Livelihood Vulnerabilities of Farming and Fishing Households in the Face of Multiple Stressors: Evidence from the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

by Chinasa Sylvia Onyenekwe, Daniel Bruce Sarpong, and Irene S. Egyir

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LIVELIHOOD VULNERABILITIES OF FARMING AND FISHING HOUSEHOLDS IN THE FACE OF MULTIPLE STRESSORS: EVIDENCE FROM THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

Chinasa Sylvia ONYENEKWE [a], Daniel Bruce SARPONG [b], Irene S. EGYIR [b]

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Abstract

There is an overwhelming evidence to suggest that environmental change drives conflicts, and that resource depletion and degradation undermine food security and livelihood wellbeing in communities where people are dependent on land and water resources. Therefore, understanding the vulnerability to climate shocks in the context of land degradation and conflicts has immense practical significance particularly in the climate-impacted and conflict-afflicted Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Employing survey data collected from Rivers and Bayelsa States, this paper investigates the vulnerability of the farming and fishing households to the triple stressors- climate shocks, environmental degradation and conflict - by developing a vulnerability index that captures the triple exposure. The results show that farming and fishing households have similar vulnerability scores, 0.42 and 0.43 respectively. Although, the farming households were more exposed to the triple stressors; the fishing households seem to be more sensitive to the triple stressors owing to their poor physical and natural asset base. The two groups share similar adaptive capacity. To reduce vulnerability of agricultural households to the triple stressors policy makers should focus on mitigation and adaptation efforts and provide opportunities for livelihood diversification.

Keywords: agricultural livelihoods, vulnerability, Niger Delta

a. Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria.
b. Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana.