

Rural Livelihood and Food Consumption Patterns Among Households in Oyo State, Nigeria: Implications for Food Security and Poverty Eradication in a Deregulated Economy

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ABSTRACT Food security is a fundamental objective of development policy and also a measure of its success. Achieving food security is still a major problem for households in most rural areas of Nigeria; therefore the associated symptoms of food crisis are found throughout the country, though with differences based on occupation, agro-ecological, socio-economic factors and rural versus urban location. This paper analyses the livelihood and food consumption patterns among households in rural Oyo State, Nigeria. Analysis of data on a sample survey of rural households in three adjoining local government areas of Oyo State show that a household member consumes N3,465.13 worth of carbohydrate foods; N750.54 of proteins and N191.43 of vitamins. On the average, a household member consumes N1469 worth of food per month; though with the modal amount skewed towards the civil servants and artisans. Results of the analysis further show that there are short falls of 18% and 11% in carbohydrate and protein intake respectively in three years. The general livelihood patterns indicate that farmers who produce more of food consumed in the study area have the least disposable income to cater for life's basic needs. The results of the study have implications for food security and poverty eradication, especially in a deregulated economy. Therefore, promoting agricultural policies with appropriate price incentives that focus on intensification; diversification and resource-stabilizing innovations will create more wealth for all categories of rural households. In all, more rural financial and agricultural extension services are needed; these will improve the conditions needed for increased productivity and capital accumulation.

INTRODUCTION

Food is a basic human need and the major source of nutrients needed for human existence. Food security indicates the availability of and access to food. The issue according to Ayalew (1997) became prominent in the 1970s and has been a topic of considerable attention since then. Maxwell and Frankenberger (1992), identified thirteen groups of definitions of food security. Few of such definitions are reviewed hereafter:

One of the most influential definitions of food security was given by the World Bank (1986) as "access by all people at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life." Food security is also defined as the physical and economic access to adequate food for all household members, without undue risk of losing the access (FAO, 1989). A definition endorsed by the International Conference on Nutrition (1992) states that food security is a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. According to the life sciences research office (1990), food security implies the ready availability

of nutritionally adequate and safe foods and an assured ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways (for example; without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies). USAID (1992), gave a relevant statement, which incorporates the fundamental concepts of various definitions of food security; this is, when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. In short, the main goal of food security is for individuals to be able to obtain adequate food needed at all times and to be able to utilize the food to meet the body's needs.

The problem of food security entails various elements in different countries. Such as might involve a lack of available food products, a lack of food or technical ability to distribute the food, problems of availability, affordability and accessibility of food through conventional food channels. In recent times however, economic deregulations has had a serious and negative influence on the food security. Economic deregulations due to changing conditions have

been practiced for a long time, even though it may not have been known by the term deregulation. Not too long ago, deregulation considerations have been initiated in a large number of developing countries including Nigeria (Mbanasor, 1999). It can be distinguished from economic policy making in earlier era as it involves many individual reform measures put together in a single package, worked out in explicit consultation with international agencies and tied to some additional loan. Economic deregulation in Nigeria has in a very short time brought about a reduction in household income levels and to this effect, the livelihood patterns of most households have remained more deplorable.

On the national level, per-capita growth of production of major foods in Nigeria has not been sufficient to satisfy the demands of an increasing population (Kormawa, 1999). The result is a big gap between national supply and national demand for food. Progress in the agricultural sector has also remained unsatisfactory (Abdulahi, 1999). Common staples in most Nigerian homes are insufficient and do not provide a balanced diet, as such, malnutrition is prevalent in most homes. This has led to massive importation of foods and massive foreign debt (CBN, 1996, 1999; Makinde, 2000).

The right to an adequate standard of living, including food is recognised in the universal declaration of human right (Eide, 2001). Food security is a fundamental objective of development policy and also a measure of its success. Yet, achieving food security is still a major problem in most households of urban Nigeria, food security is multifaceted. Other aspects of the food security problem facing the households involve the utilization of the food consumed. As a result of various forms of deprivation of basic amenities of life, like the sub-standard health care facilities, absence of potable water, prevalence of poor sanitation, low level of literacy, diseases, etc., the productivity of most households is reduced and their ability to utilise food to their maximum benefit is hampered. The resultant effect of these problems being faced by these households is that most of them are not having enough to subsist on, the year round. They are therefore closely identified with poverty and food insufficiency.

In view of the foregoing, this paper makes an expository analysis of the underlying charac-

teristics of households in rural Oyo State, in relation to their livelihood patterns. The livelihood patterns are expected to among other things, affect the food security level. This in turn impinges more on their level of poverty and its eradication.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data for this study are from a sample survey of households conducted in 2002. The survey was designed to gather general information about households' food consumption patterns e.g. types and classes of food, monetary equivalence of food types produced and consumed, food bought and consumed outside the family. Information was also gathered on the expenses on basic livelihood needs such as housing, health, transportation, children's school fees, utilities and others. The target population for the survey was rural households whose occupational status are of three categories; farmers, artisans and civil servants (mainly teachers). The sampled households were selected from three (3) adjoining local government areas (LGAs) of Oyo State, namely Akinyele, Afijio and Oyo East. From each local government, thirty (30) households were randomly selected, e.g. 10 farmers, 10 artisans and 10 teachers. A stratified random sample, totalling 90 households on the delineation of the LGAs and occupational status of household heads was then selected on which a questionnaire was administered.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages and tables were employed to fulfil the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Food Demand Characteristics of Households: Findings on Table 1 reveal that 46.67% of the households spent between N1000 and N5000 on carbohydrate food consumed, 40% of them spent between N5100 and N10000 on the same food item. Results further show that 10% of the households spent more than N10000 on the carbohydrate food consumed. Food demand pattern shows that 86.67% spent between N1000 and N10000 on the carbohydrate food items consumed monthly.

On protein food items, 40% of the households spent between N3100 and N5000 while 33.33% spent between N1000 and N3000. Also 20% of

Table 1: Distribution of households based on the amount spent on carbohydrate, protein and vitamin food items demanded.

<i>Carbohydrate (₦)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
< 1000	3	3.33
1000-5000	42	46.67
5100-10,000	36	40
>10,000	9	10
Total	90	100

<i>Protein (₦)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
< 1000	6	6.67
1000 – 3000	30	33.33
3100 – 5000	36	40
> 5000	18	20
Total	90	100

<i>Vitamin (₦)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
< 200	9	10
210 - 500	27	30
510 - 1000	42	46.67
> 1000	12	13.33
Total	90	100

the households spent more than N5000 on protein food items consumed. About 7.0% of the households spent less than N1000 on this particular food item on a monthly basis.

About 47.0% of the households spent between N510 and N1000 on the vitamin food items consumed, 30% spent between N210 and N500, while 13.33% spent more than N1000 on vitamin food items consumed. Nine or 10% of the households spent less than N200 on the vitamin food items consumed. All the expenditure recorded on food is done on monthly basis.

Households' Expenditure Patterns of Specific Food Items and Classes

On Table 2, the average monthly values and expenditure on specific food items under each class of carbohydrate, protein and vitamins are presented. These expenditures are recorded on household own produced (non-purchased) and food purchased and consumed within the family. The average monthly total value of carbohydrate food items consumed from household own produced food stood at N13,345.32; for protein, an amount of N2,010.00 was recorded, while N678.53 worth of vitamin food was consumed from own produced food items.

On food items purchased and consumed within the family, N10,038.40 was spent on carbohydrate, N5464.35 on protein and an average of N825.92 was spent on vitamin; all on monthly basis.

On Table 3, the household expenditures on

prepared foods purchased outside are presented. Carbohydrates constitute the major prepared food items bought and consumed outside the household. It gulped up to N4,337.33 per month per household. The average amount spent on prepared and purchased protein food outside the home stood at N540 per month. No record was made for prepared and purchased vitamins in this context.

General Characteristics of Households Livelihood Pattern: On Table 4, the average monthly expenditure of households on major livelihood items are presented. These items are indispensable to livelihood and the general living conditions of the households depend on them. Households were broadly classified into farmers, artisans and civil servants (mostly teachers).

The households considered in this study expended money on food, accommodation, transport, clothing, school fees, health, utilities and others (miscellaneous such as gifts and etc) On the average, farmers expended N6,787.58; artisans, N10,861.12 and civil servants; N16,180.00 monthly on the items considered. The monthly expenditure on the items is a reflection of the household income for the three groups sampled. For example, the findings of the study show that farmers made approximately an income of N11,560.00 per month; the artisans, N14,655.00 and the civil servants; about N17,000.00.

The income earned by the three categories of sampled households however remain a far cry from the expected average income due to an average person considering the expenses that gulp major parts of their income.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the following are the implications of the results for food security and poverty eradication.

With an average of 8 members per household, a member consume N3465.13 worth of carbohydrate food, N750.54 of protein food and N191.43 worth of vitamins. This amounts to an average of N1469 worth of food per household member per month. It also amounts to an intake of 79% carbohydrate, 17% protein and 4% vitamin per month. Comparing this with a recent and related study of farming households in Oyo State (Adio, 2000), where energy intake was found to be about 97% carbohydrate (from plant and animal products) and about 28% protein (from

Table 3: Average monthly expenditure of households classified by prepared foods purchased outside.

<i>Carbohydrate foods</i>	<i>Average cost ₦</i>	<i>Protein foods ₦</i>	<i>Average cost ₦</i>	<i>Vitamin foods ₦</i>	<i>Average cost ₦</i>
Bread	440	Beans	440	-	-
Rice	314	Akara (Bean cake)	100	-	-
Banku	633.33	-	-	-	-
Amala	600	-	-	-	-
Yam	200	-	-	-	-
Plantain	200	-	-	-	-
Semovita	450	-	-	-	-
Fufu	1500	-	-	-	-
Total	4337.33	-	540	-	-

Table 4: Average monthly expenditure of households classified by budget item and occupational groups of household head.

<i>Budget item</i>	<i>Occupational groups of household head</i>		
	<i>Farmers ₦</i>	<i>Artisans ₦</i>	<i>Civil servants ₦ (mainly teachers)</i>
Food	3137.18	3965.50	5320.00
Accommodation	750.00	1250.00	2750.00
Transport	1200.00	2780.00	2890.00
Clothing	300.00	450.70	1500.00
School fees	250.50	720.00	1000.00
Health	550.00	780.00	850.00
Utilities	350.40	350.00	370.00
Others	250.00	565.00	1500
Total	6787.58	10861.12	16180.00

plant and animal products), this implies a short fall of 18% and 11% in carbohydrate and protein intake respectively in three years. This situation depicts food insecurity and is expected to be worse in the next few years.

The general livelihood pattern also indicates that farmers who produce more of the food consumed in the study area have the least disposable income to cater for life's basic needs. This implies that as this trend continues, the farmers will have less money to cater for the household, resulting in them having less resources, poorer accommodation, transportation and health, consuming more of the unbalanced diets and generally remaining in the ultimate vicious cycle of poverty.

RECOMMENDATION

Since agriculture is the main source of rural livelihood, any improvement of incomes and food supply would be an increase of agricultural production and the main aim should be to raise productivity. We therefore suggest the following:

Expansion and deepening of the rural economic infrastructure, including roads, small scale irrigation schemes (in areas with low rainfall), markets, peasants' health and veterinary

facilities, etc. Such infrastructure should be tailored to smallholder farming with high potential for productivity, diversification and quality improvement (to control risk).

More rural financial and agricultural extension services are also needed. These will improve the conditions needed for increased productivity and capital accumulation. In all, promoting agricultural policies with appropriate price incentives that focus on intensification; diversification and resource-stabilizing innovations will create more wealth for all categories of rural households and this in turn will ensure food security and eradicate poverty especially in an era of economic deregulation, such as that in the present Nigeria.

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