



Extent of Rural Women Household Food Security, Evidence from Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Women play multiple roles in the family and also ensure household food security. The study examined contribution of rural women to household food security in Afijio Local government area of Oyo state. A total of 120 respondents were selected for the study through multi-stage random sampling technique. The results show that (77.5%) of the respondents were aged between 31-50 years, majority (65.0%) were married, had one form of education or the other, primary education (24.2%); secondary (29.2%); and tertiary education (16.6%). The respondent's livelihood activities include farming (48.3%), food processing (65.0%), trading (55.9%). The study revealed that respondents contribute to household food security in different ways. About (29.2 %) of the respondents were food secure while 26.6% were severely food insecure. The results of hypothesis reveals that age ($r = 0.386$ $p < 0.05$), level of formal education ($r = 0.405$ $p < 0.05$), and income ($r = 0.468$ $p < 0.05$) were significant at 5%. It was concluded that rural women should improve on their production skill.

Keywords: Rural, Women, Household, Food Security, Extent

INTRODUCTION

The term food security was originally used to describe whether a country had access to enough food to meet dietary energy requirements [1]. The most unduly accepted definition of food security derives from the 1996 World Food Summit Plant of Action, which describes food security as a state in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. It is regarded as the basic means of sustenance and an adequate food intake in term of quantity and quality, is a key for healthy and productive life [2].

Food availability means that enough safe and nutritious food is either domestically produced or imported from the international market. Food availability does not ensure food accessibility for food to be accessible, individual or families must have sufficient purchasing power or ability to acquire quality food at all times while utilization demands sufficient quality and quantity of food intake [3].

The Food and Agriculture Organization [4] observed that, rural women are responsible for half of the world's food production and produce between 60 and 80% for the food in most developing countries. Future Harvest [5] reported that women sow, weed, apply fertilizer and pesticides and harvest and thresh the crop. In the livestock sector, women feed and milk the large stock, while raising poultry and small stock as goat, rabbits and guinea pig. Possibly 50 million people suffer severe under nutritious and these are joined by millions more who are unable to acquire enough food to enjoy an active and productive life in Nigeria [6].

Food demand has been on the increase for long as the production is becoming relatively low due to increase in the number of mouths consuming the same [7].

However, women play a pivotal role in agricultural and rural economics in all developing countries. The roles that rural women play and their position in meeting the challenges of agricultural production and development are quite dominant and prominent [8].

Their role varies considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex household and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and waste, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes [9, 10].

Based on this background, the general objective of the study was to assess contribution of rural women to household food security in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically the objectives were to

1. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of rural women in the study area.
2. Determine the food security status of the respondents
3. Identify the contribution of rural women in contributing to food security.

METHODOLOGY

AFIJIO is one of the thirty-three local areas of Oyo state. The Local Government Area (LGA) is bounded in West, East and North by Oyo East LGA and to the South by Akinyele LGA. Its administrative headquarters are in the town of Jobele. The major communities in the LGA includes; Awe and Akinmorin, Fiditi, Ilora, Jobele, Iluaje and Ojutaiye. The population of the study consists of rural women. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study. The area consists of ten wards. First each ward a total of three communities was systematically selected. In all a total sample size of one hundred and twenty respondents were selected for the study.

Primary and secondary data were used. Data was collected using interview schedule descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing and interpreting the data. The dependent variable for the study is the level of household food security. This was measured using household food insecurity access scale (HFIAS) generic questions [11].

However the contribution to household food security was measured using three rating scale of regular = 3, occasionally = 2, and never=1. Age was measured by their actual age. Education level was measured by year spent in school; household size was measured by total number of people eating from the same pot at the time of the study. This was later categorized as less than 3, 3-5 and 6 and above. Farm size was measured in term of the size of farm cultivated. This was determined by asking the respondents to state the actual numbers of heaps molded on their farms. The numbers of heaps was converted i.e. 15 x 200 (heaps) = 1 acre.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio characteristics of the respondents

Age: Age composition of a population is a very important parameter in the overall development and also ascertains the workforce and level of dependency. Results in table 1 show that majority (77.5%) of the respondents were aged between 31-50years while only few (5.8%) of the respondents were over 60years. The mean age of the sampled respondents was 44years. This implies that most of the respondents were in their active ages and therefore actively involved in household food security activities.

Marital Status: Majority (65.0%) of the respondents interviewed was married, 18.5% were widowed and only few 7.5% were single, hence they were saddle with additional responsibility towards their children and spouses.

Educational Status: The data revealed that 30.0% of the respondent had no formal education. In all most of the respondents (70.0%) had one form of education or the other. This implies that most of the respondents were literate.

Primary occupation: The results further revealed different primary livelihood activities. These results recorded multiple activities viz a viz farming, food processing, trading, civil services and others. These are livelihood activity which generates income as reported by the respondents.

Household size: This study revealed that most (60.0%) of the respondents had between 3 and 5 children only few (19.2%) had between 6 and 7 children.

Farm size: This also indicates that majority (60.0%) of the respondents had less than 2 acres farm size. This is an indication of small land holding as major constraints for women participation in crop production activities.

Monthly income: However, on monthly income of the respondents, majority (71.3%) of the respondents earn an income between ₦7500-₦22, 600.00 on monthly basis, only few (5.8%) of the respondents earned below ₦7,500.00 and (20.8%) of the respondent earn ₦22, 600.00 and above. This means that majority earn income from different sources.

Contribution to food security

Table-2 also shows that majority of the respondents contributed to food security in one way or the other. Their contribution in the area of crop production (2.45), livestock production (3.60) and in the area of marketing of produce (2.74), others as indicated in table-2. Their contribution in the area of Shea butter production and locust beans production is low this is an indication that there is need for women to acquired necessary skill in other to be food secured.

Food insecurity access-related domains

These results indicate summary information on the prevalence of households experiencing one or more behaviors in each of the three domains reflected HFIAS i.e. Anxiety and uncertainty, insufficient quality and insufficient food intake and its physical consequences.

The result in table 3 reveals that half (52.5%) of the respondents worried that their household would not have enough food to eat this is an indication of anxiety and uncertainty about food. About (49.2%) of the respondents claimed to eat any kinds of foods not preferred because of a lack of resources this fall under insufficient quality of food intake. Also from the table 3, only few (21.7%) of the respondents had to eat fewer meals in a day because there was not enough food this is an indication of insufficient food intake and its physical consequences while only 14.7% of the respondents household member go a whole day and night without eating because there was not enough food and the respondents were experiencing insufficient food intake and its physical consequences. The findings indicate that all respondents were experiencing one domain or the other.

Household food insecurity scale score

From table 4, about (29.2%) of the respondents were food secure while only (26.6%) were mildly food insecure and almost half (41.2%) were severely food insecure.

A food secure household experiences none of the food secure conditions, or just experiences worry, but rarely. A mildly food insecure household sacrifices more frequently, by eating a monotonous diet or undesirable food sometimes or often and or has started to cut back on quantity by reducing size of meals or number of meal, rarely or sometimes severe conditions. A severe food insecure household has graduated to cutting back on meal size and experiencing any of the three most severe condition i.e. running out of food, going to bed hungry and going a whole day and night without eating. In other words 26.6 percent of the respondents are experiencing severely food insecure at least once in four weeks.

Constraints being faced by respondents

Results of analysis on table 5 shows that respondents faced constraints in the study area, these include lack of time (76.7%), lack of credit facilities (52.5%), low income (84.2%), insufficient land (44.2%), illiteracy (26.6%) and Poor storage facilities (73.8%). This implies that rural women were hindered by many problems in order to be food secure.

Results of relationship between socio-economic characteristics and household food security

The results in table 6 show that there is significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and household food security. These are age ($r=0.386$, $p<0.05$), and income ($r=0.468$ $p<0.05$) were statistically significant. This implies that a unit increase in this variable will increase household food security of the respondents.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that rural women contributed to food security in the study area but most of their activities were not self-sustaining as income derived from them are low. The respondents participated in different primary livelihood activities but were not food secure due to low income from their monthly income. For the respondents to be food secure there is need to improve their production skill, they should have access to credit. There is need for good marketing channels. For those that want to embark on mechanized farming they should have access to land and necessary input should be put in place to ease their work.

Table-1: Distribution of Respondent by Socio-Economic characteristic N = 120

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
≤ 30	7	5.8
31-40	45	37.5
41-50	48	25.8
51-60	13	15
Above 60	7	5.8
Marital Status		
Single	9	7.5
Married	78	65.0

Widowed	22	18.5
Divorced	11	9.2
Educational Status		
No formal education	8436	30.0
Primary education	29	24.2
Secondary education	35	29.2
Tertiary education	20	16.1
Primary Livelihood Activities		
Farming	58	48.3
Food processing	78	65.0
Trading	61	55.9
Soap making	6	5.0
Hairdressing	47	5.8
Tailoring	54	5.3
Food vending	55	4.2
Civil services	22	18.2
Household Size		
≤ 30	25	20.8
3-5	72	60.0
6-8	23	19.2
Farm size (acres)		
≤ 2	72	60.0
2-3	2414	11.7
3-4	19	15.8
>4	15	12.5
Monthly Income (₦) Per Month		
< ₦7,500.00	7	5.8
₦7,500.00 – ₦15,000	30	25.0
₦15,000 – ₦22,600	58	48.3
₦22,600.00	25	20.8

*Multiple responses recorded Field survey; 2019

Table-2: Level of contribution to Food Security

Contribution	Always	Occasionally	Never	WMS
Crop production	101 (84.2)	5 (4.2)	14 (11.7)	2.13
Plating	67 (55.9)	46 (38.3)	7 (5.8)	2.45
Weeding	91 (75.8)	15 (12.5)	14 (11.7)	2.23
Fertilizer application	43 (35.8)	38 (31.7)	39 (32.5)	3.0
Seed treatment	88 (73.3)	18 (15.0)	14 (11.7)	1.6
Livestock production	77 (64.2)	43 (35.8)	0 (0.0)	3.6
Processing	76 (63.4)	28 (23.3)	16 (13.3)	2.2
Threshing	67 (55.8)	7 (5.8)	46 (38.3)	0.83
Trading	56 (46.7)	48 (40.0)	16 (13.3)	1.93
Storage	92 (76.7)	15 (12.5)	13 (10.3)	1.64
Marketing	78 (65.0)	32 (26.7)	10 (8.3)	2.74
Civil service	10 (8.4)	0 (0.00)	11 (91.6)	0.89
Non Timber Forest Product				
Shea butter	46 (35.0)	7 (5.8)	67 (55.8)	1.22
Mushroom	56 (45.8)	36 (30.0)	29 (24.3)	1.62
Snail	94 (78.3)	8 (6.9)	18 (15.0)	1.63
Locust bean	41 (34.2)	5 (4.2)	74 (61.7)	0.73
Herbs for medicine	79 (65.9)	20 (16.7)	21 (17.5)	2.5
Bush meat	94 (73.3)	8 (6.7)	18 (15.0)	1.64
Fruits	88 (73.3)	32 (27.7)	0 (0.0)	2.5

Field source 2019

Table-3: Respondent's household food insecurity access

Items	Yes	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Domains
In the past four weeks, did you worry that your household would not have enough food	120 (100.0)	63 (52.3)	37 (32.5)	18 (15.0)	Anxiety and uncertainty about food
In the past four weeks, were you or any household members not able to eat the kinds of foods you preferred	116 (96.7)	59 (49.2)	41 (34.2)	16 (13.3)	Insufficient quality of food intake
In the past four weeks, did you or any household member have to eat a limited variety of food due to a lack of resources	120 (100.0)	36 (30.0)	59 (49.2)	25 (20.8)	Insufficient quality of food intake
In the past four weeks, did you or any household member have to eat some food that you really did not want to eat because of a lack of resources to obtain other types of food	102	55 (45.8)	26 (21.7)	21 (17.5)	Insufficient quality of food intake
In the past four weeks, did you or any smaller meal than you felt you needed because there was not enough food	116	34 (28.3)	58 (48.3)	24 (20.0)	Insufficient quality of food intake and its physical consequence
In the past four weeks, did you or any to other household member have to eat fewer meal in a day because there was not enough food	115	26 (21.7)	54 (45.0)	35 (29.2)	Insufficient quality of food intake and its physical consequence
In the past four weeks was there ever no food to eat of any kind in resources to get food	114	39 (32.5)	24 (20.0)	51 (42.5)	Insufficient quality of food intake and its physical consequence
In the past four weeks, did you or any household member go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food	97	17 (14.2)	63 (52.5)	40 (33.3)	Insufficient quality food intake and its physical consequence
In the past four weeks did you or any household member go a while day and night without eating anything because there was not enough food	80 (66.7)	17 (14.2)	63 (52.5)	40 (33.3)	Insufficient quality food of intake and its physical consequence

Field survey; 2019

Table-4: Food Security Status

Food Security	Frequency	Percentage
0-9 Food Secure	35	29.2
10-18 Mild Food Secure	32	42.2
19-27 Severe Food Insecure	53	41.2

Field survey; 2019

Table-5: Constraints Encountered by Rural Women

Constraints	Frequency*	Percentage
Lack of credit facilities	63	52.5
Poor marketing channel	79	65.0
Poor storage facilities	88	73.3
Lack of input	65	54.2
Insufficient land	53	44.2
Illiteracy	32	26.6
Lack of time	92	76.7
Family responsibility	91	75.8
Low income	101	84.2

Field survey; 2019

*multiple responses

Table-6: Pearson correlation of the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and household food security

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Age	0.386
Household size	0.468
Income	0.197

*Significant at 0.05 level

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