

Livelihood Diversification among Male and Female Rural Farmers in Esan West Local Government Area, Edo State

Idiako-Ochei, O. and J.I Okoh

Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria.

**Corresponding Author:* Idiako-Ochei, O, Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria.

Received Date: 12-08-2017

Accepted Date: 15-09-2017

Published Date: 24-10-2017

ABSTRACT

The study examined the livelihood diversification among male and female farmers in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to identify the livelihood activities of men and women in the area and compare the income of men and women from their livelihood activities. Primary data were collected from 80 respondents (40 males and 40 females), sampled from four communities in the study area. The data collected were analyzed using frequency table, percentage, mean, standard deviation and t-test. The result revealed that the respondents were economically active, with the males earning an average annual income of #763,680, which was higher than the females (#581,400). The t-test result ($t = 1.613$), however showed that the difference in income was not significant. It is therefore concluded that both male and female were actively involved in economic activities in the study area.

Keywords: Livelihood diversification, rural farmers and Esan West.

INTRODUCTION

Income diversification refers to an increase in the number of sources of income or the balance among the different sources. Thus, a household with two sources of income would be more diversified than a household with just one source, and a household with two income sources, each contributing half of the total, would be more diversified than a household with two sources, with one that accounts for 90% of the total (Joshi, *et al*; 2003). Income diversification is defined as the process of switching from low value crop production to a higher value crop, livestock and non-farm activities. "High value crops" are often defined in terms of the value per unit of weight; it is probably more useful to define them as crops that generate high economic return per unit of labour and land. Income growth in an agricultural economy can come from various resources. Distinction can be made between growth in crop income, non-crop agriculture income (livestock, fisheries, and forestry) and non-agriculture income which includes both off-farm wage labour and nonfarm self-employment (Escobal, 2001). Given that semi subsistence farmers often focus on production of staple food

crops, the switch to non-crop activities is often referred to as income diversification. Rural households in many different countries have been found to diversify their income sources allowing them to spread risk and smoothen consumption (Chibnik, 1994; Ellis, 1998; Reardon, Delgado and Milton, 1992; Valdivia, Dunn and Jette, 1996). This is often necessary in agriculture based peasant economies because of risks such as variability in soil quality, household and crop diseases, price shock, unpredictable rainfall and other weather related events. Income diversification can be achieved by producing a variety of crops and/or pursuing off-farm employment.

According to the World Bank (1996), 52% of Nigerians live on less than a dollar per day. In addition to the high incidence of poverty, most rural areas of the world are characterized by poor infrastructure, low level of urbanization, low population density and a very important agricultural sector (Minot, Epprecht, Ann and Trung, 2006). In addition to a rapid economic growth, a sustained and widespread growth in household income through diversification is a necessary condition for any developmental strategy for such areas (Minot *et al.*, 2006).

Diversification of livelihood pursuits is crucially important and a part of life in rural areas in many developing countries. It not only provides earnings to supplement the usually inadequate main source of income but also reduces the risks arising from relying on single employment (Ellis 2000). Rural people in Cambodia have traditionally earned livelihood from multiple sources: agriculture, fisheries, and forest produce, to name the most important ones. With the advent of modernisation over the last several decades, multiple bodies (including those from outside the agrarian system) have begun to make claims on natural resources.

This has disturbed the earlier harmony that existed between income flows from different sources to the farmers. Since farm sizes have been small all along, a reduction of income from non-farm sources implies that farm incomes by themselves would not meet food security requirements, and incomes from multiple sources become inevitable for sustaining livelihood. Villagers have begun to further diversify their income generation away from conventional agricultural sources, to others like wage labour and trade.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at assessing livelihood diversification among male and female rural farmers in Esan West LGA, Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were:

1. To identify the livelihood activities of men and women in the area.
2. To compare the income of men and women from their livelihood activities.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypothesis was tested:

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in income of male and female rural dwellers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Esan west local government, which is one of the 18 local governments' areas in Edo state, Nigeria. It has its headquarter in Ekpoma. It has a land area of about 502km² and situated at the latitude 6°08' east. Its estimated population is 125,842 (based on the population census fig. of 2006). Economic activities of Esan west local government area include commerce, college

industry, farming and furniture making. Major agricultural products include Rice, Pineapple, Cassava, Yam, Black pear and Avogadro pear.

Esan west local government of Edo state is made up of twenty one (21) communities, four (4) were randomly selected, namely Ihumudumu, Ukpenu, Emaudo and Ujemen. Twenty (20) farmers (10 males and 10 females) were randomly sampled from each of the selected communities making a total of eighty (80) respondents. Validated questionnaire was used to obtain data from the literate respondents and interview schedule for the illiterate respondents. Frequencies, mean, standard deviation were used to analyze the objectives while T-test was used to analyze the formulated hypothesis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Livelihood Activities of Respondents

Table 1 shows the different of the livelihood activities of the respondents. The result revealed that 75% and 52.5% of the male and female respondents respectively participated in farming (crop production), 25% and 12.5% of the male and female respondents respectively participated in livestock rearing. Processing (garri and rice), 12.5% and 60% of the male and female respondents respectively participated in agricultural processing.

The result for government employment reveals that 22.5% and 12.5% of the male and female respondents respectively were involved in non-teaching civil service job. About 17.5% and 15% of the male and female respondents respectively were teaching in government owned schools.

The result for private establishment reveals 12.5% of both male and female respondents were working for private establishment.

The result also reveal that 10% and 30% of the male and female respondents respectively were traders. For farm labour service, 7.5% of both male and female respondents offer their services as farm labourers. Only female respondents (12.5%) were found to engage fashion designing (12.5%), hair styling (17.5%).

Only the male respondents were economically engaged in mechanics (7.3%), vulcanizing (5%), carpentry (2.6%), bike driving (7.5%) and brick layering (7.5%). The result shows that the respondents were economically active.

Livelihood Diversification among Male and Female Rural Farmers in Esan West Local Government Area, Edo State

Table1. Livelihood activities of respondents

	Male		Female	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Farming (crop production)	30	75.0	21	52.5
Livestock rearing	10	25.0	5	12.5
Processing (garri, rice etc)	5	12.5	24	60.0
Teaching	7	17.5	6	15.0
Civil service (non-teaching)	9	22.5	5	12.5
Working for private establishment	5	12.5	5	12.5
Trading	4	10.0	12	30.0
Farm labour service	3	7.5	3	7.5
Fashion design(tailoring)			5	12.5
Mechanics	3	7.5		
Vulcanizing	2	5.0		
Hair styling			7	17.5
Carpentry	1	2.6		
Bike town service(okada)	3	7.5		
Brick layering	3	7.5		
Others	1	2.5	1	2.5

Income Range of Respondents

Table 2 shows that majority of both male (47.5%) and female (52.5%) respondents respectively earned #500,000 and below per annum. While 30% of both groups earned #500,001 - #1,000,000 per annum, while

#1,000,001 - #1,500,000 is earned by 12.5% and 15% of male and female respondents respectively. The average annual earnings of the respondents were #763,680 for the males and #581,400 for the females. The result suggests that the male earn more than the female.

Table2. Income range of Respondents

	Male		Female	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
500,000 & below	19	47.5	21	52.5
500,001-1,000,000	12	30.0	12	30.0
1,000,001-1,500,000	5	12.5	6	15.0
>1.5M	4	10.0	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0	40	100.0

Test of Difference in Income of Male and Female Respondents (T-Test)

Table 3 shows the t-test result of the difference between the income of the male and female respondents. The table shows that while the males earned #763,680.00 on average, the females earned #581,400.00 annually from their economic enterprise. This suggests that male

earned more. The t-test result (1.613) indicates that the difference (#182,280.00) in the income between the male and female respondents is not significant since the calculated t-value (1.613) is less than the critical t-value (1.994) at 5% level of significance. The non-significance means that the male and female earn statistically similar income per annum.

Table3. Test of difference in income of male and female respondents (t-test)

Sex	N	Income		T value	Decision
		Mean	Difference		
Male	40	763,680.00	182,280	1.613	Not significant
Female	40	581,400.00			

*critical t-value at 5% = 1.994

CONCLUSION

The study shows that farmers (males and females) in the study area partake in diverse

livelihood activities and the income generated from these activities by the males is more than the females but with no significant difference.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chibnik, M., (1994) *Risky Rivers: The Economics and Politics of FloodPlain Farming in Amazonia*. University of Arizona Press. Tuscon
- [2] Ellis, F., (1998) Household livelihood strategies and rural livelihood diversification *Journal of Development Studies*, 35(1):1-38
- [3] Ellis, F., (2000), *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries* (London, Oxford University Press)
- [4] Escobal, J., (2001). The determinants of nonfarm income diversification in rural Peru. *World Development*, 29(30):497-508
- [5] Joshi, P.K., Gulati, A.A., BIRTHAL, P.S. and Twari, L., (2003) Agriculture diversification in South Asia: Pattern, determinants and policy implications. *Discussion Paper No. 57*. Market structure studies division. International Food Policy Research Institute. Washington D.C.
- [6] Minot, N., Epprecht., M., Anh., T.T.T. and Trung, L.Q., (2006) Income diversification in the northern uplands of Vietnam?: *Research report No.145*. International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C.
- [7] Reardon. T., Delgado, D and Milton, P., (1992). Determinants and effects of income diversification amongst farm households in Burkina Faso. *Journal of Devt. Studies*, 28(20):264-296
- [8] Valdivia. C., Dunn, E. and Jette, C., (1996). Diversification as a risk management strategy in an Andean agro pastoral community? *American Journal of Agric Economics*, 78(5):13-34.
- [9] World Bank (1996). Poverty in the midst of plenty. The challenge of growth with inclusion. A World Bank poverty assessment, population and human resource division. West Africa Department, African Region Report No 14733.

Citation: I Ochei, and J Okoh, " Livelihood Diversification among Male and Female Rural Farmers in Esan West Local Government Area, Edo State", *International Journal of Research in Agriculture and Forestry*, vol. 4, no. 11, pp. 5-8, 2017.

Copyright: © 2017 I Ochei, and J Okoh. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.