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Research Note

Assessment of Household Food Security Status of Extension Services Beneficiaries in Obio Akpo and Emuoha LGAs in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the food security status of households who benefited from extension services in Obio Akpo and Emuoha Local Government Areas of Rivers State of Nigeria. The data used for the study was obtained from primary sources only. Structured questionnaires were administered on 240 respondents who were selected purposively and randomly respectively. The data were analyzed using descriptive and coping strategy index to determine the food security status of the respondents. The results indicated that the beneficiaries of extension services fell between the ages of 20-59 years. This result showed that the beneficiaries of extension services were young and full of energy which enhanced food production and security. Furthermore, the results also indicate that 80.4% of extension beneficiaries from Obio Akpo Local government area were food secured while 19.6% were food unsecured. However, 76.7% of beneficiaries of extension services from Emuoha Local Government Area were food secured whereas only 23.3% of beneficiaries were food unsecured. The food security status of beneficiaries of extension services from both Local government areas were food secured due to the reduced activities of the militants in the Niger Delta resulting from amnesty granted to the Militants during the period of this research work. Furthermore, there are increased assistance from oil companies and non-governmental organizations to enhance the food production and security in these local government areas.

Keywords: Household, Food Security, Extension Services, Status, River

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Introduction

Food security refers to 'access by all people at all times to safe and nutritious food needed to maintain a healthy and active life, (FAO, 2001). The proportion of people with inadequate food energy consumption has declined in all regions except sub-Saharan African (Thones, 2004). The food security outlook for Nigeria as reported by most studies is especially bleak. For example, Sanusi *et al.* (2006) reported that 18% of Nigerian household were food insecure in 1986 and that this figure went up to 40% in 2005. Food insecurity has been attributed to several factors but there is a growing consensus that poverty is at the root of food insecurity, this remains the backbone of government of all over the globe because only a food secure population can participate meaningfully in economic activities in both agrarian and industrial settings. Though,

Omonona and Agoi (2002) believed that there is enough domestic food production in Nigeria and that food insecurity can be attributed to poor storage, marketing and distribution arrangements which greatly reduced food availability. For emerging economics like Nigeria the assessment of food security status of beneficiaries of extension services would help to determine how food secured the benefiting households in the local areas are in the state.

The assessment of household food security status of extension services beneficiaries in Obio Akpo and Emuoha Local Government area has not been thoroughly assessed by the ministries of Agriculture since the 1970s with Agricultural Development Projects complimenting the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture since 1987. Judged from the number of technological institutions,

research institutes, as well as the huge amount of money spent on human and materials towards extension services, research contributions in terms of various released varieties of crops/animals and practices recommendation appear quite significant but the conversion of these research proven result into production accomplishment have not kept pace with time.

Materials and Methods

This study was carried out in Obio-Akpo and Emuoha local government areas of Rivers state. Majority of the populace of the two local government areas are predominantly farmers. Samples of 240 respondents were obtained by combination of purposive and simple random procedures. Three towns were purposively selected from each local government area (LGA). Thus, in Obio-Akpo LGA, Choba, Elakahia and Elelenwo were selected. In Emuoha LGA Ogbakiri, Agbandele and Ndele were selected. In each town, 40 respondents were randomly selected. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic and coping strategies index to determine the food security status of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

The results in Table 1 show that 35% of Obio Akpo extension services beneficiaries and 35% of Emuoha beneficiaries fall within the age brackets of between 20-29 years, while 37.3% and 35% of both beneficiaries from Obio Akpo and Emuoha Local Government areas are within 40-59 years. The result implied that younger and men full of energy benefited from the extension services that enhanced food production and security. The result is in agreement with Matthews (2007) which stated that young people enhances food production.

Table 1 also revealed that 49.2% of Obio Akpo extension services beneficiaries were male, while 48.3% Emuoha extension services beneficiaries were males; 50.8% of Obi Akpo beneficiaries were females whereas 51.7% of Emuoha beneficiaries were females. The implication of more females benefiting from extension services led to improved finances of the household hence more food produced and food security guaranteed. The household size in the table also indicated that

53.3% of Obio Akpo beneficiaries and 52.4% of Emuoha beneficiaries had a household size of 6-10 persons, while 30% of Etche beneficiaries and 20% of Ikwere beneficiaries had a household size of 1-5 persons. This implies that the number of persons in the household of the various beneficiaries enhanced labour supply for food production and security. Further entries in Table 1 showed that 50% of Obio Akpo extension services beneficiaries and 44.2% of Emuoha extension services beneficiaries were married while 24.2% of Obi Akpo beneficiaries were single. However, 10.8% of Obio Akpo beneficiaries and 6.7% of Emuoha beneficiaries were widows. The implication is that majority of the beneficiaries from the two local government areas were married and were seen as responsible persons which enhanced food production. This is also in agreement with Eze and Madukwe (1999) that stated that high percentage of married persons favoured high food productivity and security.

The results in Table 2 showed that 85% Obio Akpo extension services beneficiaries were rated food secured while 15% were rated insecure among the household which consumed less preferred food. On it the household reduced food secured while 20% were food insecure. Furthermore on respondents who reduced personal consumption 87.5% were food secured while 12.5% of the households who reduced food for children 72.5% were food secured while 27.5% of the households were food insecure. The household beneficiaries who did not skip meals in the households who “never” and “rarely” skipped meal a day stood at 78.3% while 21.7% agreed to have skipped a meal a day and are food insecure.

The results in Table 3 indicated that the percentages of households in Emuoha Local Government area extension services beneficiaries who never and rarely agreed to the items put to question was 76.7% and were food secured while 23.3% of the beneficiaries were rated food insecure. Furthermore 64.4% of the households attested to have never and rarely reduced food for men and were rated food secured while 35.6% who attested to have reduced food from time to time and often for men were rated food insecure. On the households who have reduced personal consumption, 74.2% were rated food secured

while 25% were rated food insecure. The households who did not reduce children food stood at 76.7% and were rated food secured while the household who reduced children's food from time to time and often stood at 23.3% and were rated food insecure. However, 80.9% of households who never and rarely skipped meals in the last 7 days were rated food secured while 19.1% of the households who benefited from extension services and agreed to have from time to time and often skipped meals in the last 7 days were rated food insecure. Finally 77.5% of the households who "never" and rarely skipped meal a day were rated food secured while 22.5% of the households who agreed to have skipped meal a day from time to time and often were rated insecure.

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference between the food security status of the beneficiaries of extension services in Obio Akpo and Emuoha Local Government Areas. The hypothesis is accepted. This implies that all the beneficiaries had access to food for their family members needed to maintain healthy and active life.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in Obio Akpor and Emuoha Local Government areas of rivers state to access the household food security status of the beneficiaries of extension services. The study indicated that the ages of the household beneficiaries were between 20 – 59 years and this age bracket enhanced food production and security because of the nature of this age group that is full of energy. However 80.4% of Obio extension services beneficiaries were food secured while 19.6% of the beneficiaries were rated food insecure. Furthermore, the beneficiaries from Emuoha had 76.7% of the households rated food secured while 23.3% of the beneficiaries were rated food insecure. Finally, the above positive

result was due to the support from private and public extension services providers (SPDC, AGIP, Research institutes and Universities).

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Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-economics characteristics (n=240)

| | Obio Akpor | Emohua |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| Age yrs. | | |
| Less than 19 | 8(6.8) | 14(11.7) |
| 20-39 | 42(35.0) | 42(35.0) |
| 40-49 | 40(37.3) | 42(35.0) |
| Above 59 | 27(24.2) | 42(35.0) |
| NR | 3(2.5) | |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 59(49.2) | 58(48.3) |
| Female | 61(50.8) | 62(51.7) |
| Marital status | | |
| Married | 60(30.0) | 53(44.2) |
| Single | 29(24.2) | 24(20.0) |
| Widow | 13(10.8) | 8(6.7) |
| Divorced | 14(11.7) | 12(10.0) |
| NR | 4(3.3) | 23(19.2) |
| Household size | | |
| 1-5 | 36(30.0) | 344(28.3) |
| 6-10 | 64(53.3) | 63(52.5) |
| 11-15 | 15(12.5) | 19(15.8) |
| Above 15 | 5(4.5) | 3(2.5) |
| NR | - | 1(0.8) |

Source: field survey 2013

- Percentages in parenthesis

Table 2: Distribution of Obio Akpo Extension services beneficiaries based on food security status

| S/No | Item | “Never” | “Rarely | Time to Time | “Often” |
|------|---|----------|----------|--------------|---------|
| 1 | Has the house consumed Less food | 64(57.0) | 34(28.0) | 14(10.0) | 6(5.0) |
| 2 | Have you reduced food for men? | 45(37.7) | 51(42.3) | 17(14.2) | 7(5.8) |
| 3 | Have you reduced personal consumption | 69(57.5) | 36(30.0) | 12(10.0) | 3(2.5) |
| 4 | Have you reduced children’s food? | 28(23.3) | 59(49.2) | 30(25.0) | 3(2.5) |
| 5 | Have you skipped meals in the last 7days? | 45(37.5) | 35(29.2) | 35(29.2) | 7(2.5) |
| 6 | Have the households skipped meal a day | 51(42.6) | 43(35.8) | 19(15.8) | 7(5.9) |

Sources: Field survey 2013. Percentages in parenthesis multiple choice

“Never” = 1, “Rarely” = 2, From time to time=3, Often = 4

Table 3: Distribution of Emuoha Extension services beneficiaries based on food security status

| S/N | ITEMS | NEVER | RARELY | TIME TO TIME | OFTEN |
|-----|---|----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| 1 | Has the household consumed less preferred food? | 52(43.3) | 40(33.3) | 20(16.7) | 8(6.6) |
| 2 | Have you reduced food for men? | 32(26.7) | 45(37.7) | 27(22.5) | 16(13.1) |
| 3 | Have you reduced personal consumption? | 33(27.5) | 68(56.7) | 17(14.2) | 2(1.6) |
| 4 | Have you reduced children’s food? | 33(27.5) | 59(49.2) | 16(12.3) | 12(10.0) |
| 5 | Have you skipped meal in the last 7 days? | 29(24.2) | 68(56.7) | 11(9.1) | 12(10.0) |
| 6 | Have the household skipped meal a day? | 51(42.5) | 42(35.0) | 22(18.3) | 5(4.2) |

Source field survey 2013; percentages in parenthesis; multiple choices

“Never”=1, “Rarely” = 2, “From time to time” = 3; “Often” = 4

Table 4: Analysis of variance of food security status for beneficiaries in obio – akpor and emuoha local government areas

| ANOVA | SUMOFMEAN SQUARE | DF | MEAN SQUARE | F | SIG. |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Food security Etche beneficiaries | | | | | |
| Between groups | 219.934 | 15 | 14.662 | 1.086 | 0.379 |
| Within groups | 1404.432 | 104 | 13.504 | | |
| Total | 1624 | 119 | | | |
| Food security ikwere beneficiaries | | | | | |
| Between groups | 219.457 | 15 | 14.630 | 1.165 | 0.311 |
| Within groups | 1306.534 | 104 | 12.563 | | |
| Total | 1525.992 | 119 | | | |

Source Data Analysis 2013