7 X_{7i} + \beta_8 X_{8i}$$

- P_i = Poverty status dummy (poor = 1, 0 otherwise).
- X_1 = Sex (male = 1, 2 otherwise).
- X_2 = Marital status dummy (married = 1, 0 otherwise).
- X_3 = Size of the household.
- X_4 = Education dummy (formal education = 1, 0 otherwise).
- X_5 = Household income (₦)
- X_6 = Dependency Ratio
- X_7 = Major occupation (civil servant = 1, 0 otherwise)
- X_8 = Number of years spent in school (Years)

4.0 Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1.1 Distribution of farmers by Socio-economic Characteristics in the study area

Table 1 showed that majority 66.7 percent of the respondents were male which showed that male farming household heads were more than female in the study area. This can be attributed to the predominance of the male headed households in both rural and urban areas in Nigeria and nature of farming operation which require more strength. This result agreed with the work of Aigbhokhan (2000) titled “Poverty, Growth and inequality in Nigeria: A Case Study” where male-headed households were about 86.5% of the sample studied. The mean age of the respondents was 41.4 years. This implied that middle age respondents dominated the study area. The findings of this study are in line with the work of Chrisand (2007) whose study mean age was 32 years. His work was on Effect of technology on groundnut production in Kaduna State. Table 1 showed that about 86 percent of the respondents were married. This implied that majority of the respondents were married.

The predominance of married people in the study area may be attributed to the prevalence of early marriages or the ideals of the customs and traditions that are held in high esteem. This is in line with the work of Adesanoye and Okunmadewa (2007) which titled “household impact to poverty in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria” in which 26.5% were single, 44.5% were married, 10% were divorced while 19% were widowed. The mean of the household size of the respondents was 6 members per household in the study area which showed a moderate size. This is in line with the findings of Oladejo (2011) in her work titled “Transactions Costs and Agricultural Household Supply Response of Maize Farmers in Osun State of Nigeria” which revealed that the mean household size for the respondents was 8.

Table 1: Distribution of farming households by socioeconomic characteristics

Socioeconomic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Gender			
Male	70	66.7	66.7
Female	35	33.3	100.00
Total	105	100.00	
Age group			
≤ 30	15	14.3	14.3
31-40	42	40	54.3
41-50	34	32.4	86.7
51-60	8	7.6	94.3
Above 60	6	5.7	100.00
Mean	41.4		
Total	105	100.00	
Marital Status			
Single	6	5.7	5.7
Married	90	85.7	91.4
Widowed	7	6.7	98.1
Divorced	2	1.9	100.00
Separated	0	0.00	
Total	105	100.00	
Family Size			
≤5	58	55.2	55.2
6-10	45	42.9	98.1
10-15	0	0	0
Above 15	2	1.9	100.00
Mean	6.0		
Total	105	100.00	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

4.1.2 Distribution of farming households by socioeconomic characteristics in the study area continue

Table 2 showed that majority of the farming households in the study area were literate with about 93.7 percent. This result agreed with the work of Adesanoye and Okunmadewa (2007) in which majority of the respondents were literate with about 90 percent. Table 2 revealed that the prevailing occupations of the household heads in the area included: civil servant, farming, artisans, transport, trading. 9.5% were civil servants, 47.6% were farmers, 15.3% were artisans, 5.7% were transporters and 21.9% were traders. This implied that there was no regular distribution of occupation among the respondents. Table 2 also revealed that 73.3% of the respondents earned income within the range of N5,000 and N100,000, 12.4% earned between N100,001 and N200,000. 7.6% of the respondents earned between N200,001 and N300,000, 1.9% earned between N300,001 and N400,000 while 4.8% of them earned above N400,000. This indicated that majority earned between N5,000 and N100,000 with which their mean income was N99,245.8. It showed that income of the respondents were quite low and it implied that consumption of good food, basic amenities such as clean water, health, education and energy might not be adequately afforded by the respondents. This agrees with the findings of Akpan *et al* (2012) in their work titled Factor Influencing Fertilizer Use Intensity among Small Holder Crop Farmers in Abak Agricultural Zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the mean annual household income of N87, 146.67 was also obtained among the respondents in their study.

Table 2: Distribution of farming households by socioeconomic characteristics in the study area continue

Socioeconomic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Cumm percent
Educational Level			
No formal	7	6.7	6.7
Primary	9	8.6	15.3
Secondary	35	33.3	48.6
Tertiary	54	51.4	100.00
Total	105	100.00	
Occupation			
Civil Servant	10	9.50	9.50
Farming	50	47.60	57.10
Artisan	16	15.30	72.40
Transport	6	5.70	78.10
Trading	23	21.90	100.00
Total	105	100.00	
Income Level(N)			
5,000-100,000	77	73.3	73.3
100,001-200,000	13	12.4	85.7
200,001-300,000	8	7.6	93.3
300,001-400,000	2	1.9	95.2
Above 400,000	5	4.8	100.00
Mean	N 99,245.8k		
Total	105	100.00	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

4.2 Analysis of Poverty among farming households in the study area

Table 3 showed the two broad issues in the measurement of poverty, there are establishment of a poverty line and choice of an index to measure poverty. In addition to the measurement of poverty line, an appropriate poverty measurement must reflect three basic elements namely the incidence, the gap/ dept and poverty intensity/severity is reflected in the extent to which the per capita expenditure of the poor on the poverty line. The total annual expenditure for all the farming households in the study area was ₦82,205,029k, the mean annual expenditure of the respondents in the study area was ₦782,905.04k per annum. The total per capita expenditure was ₦14,977,460.93k, the mean per capita expenditure was ₦142,642.49k per annum. It is necessary to get the poverty line to determine the number of the poor i.e. those below the poverty line. The poverty line is computed as 2/3 of the per capita expenditure mean (i.e. 2/3 of ₦142,642.49k) which gave ₦95,094.99k.

Therefore an household spending less than the amount obtained above annually on consumption is described as being poor relative to other households while any other household spending exactly the stipulated amount or higher than it on annual consumption connote that the respondent is non-poor. With a poverty line of ₦95,094.99k, the incidence of poverty (Po) or poverty head-count of the respondents in the study area was 0.990. These proportions of the respondents that could not satisfy needs like food, non-food, judge the essential.

The value indicated that 99.0% of the respondents in the area were below the poverty line and were therefore relatively consumption poor. The poverty depth (P1) was 0.989 for the respondents in the study area; this indicated that poverty is not only pervasive but also deeper. However, most of those who were poor were very deficient on spending i.e. greatly below the poverty line and require much improvement in spending to reach the poverty line. The poverty severity index (P2) was 0.988 for the farming households; this high value indicated that poverty is severe in the study area. The poverty severity index is 98.8% means that 104 households out of 105 respondents in the study area were extremely poor compared with the other household. This work contradicted the work of Amao and Awoyemi (2008) titled “Adoption of improved Cassava Varieties and its Welfare Effect on Producing Households in Osogbo ADP Zone of Osun State” which revealed that incidence of poverty (Po) was 0.20, poverty depth (P1) was 0.003 and poverty severity index (P2) was 0.004.

Table 3: Summary of Poverty Indices among farming households in the Study Area

Poverty Level	Poverty index
P ₀	0.990
P ₁	0.989
P ₂	0.988

Source: Field Survey, 2012

4.3 Determinants of Poverty among farming households in the Study Area

Table 4 showed the result of the determinants of poverty among farming households in the study area. The size of the household in the study area was significant at 5% level which implies that household size has a great importance in the determinant of poverty in the study area. As it was also positive, it indicated that the larger the household size the higher the probability of being poor. This is in contrast with the findings of Omonona et al (2006) which stated that household size was not a significant factor in the adoption analysis. Household income of the respondents in the study area in naira was significant at 1% level and negative which implies that the higher the income of the household, the lower the probability of being poor. Primary occupation of the respondents in the study area was also significant at 1% level and also negative which revealed that the more households were engaged in primary occupation, the lower the probability of being poor.

Table 4: Parameter Estimates of Probit Regression Model

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Constant	0.9426	0.4754	1.983
X ₁ Sex	0.3393	3.0846	0.110
(X ₂) Marital Status	0.5172	0.6656	0.777
(X ₃) Household Size	0.7931	4.0881	0.194**
(X ₄) Education Level	0.9242	5.1921	0.178
(X ₅) Household Income	- 0.2227	0.3067	-0.726*
(X ₇) Primary Occupation	- 0.3967	0.3711	-1.069*
(X ₈) No of Years Spent in School	- 0.6099	1.1130	-0.548

Source: Field Survey, 2012

*t value significant at 1% level, **t value significant at 5% level

4.4 Poverty Alleviation Strategy

In this study, 37.1% of the respondents had an increase in their income in the past 5 years. 7.6% were given grants for their business and 55.3% got no means of alleviating poverty. Still, this means of alleviating poverty had little or no effect on the poverty because cost and standard of living increases simultaneously. However, apart from these; Anwar (1998) suggested three basic measures as ways of alleviating poverty. (1) Promoting earning opportunities for the poor (2) Investing in Human capital and (3) Social safety net policy.

A specific poverty alleviation strategy is defined to address fragmentation in sectoral policies. Since labour is the main productive asset of the poor, the promotion of rapid growth of labour demand must be the corner stone of any poverty alleviation strategy.

Table 5 Poverty Alleviation Strategy among farming households in the study area

Poverty Alleviation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Increase Income	39	37.1	37.1
Government Grant	8	7.6	44.7
No Assistance	58	55.3	100
Total	105	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research work, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents in the study area were male, married and Christians. The age of the respondents is averagely 41. Most of the respondents in the study area have tertiary education and are natives of the study area. Majority of the respondents have household size of between 1 and 5, their major occupation is civil servant. The study further showed that incidence of poverty (Po) was 0.99, poverty depth (P1) was 0.989 and poverty severity index (P2) was 0.988. The significant factors in determining poverty in the study area as revealed by this study were household size, household income and primary occupation. Poverty alleviation strategies had little or no effect on the standard of living of the respondents in the study area. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested in order to reduce poverty in the study area: During the course of the study, it was discovered that respondents had little means of acquiring income. Therefore, efforts should be made towards increasing the sources of income of farming households in the study area. The study revealed that household size had inverse relationship with the level of poverty in the study area, therefore, large family size should be discouraged through education and measures like birth control of family planning. Furthermore, the promotion of rapid growth of labour demand requires that micro enterprises be favoured over uncompetitive large scale enterprises. Improving the human capital of the poor requires more finance in the social sector. Targeted subsidies be preferred over the universal subsidies as the former greatly reduce the economic costs in the fiscal budget.

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