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POVERTY IN URBAN AREAS: EXAMPLES FROM ILORIN AND OFFA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.

*Tunde, A.M

ABSTRACT

Rural development and rural poverty have dominated research and development agenda of Nigerian government over decades without given enough considerations to urban poverty. The UNDP (2004) reported that over seventy percent of Nigerians live on less than one dollar per day. In Kwara State, 83.3% male headed households and 82.2% female headed households were classified as poor (NBS, 2006). This paper examines the extent of poverty on the people of Ilorin and Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the inhabitants. Data were generated from a survey of 300 respondents sampled with the use of random sampling technique. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews were also conducted with some of the respondents. The results indicate that poverty exist among people from various walks of lives in these two urban areas. Suggestions made include organising poverty reduction strategies programmes for the people.

INTRODUCTION

There is no universally accepted definition of poverty. According to the World Bank (2001), poverty has various manifestations which can be linked to the lack of income and assets to attain basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, clothing and acceptable levels of health and education; the sense of voiceless and powerlessness in the institutions of the state and society, which subjects the poor to rudeness, humiliation, shame, inhumane treatment and exploitation in the hands of the people in authority; absence of rule of law, lack of protection against violence, extortion and intimidation and lack of civility and predictability in interaction with public officials, lack of economic opportunities, threats of physical force or arbitrary bureaucratic power that makes it difficult for the people to engage in public affairs; and vulnerability to adverse shocks and disruptions linked to an inability to cope with them. The poor in most developing countries are to be found among four identifiable economic groups, the rural landless, the small farmers, the urban underemployed and the unemployed. The poor are usually found in rural areas and urban slums. The incidence of poverty in the country has been on the increase at the urban more than the rural areas but only decreased a little in 2004 (see Table 1). For instance, urban poverty in 1980 stood at 17% while rural poverty was 28%. By 1985, urban poverty was more than double (38%) while rural poverty only increased by 45%. Urban poverty was 58% in 1996 while rural poverty was 70%. Incidence of poverty only decreased from 58% in the urban areas to 43%. Similarly rural areas also experienced a decrease from 69% to 63% in 2004.

In spite of its enormous resource and oil wealth, the country ranks 158 out of the 188 countries of the world in terms of quality of life (UNDP, 2008). More than 70 percent of the population is classified as poor, with 35 percent living in absolute poverty (Global Action on

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Aging 2008). Supporting this is Okunmadewa (1997) that stated that more than 40percent of Nigerians live in conditions of extreme poverty, spending less than N320 per capita per month. Oriola (2009) also pointed out that poverty and unemployment have been aggravated as a result of removal of subsidy and devaluation of the naira.

According to the nationwide living standard measurement survey conducted in 2004, Kwara State is among the six poorest in Nigeria in terms undernourishment and income poverty. About 83% of the population of the state classified themselves as being poor (NBS, 2006). In order to examine the conditions under which the urban poor live in both Ilorin and Offa towns, this study becomes imperative. Findings in the study are expected to be useful in comparing the living standard of the people in the study area with other parts of the country in terms of income-expenditure (per capita) and other social welfare performances. Also, the study will provide information that will assists the urban areas and state administrators develop more positive policies and actions towards the poor.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (1) Assess respondents' understanding of and causes of poverty
- (2) Examine factors affecting respondents' income and household expenditure
- (3) Identify the factors that make people susceptible to poverty
- (4) Compare respondents' opinion in the two sampled towns

Table 1: Incidence of Poverty by Sector and Zones, 2004

		1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
National	Total Poor	28.1	46.3	42.7	65.5	54.4
	Core poor	6.2	12.1	13.9	29.3	22.0
Urban	Total Poor	17.2	37.8	37.5	58.2	43.2
	Core poor	3.0	7.5	10.7	25.2	15.7
Rural	Total Poor	28.3	51.4	66.0	69.3	63.3
	Core poor	6.5	14.8	15.8	31.6	27.1
South South	Total poor	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
	Core poor	3.3	9.3	13.0	23.4	17.0
South East	Total poor	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7
	Core poor	2.4	9.0	15.7	18.2	7.8
South West	Total poor	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
	Core poor	2.1	9.0	15.7	27.5	18.9
North Central	Total poor	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0
	Core poor	5.7	16.4	14.8	28.0	29.8
North East	Total poor	35.6	54.9	54.0	70.1	71.2
	Core poor	11.8	16.4	18.5	34.4	27.9
North West	Total poor	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	7.2
	Core poor	8.3	14.2	9.0	37.3	26.8
Population in Poverty (Millions)		17.7	34.7	39.2	67.1	68.7

Source: NBS, 2005 Poverty Profile for Nigeria, 1980-2004

STUDY AREAS

Ilorin

Ilorin metropolis is located on latitude $8^{\circ}30'N$ and longitude $4^{\circ}35'E$. About two-thirds of the area lies within Kwara State. Ilorin has a tropical wet and dry climate with a mean annual rainfall of about 1,318mm. The monthly temperature varies between $25^{\circ}C$ and $28.9^{\circ}C$ with mean temperature of $30^{\circ}C$. It consists of derived savannah in Guinea Savannah vegetation belt, featuring tall grass vegetation, interspersed with short scattered trees. The study area has a relative flat and undulating landscape with a varying general elevation of 273m to 304m except for Sobi hills which is about 394m. Ilorin is one of fastest growing urban centers in Nigeria with a population of 777,667 (NPC, 2006) as at the 2006 population census. Ilorin is characterized by a good number of traditional craft industries such as clothing weaving, pottery, basket making, saw milling just to mention a few. For the purpose of political administration, the city is divided into twenty (20) traditional wards.

Offa

Offa, an ancient town in central Nigeria is located on latitude $8^{\circ}30''$ and longitude $4^{\circ}35''$. It is the headquarters of Offa Local Government Area. The provincial figure for the population of Offa Local Government Area by the National Population Commission (2006) is 89,674 comprising of 46,266 males and 43,428 females. It is the second largest town in the state and bounded in the North by Erinle, Ijagbo in the South, in the West by Igosun town and in the East by Ipe. Offa Local Government Area has 5 wards, namely; Essa, Ojomu, Balogun, Shawo and Igbo-Idun. The climate of Offa is characterised by wet and dry seasons. It has a mean annual rainfall of between 1000mm and 1500mm. The temperature ranges from between $33^{\circ}C$ - $38^{\circ}C$. The climate is suitable for agriculture and other economic activities. Sweet potatoes and maize are the favourite staple foods of the indigenes in the town. Cattle, goats and sheep are also raised in the environs. The vegetation in Offa is savannah and the city is noted for its weaving and dyeing trade, using vegetable dyes made from locally grown indigo and other plants.

RESEARCH METHODS

The methods of study adopted for this research work includes the use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Copies of structured questionnaire were used to elicit information from household heads in all the traditional wards of Ilorin and Offa towns. To complement the primary data, information were also sourced from relevant text books, magazines, newspapers and internet. A total number of 300 household heads consisting of 200 males and 100 females were sampled randomly with the use of copies of questionnaire. Invariably, one hundred and fifty (150) respondents from each town consisting one hundred (100) males and fifty (50) females were sampled. Focus Group Discussions and interviews were also conducted with some of them especially those living in the suburbia and frontiers of the sampled towns. Information on factors affecting their income and household expenditure was sought from the respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study deals with both male and female headed households. There are 66.7% male as against 33.3% female because there are more male head of households than female in the study areas. The age distribution of the respondents varies but larger percentage (62.3%) is between 41 and 50 years of age. This means majority of the sampled respondents are in the middle age and economically active as well as in their reproductive age. Only a few (8.7%) of the sampled respondents do not have formal education while majority (91.3%) are educated. There are 63.9% of male-headed households as against 27.4% female-headed households that are educated. This is an indication that urban residents have access to education. The marital status revealed that 61% of the sampled respondents are married of which all of them are male-headed households. All the sampled female-headed households are widowed (21%), separated (9%) or divorced (3.3%). This is because a woman can only become a head of household if her husband is dead or not living with her. The implication of this is that the level of living of the female-headed respondents will be affected since they have to take care of themselves and their dependants.

About 86% of the sampled respondents have household size of between 4 and 12 members. This means the more the number of household size, the more the income expended on the needs of their large family size. There is the possibility of sampled respondents being poor. In terms of occupation, majority of the sampled respondents both male-headed and female-headed households are self-employed (44.7%) and in government offices (38.7%). There is no male-headed household that is not employed but 2.7% female-headed households are unemployed. During the period of survey one dollar (\$1) is equal to N162 and this translates to N58,320 per annum. The World Bank poverty line measure for developing nations is \$1 per day at 1993 purchasing power parity (Ravallion, 2007). Hence, anybody that earns less than a dollar (\$1) per day (poverty line) is poor. Meaning anybody that earns less than N58,320 annually is poor. Correlation exists between income of household and poverty. This is because; the income of a household determines the expenditure of that household. Majority of the sampled respondents (90.6%) earn less than N50,000 monthly. This is an indication that majority of urban dwellers are poor.

Respondents' Opinion of Poverty

Sampled respondents have different views as to the way and manner they perceive poverty. Their opinions were sought during the focus group discussion, about their perception of poverty. Generally, some of the respondents especially the males in Ilorin and Offa perceived poverty as not being able to perform your societal roles as the head of the house while the females on the other hand perceived it as deprivations within the society. From the discussion, some of them in the suburbia part of Ilorin perceived poverty as laziness, some perceived it as not having money, some say an individual is poor if he thinks he is poor regardless of the income accrue to him, some perceive it as not rich, some perceived it as not being able to cater for the

family, some see it as not being able to go to the hospital when you are sick, some perceive it as not been able to take three square meal daily and this is peculiar to females in Offa. To some of them, it is lack of representation and freedom among others.

The perception of poverty by male respondents in such areas as Balogun Fulani, Balogun Alanamu, Balogun Gambari and Balogun Fulani of Ilorin is not having access to your needs at the right time. The females on the other hand see it as not having money or material possessions. In some areas particularly the traditional parts of Ilorin, both male and female respondents are of the opinion that poverty has to do with lack of power. Power in this sense means financial power to possess basic necessity of life such as nutritious food, good health, decent housing, pay children's school fees and other household items. During the survey, a male respondent in Ilorin responded

“being poor is all about money because there is an adage that says money answers all things. So when you have money, there is no poverty”.

Another male respondent said

“poverty is laziness, a lazy person will forever be poor, if you think you are poor because of laziness then you can never be rich”

Although poverty transcends not just having money (poverty of income) as there are poverty of power and poverty of access. Poverty of money (income) deals with productivity and working conditions in the urban areas i.e ability to work in a good environment and earn enough income for sustenance. Poverty of power has to do with participation, mainstreaming of human rights-based approach and good urban governance. It is to have equal rights within the society. Poverty of access means there should be food security, access to water, health, security, education and other necessity of life.

On the overall, there is a consensus that poverty is concentrated among people that are unemployed, underemployed, low income, low education, living in slums, with unhealthy lives, unstable income, unstable employment, poor material possessions and limited access to important services and facilities. This is common to both towns. For instance, a male taxi driver in Baboko, Ilorin said “poverty is not being able to do what others are doing as a result of lack”. A female trader in the same location says “it is a situation of depravity of all necessity of life” A female civil servant in Owode area (Offa) views poverty as lack of help while a male teacher from the same town says “it is lack of determination; if you see yourself as being poor then you are indeed poor”. A female lecturer in Offa perceived poverty as “inability to achieve Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs theory”.

Causes of Poverty Among Respondents

Causes of poverty were viewed by respondents in diverse ways. Respondents from Offa indicated that rapid increase in population and lack of income are the greatest causes of poverty. A female respondent opined that it is lack of help and inability to believe in oneself as the major

cause. However, Herbert Spencer called this individualistic theory meaning individual failings of some sort or another is the cause of poverty and inequality. It is the morality of the individual that is causing their poverty; it is because they are lazy. On the contrary, Oscar Lewis noted that people's culture (beliefs, values attitudes and general patterns of behaviour and language) are what causes their poverty. Culture of poverty exhibited main characteristics as being hopeless to improve their situation and so they live for today instead of tomorrow. A male respondent from Ilorin says lack of good governance is the major cause of poverty. To the physical ecologists, poverty is primarily caused by resource poor environment; incapacity to tap these sources of the environment, high population growth rate resulting in the overstretching the carrying capacity of the environment and in efficient and wasteful exploitation of the environment.

Respondents' Experience of Poverty

Men and women experience poverty in different ways but women are the most vulnerable. A causal factor in the chronic poverty of all household members has been gender inequalities in economic life. Women feel insecure as a result of their inability to access the basic necessity of life. Men on the other hand feel inferior when they cannot perform their roles as a husband and a father. The inabilities of women to cater for the needs of their children make them feel the impact of poverty more than men. Hence, women are exposed to such risks as begging, adultery and fornication.

*"there is poverty and unemployment everywhere,
even if you attend school, no job for you then why not
use what you have to get what you want."*

(A female prostitute in Ilorin)

Another female prostitute has this to say

*"If you don't have people at the corridors of power,
you cannot achieve anything in this country".*

Factors affecting Respondents' income and household expenditure

Part of the objectives of this research is to examine the factors affecting respondents' income and household expenditure. Some of the factors affecting respondents' income and household expenditure as revealed by the respondents include household size, occupation, education, cost of living, basic infrastructure, economic status, culture, health, food, ceremonies and economic situation among others.

Consequences of Poverty

The consequences of poverty as enumerated by respondents include food insecurity, low income, living in unhygienic places because a beggar has no choice, unemployment, lack of production resources and lack of representations and freedom. When people are poor, they accept whatever offer comes to them. They tend to live in unhygienic places and take up low wages job. Women feel the consequences of poverty more than men. Poverty is more

concentrated among women and children especially female-headed households. Feminization of poverty gives explanations that while men are identified as the principal breadwinners, women are held primarily responsible for domestic work for women's economic vulnerability in the gendered division of labour. The feminization of poverty then emerges from interconnections among women's disadvantaged position in the family, the labour market and the state.

Susceptibility of People to Poverty

The features that make people susceptible to poverty in study area according to the sampled respondents include low income, lack of power, inability to cater for the family, unemployment, high cost of living, lack of freedom and inequality. Tables 1 & 2 show the features and susceptibility of people to poverty in both Ilorin and Offa respectively. Also figures 1 & 2 depict the spatial pattern displayed by each of these features. High cost of living and unemployment have high responses in almost all the wards in Ilorin while low income, inability to cater for the family and unemployment ranked very high in all the wards in Offa town. This is an indication that poverty in the two urban areas sampled is similar. In Ilorin, respondents from Baboko, Sabo geri 1 & 11 and Sango wards ranked low income to be high while those in Adewole, Balogun Alanamu, Balogun Gambari, Balogun Fulani, Magaji Baderi, Magaji ojuekun, Magaji okaka and Magaji oloje wards indicate lack of power and high cost of living as dominant susceptibility to poverty.

Table 2: Features of Poverty in Ilorin Metropolis

Wards	Poverty Susceptibility by Respondents (%)						
	i.	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii
Adewole	15.0	25.0	9.0	18.0	15.0	7.0	5.0
Baboko	35.0	11.0	12.0	19.0	16.0	14.0	5.0
Balogun Alanamu	12.0	21.0	8.0	17.0	14.0	10.0	8.0
Balogun Ajikobi	12.0	17.2	12.2	23.0	30.0	18.0	7.0
Balogun Gambari	10.0	25.0	10.0	25.0	25.0	5.0	6.0
Balogun Fulani	7.0	21.4	10.0	17.0	35.0	7.0	5.0
Mogaji Are	6.0	10.0	17.0	22.0	27.0	5.0	4.0
Mogaji Badari	18.0	24.0	12.0	14.0	29.0	2.0	6.0
Mogaji Geri	7.0	9.0	15.0	16.0	34.0	10.0	3.0
Mogaji Ibagun	9.0	15.0	9.0	14.0	25.0	5.0	2.0
Mogaji Okaka	7.0	29.0	12.2	19.0	19.0	9.0	4.0
Mogaji Ogidi	12.0	17.0	11.0	12.0	10.0	7.0	5.-
Mogaji Oju-ekun	14.0	20.0	11.0	10.0	14.0	4.0	4.0
Mogaji Oloje	8.0	19.0	10.0	18.0	15.0	3.0	3.0
Mogaji Zarumi	16.0	12.0	7.0	12.0	18.0	2.0	6.0
Oke-ogun	16.0	7.0	10.0	20.0	14.0	4.0	4.0
Sabo Geri 1	30.0	5.0	9.0	12.0	16.0	6.0	11.0
Sabo Geri 2	31.0	15.0	13.0	11.0	12.0	5.0	9.0
UbanDawaki	5.0	18.0	10.0	15.0	19.0	5.0	8.0
Zango	40.0	15.0	5.0	12.0	14.0	4.0	9.2

Source: Author's Survey, 2013

Table 3: Features of Poverty in Offa Town

Wards	Poverty Susceptibility by Respondents (%)						
	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii
Essa	35.0	15.0	30.0	20.0	13.0	5.0	12.0
Ojomu	40.0	10.0	22.0	18.0	15.0	4.0	14.0
Balogun	25.0	17.0	20.0	16.0	8.0	7.0	10.0
Shawo	38.0	11.0	18.0	14.0	9.0	6.0	9.0
Igbo-Idun	28.0	12.0	19.0	15.0	7.0	8.0	8.0

Source: Author's Survey, 2013

Note:

i= Low income

iv= Unemployment

vii=Inequality

ii= Lack of power

v= High cost of living

iii= Inability to cater for the family

vi= Lack of Freedom

CONCLUSION

The study examined the poverty situation in Ilorin and Offa towns. From the study it was discovered that a lot of people see poverty as lack of income especially the males while females on the other hand see poverty as been deprived of all necessity of life. However, poverty in the two towns sampled is similar based on the pattern but differ between men and women. It can therefore be concluded that women experience poverty more than men because of their subordinate roles and lack of power and so are exposed to more risks than men.

Suggestions for Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is concentrated more in urban areas than the rural areas as a result of high cost of living found in the urban areas as revealed in the study. Urban poor has to pay for basic services and facilities to the extent that getting food to feed the family is always a problem. Based on the findings, suggestions for poverty alleviation include equal access to basic facilities and resources by both male and female in the study area. Also, there should be improved and free access to education by the children. This in a way will reduce the cost incur on children's education since most respondents believed that education can reduce poverty if targeted at the right people.

Empowerment is another factor that can be considered, especially women empowerment. If women are empowered it will go a long way to reducing poverty and population growth since population growth has been identified as one of the causes of poverty. Provision of employment for the unemployed and encouragement of self-reliance is another way of reducing poverty. Awareness campaign on fertility and the use of contraceptives should also be considered.

Tunde, A.M

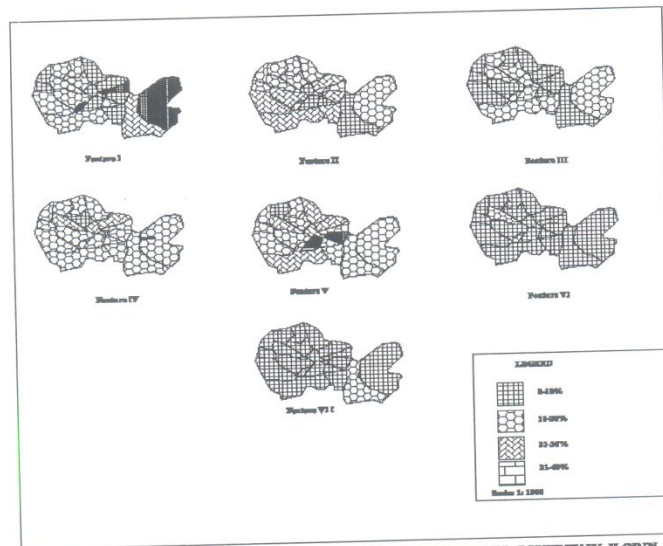


FIG 1: MAP SHOWING FEATURES THAT MAKE PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO POVERTY IN ILORIN

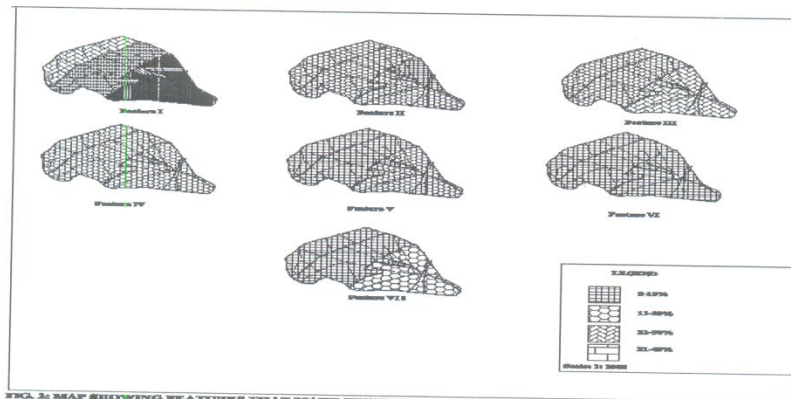


FIG. 2: MAP SHOWING FEATURES THAT MAKE PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO POVERTY IN OBA TOWN

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