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ANALYSIS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY STATUS IN ORUK ANAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study analyzed the poverty status among rural farm households in Oruk-Anam Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data were collected from 120 household's heads spread across nine (9) clans in Oruk-Anam Local Government Area and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Forster-Greer and Thorbecke (FGT) poverty model and Logit model. The results for the socio-economic revealed that majority (43.3%) of the rural farm household's head were aged between 51-60 with a mean of 40.5%. About 45% of the total respondents had less 5 years of farming experience. The majority of the household size stood at between 5-10 members and greater percentage of the household's head were married, 57.5% of the household's heads were male and 51.7% had secondary education without higher institution. 76.7% of the respondents were without access to extension service while 80.8% had no access to credit. Also, 60.8% of respondents were non-poor, 32.5% moderately poor, and 6.7% were poor. The poverty incidence, depth and severity were 0.516, 0.2904 and 0.0632 respectively among the rural farm households. Further analysis of the determinants of poverty using the logit model revealed that 6 out of the eleven (11) variables impacted significantly on poverty incidence and these were membership to social organization, monthly income, farm size, education, age, and household size. Hence, farmers should be educated through series of awareness campaigns on the need to embrace off-farm activities. Also, policies should be made on intense family planning to reduce the size of household as well as participation in social organization to enhance the raising of capital for farming.

Keywords: Poverty status, farm household, income, malnutrition

Introduction

The rising profile of poverty in Nigeria is assuming a worrisome dimension every passing day. Nigeria has at least half of its population living in abject poverty (Ojo, 2008). The National Bureau of Statistics (1996) reported that poverty has been massive, pervasive, and engulfs a large proportion of the Nigerian society. According to the scourge of poverty in Nigeria is an incontrovertible fact, which results in hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, poor access to credit facilities, and low life expectancy as well as a general level of human hopelessness. The Nigerian story is truly a paradox. The country is rich, but the people are poor. Omotola (2008), noted that Nigeria is richly endowed, the country's wealth potentials manifest in the forms of natural, geographical, and socioeconomic factors. With this condition, Nigeria should rank among the richest countries of the world that should have

no business with extreme poverty. However, Okpe and Abu (2009) remarked that Nigeria has witnessed a monumental increase in the level of poverty, every measure of poverty ranks Nigeria at the bottom list of Nations. Poverty is an unacceptable deprivation in human wellbeing that can comprise both physiological and social deprivation. As one looks towards the global poverty figures, the deprived masses of the poor are living in acute misery in the rural area (Abbas, F. Saboor, N. Sarwar and A. Maqbool, 2005). Out of total 1.2 billion poor, more than 900 million live in rural areas around the globe (IFAD, 2002; Etim & Edet, 2009a). Nigeria is one of the most resource-endowed nations in the world, but socio-economically, Nigerians is also among the poorest in the world (Etim & Edet, 2007; 2009a). However, despite Nigeria's physical and human resources endowment, there had been progressively worsening welfare conditions of its nationals (Okunmadawa, 2001;

Etim *et al.*, 2009a; Etim & Edet, 2009b). Like in many developing countries, poverty in Nigeria is essentially a rural phenomenon as most of the impoverished people live in the rural areas, where they derive their livelihood from farming (Okon, Enete & Okorji, 2016). Though, urban poverty exists and is also becoming an increasing concern, as reflected in the worsening trend in urban welfare indicators (World Bank, 1997), rural poverty is a much wider issue than the former. It is known that about 68% of the extreme poor are dependent on agriculture and live in the rural background (Cleaver & Schreiber, 1994; UNICEF, 1996; World Bank, 1997). Apart from the overwhelming evidence, which suggests that, the country belongs to the group of the lower-income countries (GNP per capita of \$US269 in 2000), the incidence of poverty has continued to rise with each passing day. Thus, poverty incidence that was just 15 percent of the population in 1960 rose to 28.1% in 1980 and further to 43.6% in 1985. The incidence of poverty dropped marginally to 42% in 1992 only to rise to 67% in 1996, 74.2 in 2000 and 92.5% in 2010 (Garba, 2006; Okpe and Abu, 2009; Alayande and Alayande, 2004; NBS, 2010). The UN Human Poverty Index, in 1999, placed Nigeria among the 25 poorest nations in the world. According to UNDP (2010) report, the population in poverty was 68.7 million, as of 2004. This is a very tragic situation when one considers the fact that Nigeria has had over \$300 billion in oil and gas revenues since independence but it is sad to know that up to 95 percent of this great wealth is controlled by about 0.01 percent of the population (Awa, 1983). Poverty in Nigeria is said to be mainly a rural phenomenon with agriculture accounting for the highest incidence over the years. This study focused on Akwa Ibom State. The situation in this state is not quite different being the hub of the Nigerian monotonic economy. Oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities have rendered the ecosystem less habitable for aquatic and terrestrial lives, and less useful for agricultural activities. In spite of this there is lack of well documented facts on the incidence of poverty in the state over the years which, perhaps explains the dearth of empirical works on poverty with specific reference to the state. This study seeks

to analyze the household poverty status of the farm households in Oruk Anam Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, specifically, the study;

- i. examined the socio-economic characteristics of rural farm households in Oruk Anam Local Government Area;
- ii. determined the Poverty status of farming households in the study area;
- iii. assessed the incidence, depth, and severity of poverty of the rural farm household in the study area; and
- iv. examined the factors affecting poverty status in the study area.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Oruk Anam Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The Local Government Area is located in the Southern part of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It lies between latitude 4040 'N and 50N, and longitude 70030 'E and 70050 'E. It has a land mass of 511.73km .The area also comprises two major political units, the Oruk zone and the Anam zone. The area is characterized by a typically humid tropic/climate with a distinct dry and wet season. The agricultural season last for up to 9 months. The mean annual rainfall is heavy and lies between 2000mm – 4000mm and to temperature range of 260c – 280c. The rainy season last from March to November and it's characterized by high relative humidity and heavy cloud cover while the dry season last from December to February. Its inhabitants are mostly farmers, craft men and civil servants. The population of the local government is about 172,654 out of which males are 86, 239 and females are 86, 415 (2006 National Census). It is predominantly agrarian with notable food crops like yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, pumpkin, okra, melon, oil palm, plantain and banana.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Combination of sampling methods was used to select respondents in the study area. The study area consists of 9 clans (Inen, Obio Akpa, Ibesit Nung Ikot, Nung Ikot, Ndot, Ibesit, Ekparakwa, and Abak/Midim). The first stage selected at random 6 clans out of the 9 clans in Oruk Anam. In the second stage, two villages were selected randomly from each clan. The third stage involved the selection of 10 farm household at

random from each of the villages. A grand total of 120 respondents was selected randomly and used for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire and complemented by personal interview to ensure consistency and accuracy of data to be collected. The well-structured questionnaire was administered on 120 farming household heads in the study area. The cross-sectional data was collected, scrutinized and used for data analysis.

Poverty Status of Respondents

The study adopted the 2/3 of the Mean Per Capita Household Expenditure MPCHHE of N66, 802.20 poverty line set by the Nigerian government in its NBS 2010 study as a benchmark to estimate the poverty status of farming households in the study area. Accordingly, farming households whose MPCHHE exceeded N66, 802.20 we're regarded as non-poor while those with less than N66,802.20 were regarded as poor. To further disaggregate poor households into moderate and core poor, the study further adopted the poverty line of the 1/3 of MPCHHE of N33, 401.1 in its classification. The reason for the use of N 33, 401.1 is that it's server as the benchmark as set by NBS.

In line with this poverty line, farming households with MPCHHE less than N33,401.1 was regarded as core poor while those with MPCHHE of more than N33,401.1 and less than N66,802.20 were regarded as moderate poor.

Foster, Greer and Thorbecke Model

Having established the poverty line, the Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (FGT) (1984) model of poverty analysis was adopted.

The formula for FGT is presented as

$$P\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right] \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.1}$$

Where;

Z = poverty line for the households

q = number of poor households

n = total number of households in the population

y_i = per capital household income

α = poverty aversion parameter and takes on the values 0,1,2

The quality in the bracket $\left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^\alpha$ is the proportionate short fall in expenditure or income below the poverty line.

- (i) If α is raised to 0 then the poverty index measured is the head count ratio or incidence of poverty.

When α = 0, then FGT index is expressed as:

$$P_0 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^0 \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.2}$$

- (ii) If α is raised to 1 then the poverty index measured is the poverty gap ratio or intensity of poverty. This represents the proportion that the average poor will require to at least get to the poverty line.

When α = 1, then FGT index is expressed as:

$$P_1 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^1 \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.3}$$

- (iii) If α is raised to 2 then the poverty index measured is the severity of poverty. The closer the value is to 1 the higher the seriousness of poverty.

When α = 2, then FGT index is expressed as:

$$P_2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right]^2 \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.4}$$

Factors Affecting Poverty Status in the Study Area

Objective iv which was to estimate factors influencing poverty status of rural farm households was estimated using the Logit regression model.

The Logit model used is implicitly stated as follows;

$$Z_i = \beta X_{ij} + N \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.5}$$

Where;

Z_i = poverty status (provided as poor=1, non-poor=0)

X_i = vector of explanatory variables

N = stochastic error term

β = vector of the parameter estimates

The explicit form of the model is stated as follows;

$$Y = \ln(P_1/1-P_1) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{MSO} + \beta_2 \text{MNI} + \beta_3 \text{FMS} + \beta_4 \text{SEX} + \beta_5 \text{OFI} + \beta_6 \text{EDU} + \beta_7 \text{MAS} + \beta_8 \text{AGE} + \beta_9 \text{FAME} + \beta_{10} \text{HHS} + \beta_{11} \text{ATC} + e_i \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ. 6}$$

Where;

MSO = Member of social organization measured as dummy 1 for membership, otherwise = 0
MNI= Monthly income of farm households measured in Naira

FMS= Farm size (hectares)

SEX= Sex of household head (Dummy, 1 = male, female = 0)

EDU= Educational level of respondent (years)

ATC= Access to credit by household head (Access = 1, otherwise = 0)

OFI= Off-farm income (Participation in off-farm income = 1, otherwise = 0)

FAME= Farming experience of respondents (years)

MAS= Marital status of respondents (married = 1, otherwise = 0)

HHS= Households size (number of persons)

AGE= Age of respondents (years)

e_i = error term

Results and Discussion

Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents were male 69 (57.50%) and about 51 (42.50%) were female. This result implies that male folks were the dominant household's heads in the study area. This result could be linked to the fact that, men especially in rural areas and even in the urban areas are said to be the bread winners and engaged in many businesses to carter for the family. Female house headships resulted from divorce, separation between the partners (husband and wife) or death of the male heads of households. This result is in alignment with the research findings of Oyekale, Adepoju and Balogun (2012). The age distribution of Rural farm heads in the study area according to the age range presented revealed the modal class of between 51-60 years, which accounted for 43.3% of the total respondents. Only 5% and 1.7% of the total respondents fell between the ranges of < 30 and above 60 years respectively. However, 36.7% of the respondents aged between 41-50 years, 13.3% of the respondents aged between 30-40 years. The results of this research suggest that; the present farm household heads in the study area are fast aging out and by implication, there is need to encourage the younger generation to engage in farming as their main business. This finding supports those of Akpan, Patrick and Amama. (2016). The results of the analysis showed that majority 64.2% of the respondents were married, 25% were single, 9.1% were widow, and only 1.7% of the total respondents were divorce. The findings revealed that most of the household's heads were married, and it implies that farming is a stable job in the region. The findings are in tandem with that of Cathy-Austin and Nahanga,(2017).The results showed that about 45% of the respondents had farming experience in the range of less than five (5) years, and 33.3% of the respondents had farming experience of between 5-10 years, while 14.2% had farming experience in the range of 11-15 years.

Table 1: Socio Economic Characteristics of Rural Farm Households in Oruk Anam L. G., Akwa Ibom State

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	69	57.5
Female	51	42.5
Total	120	100
Age (years)		
Less than 30	6	5.0
30 – 40	16	13.3
41 – 50	44	36.7
51 – 60	52	43.3
Above 60	2	1.7
Total	120	100
Marital Status (Numbers)		
Married	77	64.2
Single	30	25.0
Divorce	2	1.7
Widow	11	9.1
Total	120	100
Household sizes (Numbers)		
Less than 5	26	21.7
5 – 10	76	63.3
11 – 15	13	10.8
Above 15	5	4.2
Total	120	100
Farming Experience (years)		
Less than 5	54	45.0
5 – 10	40	33.3
11 – 15	17	14.2
Above 15	9	7.5
Total	120	100
Educational Qualification (years)		
No Formal Education	19	15.8
Primary School	30	25
Secondary School	62	51.7
NCE/OND	5	4.2
HND/B.Sc/B.Agric	3	2.5
PGD/M.Sc/Ph.D	1	0.8
Total	120	100
Access to Credit		
Yes	23	19.2
No	97	80.8
Total	120	100
Member of Cooperative		
Yes	83	69.2
No	37	30.8
Total	120	100
Major Occupation (Number)		
Farming	63	52.5
Non-farming	57	47.5
Total	120	100
Access to Extension Service		
Yes	28	23.3
No	92	76.7
Total	120	100
Monthly Income (Naira)		
Less than 20, 000	13	10.8
20, 001 – 30, 000	48	40.0
30, 001 – 40, 000	22	18.3
40, 001 – 50, 000	8	6.7
Above 50, 000	29	24.2
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

This result implies that the rural farm household's heads has less farming experience. The result of this study supports the work of

Ezeez and Abang (2015). From the results about 21.7% of the respondents had family size less than five (5) members, 63.3% had between 5-10

members, 10.8% of the respondents had between 11-15 members and only 4.2% had family members greater than 15 members. This implies that households with members above 5 had greater level of dependency. This result supports the works of Akpan, Patrick, and Amama (2016). The result showed that (69.2%) of the total respondents were involved in cooperative society while (30.8%) were not involved. This implies that farm household heads in the study area are fully involved in cooperatives and other social organizations which enhance their chances of making impact in farming. The result shows that about (15.8%) of the rural farm household heads had no formal education, 25% had primary education while 51.7% had secondary education and 4.2% and 2.5% had NCE/OND and HND/B.Sc/B.Agric respectively, only 0.8% of the rural farm households in the study area acquired up to PGD/ M.sc/ Ph.D level. The result does not portray farming population or segment that would welcome innovation with ease. This perhaps explains the continuous subsistence level of production among farmers of the region. Several empirical works have attested to this finding. For instance, Akpan *et al.*; (2013) have supported this finding in their separate reports. The result of the monthly distribution of income of respondents showed that 10.8% of the households' heads made income less than N20, 000/month, 40% of the household heads made their monthly income in the range of N20, 000 – N30, 000. Also,

18.3% and 6.7% of the total respondents realized their monthly income in the ranges of N30, 001 – N40, 000 and N40, 001 – N50, 000 respectively, while 24.2% of the respondents made income of above N50, 000 per month. This implies that the increased level of income reduces incidence of poverty and it supports the work of Akpan *et al.*, (2016). Results show that majority 52.5% of the respondents were into farming as a source of livelihood while about 47.5% of the farm household head were into other means of livelihood. This implies that the rural farm household heads are majorly engaged in farming. This has been supported in the work of Oyekale, Adepju, and Balogun (2012). Result revealed that only 19.2% of the total respondents had access to credit for their farming, while 80.8% of the household heads were unable to access credit for their farming activities. This implies that the farm households' heads have less access to credit. This research has been supported in the works of Edet, Etim (2018). Access to extension service by the respondents showed that a lower percentage (23.3%) of the farming households in the study area had access to extension service while a greater proportion of the respondents (76.7%) lived without access to extension service. This implies that the rural farm household had no knowledge about innovations and new technology. This study supports that of Akpan, Patrick and Amama, (2016).

Table 2: Analysis of Poverty Status and Situation of Rural Farm Household in the Study Area

Poverty Status/Situation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Non- poor	73	60.8
Poor:		
Moderate poor	39	32.5
Core poor	8	6.7
Total poor	47	39.2
Grand Total (Poor + Non-poor)	120	100

Source: Computed using Field Survey, 2019

Note: Computation of poverty status was done using 2/3 MPCHHE of N66, 802.2.

Grouping of households into moderate and core poor was estimated using 1/3 MPCHHE of N33, 401.1

Analysis of Poverty Status of Farm Households in Oruk Anam L. G. A

Table 2. Presents the result of the analysis of poverty status and situation of farming households that was computed using the mean per capita household expenditure. The relative

poverty lines set by the Nigerian government in its NBS (2010) studies were adopted. The first was the 2/3 of MPCHHE N66, 802.20 which was adopted to estimate the number of poor and non-poor farmers. The second was the 1/3 of the MPCHHE of N33, 401.1 which was adopted to

analyze the poor respondents with a view to classifying them into moderate and core poor respectively.

Result of the analysis using the 2/3 MPCHHE presented in table 1.2 revealed that majority (60.8%) of respondents was non-poor while 39.2% were poor. In the study area, Ademola and Abang (2015) reported that 50 percent of farmers each were non-poor and poor, respectively. They further reported that while 40 percent were moderately poor, 10 percent were poor. This finding shows that there has been a remarkable reduction in poverty situation in the state between 2015 and 2019.

Further analysis of the numbered poor cases (47) using the 1/3 MPCHHE of N33, 401.1 with a view of grouping respondents into moderate and core poor classes as shown in table 1.2, showed that 32.5 % of the poor respondents were moderate poor while 6.7% were core poor. This finding when compared with the 40 and 10 percent reported for moderate and core poor by Ademola and Abang (2015) in the study area furthers evidence of the reduction in poverty in the study area. This is an indication that government poverty programs and strategies are gradually meeting their intending targets.

Table 3: Estimate of Relative Poverty Indices of Rural Farm Household in the Study Area

Relative poverty indices	H ($\alpha = 0$)	1 ($\alpha = 1$)	FGT ($\alpha = 2$)
	0.516	0.2904	0.0632

Source: Computed from field survey data, 2019.

H ($\alpha = 0$) = Head count ration, 1 ($\alpha = 1$) = Income gap ratio and FGT $\alpha = 2$) = Severity of poverty.

Relative Poverty Indices of Rural Farm Households in the Study Area

Table 3 presents the result of the relative poverty incidence that was estimated using the foster, Greed and Thorbecke (1984) model (FGT). Empirical result of the relative poverty indices revealed a headcount ratio or incidence of poverty index of 0.516, denoting that about 51.6% of rural farm households dependent were poor. The incidence gap ratio or intensity of poverty was 0.2904, implying that the poor individual's income transfer requires about 29.04 percent to bring them to the poverty line. Also, the severity of poverty was 0.0632, indicating that about 6.3 percent of the individual suffers severe poverty. In the study area, Akpan, Vincent and Amama (2016) reported a poverty incidence, severity of poverty

and incidence gap ratio of 0.5633, 0.2479 and 0.3419, respectively. Also, Bassey, Agom and Edet (2016) reported a head count ratio of 0.4164 and 0.8040, incidence gap ratio of 0.1667 and 0.3262 and severity of poverty of 0.054 and 0.0970 between off farm and non- off farm participants in the study area. Elsewhere in Oyo State, Ugege, Odewale, Oduola, Akanni and Bolagi (2017) reported a poverty incidence of 0.343, poverty depth of 0.370 and poverty severity of 0.970, respectively. Asogwa *et al.*, (2012) also reported a poverty gap of 0.27 and severity of poverty of 0.15 among farming households in Nigeria. In Kaduna state, Oyinbo and Olalaye (2016) also reported a head count ratio of 0.30, poverty gap of 0.27 and poverty severity of 0.11 percent.

Table 4: Estimate of the Logit Model for the Determinant of Poverty among Rural Farm Households in the Study Area.

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	T- test	P>[Z]
Constant	-3.7624	1.0244	3.674 ***	0.000
MSO	-0.3270	1.3331	-2.45 **	0.015
MNI	-1.06614	-0,0015	7.107 ***	0.000
FMS	-0.6614	0.03127	-2.12 **	0.0417
SEX	0.0121	0.0090	1.333	0.262
OFI	-4.22e-05	271e-05	-1.55	0.2741
EDU	0.0307	0.0148	2.071 **	0.0412
MAS	0.0033	0.0031	1.063	0.2915
AGE	-0.5923	0.3045	-1.941*	0.0418
FAME	0.5766	0.4157	1.387	1.7816
HHS	0.4797	0.0891	5.384***	0.000
ATC	0.3583	0.298	1.199	1.4311

LR Chi2 (11) = 101.462 (* ** *** = indicate level of probability)

McFadden R2 = 0.2744

Log – Likelihood 94.534

Correct Predict 177 (82.4%)

Source: Computed from field data 2019.

Where; MSO, MNI, FMS, SEX, OFI, EDU, MAS, AGE, FAME, HHS, ATC are as explained in equation 3.6.

Determinants of Poverty Incidence among Rural Farm Households in the Study Area

Table 4 presents the result of logic estimate of the determinants of poverty among rural farm households in the study area. The diagnostic statistics of estimated model yielded a log likelihood ratio 101.462 which was significant at the 1 percent probability level; denoting the goodness of fit and the strong explanatory power of the model. The McFadden R² value of 0.2744 denoted that about 27.44 percent of variability in poverty incidence among rural farm households is accounted for by the explanatory variables included in the model. Findings revealed that of the eleven (11) variables that were included in the model, six (6) variables impacted significantly on poverty incidence. These were membership of social organization, monthly income, farm size, education, age, and household size. Membership of social organization (MSO) was negative and significantly reduce poverty incidence at 5 percent level of probability. This is expected because belonging to a social organization will offer members a platform to access a pool of farm management and business contact that they can leverage on to better their lives. This result supports those of Akpan, Patrick and Amama

(2016), and Ogbonna (2012). The slope coefficient for farmer' monthly income was also negative and significantly reducing poverty incidence at 1% level of probability. This supports theoretical postulation because farmers with higher monthly income will be liquid enough to meet their financial obligations and also acquire wealth and other farm production assets through which they can boost their farm output and enhance their income level. The coefficient for farm size was negative and significantly impacted in poverty incidence of rural farm households at 5% probability level. This implied that poverty incidence will reduce with increasing farm size. Farm lands are assets that can be invested on, lease out, sold out rightly or mortgaged as collateral for wars. Hence, acquisition of large fame land will imply increase in the wealth status of food crop farmers. Findings support those of Asogwa *et al*, (2012) and Akpan, Patrick and Amama (2016). The estimated coefficient for educational attainment of rural farm households also exhibited a negative significant relationship with poverty incidence of rural farm households at the 5% level of probability showing that poverty incidence will reduce with increasing educational attainment. This finding is in line

with theoretical literature because education offers a platform for farmers to secure off farm employment, enhances their social capital status, exposure and access to credit through which they enhance their living standards. This finding support Akpan, Patrick and Amama (2016) and Asogwa *et al.*, (2012). Considering age, the empirical result for age revealed a negative relationship between age and poverty incidence at 5% level of probability. This implies that poverty incidence will reduce with increasing age of rural farm households. This is justified in that age is associated with experience. Aged farmers might have leverage on their wealth of experience to access the basic necessities of life compared to their youthful counterparts. In addition, they might have also accumulated enough wealth and tangible reduction assets that can be leverage on to boost their productivity and income. This finding support those of Asogwa *et al.*, (2012) and Akpan, Patrick and Amama (2016). Also, the household size coefficient exhibited a positive correlation with poverty incidence and was significant at the 1% level showing that increasing household size will increase poverty incidence among rural farm households. This is expected because huge household size will simply increase domestic commitment as well as huge household expenditure. Also, huge household's sizes are most times associated with high dependency ratio. Findings support those of Akpan, Patrick and Amama (2016) and Asogwa *et al.*, (2012).

Conclusion

The result presentation in this study shows that majority of the farm households in the study area were non-poor, while lesser households were found to be poor. The findings were compared with the result from other studies and it shows that there's a drastic reduction in poverty among farmers in the study area. This is an indication that government programmes and policies, targeted towards poverty reduction is meeting its predetermined objective (targets) and should be encouraged. Findings also showed that poverty status of rural farm households was affected by their socio-economic characteristics hence further efforts directed towards reducing

poverty in the study area should be focused on enhancing the socio-economic profile of respondents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations would be appropriate in reducing poverty and sustaining the poverty reduction for a long time among rural farm households.

1. All stakeholders in the agricultural sector should endeavour to empower and strengthen social capital formation among rural farmers in the study area. Increased social interaction would help a lot in poverty reduction and redistribution of income among the farmers.
2. The Akwa Ibom State government should emphasize more on the need to reduce family size especially among rural dwellers. In this regards, intensified programme on birth control should be directed to the rural areas of the state.
3. The government should also help in the enlargement and development of rural farm lands as this will help to increase income of farmers and experience in farming.
4. Extension education programme currently going on in the state should be intensified, as this would help to raise the investment motive and increase innovation adoption frequency of the rural farmers.
5. Policy makers should infuse poverty alleviation programmes in agricultural policy of the state and also evolve tangible solution to poverty among rural farmers in the state.
6. Farmers should form themselves into cooperative societies in order to attract government assistance to help alleviate poverty in the study area.

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