



Original Article

Role of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)/Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) on Poverty Reduction among Rural Women in Kebbi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of IFAD/CBARBDP in poverty reduction among rural women of Kebbi State Nigeria. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select a total of 120 beneficiaries. Interview schedule was the main tool used for data collection while descriptive statistics (means, frequency distribution and percentages) were used to analyse the data. The result showed that the mean age of the respondents was 40 years, 69% were married, the average household size of the beneficiaries was 10 persons, 95% of the beneficiaries did not have formal education, 62% of the beneficiaries were into trading as their major occupation, the average farm size of those involved in farming as their occupation was 0.225 hectares and the average amount of years spent in the programme was 5 years. The results also showed that women participated in 12 Women-Based Rural Development Activities, out of which three were agricultural related or on-farm skills acquisition activities. The rest were off-farm projects, which evolved as small scale rural industries. The findings also revealed that the major role played by IFAD/CBARBDP on poverty reduction among women in the study area are tailoring with a mean of (4.34), cream making (4.21) and preparation of food supplement (4.10). Base on the type of assistance rendered to the beneficiaries. The major role played by IFAD/CBARBDP are provision of cash with a mean of (4.41), provision of cash and livestock (4.17), provision of cash and foodstuffs (4.02) and provision of cash and Extension services (4.02). It could be concluded that IFAD-CBARBDP has played a prominent role in poverty reduction through skills acquisition, provision of support services to rural women of Kebbi State through the introduction of the Women-based rural development activities. Improving women's access to productive resources such as credit and appropriate technologies can increase production and consumption of food crops thereby increasing their income level; women literacy education programme is required to help rural women acquire basic skills and abilities to seek and receive needed information through modern communication channels such as mass media and extension agents.

Keywords: Role, Poverty Reduction, Rural Women, Kebbi State.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria poverty in the midst of plenty (1996) reported that some categories of individuals are regarded as particularly vulnerable especially female headed households particularly those with children too young to work. Widows and single mothers face special difficulties when their children fall sick, since no one is willing or able to help them. They also lack the necessary farm labour and cannot afford to hire it. The elderly are also vulnerable because poor families find it increasingly difficult to support them. Of the elderly, women are a highly vulnerable group. But of all the poor, children are the most seriously affected by poverty. The extensive involvement of their mothers in rural farming and/or selling means that they are not fed at the right times.

A recent effort by IFAD towards reduction of poverty and improving the livelihood of rural women led to the implementation of the Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Program. The program was established after several studies indicated that poverty is becoming endemic in some Northern States with fragile ecosystem in Nigeria (IFAD, 2006). The program runs among eight northern Nigerian states namely; Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara and it builds on previous community – based projects in Sokoto and Katsina States (ICT update, 2010). The major objective is to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of the rural poor with special emphasis on the needs of women and other vulnerable groups (IFAD, 2004).

All over the world, women are at the centre of poverty. Women specifically find it more difficult, if not impossible to have access to loan especially from financial institutions, wherein their male counterpart can easily get the same help. As Mayra (1998) noted in Alaye and Evelyn (2008), this account for a disturbing global trend and when the yardstick used to measure the degree of people's poverty is their level of well-being, women are traditionally found to be more impoverished than men. This situation is worse in Nigeria. Women in Nigeria form an active and reserve labour force but they rarely own the means of productions (Rahman, 2004). However, the position of women in meeting the challenges of agricultural development cannot be over emphasized. In a typical African setting, women make a significant contribution to food production; they provide 60-80% of agricultural labour and are responsible for 80% of food production (Mgbada, 2002; Rahman, 2004). Nevertheless, they have little or no access to productive assets. Most often times, they are denied access to loan facilities for lack of collateral securities (Modupe, 2008). While women play an essential and dynamic role in economic life, they remain seriously disadvantaged in terms of access to health, education, financial, and agricultural extension services due to their low economic status (World Bank, 1996).

Women in Kebbi state are not exempted from this miserable phenomenon. Kebbi State is one of the states which are plagued by poverty just like many of the Northern states. In spite of its potentials in agriculture the state is still wallowing under excruciating poverty most especially among the rural women. The rural women are left in the state of dilemma and high rate of poverty. They are generally small operators', mostly individual operators, operating out of their homes and or workshops, producing using fairly simple technology. They self-finance most of their investments and working capital. (Nigeria Galleria, 2004)

Despite the laudable programs outlined to combat the effect of poverty, and the huge scarce resources devoted to poverty alleviation by previous Nigerian Governments, Modupe (2008) noted that the level of unemployment especially among rural women and youth continued to rise while poverty conditions worsened. The rural women still suffer social problems like poverty and ignorance. Knowledge that could enable the right women to produce more, to produce the right things and get more for their effort is available but is inaccessible. This is because the programmes have not yielded the desired result in alleviating the poverty

situation of the rural women. It is imperative therefore, to examine the role IFAD-CBARDP played towards assisting rural women in their bid to be out of the vicious cycle of poverty through the poverty reduction activities introduced among the rural women of Kebbi state.

METHODOLOGY

Kebbi State was carved out of old Sokoto State in 1991; it consists of 21 Local Government Areas and four Emirate councils. It is located within latitude $10^{\circ} 05'$ to $13^{\circ} 27'$ North and Longitude $3^{\circ} 35'$ to $6^{\circ} 03'$ East. It is located in the North Western Nigeria; Kebbi State occupies a total land area of 36,800 square kilometres. It shares boundaries with Sokoto State on the North-Eastern axis, Zamfara State on the Eastern part, Niger State on the Southern part and Republic of Niger on the Western part (Nigeria Galleria.com, 2004). According to NPC (2006) Kebbi State has an estimated population of 3,662,103 people. The state has four major tribes, which include: Hausa, Fulani, Dakarkari and Gungawa, Others minor tribes include Zabarmawa, Dandawa, Kambari, Yorubas and Ibos. Islam is the dominant religion of the people.

Rainfall begins in April and ends in October with highest rain in July and August. The annual rainfall ranges from 400-800mm (KSG, 2008). Generally, the state is characterized by high temperatures especially in the month of March, April, and May. The annual temperature varies from 21°C to 38°C (KARDA, 1992). Kebbi State has an agriculturally viable environment since it is endowed with high soil fertility, vast farm land and economically viable rivers such as river Niger and it is also sheltered by fine tropical climate. Owing to these factors, Agriculture has remained the major source of revenue and indeed the backbone of the economy of the state. Major food crops produced in the area are millet, guinea corn, maize, cassava, potatoes, rice, beans, onions and vegetables. While Cash crops include wheat, soybeans, ginger, groundnuts and tobacco (Nigeria Galleria, 2004)

Multi-stage random sampling technique was used for the study. The first stage was the random selection of four Local Government Areas from the nine Local Government Areas that participated in the programme. The second stage involved the random selection of two villages from each of the Local Government areas selected and finally, the beneficiaries were drawn from each of the villages based on sampling proportionate to size. Thus, a total of 120 beneficiaries were sampled out of 260 beneficiaries for the study. Primary and secondary data were used for this study. The primary data were generated through interview schedule, while secondary data were obtained from relevant literature such as text books, Journals, internet, and official documents from IFAD-CBARDP offices in the affected Local Government Areas. Data analyses were carried out using descriptive statistics (means, frequency distribution and percentages).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Characteristics of Beneficiaries

Personal characteristic of the house hold members are known to affect the welfare or living standard of the household as well as its poverty status (Ngaski *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, the socio-economic characteristics that were investigated include age, marital status, and occupation, household size and level of education. These characteristics were considered very important variables.

From table five, 28% were within the age range of 32-41years. With a mean age of 40.38years, this is an indication that most of the beneficiaries were in their prime age, in which they possess the energy to carry out income generating activities. This agrees with David *et al.*, (2009) who stated that, 15-64 years is a period that is economically productive in a population. Furthermore, the size of the mean age according to Modupe (2008) shows

that most of the women were still in their active economic years which precluded the possibility of maximizing the economic opportunities provided by the programme. Based on their marital status, table 5 indicates that majority (69%) of the beneficiaries were married this table indicates that the single, married, divorced, and widows benefited from the program. This result is in conformity with the work of Nwachukwu and Ezeh(2007) who carried out a similar research and reported that majority of the respondent were married. From table 5, the dominant 47% household sizes are those having household size of between 2 – 8 members and the average household size was 10 people per house. This large household size is a common characteristic of rural households especially in Northern Nigeria where polygamy is mostly practiced. This result is in conformity with the findings of Sherma *et al* (2003) that carried out a research among farm families and reported that an average family size of over six members per household. According to Nwachukwu and Ezeh (2007), household size has some implication on the amount of labour available for economic activities. The distribution of the beneficiaries according to their level of education is presented in table 1. It could be observed from the result that majority (95%) of the beneficiaries acquired only quranic education. Thus most of beneficiaries had no formal education.

Table1: Personal Characteristics of Beneficiaries

Age(years)	Frequency	Percentage
12 -21	8	6.7
22 – 31	26	21.7
32 – 41	34	28.3
42 – 51	33	27.5
52 – 61	14	11.5
62 and above	5	4.2
Marital – Status		
Single	1	0.8
Married	82	68.8
Divorced	3	2.5
Widowed	34	28.3
Household size		
2 – 8	56	46.7
9 – 15	54	45.0
16 – 22	8	6.7
23 and above	2	1.7
Level of education		
Quranic education	114	95.0
Primary education	3	2.5
Secondary education	3	2.5
Tertiary education	0	0
Occupation		
Farming	26	21.7
Trading	74	61.7
Civil servant	1	0.8
Artisanship	17	14.2
Others	2	0.16
Farm size (ha)		
0.25 – 1	20	16.7
1.25 – 2	6	5
Period of participation		
Years		
1 – 3	49	40.8
4 – 6	12	10.0
7 and above	59	49.2
Mean	5 years	

Source: Field survey Data and Computation by the Researcher,2014

This result agrees with that of Aqeela *et al.*, (2005) that two third of the one billion of illiterate persons in the world are women and girls, and it disproved the findings of Islam

(1997) who stated that primary and secondary education enhances understanding of a program and productivity. It could be observed from table five that majority (61.7%) of the beneficiaries were petty traders and 0.8% of them were civil servants. The result implies that very few of them were civil servants. This result is not in conformity with the findings of Ephraim *et al.* (2008) who have shown that crop production is by far the most important single source of income providing well above 46% of total income for people in Niger, Kebbi and Kaduna States. As majority of the beneficiaries in the study area were found to engage in petty trading.

Table 1 also revealed that out of the 22% that were into farming, 17% cultivated less than 1 ha of land. This finding implies that the study area is not dominated by women farmers and that the few women farmers found in the area were small scale farmers. This agrees with the findings of Adeola *et al.*, (2008) that most of the rural women farmers are small scale farmers. The distribution of the beneficiaries according to the years spent during participation is also presented in table 1. The table indicates that 49%, of the beneficiaries had between 7-9 years of experience. It also indicates that most of them had about 5 years' experience. The implication is that most of the women beneficiaries were familiar with the different activities provided by the programme.

Role of IFAD/CBARDP in Skills Acquisition

Table 2 showed the role played by IFAD/CBARDP in poverty reduction among rural women through skills acquisition. Results indicated that the rural women in the study area participated in 12 Women-Based Rural Development activities provided by the programme. A close look at the acquisition skills provided by the programme indicated that few of them were Agricultural related or on-farm activities, while the rest were off-farm activities, which were projects that evolved as small scale rural industries. Tailoring was ranked first with mean of (4.34), followed by cream making as second with mean of (4.21) and the third role played by IFAD/CBARDP in poverty reduction among women was preparation of food supplement with mean of (4.10). Others include soya cake making (4.07), midwifery training (3.98), knitting training (3.77), fish farming (3.54), bead making (3.48), vegetable production (3.48), oil extraction (3.48), soap making (3.32) and snacks making (3.13). The result indicated that beneficiaries (rural women) in the study area benefited from skills acquisition provided by the programme.

Table 2: Role of IFAD/CBARDP in Skills Acquisition

Skills Acquisition	Mean Score	Ranking
Tailoring	4.34	1 st
Knitting training	3.77	6 th
Soap making	3.32	11 th
Bead making	3.48	8 th
Cream making	4.21	2 nd
Soya cake making	4.07	4 th
Preparation of food supplement	4.10	3 rd
Midwifery training	3.98	5 th
Vegetable production	3.48	8 th
Fish farming	3.54	7 th
Snacks making	3.13	12 th
Oil extraction	3.48	8 th

Source: Field survey Data and Computation by the Researcher, 2014

This however, increases the income generating activities of the beneficiaries, which in turn increase the standard of living of the beneficiaries thereby reducing their poverty status. This finding is similar to that of Okunade *et al.*, (2005) who carried out an investigation to identify the women – based rural development project introduced to women of Osun State. He reported that women participated in 12 women – based rural development project in their

localities of which Seven were Agricultural related or on-farm project example; vegetable production and animal rearing, and the rest five were off-farm project. Which include soap making, cloth weaving.

Role of IFAD/CBARDP in Type of Assistance Rendered

Support is sometimes extended to individuals, group and communities and is aimed at improving their livelihood and is expected to result in their improved wellbeing. However, the programme provided credit support to beneficiaries in different forms. Based on this, result revealed that provision of cash to beneficiaries was ranked first with a mean of (4.41), provision of cash and livestock (4.17), provision cash and foodstuffs (4.02), provision of Extension services (4.02), provision of livestock (3.86), provision of foodstuffs (3.79), provision of cash and pumping machines (3.64), provision of knitting machines (3.42) and provision of oil extraction machines (3.42). This result implies that all the beneficiaries received support from the programme. This will go a long way in improving the living standard of the beneficiaries if properly utilized.

Table 3: Role of IFAD/CBARDP in Type of Assistance Rendered

Type of Assistance	Mean Score	Ranking
Provision of cash	4.41	1 st
Provision off oodstuffs	3.79	6 th
Provision of livestock	3.86	5 th
Provision of knitting machines	3.42	8 th
Provision of cash and foodstuffs	4.02	3 rd
Provision of cashand livestock	4.17	2 nd
Provision of cashand oil extraction machines	3.42	8 th
Provision of cashand pumping machines	3.64	7 th
Provision of cashand Extension services	4.02	3 rd

Source: Field survey Data and Computation by the Researcher, 2014

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that IFAD-CBARDP has played a prominent role in poverty reduction through skills acquisition, provision of support services to rural women of Kebbi State through the introduction of the Women-based rural development activities. Particularly in low income state like Kebbi in which agriculture is the dominant occupation. Improving women's access to productive resources such as credit and appropriate technologies can increase production and consumption of food crops thereby increasing their income level; women literacy education programme is required to help rural women acquire basic skills and abilities to seek and receive needed information through modern communication channels such as mass media and extension agents. The promotion and development of agricultural techniques adapted to women in terms of production, post-harvest agricultural activities and marketing is also required to improve the living condition of rural women. The expansion of the programme to capture more rural women in the study area and beyond will surely be a driving force towards poverty reduction.

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