

LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES AMONG RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN EMURE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EKITI STATE

¹Bamigboye, O. Tosin, ¹Adeniji, O. B., ¹Ogunjimi, S. I. and ²Adara, C. T.

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State.

²Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI), Ilorin, Kwara State

Correspondence contact details: oluwaseun.bamigboye@fuoye.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Income derived from non-farm activities by rural household serve to augment cash from sales of agricultural products. This article examined diversification into farm and non-farm activities among rural households in Emure local government area of Ekiti State. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting 240 rural farm households, but only 221 questionnaires were completed. Data collected were described using frequency distribution, percentages and mean. Results revealed that most sample households had low-income, with mean monthly income of ₦6,215.50 for farming and ₦2,475.50 for non-farm activities. Majority (62.90%) of the rural household engaged in farming with non-farm activities, 24.43% in farming activities only, while 12.67% were involved in only non-farm activities. Rural farm households were distributed into different types of activities (farm and non-farm) categorized into farming (production), manufacturing, sales, services and enterprise. Rural farm households made use of increasingly diverse combinations of resources and assets to meet up with their rising needs by seeking alternative sources of income through engagement in both farm and non-farm activities.

Keywords: Diversification, non-farm activities, rural household

INTRODUCTION

Farming and rural non-based activities still have untapped potential to generate employment opportunities for Africa's rising youth population (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2017). Although, most rural households are involved in the farm sector, the non-farm sector has grown significantly in recent decades, and its role in rural development has become increasingly important and it is gaining prominence in most developing economies due to the increasing inability of the farm sector to support rural livelihoods (Dary and Kuunibe 2012; Oseni and Winters, 2009). Farm households diversify to combine farm activities with non-farm activities in order to meet up with their arising needs and cater for their family welfare which is an important pathway towards livelihood sustainability by not depending on only one source of income. Diversification is the norm (Jinhong *et al.*, 2016) by which rural households engage in diverse means of livelihood, through which they combine various assets and resources for them to meet up with their basic needs, increase their standard of living and manage risks (Niehof, 2004). Observations show that in many areas, own crop production is no longer the main source of income of rural households (Awoyemi, 2011). Income derived from non-farm activities by rural households serve to augment cash from sales of their agricultural products. Lanjouw and Feder (2001) emphasized that diversification can stabilize incomes and alleviate rural poverty and government in developing countries have become increasingly interested in promoting increased output of diversification.

Non-farm activities according to Haggblade *et al.*, (1989) cited in Takeshima *et al.*, (2018) is defined as "all activities other than crop and livestock production, encompassing services,

construction, mining, commerce and manufacturing" including "agro-industrial activities which store, process and market agricultural commodities". Nmeragini *et al.*, (2019) identified that non-farm income generating activities include all economic activities in rural areas aside agriculture, fishing, hunting and livestock. Rural household generate income from non-farm activities as part of their livelihood strategies to balance income shortfall (Agbarevo and Nmeragini, 2019).

The non-farm-sector has increased its share in both economy and employment in Nigeria. Recently, in 2014-2016, the Non-Farm-sector in Nigeria accounted for 79% of gross domestic product (GDP) (58% by the service sector, and 21% by the industry sector) (World Bank, 2018) and employed approximately 50% of the workforce (Groningen Growth and Development Center, 2018).

The purpose of this article is to find out if diversification to non-farm activities compliments the income accrued from agricultural production and improve the welfare of farm households in rural Nigeria. Therefore, the following questions about Nigeria's rural setting, more particularly, rural farming communities' household in Ekiti State, become essential. What are the farm and non-farm activities engaged by the respondents? What are the natures of activities diversified into by rural farm households? Do the non-farm activities generate higher income than sales of agricultural products?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Emure Local Government Area of Ekiti State. It is bounded to the north by Agbado Ekiti and Imesi Lasigidi, south by Owo, East by river Oyinmon and west by Orun and Ise Ekiti. Emure LGA was purposively selected because it is predominantly noted for agriculture.



The study area includes settlements such as Eporo, Oge, Owode, Ibeji, Ido Ope, Igbo Eku, Akeye, Kajola, Owosi Elemure, Odose camp, Edu camp, Ose, Oyimo. Igbo Aye, Alapoto, Ajebamidele, Okeseri, Adebayo, with Emure as the main town. In terms of tribal composition, majority of the people living in the study area are Yorubas, followed by a considerable number of Ibo and Idoma people, who can be purposely used for employment in agricultural activities. The major economic activity of the study area is predominantly farming. They grow food (yam, rice, cassava, plantain, and cocoyam) and cash crops (cocoa, kolanut, palm oil, coffee). Some also engage in *gari* processing, cassava flour processing, etc (Bamigboye *et al.*, 2019). There are 10 districts in the LGA namely-Odo Emure I (8 villages), Odo Emure II (5 villages), Odo Emure III (9 villages), Odo Emure IV (9 villages), Oke Emure 1 (10 villages), Oke Emure II (11 villages), Ida Mudu I (10 villages), Ida Mudu II (8 villages) and Ogbontioro I (15 villages) (Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, 2015). The people of Emure Ekiti engage in agricultural- farming, hunting, agro-processing and non-agricultural activities- handcrafting, tailoring, mining, and trading among others as a means of livelihood.

Study population consisted of all the rural households in Emure LGA. Random selection method was used to select 240 rural farm households.

Multi-stage sampling was used in selecting the sample size. In the first stage, out of the 10 districts, 40% of the districts with highest villages were purposely selected namely-, Oke Emure 1 (10 villages), Oke Emure II (11 villages), Ida Mudu I (10 villages) and Ogbontioro I (15 villages). The second stage involved the selection of 50% of the villages- Oke Emure 1 (5 villages), Oke Emure II (6 villages), Ida Mudu I (5 villages) and Ogbontioro I (8 villages), in total is 24 villages. The last stage is selecting ten (10) rural farming households from

Nature of activities diversified into by household heads

Results in Table 2 revealed that majority (62.90%) of the rural household engaged in farming with non-farm activities, 33.48% in farming activities only, while 12.67% were involved in only non-farm activities. This implies that majority of the rural household diversified into various activities both farming and non-farm-oriented economy which had enabled them to cope with their family needs. This corroborates Olanipekun and Kuponiyi (2010);

each of the villages. In total, 240 rural farm households were targeted, only 221 questionnaires were completed.

The engagement of household head in farm and non-farm activities with multiple responses was measured by assigning value=2 if any household head was into the listed activities and value 1= if any household head were not involved in the listed activities. The activities were divided into five categories (farming/production, manufacturing, sales, services and enterprises). Data collected were described using frequency distribution, percentages and mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Engagement of rural households in livelihood activities

Table 1 shows that majority (70.59%) of the respondents engaged in crop production, 46.15% were agro-processors, while 31.67% were engaged animal production. This shows that crop production and processing of agricultural products was the major source of income in the study area. It is evident from this study that the rural households process cassava into garri, oil palm seed into palm oil/palm kernel cake. Table 1 also illustrated other occupations (non-farm) the rural households diversify into. Under manufacturing, 13.57% were engaged in tailoring; under sales, 6.79% were engaged in sales of agro-products like chemicals, seeds, poultry equipment, etc; under services, 22.17 were bricklayers; under enterprise, 5.88% were employed into private companies as casual workers, security, labourers, etc. This revealed that most of the households earn income from more than one source. This implies that the rural households were economically active in the non-farm activities to combine with farm activities in order to meet up with their arising needs and cater for their family welfare which is an important pathway towards livelihood sustainability by not depending on only one source of income.

Obinna and Onu (2017) who asserted that vast majority of rural families in Nigeria are basically practicing farmers who cannot meet their needs therefore, they diversity into non – farm income generating activities as coping strategy. Oladimeji, Abdulsalam and Abdullahi (2015); Olaoye, Idowu, Omoyinmi, Akintayo, Odebiyi and Fashina (2012) further stated that diversification as a strategy involves the attempt by individuals and households to find new ways to raise income and reduce risk.

Table 1: Engagement of rural households in livelihood activities

Occupation*	Frequency (n=221)	Percentage (%)
Farming (Production)		
Crop	156	70.59
Animal	70	31.67
Agro processors	102	46.15
Hunting	10	4.52
Forestry and logging	4	1.81
Manufacturing		
Carpentry	9	4.07
Tailor	30	13.57
Blacksmith	10	4.52
Welder	13	5.88
Sales		
Sales of car, bicycle, bike spare parts	10	4.52
Sales of agro-products	15	6.79
Services		
Weaving/ hairdressers	6	2.71
Housekeeper	8	3.62
Plumber	2	0.90
Religious worker	4	1.81
Bricklayer	49	22.17
Restaurant/bar dealers	13	5.88
Traditional midwives/healers	4	1.81
Enterprise		
Civil servant/ government workers	7	3.17
Private company	13	5.88

*Multiple responses

Table 2: Nature of activities diversified into by household heads

Nature of activities*	Frequency (n=221)	Percentage (%)
Farming activities only	74	33.48
Farming with non-farm activities	139	62.90
Non-farm activities only	28	12.67

*Multiple responses

Income from farming and non-farm activities engaged by respondents

Result from Table 3 indicates that most sample households are of low-income (based on mean monthly income of ₦6,215.50 for farming and ₦2,475.50 for non-farm activities). The low earning suggests that majority of the non-farm activities engaged in, yielded low return on investment.

However, this little income earned from non-farm activities were used to augment the amount spent on their agricultural production, cater for their family during the planting season when there is little or no agricultural produce to sell. Contrarily, Odoh, Nwibo, Eze and Igberi (2019) indicate that majority of households in Southeast Nigeria maintain a good income from non-farm activities.

Table 3: Income from farming and non-farm activities engaged by rural farm household

Type of income	Average monthly income
Monthly Farming income	₦6215.50
Monthly Non-farm income	₦2475.50

CONCLUSION

Rural farm household engage in diverse of livelihood activities to meet up with their arising needs and cater for their family welfare. They made use of increasingly various combinations of resources and assets by seeking alternative sources of income through engagement in non-farm activities. This income was used to augment the amount spent on their agricultural production, provide for their family during the planting season when there is little or no agricultural produce to sell.

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