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**SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL
POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI
STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACTS

This study assessed the influence of socio-economic characteristics of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) participants in Dekina local government area of Kogi state, Nigeria.. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain 52 NAPEP Data were collected using well structured questionnaire and analysed through the use of descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Findings indicate that 67.0% of the participants were male while 32% were female. About 40.0% of the participants were of the age range of 44-53 years and 62% were married with 60.0% having a household size of 5-8 persons. About 95.0% of the participants had one form of formal education or the other with 38% having trading as their major occupation. Furthermore, the regression result shows that age, household size, educational level, and membership of co-operative group positively affect respondents' decision to participate in NAPEP. The implication of the result is that older people with larger household, formal education and are members of co-operative group will willingly participate in NAPEP to alleviate poverty and diversify livelihood means. Also, age, marital status, educational level and household size were significant at various levels of probability. Therefore, it implies that participation in NAPEP is influenced by the significant variables. Youth should be encouraged to participate and involve in cooperative societies' activities as one of the criteria for participation.

Keywords: Participants, socio-economic characteristics, participation

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is predominantly rural, in which more than 80% of the total population lives in rural areas (Joseph, 2005). The economy is basically agrarian, with most of the people living in squalor and very poor level of living which is attributed to poverty (Ajayi, 2009). Poverty has diverse economic and social dimensions that explain its manifestations in lack of income and insufficient productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihood. Poverty indicators include: hunger and malnutrition, limited or lack of access to quality education and basic services, increased morbidity, mortality which occur as result of illness, inadequate housing, homelessness, unsafe environment, and social discrimination. As a matter of fact the concept of poverty does not subject itself to any straight jacket definition (Agumagu, 2000).

Since mid seventies, successive governments in Nigeria have come up with a lot of laudable initiatives or programmes geared towards poverty alleviation (Idachaba, 2006). Some of the poverty alleviation programmes include: The National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) which was established in 1971, the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)(1972), the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) launched in 1973. Others include the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) established in 1976, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund of 1977, the Green Revolution (GR) in 1979, and Better Life Programme (BLP) in 1987 Agbamu, 2006; Omokore, 2009). Also the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) and Community Banks were also established in 1986 and 1989,

respectively. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), which has as its main objective to improve the socio-economic well being of rural people, with a properly structured organisational frame-work for its achievement, is an offshoot of (PAP) and it was established in 2001 (Aliu, 2001; Joseph, 2005; Gumwa, 2009).

The Kogi State chapter of the NAPEP was established in 2001 and it operates in line with the national objective of NAPEP, including to: promote grass roots economic activities, impact positively on the well being and level of living of participants, promote sustainability of micro finance through savings mobilization, provide access to credit at the grass root level and bring the interest rates (for the low income, rural populace) into a more encouraging level, increase the participation of the poor in the economic growth and development of the country, stimulate increased economic activities in the rural areas, and strengthen partnership between the federal government and other tiers of government in combating poverty among the Nigerian people.

The activities carried out by NAPEP in Kogi State to help achieve its objectives include:

Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which deals with youth capacity building for those with low or no qualification. The capacity building is in terms of skills acquisition such as welding, carpentry, mechanic, fashion designing, tailoring, interior and exterior decoration among others.

Capacity Enhancement Scheme (CES) which deals with assisting already established skilful youths, and other participating members of the community who are already engaged in one form of trade or the other, Community Enlightenment Scheme (COMES) which involves awareness creation, and sensitization. And also enlightening them on how to access any new package rolled out by NAPEP for them, Social Welfare Service

Scheme (SOWES) which deals with special education, food security, micro and macro credit facilities, Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) which deals with the provision of basic infrastructures like portable water for irrigation, good access roads to ease transportation, rural power supply, and construction of mini dams as well as provision of other equipment necessary for dry season farming, to ensure all year round production.

Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) which deals with the environment, land reclamation for agricultural purposes and conservation of land and space, water and solid minerals.

Multi Partner Micro Finance Scheme (MPMFS) in which NAPEP, in collaboration with some micro finance banks, disburse soft or micro credit loans to participants of the programme (Gumwa, 2009). This measure according to NAPEP is aimed at increasing their participant's capital base, for the improvement and expansion of their business with the hope that it will go a long way to better translate into higher income that will improve the level of living of its beneficiaries.

Despite the establishment of NAPEP as well as its well structured and coordinated organisational and institutional framework and the expectation that people ought to participate in the quest to eradicate poverty from the rural areas.

These argument notwithstanding, most studies on poverty in the area have ignored or touched little on the socio-economic factors influencing peoples participation in poverty eradication programme, hence the dare need for a study such as this, which seek to find out the socio-economic factors influencing peoples participation in National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Dekina LGA Area of Kogi State. Thus this study is intended to provide answer to this research

question: What are the socio-economic characteristics influencing peoples' participation in NAPEP?

The specific objective of this study is to examine the socio-economic characteristics influencing participation of NAPEP.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State; the LGA is the largest in Kogi State. Dekina LGA is located in the eastern flank of the State, most inhabitants are Igala by tribe and they are mostly farmers and traders by profession with few civil servants.

Random sampling technique was employed to select 52 NAPEP participants from the NAPEP register based on their active participation in NAPEP activities that is those that were fully participated out of 70 participants. Primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire while secondary data were collected from NAPEP's Annual Reports, journals and other periodicals. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data on personal characteristics while regression analysis was used to ascertain whether socio-economic factors influence participation in NAPEP.

Specifically the general form of the model is as follows:

$$Y = F(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, u)$$

Where:

Y = Participants

X₁ = Farm size

X₂ = Marital status

X₃ = Household size

X₄ = Education

X₅ = Napep officials Visits

X₆ = Experience

X₇ = Member of Cooperative

u = error term.

While the explicit form of cobb-douglas is as follows:

$$\log Y = a + b_1 \log X_1 + b_2 \log X_2 + b_3 \log X_3 + b_4 \log X_4 + b_5 \log X_5 + b_6 \log X_6 + b_7 \log X_7 + u \dots \dots \text{Dobb-}$$

Douglas

Where :

Y, X₁ to X₇ are as defined in the implicit form of the regression model.

b₁ to b₇ = regression coefficient

a = Constant term or the intercept of the function.

u = error term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the participants (62.0%) were married and about 15.0% of the participants were widows. The result implies that majority of the participants have partners who could encourage them to participate in the programme for increased income. The percentage of widows and widowers indicates a high level of participation of vulnerable groups in the programme. The result on the participant's marital status tallies with the findings of Eze *et al.* (2009). In the impact assessment of Community-Based Poverty Reduction Agency (CBRA) and the Civil Resources Development and Documentation Centre (CRDDC) in Ebonyi State they found that majority of the participants were married.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of participants in NAPEP programme in the study area

Items	Frequency	Percentages
Sex:		
Male	35	67.3
Female	17	32.6
Age(years):		
323-33	12	23.0
34-43	15	28.8
44-53	21	40.1
54-73	4	7.6
Marital status:		
Single	7	13.5
Married	32	61.5

Widowed	8	15.3
Widower	3	5.7
Divorce	2	3.8
Educational level:		
No formal education	3	5.8
Adult education	7	13.4
Primary education	16	30.8
Secondary education	11	21.2
Post secondary education	15	28.8
Major occupation:		
Farming	17	32.7
Trading	20	38.4
Civil servant	15	29.0
Household size:		
1-4 Persons	11	21.2
5-8 Persons	31	60.0
9-12 Persons	9	17.3
12 and above	1	2.0
Membership of cooperative society		
Member	20	38.46
Non-member	32	61.53
Farm Size (ha)		
0.5-2.5	20	38.46
2.5-5.0	22	42.31
5.0 and above	10	19.23
Total	52	100

Field Survey, 2012.

Table 1 shows that majority (67.3%) of the participants were male, while 33% were female. This implies that sex distribution for the participating respondents was skewed towards male in the programme. This indicates a dominance of male folk in the programme. This agrees with the findings of Emodi (2009). In his study on participants of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria, he found that majority of the respondents were male.

Results of the analysis on age of the participants show that 40.1% of the respondents were between the age range of 44-53 years. About

28.8% of the respondents were within the age range of 34-43 years. This was followed by 35% that were within the age range of 34-43 years. This result agrees with that obtained by Erinle (1999), in the study of the prospects of increased production of tomato and pepper in Northern Nigeria. The need for persons in this virile age to increase their income in order to cater for both personal needs as well as that of their dependants could have been the reason for their participation in the programme. This implies that majority of the respondents were within their middle age and were more likely to be more productive.

It is evident from Table 1 that 61.5% of the participants were married. About 15.3% of the participants were widows. The result implies that majority of the participants have partners who could encourage them to participate in the programme for increased income. The percentage of widows indicates a high level of participation of vulnerable groups in the programme. The result of this study also agrees with the findings of Sabo (2005), in the study of the impact of women in agriculture programme in Borno State Nigeria, which revealed that majority of the participants and the non-participants were married.

The level of education of the respondents in Table 1 reveals that 31% of the participants completed primary school, 21.2% had secondary education and 29% attended post secondary education. This result tallies with the findings of Idi *et al.* (2006), in a comparative study of participants and non-participants women in agricultural cooperatives in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area in Bauchi State, in which they report more educated participants. This implies that majority of the participants attended one form of formal education or the other. Education has been shown to be a factor in the adoption of modern practices and it is generally considered an important variable

that could enhance participants' adoption of recommended practices (Obinne, 1991).

Table 1 reveals that a greater proportion (38.4%) of the participants were traders. About 32.7% were farmers and 29% were civil servants. Respondents with trading and civil service as their major occupation had farming as their secondary occupation. The implication of this finding on the income and standard of living of participants is that it could promote or enhance livelihood diversification which could also make more money available for investment in farming and poverty reduction.

Only 38.5% of the participants were member of cooperative society, while 61.5% were non-member. This low membership of the participants in cooperative society affected the number of participation in NAPEP programme being the major criterion considered for participation.

Also, 20% of the participants had their farm size range between 0.5ha to 2.4ha, 22% between 2.5ha to 4.9ha and 19.31% from 5.0ha and above. This implies that majority of participants were medium-scaled farmers.

Table 2. The Result of the Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value
Farm Size	0.079	0.285	0.277
Age	1.364	0.451	3.022 ^{***}
Marital Status	-1.315	0.279	-4.713 ^{***}
House hold Size	0.403	0.213	1.893 [*]
Education	0.660	0.247	2.672 ^{**}
NAPEP Official Visit	-0.235	0.216	-1.088
Experience	0.257	0.113	2.274 ^{**}
Cooperative	1.134	0.791	1.434
Constant	7.365	0.644	11.436 ^{***}

*= Significant 10% probability level

**= Significant at 5% probability level

***= Significant at 1% probability level

F= 2.94(General fitness)

R² = 0.47 = 47%

The result of the regression analysis reveals that the coefficients of farm size (0.079), age (1.364), household size (0.403), education (0.660), experience are all positive and significant at 10%, 5%, and 1% probability levels. This implies that the increase in these variables the more the participation in NAPEP programme, that is, people with larger household, formal education and are members of co-operative group will willingly participate in NAPEP to alleviate poverty and diversify livelihood means. Also, age, educational level and household size were significant at various levels of probability. The negative coefficient of marital status (-1.315) and NAPEP official visits indicates that their participation in NAPEP programme is not linked with their marital status and NAPEP official visit (-0.235). Therefore, it implies that participation in NAPEP is influenced by the significant variables. The coefficient of determination (R²) indicates that 47% of the participation is influenced by the included variables in the model.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was discovered from the study that the majority of the participants were not too aged, meaning they are still active and productive, they were mainly married and were literate at least up to primary education level. Also, the participant have moderate family size, mostly traders, less participation in cooperative society and they were small-scale farmers. The study also implied that farm size, age, marital status, household size, education and membership of cooperatives determined their participation in NAPEP programmes.

Effort should be intensified to encourage and increase membership in the cooperative society and more youth should be captured in the participation

in the programme as they are the leaders of tomorrow.

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