



**THE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE RURAL POOR IN EBBO/KUCHI IN LAPAI
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study investigated the demographic, socio-economic and housing characteristics of the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Preliminary survey of the study area was carried out to observe some indicators of poverty. Ebbo/Kuchi is made up thirteen (13) districts; six (6) districts which are prone to poverty were selected. Data were acquired by means of face to face interview using structured questionnaire, table, chart and chi-square analytical techniques were used to show the relationship between variables. It was found out that (73.9%) of the sampled respondents are poor and their economic activity varies significantly with the level of poverty. That is to say their being poor is a result of economic activities. It was recommended that the government should improve the productive capacities of small scale farmer in rural areas by providing them with relevant inputs. And also the governments, Non-governmental organizations, religious, labour groups and academicians should commit themselves to the development of rural societies in order to alleviate rural poverty in Nigeria.

Keyword: *Characteristic, Rural, Poor, Ebbo/Kuchi, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria*

Introduction

Poverty is a fact of life for more than one billion people all over the world. In order to live we must satisfy a variety of needs, when important needs are not met, individuals or households are said to be in poverty because the conditions of their life are not considered satisfactory. Deaver K and D. Brown (1984) More than fifty percentage of the world's population are living in absolute poverty. According to the world development report of 1985. Being poor has much to do with being deprived indicating a short fall and inadequacy from attaining internationally acceptable levels of well-being, this may be relative or absolute. Ascher, W (1984)

Taking absolute poverty for example Arigbede M.O (2014) noted that absolute poverty reflect in the condition of people who live below the poverty line or are too poor to obtain a calorie-adequate diet and thus do not have enough energy to earn a living.

According to Umar T.I (2017) poverty is the deprivation in the material requirement for minimally acceptable fulfillment of human need including food. this derivational concept goes far beyond lack of private income; it include the need for basic health care, education and essential service which prevent people from falling into poverty. In addition, many people believed that the country (Nigeria) has a lot of resources but its people are still poor. The 1999 Human Development Report Union indicated a human poverty index of 0.4 for Nigeria which placed the country among the 25th poorest nation of the world. William, B.M (1992):

Additional data in Nigeria further indicated that (1999) 1.65 percent of Nigerians as poor. Rural population without safe drinking water was seventy percentages (70%). Most rural populations are without basic health care and delivery facilities. Kofar A. (1989)

Nigeria is an oil rich country with a population of about 133 million. The oil wealth and rapid growth of recent year have brought little improvement in the life of the people. As oil price falls apart the incidence of poverty drastically increased. Olukosi J.O (2003)

However, critical surveys of many zones of the country indicate lack of social amenities such as water and equipped educational institutions. These situations are often associated with the degree of poverty in the rural societies. Schille B.R (1985)

Nevertheless despite the foregoing conditions of the poor people in the rural areas, there seems to be lack of concern among the poor in relation to their conditions. This might be due to economic, cultural, social and demographic characteristics of the people that brought about

individual negligence among the rural dwellers. It is on this basis that the study attempts to investigate the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Research Problem

Rural society is characterized by primary activities such as farming and is made up of different socio-economic value. Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai local Government Area is society endowed with some natural resource such as available land, agricultural resources could be harnessed to uplift the economic conditions or the status of the people. But the level of poverty still very high

To access the profile of the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai local Government Area The following questions have been asked on the focus problem.

- What is the characteristics of the rural poor
- Where do the poor live
- What is the nutritional standard of the poor
- What is the principal occupation of the rural people
- What is the average health condition of the poor people

This study focuses on the characteristic of the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria and the specific objective is to analyze the socio-economic and demographic characteristic of the poor, analyze the economic activities of the poor, and examine the relationship between gender and rural poverty. Findings are expected to proffer solutions that could aid the problems of rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai local Government Area of Niger State in Nigeria

Review of Related Literature

One of the major problems involved in the study of poverty at any time is that of definition. Dike N (1997) in his work argued that one of the main problems of describing how many people live in poverty and who they are is that of definition. In fact, for better understanding of the nature and scope of poverty particularly in the rural society, certain variable needs to be examined. Therefore, some important areas revealed in this study include: characteristics of rural poor, causes of rural poverty, implication of rural poverty and combating the rural

poverty effectively in Nigeria. Using Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local government area in Niger state as a case study

Characteristics of Rural Poor

Runcimamn (2011) point that land is the major source of income of the rural inhabitant therefore variation in land size lead to distinction income distribution among the rural dwellers. According to Rose(2011) the poor population often lives in remote areas and most of the vital service do not reach them and the opportunities of sharing political power or participation in decision that affects them are limited. Rose who state that the poor are weak, powerless and isolated They are difficult to find and hard to learn from. She also pointed that “ the poor are scarcely met’, when they are met, they often do not speak and even when they speak they are not listened to or pushed aside or interpreted in a bad light. There are two (2) main rural characteristic first; rural people usually live in farm steads or in groups of houses containing perhaps 5,000 -10,000 persons, separated by farmlands, pastures, trees or scrubland. Secondly, the majority of rural people spend most of their time on farms.

Most rural poor are small holder farmers who lived in low fertility regions and are independent on uncertain rainfall. Their survival depends on subsistence crops and sometimes on live stocks.

The landless are among the poorest; they rely on selling their labour during seasonal peaks, but opportunities are rare and the rewards are minimal. Although rural women are most affected by poverty, they are denied equity in household decision making and communities’ participation. They also have limited access to credit, technology, land, education and health services. Those who live in remote areas have higher child/adult ratios, work insecurity and low income jobs they belong to ethnic minorities.

World development report (1990) pointed that Latin America for example the worst poverty occurs heavily in arid zone or in steep hill slope area ecologically vulnerable. However, some of the rural people are found in areas endowed with natural resources. It is also common for the rural poor to be cultivators. Petty traders and wages labourers at different time of the year they are hardly self sufficient. They lack money to buy household items such as salt, soap, cloths, just to mention but a few. Most of the rural poor are tax defaulters and lack money to pay school fees of their children and medication, the livelihood of the rural depends solely on farming. Whether they like it or not, they have low socio-economic status. The products of their farm are meant for home consumptions only little are taken to the local

market. Quite a number of them save little or nothing for investment. The situation which is economically termed as 'various cycle of poverty'

According to Englama A.A.&Bamidele (1997) rural areas have several specific features such as relatively low population densities, heavy reliance on resource based production and more limited access to public infrastructure and services. While agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in many areas, the economy is broader than agriculture.

In addition rural residents are also prone to other conditions associated with poverty; malnutrition, substandard housing, poor health and high rates of disabilities.

The World Bank 'voice of the poor' based on research with over 20,000 poor people in 23 countries, identifies a range of factors which poor people identify as part of poverty. These include:

- ✚ Precarious livelihoods
- ✚ Excluded locations
- ✚ Physical limitation
- ✚ Gender relationship
- ✚ Problems in social relationship
- ✚ Lack of security
- ✚ Abuse of those in power
- ✚ Limited capabilities
- ✚ Weak community organization

Umar T.1 (2017) in his book, the world bank, argues that some analysis of poverty reflects pejorative, sometimes racial, stereotype of impoverished people as powerless victims and passive recipients of aid programs.

Causes of Rural Poverty

The causes of rural poverty are complex and multi-dimensional. They involve, among other things, culture, climate, gender, markets and public policy. Likewise the rural poor are quite diverse both in problems they face and the possible solutions. About one-fifth of the world's population is afflicted by poverty; these people live on less than 1.00 day. Poverty is not only a state of existence but also a process with many dimensions and complexities.

Rural poverty accounts for nearly 63% of poverty worldwide, reaching 90% in some countries like Bangladesh and between 65 and 90% in sub-Saharan Africa, some analysts believe

that poverty whenever it is found is more of a function of history economic structure rather than individual or group characteristic,

Umar T.I & Oduwole O. (2017) posited that the causes of poverty are poverty itself. “A poor father cannot educate his son neither can he give him any land, or very little land of poor quality”, every generation gets poorer. It is legacy of the poor health and education combined with limited resource to the minimum assets of a serious and often lifelong disadvantage

The rural economy is generally, characterized by a member of features Orshanky, M (2000). They include dependence on natural resources, a narrow industrial base in a given local and emphasis on low skill labour.

Routine manufacturing industries now tend to be the largest employers. The developments pose two problems. Specialization makes rural economics less elastic than the urban economics. Routine manufacturing is based on low skilled labour manufactures are tempted to leave rural area for foreign countries where wages rates are much lower.

Structural condition also affects the response of individual in two ways. That is the rural poor may accept part time work in favour of full time work, also displace worker may cease to look works. These according Umar T.I (2017) are more contributors to recent increase in rural poverty.

The foregoing reasons led Prof. Olukos in his “combating rural poverty a paper presented during the get-together dinner in honour of the of the deputy governor of Kwara state” he asserted that a number of factors contribute to increased poverty in Nigeria. These include the microeconomic distortion, effect of globalization, governance corruption, debts burden, low productivity, unemployment and high population growth rate are the main causes of rural poverty in Nigeria.

People remain poor because they feel no obligation to contribute to the society Umar T.I (2017)

Causes of poverty in the rural areas can be attributed to ill being in the rural location. For instance, distance market and very poor infrastructure can contribute to rural poverty. The rural poor cannot sell their crops in good times because bad road force them to pay more than what they are expected to pay before reaching even the nearest market and thus further compounding poverty. Umar T.I (2019)

Implication of rural poverty

Poverty can cause a lot of things to be individual in household and community. One such is food insecurity. Food in security means that the persons, household does not have access to adequate food at all times for maintenance of active life. Access to food at household level implies the ability of a household to provide food not by begging but through owned production, purchases bartering or gathering and hunting from the forest, poverty causes faster rate of aging to increase and cause lower income and purchasing power. In this sense poverty is gets poverty.

Poverty can lead to low self esteem and the will to self actualization. The person affected may no longer be able to lead a live worthy of human dignity. Whoever is poor have no access to the material things of life such as good drinking water, good nutrition, good education opportunities, health care, productivities, assets, economic infrastructure and ability to participate in decision making process. Lack of these resources and right can lead to a state of powerlessness, helplessness and despair. These predicaments can lead to desperation and helplessness and inter productive violence, high rate of robbery, theft and other deviant behaviour. Poverty can go beyond what include defenselessness, insecurity, vulnerability and exposure to risk shocks and stress. For the forgoing reasons, poverty must be curtailed in every society as a necessary condition for sustainable development.

Combating the rural poverty

According to UN estimates, about seventy five percent of the world 1.2 billion extremely poor people live in rural areas. Therefore this need gives priorities to address rural poverty. Several measures and approaches have been used to alleviate or combat rural poverty but could not yield positive result results. Experts argued that developing the nation numerous potential remain the best way to tackle the problem of poverty. It is an undisputable fact that most of our natural tourism sites are located in the rural areas where bulk of the population are said to reside.

Improving the condition of tourism in the nation will give jobs to the learning rural population by getting the rural poor engaged in such activities as sales of food, items arts and craft, and souvenirs around the tourism facility and this serves as the best way to combat rural poverty.

It is not worthy that former president Obasanjo's regime took not of the causative factors and noted that they foreword would require a well articulated and appreciated policy direction. In addition it is in line with the Nigeria participatory rural appraisal(NIPRANET), which advocated that community must be tapped to participate in the design, prioritization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project that directly affects them. This is bottom up rather than top down to actualize the bottom up approach, the following principle for effectively combating the rural poverty must be adopted.

- ❖ Demand driven programmes in which communities have the responsibilities to identify and prioritize their own programmes
- ❖ Implementation should be the responsibility of the communities with active participation of skills NGO community.
- ❖ Decentralization of decision making
- ❖ Empowerment of local communities through acquiring of skills and resource themselves.
- ❖ Minimum bureaucracy in the operation of the poverty alleviation project.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study Survey Research The survey research involves field reconnaissance visits and administration of well-structured questionnaire. Initially a map of Lapai were acquired from the Lapai local government council. A number of visits were undertaken to update the map by adding new structures and removing non existing structures and information. Once a credible base map has be prepared, two reconnaissance visits were undertaken to identify and indicate the boundaries of the various districts in Ebbo/Kuchi and establish the urbanization stages of the town. This information is necessary and essentially for the delimitation and delineation the four zones proposed for the social survey.

Types and Sources of Data

In the course of the study and also to accomplish the aims and objectives of the study, various methods were used in the process of data acquisition. Data that is used for the work is collected from two (2) major sources which are:

- Primary sources
- Secondary sources

Primary Sources of Data

Structured questionnaire were used to obtain the behavior, opinion while interview instrument was adopted to establish personal verbal communication between the researcher and respondents. Field observation was equally employed.

Secondary Sources of Data

The secondary data is obtained from relevant textbooks, reputable journals, conference and seminar papers, relevant maps, internet and dissertation/thesis, other areas where this data were derived include the department of works and housing at Lapai Local Government Council, Library which were repository of information were also the researcher's source of secondary data for the study and also the Population Census Board were visited for secondary data.

Method of Data Collection (Instrument)

Three sets of questionnaire were used for this survey. The first questionnaire, PART A was administered on the socio-economic and demographic information of respondents, while PART B was administered on the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria while PART C covers on the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria . In addition to the questionnaire, other methods were used to obtain information; these are recognizance survey so as to know the problem in Ebbo/Kuchi residential area and to be familiar with the study area. Also oral interview is conducted in the study area.

Validity of the Instrument

In other to ensure relevant question and to reach meaningful conclusion, the research instrument was subjected to meaningful validation through several criticism and amendment. The structured questionnaire was submitted to some experts in the department of Urban and Regional Planning, Lapai Local government council for their contributions. The final copies after thorough scrutiny were produced and sent to the field for administration.

Reliability of the Instrument

For concrete content and validity to be ensured, the questionnaires were pre-tested on thirty respondents in the study area. These were retrieved and revalidated by the researcher for final approval.

Method of Administration of Instrument

The questionnaires were administered to respondents in the study area. All the questionnaires were administered by hand; none is administered by post or by any electronic device. However, the researcher and his assistant went personally to the study area to administer the questionnaires. All completed questionnaires were retrieved at the spot by the researcher and his assistant. All instructions regarding how the respondents answered the questions were in very simple and clear terms

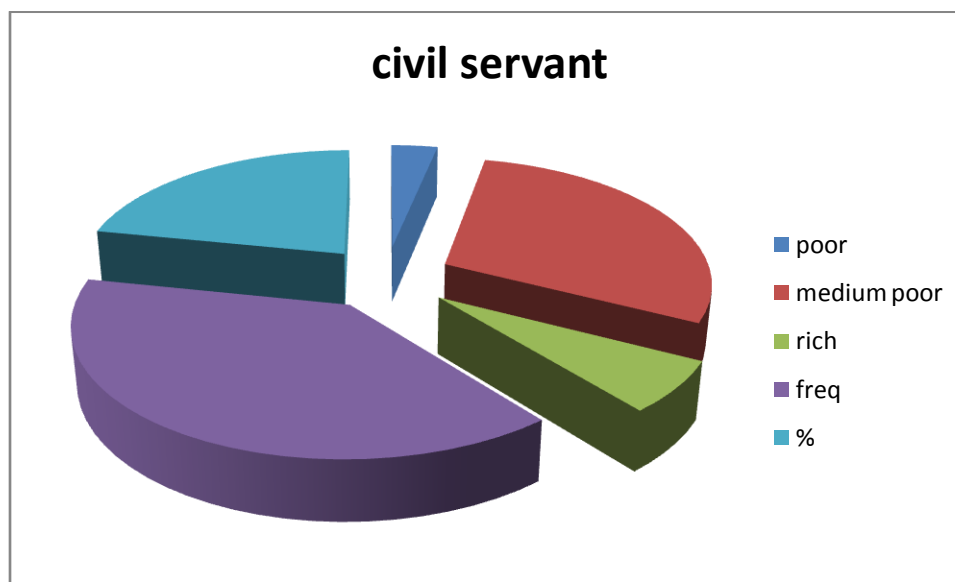
RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

Occupation and level of poverty

| Occupation | Poor | Medium poor | Rich | Frequency | % |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Civil servant | 1 | 9 | 2 | 12 | 6.7 |
| Teaching | 2 | 19 | 6 | 27 | 15 |
| Farming | 9 | 62 | 27 | 98 | 54.4 |
| Trading/bus | 2 | 22 | 19 | 43 | 23.9 |
| Total | 14 | 112 | 54 | 180 | 100 |

Sources Researcher's Field survey, 2020



Sources Researcher's Field survey, 2020

Chi square table

| Frequency | Expected frequency (E) | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² / E |
|------------|------------------------|-----|--------------------|------------------------|
| 12 | 45 | -33 | 1089 | 24.2 |
| 27 | 45 | -18 | 324 | 7.2 |
| 98 | 45 | 53 | 2809 | 62.4 |
| 43 | 45 | -2 | 4 | 0.09 |
| 180 | 180 | | | 93.09 |

Sources Researcher's Field survey, 2020

Decision Making

0.05 significant level the calculated value (93.89) is higher than the table value (7.82). Decision rule is to reject H₀ and accept H₁ that is there is significant difference between rural poverty and low economic status of the people of Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

Major findings

The objectives of the study is to analyse the demographic, socio- economic and physical characteristics of the rural poor in Ebbo/Kuchi in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria, to analyze the economic activities of the rural poor, examine the relationship between occupation and poverty level, lastly to identify the strategies that can be taken to alleviate the problem. Finding revealed that about (73.9%) of the sampled respondents are poor as against (26.7%) that are relatively rich, it has been revealed that about (34.4%) of the rural societies is dominated largely by young men and women of age less than 30 years similarly, finding shows that majority (25.5%) of the respondents in Ebbo/Kuchi have secondary school certificate, followed by illiterate (25%) who had never attended school. Nevertheless, the literate ones have diploma, NCE and university education. But poverty is likely to be mention among the illiterate more than their literate counterparts. It was discovered that the respondents are found in diverse occupation but there is no relationship between occupation and poverty. About (46.5%) earned less than #51,000 and above. Finding also pointed out that large proportion of the respondents (42.2%) live in houses built with mud and (83.3%) live in houses roofed with corrugated iron sheet.

Recommendations

To successfully eradicate poverty completely is not financially feasible especially for most developing countries. On the basis of the analysis and review of government plans and programmes the following important recommendations have been suggested for poverty alleviation.

- ❖ The relationship between population and poverty suggest that a change from large to small household size, norms and consequently reduction of dependency ratio are important approaches for poverty.
- ❖ The equity and redistribution aspects should be the main focus of almost all policy issues such as agricultural growth, industrial development, employment generation, creation of educational facilities, rural development appear to be a basic pre-condition for lifting a society out of poverty.
- ❖ Intensive use of agricultural land is essential strategies for alleviation of rural poverty are also important strategies for higher production alleviation of rural poverty.
- ❖ Special emphasis could also be given on the development of basic need good industries in order to create multiplier effect on rural income. In the rural industrial sector could be intensified, there would be some expansion of job opportunity for the poor.
- ❖ Special programmes for asset forming, self employment opportunities in non formal activities like manufacturing, fishers, livestock, social forestry trade etc can be implemented under various institutional arrangement with inputs support like credit training and expansion support services for income generation and thereby help in reducing poverty.

Conclusively, it is necessary to allocate public resource in favour of the rural agro related programmes in a pronounced manner also the Non-governmental organization, religious group, labour group and academicians should commit themselves to the development of the rural societies in order to alleviate rural poverty in Nigeria.

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