

Assessment of Income Poverty among Farmers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed income poverty among farmers using six Agricultural Zones in Akwa Ibom State. Data on the number of registered farmers in the six (6) Agricultural Zones and data on the level of income across the six agricultural zones in the area used for the study were obtained from the Akwa Ibom State Agriculture Development Project (AKADep). Questionnaire was administered to the sampled farmers across the Agricultural zones in the area in order to obtain data. Descriptively, tables, charts, percentages, averages, frequencies, mean and maps was used to explain income poverty in the area, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool was used to determine the spatial variation of income poverty among farmers across the six (6) agricultural zones in the area. From the results, the annual income across the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State indicates that in Uyo Zone, the farmers annual income was between ₦121,000 – ₦140,000,810. In Eket Agric zone, the respondents' income level was less than ₦100,000.00 annually. In the same vein, the farmers' in Abak zone were within ₦141,000.00 – ₦160,000.00 annual income range. In Oron and Etinan Agric zones, the respondents earned between ₦100, 000.00 - ₦120,000.00 annually respectively. Furthermore, the results showed that annual income of the respondents in the area was relatively low as the people earned less than ₦100, 000.00 and ₦120,000.00. Also, the calculated F- value of 53.426 is greater than the table value of 2.64 at 0.010 significant level, the “H₁” indicating a significant variation in income poverty among farmers across the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: assessment, income poverty, farmers, agricultural zones, Akwa Ibom State.

INTRODUCTION

Rural poverty the world over, has been observed to be a major problem in the socio-economic development of rural inhabitants. Poverty has been conceived to be the lack of command over commodities and resources that provide people with income and consumption (Lipton and Ravallion, 1995). Also, Sen (1984) viewed poverty as the extent to which the consumption of certain goods and services affords certain capabilities. Therefore, poverty occurs where there is poor production, income inequality, low income, rising vulnerability, destitution resulting from misdistribution of resources, low calorific intake, absence of resources, low life expectancy, stagnation of local economic growth and limitations of access to health, sanitation and education. In spite of the economic policies and institutional structures aimed at reducing income inequality, most rural economies are still characterized by low incomes and rising vulnerability (World Bank, 2008).

These manifestations confirm the prevalence of poverty in Akwa Ibom State, especially among the rural and

peri-urban dwellers. Inequality is high in Akwa Ibom State as the total expenditure per month of the highest 10 percent of the population (N8, 235) is seven times higher than that of the lowest 10 percent of the same population (N1,120). Also, using the Gini Index, inequality is 44 percent for food items and 55 percent for non-food items. Additionally, while the overall urban poverty index was 53 percent, rural poverty index was 76 percent. Also, 81 percent of the rural poor use uncovered traditional pit latrines with HIV prevalence rate of 8 percent, second only to Benue State with 10 percent prevalence rate. Rural Akwa Ibom is inhabited by landless, uneducated poor and its crop yield is low because of degraded and polluted land. Its agriculture is mostly subsistent and rain-fed and its man-land ratio is approximately 1. Furthermore, 89.2 percent of the population in Akwa Ibom State resides in the rural areas and 74 percent live below the poverty line of ₦4,954 per adult per month. Therefore, the incidence of poverty has been described as “high, extensive and deep” (AK-BASES, 2005). Based on these, there is high (36.1

percent) unemployment among the rural residents who are characterized by low incomes, high level of poverty, poor quality of life, poor shelter, lack of access to potable water, poor sanitary conditions, poor transportation, poor energy supply and even poor storage facilities for harvested agricultural produce. Consequently, these have led to increased rural-urban migration, high crime rate, kidnapping, advance fee fraud, social unrest and juvenile delinquency thus, making the rural socio-economic growth and development stagnant and redundant and the urban areas vulnerable to insecurity.

According to Bardhan, (1973) and Ahluwalia (1976), Poverty can be measured using the head count ratio which is based on the ratio or percentage of the number of individuals or households whose income are not equal to the poverty line to the total number of individuals or households (Ginneken 1980). Another method of measuring intensity of poverty is the “income-gap” ratio. Here the deviation of the poor’s incomes from the poverty line is averaged and divided by the poverty line or expressed as its percentage (World Bank, 1980; Ogwumike; 1987; Echebiri, 1997; Van de Walle, 1990). However, with the prevalent rate of poverty in the area, the possibility of increase in social vices and juvenile delinquencies among siblings of the rural poor farmers could bring about social unrest and civil strife in the relatively calm and peaceful rural and peri-urban areas of Akwa Ibom State. This study is therefore aimed at assessing income poverty among rural farmers in Akwa Ibom State. However, this paper is significant numerous ways especially as it highlights the level of income poverty in the study area. Thus, the paper helps to show the spatial and temporal poverty level in different agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State. Hence, it has provided a baseline information on the poverty level among peasant farmers.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Study Area

Akwa Ibom State which was proclaimed on September 23, 1987, is situated between longitudes 7⁰30’ and 8⁰20’E and latitude 4⁰30’ 5⁰30’N with a total area of 8,412km² and a shoreline of 12km (FIG. 1). The map of Akwa Ibom State roughly represents a triangle; it is bounded to the West by Rivers and Abia States, Cross River State to the East and the Atlantic River on the South-southern Nigerian coastal plain. It has a population of 3.9 million and 31 Local Government Areas of which Uyo, the State Capital has 305,000 (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2009). Ninety percent of its population live in the rural areas (AK-BASES, 2005) and are engaged mainly in agriculture, trading and the gathering of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). The near absence of industrialization makes Akwa Ibom State a “Civil Service State”. The State is characterized by two seasons, the wet and rainy seasons that last for about 7-8 months, and the short dry season during which the State is covered by dry, dusty, harmattan winds which last for about 4-5months. Rainfall ranges between 2000mm and 3000mm with annual mean temperature between 27⁰c and 28⁰c (Ekanem, 2010). Agricultural and related works engage about 70 percent of the people of Akwa Ibom State (Okoji and Ekanem, 2010). But agriculture has remained the mainstay and is at subsistent level. Oil palm (*Elaeis Guinensis*) seems to be the only industrial crop and this necessitated the setting up of Akwa Palm Industries in 1981 to harness the full potentials of the crop. Rubber (*Hevea Brasilensis*) and Cocoa (*Theobroama Cacao*) are the other tree crops seeking attention for commercial cultivation. Livestock reared include small-scale poultry, piggery and goats. The coastline of 129 kilometres is characterized with mangrove swamps, rivers, creeks and flood plains. However, fishing practices are still rudimentary and aquaculture negligible.

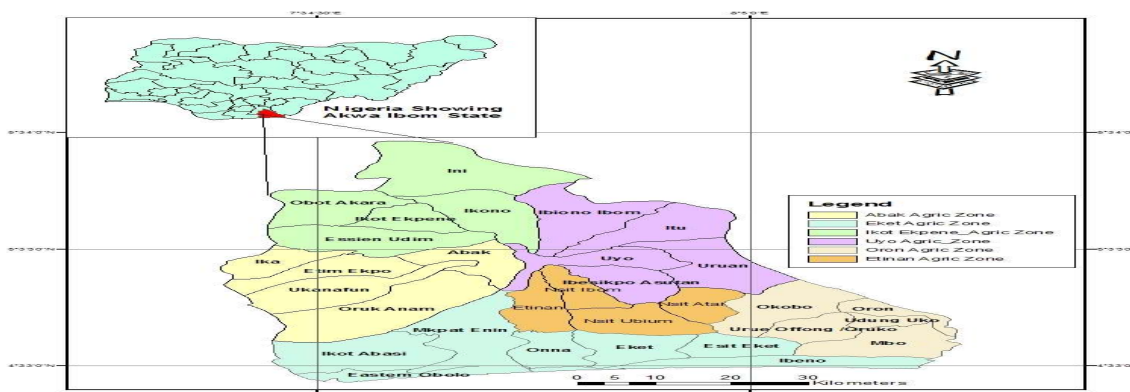


FIG.1: Akwa Ibom State Showing the Different Agricultural Zones

TYPES DATA AND SOURCES

The major type of data required for this study were data on the number of registered farmers in the six (6) Agricultural Zones of Akwa Ibom State and data on the level of income across the six agricultural zones in the area. These data were required to ascertain the level of poverty among rural farmers in the state. These data were sourced from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data included copies of the questionnaire administered to the farmers. While secondary sources of data included number of registered farmers in the State obtained from the Akwa Ibom State Agriculture Development Project (AKADEP).

PROCEDURE AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

For data from primary sources, the respondents will be allowed to record their responses in spaces provided in the questionnaire according to instructions. In the case of illiterate farmers/respondents, their responses will be recorded for them through the aid of the trained field assistants. This will form the core of this work as much of the data will be collected via questionnaires. The population of study was made up of registered farmers in the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State which sums up to 70,535 in number. Furthermore, the Taro Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size. Hence, a total of 778 registered farmers were sampled across the State as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 1: Registered Farmers in the Agricultural Zones and proportionate sample size form the study

S/N	Agricultural zone	Population of study (Registered Farmers in the Agricultural Zones)	Proportionate sample size (No. of Respondents)
1	Uyo	48241	492
2	Eket	476	15
3	Oron	1297	66
4	Ikot Ekpene	19621	159
5	Etinan	331	17
6	Abak	569	29
	Total	70535	778

Source: Author’s Computation, (2015).

TABLE 2: Annual income of respondents across the six agricultural zones

S/N	OPTION	UYO FREQ	%	EKET FREQ	%	ABAK FREQ	%	IKOT EKPENE FREQ	%	ORON FREQ	%	ETINAN FREQ	%
a	Less than N100,000	94	19.4	7	33.3	13	20	32	25.4	6	8.82	3	9.1
b	N100,000- N120,000	101	22.5	6	28.6	12	18.5	48	38.1	19	27.9	17	51.5
c	N121,000- N140,000	113	23.3	0	0	6	9.23	14	11.1	14	20.6	7	21.2
d	N141,000- N160,000	103	21.2	3	14.3	21	32.3	14	11.1	11	16.2	2	6.1
e	Above N180,000	66	13.6	5	23.8	13	20	18	14.3	18	26.5	4	12.1
	Total	485	100	21	100	65	100	126	100	68	100	33	100

Source: Author’s Field Report, 2015

The sampling technique used for this study includes the multi-stage sampling based on the six (6) Agricultural Zones in the State as demarcated by the Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Project (AKADEP). In the first stage, purposive sampling was used in selecting Local Government Areas with established registered farmers. In the second stage, the lists of registered farmers were being sorted out for the respective LGAs for computation and administration of copies of the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the field were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptively, tables, charts, percentages, averages, frequencies, mean and maps was used to bring the study to a clear perspective. On the other hand, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Statistical tool was used to determine the spatial variation of income poverty among farmers across the six (6) agricultural zones in the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Annual Income of Respondent

The annual income in across the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State as shown in Table 5a indicates that in Uyo Zone, the farmers annual income was between ₦121,000 – ₦140,000,810 as the option had a value of 23.3 per cent. In Eket Agric zone, the respondents' income level was less than ₦100,000.00 annually. In the same vein, the farmers' in Abak zone were within ₦141,000.00–₦160,000.00 annual income range as the option had a value of 32.3 per cent. In Oron and Etinan Agric zones, the respondents were within ₦100,000.000- ₦120,000.00 with 27.9 per cent and 55.5 per cent values respectively.

Annual Income of Respondents in Akwa Ibom State

From the foregoing, it can be observed that the annual income of the respondents in the area was relatively low as the people who earn less than ₦100, 000.00 and ₦120,000.00 were much with a total value of 26.4 per cent which was the highest. This was closely followed by those within the income level of ₦121,000.00 - ₦140,000.00 and ₦141,000.00—₦160,000.00 with a percent value of 19.3 per cent respectively. This showed that, poverty in the area was still high as the income level was relatively low. Those within the lowest rung of the income ladder were second with percentage of 19.4 percent. These was closely followed by those within the ₦120,000.00 - ₦140,000.00 and the ₦141,000.00- ₦160,000.00 with 19.3 per cent value each. The respondents with annual income in excess of ₦160,000.00 were mere 15.5 per cent, on the whole, table 5b reveals that income levels were generally low, suggesting a high prevalence of income poverty

Table 2: Annual income of respondents in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	Less than ₦ 100,000	155	19.4
b	₦ 100,000 - ₦ 120,000	211	26.4
c	₦ 120,000 - ₦ 140,000	154	19.3
d	₦ 141,000 - ₦ 160,000	154	19.3
e	Above ₦ 160,000	124	15.5
	Total	798	100

Source: Author’s Field Report, 2015

Spatial Variation of income poverty among farmers across the six agricultural zones

In an attempt to determine the spatial variation of income poverty among farmers across the six agricultural zones, a study hypothesis was postulated as follows;

Ho: There is no significant variation in income poverty among farmers in the six agric zones.

H1: There is a significant variation in income poverty among farmers in the six agric zones.

From the result, since the calculated F- value of 53.426 is greater than the table value of 2.64 at 0.010 significant level, the “H₁” which states that there is a significant variation in income poverty among farmers across the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State was therefore accepted. The result showed that the actual difference in the mean scores between group was quite large with the effect size calculated using eta squared giving a value of 0.06 which is large effect as classified by Cohen (1988).

TABLE 4: Results for Analysis of Variance on variatic poverty Across the six Agricultural Zones

Agriczone	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29258.160	5	5851.632	53.426	.010
Within Groups	2519.150	23	109.528		
Total	31777.310	28			

Source: SPSS Version 18.0 output

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study highlighted the poverty situation in Akwa Ibom State. The results revealed that the level of rural poverty was actually high across the entire agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State. The annual income across the six agricultural zones in Akwa Ibom State indicates that in Uyo Zone, the farmers annual income was between ₦121,000 – ₦140,000,810. In Eket Agric zone, the respondents' income level was less than ₦100,000.00 annually. In the same vein, the farmers' in Abak zone were within ₦141,000.00 – ₦160,000.00 annual income range. In Oron and Etinan Agric zones, the respondents earned between ₦100, 000.00 - ₦120,000.00 annually respectively. Furthermore, the results showed that annual income of the respondents in the area was relatively low as the people earned less than ₦100, 000.00 and ₦120,000.00. This was closely followed by those within the income level of ₦121,000.00 - ₦140,000.00 and ₦141,000.00- ₦160,000.00 with a percent value of 19.3 per cent respectively. Furthermore, those within the lowest rung of the income ladder were second with percentage of 19.4 percent, closely followed by those within the ₦120,000.00 - ₦140,000.00 and the ₦141,000.00- ₦160,000.00 with 19.3 per cent values respectively.

Consequent upon these findings, the authorities concerned with poverty reduction/alleviation responsibilities should adopt a geo-spatial approach in handling poverty issues. For instance, this study adopted the geo-spatial perspective (six agricultural zones) in carrying out its aim. Therefore, if each of these agricultural zones is studied in detailed manner, poverty levels would be drastically reduced over time.

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