Analysis of Poverty Profile of Rural Farm Households in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The poverty profile of rural farm households belonging to association(s) in Akwa Ibom State, in the southern region of Nigeria, was analyzed. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 180 rural farm households within the research area. Descriptive statistics and the FGT methodology were utilized to evaluate the objectives of the study. The findings indicated that 60.56% of the rural farm households were classified as poor. Among the identified poor farmers, approximately 27.78% and 32.78% were categorized as core poor and moderate poor, respectively. Only 39.44% of the rural farm households were considered non-poor. The incidence of poverty among the core poor farm households was found to be 51.00%, while it was 62.00% for the moderate poor rural farm households. Similarly, the poverty depth indices revealed that the core poverty group accounted for 28.00%, whereas the moderate poverty group accounted for 22.00%. Furthermore, the research identified several activities adopted by farm households to alleviate poverty, including providing loans to members at reduced rates, mobilizing savings, engaging in group work, disseminating information on new agricultural products and prices, and organizing training on modern farming techniques, among others. Based on these findings, it is evident that poverty continues to be a significant issue among rural farm households in the southern region of Nigeria. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the various strategies aimed at reducing poverty is imperative in this region.

Keywords: Poverty, household expenditure, farm household, rural areas, Nigeria.


Introduction

Poverty is widely recognized as a significant indicator of underdevelopment, with its reduction often equated with progress in development or economic advancement (Karaosmanoglu, 1989; Salmen 1992, edet and Etim, 2013, Mansi et al., 2020, Henry et al., 2023). It is a pervasive challenge that impacts all societies globally and remains a major obstacle on a global scale (Etim et al., 2008, Etim et al., 2009, Dia, et al., 2023, World Bank, 2024). As of 2022, a staggering 712 million people worldwide were living in extreme poverty (defined as less than $2.15 per day, based on the international poverty line). According to the World Bank (2024), extreme poverty continues to be concentrated in regions of Sub-Saharan Africa.
Africa, areas affected by conflict and fragility, and rural settings. The report emphasizes that addressing poverty comprehensively necessitates addressing its multifaceted dimensions. Furthermore, it highlights that countries cannot effectively combat poverty without simultaneously enhancing the overall well-being of their populations, including through equitable access to healthcare, education, basic infrastructure, and services, as well as digital technologies. Both the World Bank (2024) and the United Nations (2024) have jointly acknowledged that the current global initiatives aimed at eradicating extreme poverty by 2030, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are unlikely to be met, with projections indicating that nearly 600 million individuals will still be grappling with extreme poverty by that time.

Rural poverty is a significant issue globally, with nearly 63 percent of poverty concentrated in rural areas (UN, 2024). In some countries such as Bangladesh and China, this number reaches as high as 90 percent, while in sub-Saharan Africa it ranges between 65 and 90 percent. The World Bank (2024) and UN (2024) highlighted that poverty is more prevalent in rural regions, characterized by inadequate basic facilities, food insecurity, outdated farming methods, poor nutritional standards, limited access to financial services, challenges in educating children due to high costs, insufficient diet, unreliable electricity supply, and scarcity of clothing materials. Obayelu (2010) identified various factors contributing to rural poverty, including cultural norms, climatic conditions, gender disparities, market dynamics, and poor and skewed public policies. To address poverty, especially in rural areas, it is essential to enhance the management capacities of community-based initiatives like community-based organizations and development associations through training programs and workshops, enabling them to actively engage in poverty alleviation efforts at the grassroots level (Lipto, 1982, Ndiyo, 2008 and World Bank, 2018). The prevalence of poverty among a significant portion of the population can hinder economic growth prospects (Khan, 2001). The impacts of poverty, as outlined by Edet and Etim (2009) and Akpan et al., (2016a) manifest in inadequate nutrition, poor health outcomes, heightened vulnerability to health issues, substandard housing conditions, or even homelessness.

Globally, there exists a significant population struggling to afford basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. UN (2024) reports that the percentage of individuals living on less than one dollar per day in the underdeveloped nations of Africa increased from 56 percent in the late 1970s to 65 percent in the late 1990s. Despite significant economic growth in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the persistence of extreme poverty is now a more pressing issue than relative poverty or the widening wealth gap between the affluent and the impoverished (Ndiyo, 2008). The socio-economic conditions, agricultural practices, inconsistent government policies, and inadequate infrastructure collectively contribute to low productivity, inflation, underdevelopment, and the resulting poverty (World Bank, 2018).

Despite its abundant resources and oil wealth, poverty continues to be a growing issue in Nigeria. The country is recognized as one of the most resource-rich nations globally; however, its citizens are among the poorest in the World (Etim and Edet, 2007; Etim and Edet, 2009; Etim and Edet, 2013; Etim and Edet, 2014a; Etim and Edet, 2014b; Etim and Edet, 2014c; Akpan et al., 2016a. Akpan et al., 2016b; Akpan et al., 2019, NMPI 2022). Aderounmu et al., (2021) and AK-SEEDS (2004) revealed that Nigeria has the highest concentration of extremely impoverished individuals in Africa, with a staggering 91 million people living in extreme poverty. Furthermore, a significant number of Nigerian states also face economic hardships. Nigeria is ranked the sixth largest oil producer worldwide, yet approximately 70 percent of Nigerians survive on less than one dollar per day (Akpabio, 2005). Soludo (2008) highlights that poverty in Nigeria is an escalating problem, affecting over 54 percent of the population. Kakwani and Subbarae (2005) provide evidence that in 1996, 63.46 percent of Nigerians lived in poverty. Unfortunately, the situation has deteriorated over the years, leading Nigeria to be classified as one of the 20 poorest countries globally (IFAD, 2006). Wright and Weiss (1995) argue that poverty plays a significant role in the country’s high corruption rate. Poverty is pervasive in Nigeria and has worsened since the late 1990s, with over 70 percent of Nigerians falling under the poverty line, and 35 percent living in absolute
poverty (IFAD, 2006). The country in 2018 was ranked low on human development index at 158th out of 189th countries. Also, about 39.10% of her population was living below income poverty line of US$1.90 per day despite enormous resources, a position that was far below countries like Rwanda (60%), Zambia (64.4%) and Mozambique (68.7%) among others (UNDP, 2018; UNDP, 2016).

The poverty situation in Nigeria is a cause for concern, as evidenced by both quantitative and qualitative measurements indicating a growing incidence and depth of poverty in the country (Okunmadewa et al., 2005; IFAD, 2006; Etim et al., 2009; Okigbo, 2000; Etim and Edet, 2014a; Edet & Etim, 2009). This presents a paradox, given the abundant human and physical resources that the country possesses. Nigeria is wealthy in resources, yet its people are impoverished, a phenomenon described as "poverty in the midst of plenty" by Adewumi et al. (2007). Despite significant efforts and resources allocated by various governments to reduce poverty, there has been little success in this regard. The Human Development Report (HDR, 2023) highlights Nigeria as one of the poorest countries in the world. Okunmadewa (2001) further emphasizes the harsh reality that over 40 percent of Nigerians live in extreme poverty, with expenditures of less than N320 per capita per month, which is insufficient to meet basic nutritional needs. These findings underscore the ongoing challenge of poverty in Nigeria, necessitating immediate attention from all stakeholders.

In 2018 over 62.32 million people live in extreme poverty in Nigeria representing about 30.90% of the population (World Bank, 2022). In 2021, over 11 percent of the world population in extreme poverty, with the poverty threshold at 2.15 U.S. dollars a day, lived in Nigeria (World Bank, 2022). Failing to meet a minimum standard of living above the poverty line has resulted in over 40% of individuals in less developed countries living in extreme poverty, characterized by disease, illiteracy, malnutrition, and squalor, depriving them of basic human needs (World Bank, 2022). The number of people suffering from chronic hunger is about 783 million in 2023 (Action Against Hunger (AAH), 2024). Addressing poverty is a challenging task that cannot be solely managed by the government (PERT, 2001).

A common understanding in poverty literature is that poverty is predominantly a rural issue (World Bank, 2024). Unfortunately, the significance of rural poverty is often overlooked, as urban poverty tends to be more visible and vocal. Interestingly, the rural sector plays a crucial role in the Nigerian economy (Okunmadewa et al., 2005). Udoh and Akaeme (2006) highlight that a large portion of individuals in third world countries reside in rural areas, with their primary source of employment and income coming from agricultural activities.

The government of Akwa Ibom State, one of the constituent states in Nigeria, acknowledges the severe impact of rural poverty and has made concerted efforts to implement programs and initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty among vulnerable groups, particularly rural farm households. These initiatives include the distribution of fertilizers to farmers to enhance crop yield and income, the Akwa Ibom State Integrated Farmers Scheme (IPS) which provides economic loans to farmers, the rice rehabilitation project/Counterpart Funding, the disbursement of over N350 million as micro-credits to farmers and artisans, and the procurement of craft and manufacturing equipment worth over N71 million for self-employed individuals, among others. Despite these commendable efforts by the State government to enhance the well-being of farmers, there is a prevailing perception that the agrarian economy of the state has not experienced significant improvement, and numerous challenges in various key areas still need to be addressed (AK-SEEDS, 2004). However, the crucial question that demands immediate attention is whether the poverty situation of farmers in the State has witnessed substantial improvement. To unravel this enigma, the study specifically focuses on determining the poverty profile of farm households in the State.
Materials and Methods

Study Area

The research was carried out in Akwa Ibom State, located in the southern region of Nigeria. In terms of governance, the State is divided into 31 Local Government Areas and encompasses 6 Agricultural Development Project (ADP) Zones, namely: Oron, Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Etinan, Eket, and Uyo (AKADEP, 2024). The climate in this region is tropical, characterized by two distinct seasons: the rainy season, which spans from April to October, and the dry season, which lasts from November to March. The annual precipitation ranges from 2000mm to 3000mm, and the average daily temperature is around 30°C. Due to this climatic pattern and the presence of fertile soil, the vegetation in Akwa Ibom State is highly suitable for cultivating a diverse range of food crops, including yam, rice, cassava, fluted pumpkin, cocoyam, okra, oil palm, and water leaf. Additionally, micro livestock such as poultry, pigs, goats, and sheep are commonly raised as supplementary sources of income. Agriculture serves as the backbone of the economy in this region.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study employed a multistage sampling technique to gather data. Initially, three out of the six Agricultural Development Project (ADP) Zones in Akwa Ibom State, namely Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, and Eket zones, were randomly selected in the first stage. Moving on to the second stage, two agricultural blocks were randomly chosen from each of the selected zones, resulting in a total of six agricultural blocks. Subsequently, three circles were randomly chosen from each of the selected blocks, amounting to a total of 18 circles. Within each circle, the executive members of each association were contacted to obtain a list of households affiliated with their respective associations. The study area consisted of six major associations, each comprising approximately 29 to 32 members. The list of members within each association served as the sampling frame, from which one-third of the households were selected for the study. Finally, in the last stage, ten households were purposively selected from each circle, resulting in a total of 180 respondents for the study. It is important to note that the selected respondents were individuals who belonged to at least one association and had farming as their primary occupation.

Nature of Data Collected and Method of Data Collection

The study's data primarily originated from primary sources, gathered through field surveys utilizing a meticulously designed questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives. In cases where respondents were unable to read or write, individual interviews were arranged at their convenience. Questions were translated into the local language of each respondent. The data collection focused on households that had interactions with at least one social association. By implication, a respondent belongs to at least one social organization.

Analytical Techniques

Measurement of Poverty among Farm Households

The Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) (1984) model was used to analyze poverty status of oil palm farmers in the study area. The FGT poverty index is generally expressed as thus:

\[ P_\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^\alpha \]  

Where:

\[ n = \text{total number of households in the population} \]
q = the number of poor households  
Z = the poverty line for the households  
Y_i = Per capita household income for i^{th} farmer  
α = poverty aversion parameter and takes on value 0, 1, 2  
\( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \) = proportion shortfall in income below the poverty line.

**Decomposition of Poverty Index**

Following Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) (1984) model, household poverty can be decomposed into the following sub-units:

a) When \( \alpha = 0 \), then FGT index is expressed as:

\[
P_0 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^0 = \frac{q}{n}
\]

This is called the Incidence of poverty or headcount index, which measures the proportion of rural farm households that are poor or falls below the poverty line. This gives the head count ratio or the incidence of poverty which is the percentage of rural farm households that are poor or whose per capita household expenditure is below the poverty line.

b) When \( \alpha = 1 \), then FGT index is expressed as:

\[
P_1 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^1
\]

This is called Poverty depth or Poverty gap index, which measures the extent to which rural farm households' fall below the poverty line as a proportion of the poverty line. It reflects both incidence and depth of poverty or the proportion of the poverty line that the average poor will require to attain to the poverty line.

c) When \( \alpha = 2 \), then FGT index is expressed as:

\[
P_2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left( \frac{Z-Y_i}{Z} \right)^2
\]

This is called Poverty severity index which measures the squares of the poverty gaps relative to the poverty line. The index measures the severity of poverty which is the mean of square proportion of the poverty gap. When multiplied by 100, it gives the percentage by which a poor farm household's per capita expenditure should be increase to push them out of poverty.
Measurement of Poverty Line

This was done to separate farm households into poor and non-poor groups. As a benchmark, two-third of the mean per-capita income was used as a threshold. Households or farmers whose mean per-capita expenditure fall below the poverty line are regarded as being poor while those with their per-capita expenditure is on or above the benchmark are non-poor.

\[
\text{Household Per Capita expenditure (HPCE)} = \frac{\text{Total household Expenditure (THE)}}{\text{Household Size (HHS)}} \tag{5}
\]

\[
\text{Total Household per capita expenditure (THPCE)} = \text{Summation of HPCE} \tag{6}
\]

\[
\text{Mean Household Per Capita Expenditure (MHPCE)} = \frac{\text{THPCE}}{\text{number of households (n)}} \tag{7}
\]

\[
\text{Then Poverty Line (PL)} = \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)\text{(MHPCE)} \tag{8}
\]

Results and Discussion

Derivation of the Poverty Line

The initial step in poverty analysis involves determining the poverty line. As previously mentioned in the methodology, the poverty line benchmark was established using the Mean Household Per Capita Expenditure (MHPCE) as presented in Table 1. The results indicate that the MHPCE amounted to ₦41,282.65 per month. One third \((1/3)\) of the MHPCE equated to ₦13,760.00, while two thirds \((2/3)\) amounted to ₦27,521.77. Ijaiya (2000) discovered a poverty line of ₦1,288.49 per month, while Akpan et al., (2016b) submitted ₦1,437.36 per month in 2016 and Asa et al. (2007) reported a poverty line of ₦3,497.43 per month among rural farm households in Nigeria. The increase in the poverty line over time may be attributed to the rising costs of essential food and non-food items. With the uprising in inflation rate in Nigeria, it is expected that the poverty line will continue to surge. However, it is important to note that this increase in the poverty threshold or line has not led to an improvement in the standard of living of Nigerians. Table 1 reveals that the combined total of food items accounts for 50.71%, which is relatively high compared to non-food items. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Udoh and Omonona (2005), who found that food constitutes the highest proportion \((46.00\%)\) of Mean household Per Capita Expenditure among rural farm households. Food is an essential factor that cannot be disregarded. According to Okumnadewa et al., (2005), 61.00% of expenditure in rural households is allocated to food consumption, while 39% is allocated to non-food items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Amount (₦)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garri</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>2901.25</td>
<td>7.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yam</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1154</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Yam</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>501.25</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fufu</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoyam</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>403.5</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1902.95</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantain</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>440.75</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>333.75</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>625.1</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>600.4</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnut Oil</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crayfish</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>2703.5</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup Condiments</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>889.5</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>300.15</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages/Drinks</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toiletries</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>4502</td>
<td>10.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Wood/Kerosene/Gas</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>1503.75</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing/Foot Wears</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>2753.3</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity Bills</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>1403.5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>2056.5</td>
<td>4.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>742.5</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>3004.5</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittance</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>752.5</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Non-Food</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MPCHHE</td>
<td></td>
<td>41282.65</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 MPCHHE</td>
<td></td>
<td>13760.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 MPCHHE</td>
<td></td>
<td>27,521.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey (2023).

The research findings are consistent with Elijah, et al. (2011), who asserted that, households in the rural areas spend as high as 66.04% of their expenditure on food compared to 69.37% in the urban area. Also, Silver et al., (2015) and Obasi et al., (2020) have reported similar result, emphasizing that rural household budget is being dominated by food expenditure. The report further revealed that, rural households allocate a significant portion of their budget towards provision of shelter, health, education and transportation. Besides, the size of budget allocated to transportation is a reflection of the poor road network especially in the rural areas of the country. Hence, the high budget allocated to transportation among rural households in Akwa Ibom State can be attributed to the poor road infrastructure prevalence in the rural areas of the State. This has an adverse effect on the productivity of farm resources and farm income. Idachaba et al. (1981) emphasized the role of rural roads in facilitating production, processing, and distribution activities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for rural residents. Roads and transportation infrastructure are crucial components of rural infrastructure in Nigeria, playing a key role in enabling economic transformation. Access to good roads is essential for farmers to reach both input and output markets. The significance of rural infrastructure in supporting various agricultural activities and improving overall quality of life in rural areas is well-documented. The relatively low percentage allocated to rent (4.84%) in the study area may be attributed to the prevalence of homeownership among rural residents.
Poverty Classification among Farm Rural Households

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of the respondents according to poverty classification. The distribution of rural farm households based on poverty classification reveals that majority of the rural farm household heads were poor (60.56%) while the other 39.44% were classified as non-poor based on the estimated poverty line. Out of the poor rural farm households, 27.78% were core poor while 32.78% were moderately poor. Households were classified as poor if Per Capita Household expenditure was less than N27,521.77 per month and non-poor if per capita Household Expenditure was equal to or more than N27,521.77 per month since this was the bench mark figure for poverty line.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Rural Farm Households Based Poverty Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Status</th>
<th>Poverty Line (N)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Poor (1/3 MPCHHE)</td>
<td>&lt; 13760.00</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Poor (2/3 MPCHHE)</td>
<td>13760.00 ≤ z ≤ 27,521.77</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>32.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>≥ 27,521.77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>39.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of farm households</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2022).

According to the data presented in Table 2, the percentage of non-poor individuals was only 39.44%. This finding is consistent with the results of PERT (2001) which indicated that in Akwa Ibom State, the percentage of poor individuals (57.00%) was higher than that of non-poor individuals (43%). Similarly, Asa et al. (2007) found that 58.00% of rural farmers in Akwa Ibom State were classified as poor, while only 42% were considered non-poor. Akpan et al., (2016b) reported 55.13% of poverty among rural farm household with male headed households showing 33.20% and female headed households having 22.10% poverty incidence. Akpan et al., (2016a) also found 56.33% of poverty incidence among youth farmers in Akwa Ibom State. The result revealed that female youth farmers had poverty incidence of 30.00% while the male folks showed 26.7% poverty incidence.

The study area had a mean household size of 7.00, and based on a total monthly average household expenditure of N41282.65, the Mean Per Capita Household Expenditure per head was calculated to be N5897.52.

\[ \text{Mean Per Capita Household Expenditure per head} = \frac{41,282.65}{7.00} = 5897.52 \]

This gives an average of N5897.52 as the Mean Per Capita Household Expenditure per head per month. For the Mean Per Capita Household Expenditure per head per day, it is given as:

\[ \frac{5897.52}{30} = \text{₦196.58} \]

The thirty represents the number of days in a month. Comparing this amount to equivalent US dollar (i.e. 1 naira = $1471.21 on the 9th of June, 2024), it means that a daily expenditure for an average farm household in Akwa Ibom State is about $0.13. This implies that an average rural farmer spent less than...
one dollar per day. This average consumption expenditure is far below the international poverty line of $2.15 per person per day and also far below those of most African countries like Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, Angola, etc., thus becoming one of the poorest in Africa. The finding implies that, even most farmers that are considered rich or non-poor in Nigeria are actually below the international poverty line. In 2019, about 40.10 percent of total population were classified as poor. The information translates to 4 out of every 10 Nigerians representing 82.90 million were considered poor (NBS, 2019). In 2023, nearly 12 percent of the world population in extreme poverty lived in Nigeria, considering the poverty threshold at 2.15 U.S. dollars a day. According to Soludo (2008) as stated in the literature, Nigerian’s poverty problem is a growing phenomenon with more than 54 percent living in poverty.

In Akwa Ibom State generally, poverty seems to be worsening. The increase in the percentage of poor rural farm households in the State (57% in 2005: 58% in 2007 and 60.56% in 2010) implies increase in poverty level in the State. This agrees with NISS (2006), who stated that poverty is increasing in Akwa Ibom State. The State economy has not improved significantly and so several challenges in many key areas remain to be addressed (AK-SEEDS, 2004).

Incidence, Depth and Severity of Poverty among Farm Households in Akwa Ibom State

Table 3 shows the incidence (P₀), depth (P₁) and severity (P₂) of poverty among poor rural farm household heads. From the results, not all the households were equally poor. This agrees with the findings of Kzaghe (2009) who documented that the poor households are not equally poor but vary in the degree of poverty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>(P₀)</th>
<th>(P₁)</th>
<th>(P₂)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3 MPCHHE (Core Poor)</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 MPCHHE (Moderate Poor)</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2022).

The incidence of poverty among the core poor was 51.0% and 62.0% for the moderate poor respondents. The depth of poverty shows the percentage of expenditure required to bring each individual below the poverty line up to the poverty line. It shows how much below the poverty line was the average poor person. This measure for the core poor was 28.00% and 22.00% for moderate poor. The implication is that if the average rural farmer is to be made non-poor, the per capita expenditure must be increased by at least 28.00% for the core poor and 22.00% for the moderately poor rural farmer. The severity of poverty was put at 36.00% and 32.00% for the core poor and moderate poor respectively. This shows the spread of the poor around the average poor.

Activities of Associations that Lead to Poverty Reduction

Table 4 shows the major activities carried out by rural farm households belonging to association that led to poverty reduction. The finding reveals that giving loans to members at a reduced interest rate had the highest percentage of impart. Members used this loan to increase their farming and non-farming businesses. Several authors have submitted findings that support the promotion of this strategy among members of social group. For instance, Shah et al., (2008); Akpan et al., (2011), Obioma et al., (2021); Adewale et al., (2022), Zabatantou et al., (2023), Haryanto et al., (2023), Akpan et al., (2023) and Akpan et al., (2024), have documented that an increase in interest rate reduces the volume of loan supplied and increases the potential for loan default or loan repayment pattern. FAO (2024) reported that membership of cooperatives, farmers’ organizations, trade unions and other organizations represent one of the best
ways for rural men and women to gain access to resources, opportunities and decision making. Babatunde et al. (2007) asserted that loans could be easily accessed through the groups than individual. The implication is that respondents derived many benefits including credit from these associations. These facilities were used for their farming operations. Savings mobilization for members is indicated by 84.44% and was reported as one of the significant strategy used by members of association to avert poverty incidence in the region. Members saved their money to a certain amount that is tangible for their farming and non-farming businesses. Their behaviour have been confirmed by studies conducted by Adebayo et al., (2010) and Akpan et al., (2012). In most cases, the association could get contract from people and work as a group to obtain money. This money was usually shared based on those who actually took part. This was one of the major things done by the association to reduce poverty.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Their Perceived Activities that Lead to Poverty reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Giving of land to members at a very reduced cost</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>50.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organizing training on modern techniques of farming</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>53.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Savings mobilization</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>84.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Giving loan to members at a reduced interest rate</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>94.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Doing of group work like contract and sharing the money to members</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>82.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Giving of information to members on prices of agricultural products</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>57.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Giving of information to members on new products of agriculture</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>60.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Giving of information to members on employment opportunities</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>52.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Other things done by the members of the association which assisted them in reducing poverty incidence were giving of information to members on new products of agriculture, giving of information to members on prices of agricultural product, organizing training on modern techniques of farming, giving or renting of association farm land to members at a very reduced cost and giving of information on employment opportunities were represented by 60.56%, 57.78%, 53.33%, 50.56% and 52.22% respectively. In support of this finding, FAO (2024) asserted that membership of cooperatives, farmers’ organizations, trade unions and other organizations represent one of the best ways for rural men and women to gain access to resources, opportunities and decision making.

Conclusion

The study analysed the poverty profile of rural farm households in Akwa Ibom State in the southern region of Nigeria. Rural poverty in Nigeria is a serious issues such that the country is known as one of the strong hub for extreme poverty incidence in the World. Though government and other organizations have enunciated several programmes aimed at alleviating rural poverty especially among farm households. Premised on these facts, the government of Akwa Ibom State has implemented agricultural based programmes to upsurge farmers’ wellbeing over the years. However, the people have not experienced improve agricultural production which is directly correlated to farmers’ wellbeing. To generate the first hand information on the issue, the research was designed specifically to assess the poverty profile of rural farm households in the State. The study used FGT methodology to analyze the objective of the study. Findings revealed that, 60.56% of the farm households were classified as poor which has a serious implication on the wellbeing of the farmers. From the total poor farmers, about 27.78% and 32.78% were found to be core and moderate poor. Only 39.44% of the farmers were known to be non-poor based on the generated poverty line. The incidence of poverty among the core poor was 51.00% and
62.00% for the moderate poor rural farm households. Similarly for the poverty depth indices were 28.00% and 22.00% for core and moderate poverty group. The study also found that activities of the associations that assisted members in reducing poverty were: giving of loan to members at a reduced rate, savings mobilization, group work, giving of information to members on new products of agriculture and prices of agricultural products, organizing training on modern techniques of farming, giving of land to members at a reduced cost as well as giving of information to members on employment opportunities. Based on the result found, it is obvious the poverty is still mounting among rural farm households in the southern region of Nigeria. It implies that the strategies adopted by the government is yielding slow result or is not effective enough to cause significant change among beneficiaries. Hence, the poverty alleviation strategies used should be re-assessed to enhance efficiency in deliveries.

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Conflict of Interests
The authors agreed that, there is no conflict of interest.

References


