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DETERMINANTS OF POVERTY STATUS OF RURAL FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the determinants of poverty status of rural farming households in Osun State, South western, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and twenty representative farming households comprising of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme (FEP) in the state were used for the study. Descriptive statistics, the Foster, Greer and Thorbecke class of weighted poverty indices as well as the Tobit regression model were used to analyse the data generated from the survey. The results of the poverty indices show that 35 per cent of the beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme were poor as against 55 per cent for the non-beneficiaries of the programme. The regression results show household size, amount of credit utilised and annual farm income as the factors influencing the poverty status of the rural farming households in the state. The lower incidence of poverty and access to credit for the beneficiaries of FEP in the state are indications of better welfare for this category of farming households. It is therefore suggested that the programme be sustained for poverty reduction among farming households in the state.

Keywords: Farmers empowerment programme, poverty measures, Tobit regression model, farming households.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a common plague afflicting people all over the world but more pronounced in developing nations of the globe. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2009) asserts that poverty is a complex phenomenon which encompasses alongside low income, other concepts such as illness and lack of education, social exclusion, entitlement failure, vulnerability to shocks and lack of a voice in a decision that concerns oneself. National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP, 2006) describes poverty as a condition where an individual or group could not have access to basic needs for human existence and are considered as poor when compared with other members of the society. Poverty according to World Bank (2011) has many dimensions, including low income, lack of education, environmental degradation and gender inequality. The incidence of poverty in developing countries has assumed an endemic proportion that its reduction tops the United Nations' Millennium Develop-

ment Goals. In Nigeria, poverty continues to be on the increase despite several past measures put in place to eradicate it. Such measures include among others the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and Farmers Empowerment Programme (FEP) which is a scheme under NAPEP. Despite these measures however farming households in the rural areas still record high incidence of poverty and lack adequate access to credit facility (Olorunsanya and Omotesho, 2012). This study therefore examines the determinants of poverty status of rural farming households in Osun State with specific attention given to the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the state. The specific objectives of the study are: to examine the socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the study area; determine the poverty status of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the state as well as identify the determinants of poverty status of the rural farming households in the state. The results obtained from the study would inform policy on poverty eradication strategy in the state. The Farmers Empowerment Programme (FEP), a form of microfinance of some sort was initiated to improve the livelihood of the rural farming households in Nigeria. It is one of the schemes used by National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) to alleviate poverty in Nigeria. The Farmers Empowerment Programme is specifically designed to give agricultural credit to resource poor farmers to enhance their productivity. NAPEP, initiated in 2001 undertakes this scheme with the state and local government as well as specialised agricultural agencies. Hossain (2002) defines microfinance as the practice of offering small, collateral-free loans to members of cooperatives who otherwise would not have had access to capital. It is also the provision of financial services to resource poor low income households with no access to formal credit (Adeyeye, 2003). It is an effective and innovative tool for alleviating poverty among rural dwellers (Simanowitz, *et al.,* 2000 and Data, 2004). Access to financial services enables the poor to increase their households' income, acquire productive assets and reduce their vulnerability to poverty.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Osun State, South Western Nigeria. The target population for the study were the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the state. Sixty farming households were randomly selected from the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme based on the information provided by the ministry of agriculture of the state to give a total of 120 representative farming households for the study. Information used for the study include those on socio-economic, farm related and those on expenditure made on food and non-food items by the rural farming households. The expenditures on food include those on staples such as beans, garri, rice, yam, palm oil and so on and expenditure on non staple food items such as eggs, meat among others. The non-food items of expenditure include those on accommodation, clothing, electricity and medical care. The items of wealth owned by the farming households were also examined. The considered wealth items include radio players, television sets, cell phones, motorcycles, fans, refrigerators and bicycles. The data generated from the survey were analysed using descrip-

tive statistics, poverty measures and Tobit regression model. A poverty threshold was obtained using the two-third of the mean consumption per adult equivalent of the rural farming households. This threshold was used to separate the poor from the non -poor. The Foster, Greer and Thorbecke class of poverty measures was then used to profile the poverty status of the rural farming households in the study area. The formula following Foster *et al.,* (1984) and as adapted by IFAD, (1993) is specified as follows:

$$P_\alpha = 1/n \sum_{i=1}^{q} (z - y_i / z)^\alpha \quad ; \text{ a is from 0 to2} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(1)$$

where:

Y_i is the expenditure per adult equivalent of *ith* household

Z is the poverty line, n is number of households; q is the number of the sampled population below the poverty line and α is aversion to poverty, a coefficient reflecting different degrees of importance accorded to the depth or severity of poverty. The Tobit regression model was also used to identify the factors affecting the poverty status of the farming households. The regression model is expressed as follows:

$$\text{Si} = \quad S_i^* = \beta X_i + e_i \quad \text{if} \quad S_i^* > 0 \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots(2)$$

$$0 = \beta X_i + e_i \quad \text{if} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(3)$$

$$i = 1,2,3.....20 \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(4)$$

Where: S_i is the limited dependent variable, it is discrete when the households are not poor (it assumes zero value in this case) and continuous when they are poor that is equal to S_i^*. S_i^* is the poverty gap defined as $(Z - Y_i / Z)$ and Z is the poverty line; X_i is the vector of explanatory variables; Y_i consumption expenditure per adult equivalent; b vector of unknown parameters; e_i is independently distributed error term. The independent variables hypothesised as determinants of poverty following Haddad and Ahmed (2003) and with some modifications are specified as follows:

X_1 = Educational level of the household heads in years
X_2 = Household size in adult equivalent
X_3 = Amount spent on children education in naira
X_4 = Annual farm income in naira
X_5 = Farming experience in years
X_6 = Amount of credit utilised in naira by the farming households
X_7 = Marital status; a dummy which is equal to 1 for married household heads and 0 otherwise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiary and non-beneficiaries of the empowerment programme in the study area are shown in Table 1. The table reveals that 57 per cent of the household heads of the beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme are below 40 years of age and thus are in their active and virile age to effectively utilise the fund for farming purposes. The modal age class for the heads of the non-beneficiary households however fall between 41– 60 years of age showing that the household heads in this category are aged and are probably not aware of the programme judg-

ing by their low level of education; 40 per cent have only primary education. cent have no formal education and 32 per

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Beneficiary and Non-Beneficiary of the Farmers' Empowerment Programme in Osun State, Nigeria

Variables	Beneficiary	Non-Beneficiary
Gender		
Male	50 (83.3)	51 (85.0)
Female	10 (16.7)	9 (15.0)
Age:		
<40	34 (56.7)	13 (21.7)
40-60	26 (43.3)	37 (61.6)
>60	0 (0)	10 (16.7)
Marital Status		
Single	8 (13.3)	1(1.67)
Married	50 (83.3)	49 (81.7)
Widowed	0 (0.0)	3 (5.0
Separated	2 (3.3)	3 (5.0)
Divorced	0 (0.0)	4 (6.7)
Educational Status		
Non-Formal	8 (13.3)	24 (40.0)
Arabic	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)
Primary	8 (13.3)	19 (31.7)
Secondary	32 (53.3)	12 (20.0)
Tertiary	12 (20.0)	4 (6.7)
Farming Experience in Years		
1-10	24 (40.0)	4 (6.7)
11-20	21 (35.0)	10 (16.7)
Above 20	15 (25.0)	46 (76.7)
Household Size		
1-5	32 (53.3)	4 (6.7)
6-10	21 (35.0)	26 (43.3)
11-15	7 (11.7)	18 (30.0)
16-20	0 (0.0)	10 (16.7)
Above 20	0 (0.0)	2 (3.3)
Occupational Status		
Farming	12 (20.0)	38 (63.3
Civil Service and Farming	19 (31.7)	3 (5.0)
Artisanary Work and Farming	29 48.3)	19 (31.7)
Amount of Loan Obtained		
< N20,000	25 (41.67)	-
N20,000-N40,000	17 (28.3)	-
N40,001-N60,000	13 (21.7)	-
>N60,000	5 (8.3)	-

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Over 83 % of the heads of the farming households in the beneficiary category are married. About 82 % of the heads of the households in the non-beneficiary category are also married. In the same vein over 80 % of the farming households are males showing the dominance of males in farming activities in the study area as is the case in most parts of Nigeria (NBS, 2006). 67% of the heads of the beneficiaries have at least secondary education. This probably accounts for their awareness of the programme and is an indication that young people could engage in farming if necessary incentives are available. The study further shows that 50% of the non-beneficiaries have large family size of more than ten members per household as against 12% for the beneficiaries. Large family size could provide ample family labour for farming activities only if such household members are not engaged in school or other income generating activities. However, it could also put a high pressure on households' income and further increase their level of impoverishment (Olorunsanya and Omotesho, 2012; Martins and Fernandes, 2008; FAO, 2008; and Fagernas and Wallace, 2007).

Living Condition Characteristics of the Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme

Table 2 presents the living condition characteristics of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State, south western, Nigeria. Access to modern toilet facility is relatively poor in the study area only 12 per cent of the beneficiaries and none of the non -beneficiaries have access to modern toilet facility (water closet). This shows the extent of the poor sanitary condition of the rural farming households in the study area with a negative implication on their health status and the environment. Dhanani and Islam, (2002) reported poor availability of modern sanitary facilities in Indonesia.

Table 2: Living Condition Characteristics of the Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State

Variables	Beneficiaries	Non-Beneficiaries
Types of Toilet Facility		
Open Space	15 (25.0)	37 (61.7)
Water Closet	7 (11.7)	0 (0.0)
Pit Latrine	38 (63.3)	23 (38.3)
Sources of Water Supply		
Stream	5 (8.3)	17 (28.3)
Well	33 (55.0)	19 (31.7)
Borehole	19 (31.7)	24 (40.0)
Tap	3.0 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
Types of Medical Facility		
Traditional	1 (1.7)	7 (11.7)
Clinic/ Dispensary	59 (98.3)	53 (88.3)
Sources of Energy for Cooking		
Wood Fuel	16 (26.7)	35 (58.3)
Charcoal	18 (30.0)	7 (11.7)
Kerosene	26 (43.0)	18 (30.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table further shows that over 28 per cent of the non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme utilise stream water. Generally there is poor availability of potable water to the entire farming households in the study area; only five per cent of the beneficiaries have access to tap water. The rural farming households in the study area however have access to modern medical facility (98% of the beneficiaries have access to modern medical facility as well as 88 per cent of the non-beneficiaries). The use of wood fuel as a source of energy for cooking is prominent among non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the study area; 58 per cent of the non-beneficiaries utilise wood fuel for cooking as against 27 per cent for the beneficiaries of the programme. This shows a high level of wood fuel utilisation by the non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the study area and a negative implication on the ecosystem if left unchecked. Olorunsanya and Omotesho (2011) reported poor availability of modern toilet facilities in rural Kwara, Nigeria as well as Dhanani and Islam (2002) in rural Indonesia.

Living Condition Characteristics of the Beneficiaries before and after FEP in Osun State

The study also examines the type and quality of the accommodation facilities for the beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme before and after their involvement in the programme. The results indicate a considerable improvement in the quality and type of accommodation of the beneficiaries after their involvement in the poverty alleviation programme since 2001. Only 13 per cent of the beneficiaries had financial means of building houses before the empowerment programme while 87 per cent lived in hired accommodation. The number of house owners rose to 37 per cent after their involvement in the Farmers Empowerment Programme. The impact of the involvement of the beneficiaries in the empowerment programme is also seen in the improvement in the quality of education given to their wards (Table 3).

Table 3: Living Condition of the Beneficiaries Before and After FEP in Osun State

Variables	Before The Empowerment Programme	After The Empowerment Programme
Types of Accommodation		
Rented Single Room	19 (31.7)	8 (13.3)
Rented Room and Parlour	18 (30.0)	13 (21.7)
Rented Flat	15 (25.0)	17 (28.3)
Self Built House	8 (13.3)	22 (36.7)
Types of Farmers' Children's Schools		
Public Schools	44 (73.3)	21 (35.0)
Private Schools	16 (26.7)	39 (65.0)
Asset Ownership		
Radio	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)
Television Set	53(88.0)	60 (100.00)
Refrigerator	17 (28.33)	28 (46.7)
Iron	21 (35.0)	34 (56.7)
Generating set	12 (20.0)	30 (50.0)
Fan	40 (66.67)	42 (70.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Sixty-five per cent of the beneficiaries' children attend private schools after their involvement in the programme as against 28 per cent before their involvement in the empowerment programme. This is an indication of improvement in their children's education which serves as a measure of the rural farming households' welfare judging by the poor state of public primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. In terms of asset ownership and access to and utilisation of credit there has also been a considerable improvement in the beneficiaries' welfare.

Poverty Profile of Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State

Poverty profile of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State is presented in Table 4. The two-third and one-third of the mean per adult equivalent expenditure on food and non-food items were used to classify the households into moderately poor, core poor and non-poor respectively. The estimated mean per adult equivalent monthly household expenditure for the beneficiary category is N4,544 from which the moderate and core poverty lines of N3,029 and N1,515 per month were obtained respectively. These figures are N100 and N50 per capita per day respectively and are correspondingly $0.64 and $0.32 per capita per day respectively; a far cry from the $1.25 international poverty line per capita per day recommended by World Bank (Human Development Indicators, 2012). For the Non-beneficiaries, the mean per adult equivalent monthly household expenditure is N4,142 from which the moderate and core poverty lines of N2,761 and N1,381 per month were obtained respectively. These poverty benchmarks translate into N92.03 and N46.02 per capita per day and corresponding dollar equivalents of $0.59 and $0.29 respectively; again far below the international benchmark of $1.25 per capita per day. The table further reveals that 35 per cent of the beneficiaries are poor as against 55 per cent of the non-beneficiaries. Also, out of those that are poor among the beneficiaries, seven per cent is core poor and over 28 per cent is moderately poor while the remaining 65 per cent are non-poor. This suggests that incidence of poverty is less among the beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme which portends a positive effect on their welfare.

Table 4: **Poverty Profile of the Beneficiaries and non-Beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State**

Respondents	n	P0	P1	P2	Moderate Poverty	Core Poverty	Non-Poor
Beneficiaries	60	0.3500	0.0439	0.0103	17 (28.3)	4 (6.7)	39 (65)
Non-Beneficiaries	60	0.5500	0.1357	0.5060	10 (16.7)	23 (38.3)	27 (45)

Source: Field Survey, 2010. (The figures in parentheses are percentages of n in each row)

The poverty status of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the empowerment programme are further disaggregated based on their socio-economic characteristics to give more vivid revelation of their poverty status.

Table 5: Poverty Profile of the Rural Farming Households in Osun State based on Some Socio-Economic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency	P0	P1	P2
Gender				
Male	101	0.842	0.042	0.012
Female	19	0.158	0.102	0.001
Age				
<40	47	0.3917	0.0523	0.0125
41-60	63	0.5250	0.1354	0.0227
>60	10	0.0833	0.0132	0.0014
Marital Status				
Married	99	0.825	0.215	0.034
Single	8	0.067	0.012	0.001
Widowed	3	0.025	0.005	0.000
Separated	5	0.042	0.011	0.004
Divorced	4	0.033	0.052	0.005
Educational Level				
Informal	32	0.267	0.151	0.004
Primary	27	0.225	0.102	0.002
Arabic	1	0.008	0.002	0.006
Secondary	44	0.367	0.001	0.000
Tertiary	16	0.133	0.003	0.001
Household Size				
1-5	25	0.208	0.012	0.005
6-10	58	0.483	0.561	0.041
11-15	25	0.208	0.004	0.003
16-20	10	0.083	0.010	0.002
Above 20	2	0.012	0.020	0.000

Source: Calculated from Field Survey Data

Determinants of Poverty Status of the Beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State

In order to determine the factors influencing the poverty status of the beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the study area, the Tobit regression model was employed based on variables specification in the methodology. The regression results are negative for the amount spent on children education, annual farm income, amount of credit used, educational level of the household heads and their years of farming experience (Table 6). It is however positive for household size, and marital status of the household heads.

Table 6: The Likelihood Estimates of the Tobit Regression Model for the Beneficiaries of Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	t	P>/t/
Constant	2.499	0.950	2.63	0.011
Educational level of household heads	-0.006	0.152	-0.04	0.968
Household Size	0.348*	0.088	3.94	0.000
Amount spent on children's education	-0.016	0.053	-0.29	0.772
Annual Farm Income	-9.202*	2.421	-3.00	0.001
Farming Experience	-0.015	-0.022	0.71	0.483
Amount of credit received	-3.190*	0.841	-3.80	0.000
Marital status	0.1201	0.234	0.50	0.618
Log likelihood = - 64.59				

Source: Estimated from Field Data

The coefficient of the household size is positive and statistically significant at one per cent which is in line with *a priori* expectation; increase in household size has the likelihood of increasing the rural farming households' poverty if their level of income or remittances does not increase. Martins and Fernandes (2008) found household size to positively influence poverty status of rural farming households. The amount of credit utilised by the rural farming households also significantly influence their poverty status. Access to agricultural inputs including credit facility has ability to reduce poverty among rural farming households (Hulme, 2003; Fagernas and Wallace, 2007 and Olorunsanya and Omotesho, 2012).

Table 7: The Results of the Likelihood Estimates of the Tobit Regression Model for the Non-Beneficiaries of FEP in Osun State

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P>/t/
Constant	0.746	0.573	1.30	0.199
Education level of the household heads	-0.016	0.065	-0.25	0.804
Household size	0.112*	0.026	4.31	0.000
Amount spent on children's education	-0.065	0.033	-1.97	0.059
Annual Farm Income	1.731*	0.681	2.54	0.006
Farming Experience	0.002	0.008	0.25	0.808
Lack of access to credit facility	1.571*	0.181	-8.68	0.000
Marital status	-0.034	0.262	-0.13	0.896
Log likelihood = -35.95				

Source: Estimated from Field Data, 2010

The regression coefficients are found to be negative for the amount spent on children's education, marital status of the heads as well as his or her level of education. Household size, annual farm income, lack of access to credit facility and farming experience are however positively related to the poverty status of the non-beneficiaries of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in the study area. The results further show that household size, annual farm income and lack of access to credit facility are the factors influencing the poverty status of the non-beneficiaries of the empowerment programme in the state. Olorunsanya and Omotesho, (2012); FAO, (2008), Fagernas and Wallace, (2007) and NBS, (2006) supported the claim that household size is a determinant of poverty. Olorunsanya and Omotesho, (2012) reported that utilisation of agricultural credit had negative influence on rural farming households poverty status in Kwara state. Lack of access to credit facility could therefore work in the opposite direction.

Table 8: The Likelihood Estimates of the Tobit Regression Model for the Pooled Data (Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries) of the Farmers Empowerment Programme in Osun State

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	t	P>/t/
Constant	1.186	0.514	2.31	0.023
Educational status of the Household Heads	-0.007	0.069	-0.10	0.918
Household Size	0.186*	0.032	5.77	0.000
Amount spent on children' education	-0.018	0.030	-0.60	0.552
Annual Farm Income	-6.645*	1.510	-4.40	0.009
Farming Experience	-0.006	0.009	-0.67	0.513
Amount of Credit utilised	2.613*	0.217	12.07	0.000
Marital status	-0.036	0.271	-0.13	0.895
Log likelihood = -103.24351				

Source: Estimated from Field Data, 2010

The regression coefficients are negative for the amount spent on children's education, educational level of the household heads, annual farm income, farm experience, access to credit and marital status of the household heads. These are poverty reducing variables in the study area. The results of the regression further show that household size, amount of credit utilised and annual farm income are the determinants of poverty for the two categories of households pooled together. Increasing the amount of credit made available to farmers could result in increase in farm output and by extension increase in rural household welfare in the study area.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the determinants of poverty status of rural farming households in Osun State, South Western Nigeria using Tobit regression model. The results of the Foster, Greer and Thorbecke poverty measures show that only 35 per cent of the beneficiaries of the empowerment programme are poor as against 55 per cent for the non-beneficiary category. The results of the Tobit regression model for the pooled data (that is the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the empowerment programme) show that household size, amount of credit utilised and annual farm income are the determinants of poverty of rural farming households in Osun State. The study concludes that the poverty empowerment programme has significant poverty reducing effects on the beneficiaries of the programme in Osun State. It therefore recommends that the Farmers Empowerment Programme of NAPEP be sustained as an effective policy tool for poverty eradication among rural farming households in Osun State. Farmers should also be educated on the need to have manageable household size for improved welfare.

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