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SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF POVERTY INCIDENCE AND FOOD INSECURITY IN KANO STATE-NIGERIA: 1990 - 2007

DR. AHMAD MUHAMMAD TSAUNI
LECTURER
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
BAYERO UNIVERSITY
KANO-NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the interconnectedness of poverty incidence and food insecurity in Kano state vis-à-vis their socioeconomic implications. The two concepts are not only independent but they are correlated as poverty leads to food insecurity. A survey was conducted where information on people living in poverty, poverty incidence, income inequality, calories intake and underweight children were obtained from the records of the relevant State Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The paper reveals that poverty trend in Kano State is on the increase. This is evident by the high relative (67.4%) and extreme (67.1%) poverty levels, the incidence of poverty at 68.2% and the underweight children at 41.8%. The findings indicates that, almost 70 percent of Kano State population lived on less than US\$1 a day, and the scenario is more severe in the rural areas. The paper also shows the steady fall in the quality and quantity of food people take which resulted to rising level of absolute poverty in the State. The effort to reduce poverty as encapsulated in the Kano State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (K-SEEDS), and the integrated agricultural input support initiative amongst others, are likely to reduce the proportion of poor in the State when implemented judiciously.

KEYWORDS

Poverty incidence, Food insecurity, Gini coefficient, Kano.

INTRODUCTION

Alleviation of poverty and achieving equitable distribution of income has for some time been a major development objective in Nigeria. Income distribution explains well the access or otherwise of people to basic facilities, and improved overall living standard. Poverty, therefore, is a state in which an individual is unable to meet the minimum conditions required to sustain livelihood in a given society. These conditions include adequate food, portable water, decent shelter, health care and education. An individual is classified as poor if s/he does not have enough of these basic needs. Poverty could be measured in absolute or relative terms. Food insecurity, hunger and poverty are closely linked. To some extent, food insecurity is a sub set of poverty, but the paper considers them as independent but interrelated concepts. They are interrelated in the sense that, the two are correlated, where poverty incidence is high, food insecurity also tends to be high and vice versa. The level of poverty in Nigeria is high and the percentage of food insecure households was reported to be 18% in 1986 and over 40% in 1998, the level in 2005 is not known (Ajani, 2006).

This paper analyses poverty incidence and the level of food insecurity in Kano state with a view to ascertaining their socioeconomic implications. Those implications would go a long way when ascertained in shedding light on the causes and effects of the two most pressing problems that all developing economies are taking very seriously in their policy formulations. The paper intends to study Kano state being the most populous and one of the victims of poverty and hunger in the country, with the hope that the findings could be of help in explaining similar problems in other states or regions in the country and beyond. The paper covers a period of 17 years (1990 – 2007) and data were obtained with the aid of questionnaires administered to relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Kano. Supplementary data were obtained mainly from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). These data were analysed with the aid of both descriptive and inferential techniques. Essentially, Gini-coefficient, percentages, diagrams and figures were employed. To this end, the paper is organized into four sections. The first section covers introduction where the objectives and methodology of the paper were spelt out. Section two covers conceptual and empirical issues, discussion of results were presented in section three and the last section contains concluding remarks.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ISSUES

POVERTY

Poverty is a plague afflicting people all over the world. Poverty is linked to the shortage of vital resources and the endurance of “harsh and inhospitable environments”, including the breakdown of economic, demographic, cultural and social systems and bad governance which they claim sustains systematic poverty in developing countries (Onibokun and Kumuyi, 1995). In another perspective, poverty is recognized as a way of life characterized by low calorie intake, inaccessibility to adequate health facilities, low quality education system, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, low income, unemployment and underemployment and inaccessibility to various housing and societal facilities. In real terms, poverty denies its victims of the most basic survival needs, which are also fundamental human rights, such as water, food, clothing and shelter (CBN/World Bank, 1999; Gass and Adetunmbi, 2000). On that note, poverty manifests itself not only in economic deprivation but also in terms of an individual's inability to access basic social amenities. In Kano, most of social vices are attributable to poverty, particularly income poverty whereby people are living below \$1 per day. This is because social problems are the functions of employment and access to social amenities.

FOOD SECURITY

Food security means “access to adequate food by the members of the household, at all times for the maintenance of a healthy and active life” (ICN, 1992). A secure supply of food is necessary for good nutrition, but it does not by itself ensure that people are well nourished. This is because there are other factors, which affect nutritional status such as meal frequency, energy concentration of meals, appetite (health status), birth spacing and women's work load.

Provision of food has become a policy issue because, the basic nutrients in diet (carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, vitamins and water) are all necessary for proper body functions. These functions include the production of energy for body activities, the promotion of growth, the maintenance and repair of body tissues, the regulation of body processes and the maintenance of a proper internal environment (Olayide, 1982 in Idris, 2009).

The nutrient requirements and food availabilities have created five major problems for human beings. These are the problems of hunger, famine, under nutrition, malnutrition, and over nutrition. An effective food policy of all governments would be to move populations from the over – nutrition and under-nutrition categories to the adequate nutrition category.

Kano state, in spite of its agricultural potential as highlighted below is characterized by food insecurity. Thus:

- Kano has an arable land of about 18,684 square km out of the total Land Area of 20,760 square km (Sani, 2005).
- Kano State has the largest irrigation projects in Nigeria, and had indeed constructed 22 earth dams for domestic, industrial and irrigation purposes as at 1999. The irrigation infrastructure includes the following:
 - Kano River irrigation project phase 1 which covers 22,000 hectares;
 - Watari River irrigation project;
 - Gwarzo Road Dams project;
 - Kafin Chiri Dam irrigation project;

- Thomas River project,
- Gari River irrigation project;
- Kano state possesses the largest markets for agricultural produce in West Africa for example the famous Dawanau Market.
- Kano is one of the biggest terminals where all agricultural produce are bought and channeled to all major cities of the country and other cities of West Africa. These include neighbouring cities of Niger Republic, Mauritania, Mali, among others.
- Kano State also has potentials for fish farming as given the above Dam projects.

FOOD INSECURITY

Having conceptualized food security, understanding food insecurity becomes easy. One needs to look at the reverse of former with all the characteristics and requirements to mean the latter. However, in Kano State, each locality has its own way of describing food insecurity. There are different terminologies used depending on the community, but the terms are usually associated with the event to which a household is food insecure or the number of months in a year during which a household does not have adequate food (Idris, 2009). The most common names use to denote food insecurity in Kano State include *Zulumi*, *Tararrabi* and *Matsala* (Idris, 2009).

Household food insecurity in Kano as observed by (KNSG/FAO, 1997 in Idris, 2009) is caused by among other factors: -

- a. Low wages and income;
- b. Low percapita productivity in both animal and plant foods;
- c. Lack of knowledge of Food values; and
- d. Poor processing, distribution and marketing systems that result in excessive loses of food produce;
- e. Small sized and fragmented land;
- f. Crude technology and decreasing productivity;
- g. Lack of adequate institutional and support structures;
- h. Lack of storage facilities;
- i. Sales of food to cater for daily expenses; and
- j. Migration to urban areas in search of paid jobs.

POVERTY INCIDENCE AND FOOD INSECURITY

Poverty and hunger have constituted two major challenges that Nigeria has faced. The trend in relative poverty has been an increasing one with the percentage of the population in poverty rising from 46.3% in 1982 to 54.4% in 2004. The National Bureau of Statistics estimates for 2004 also shows that more than half of the population lived below the international bench mark of \$1 per day, an estimate that is even considered conservative (Taiwo, 2008.) Best on self – assessment, Nigerians are generally more critical of their poverty status. In 2004, more than three – quarter of Nigerians were considered poor and food unsecured (Idris, 2009).

The incidence of poverty varies markedly between states. For instance, based on relative poverty, poverty incidence in 2004 was highest in Jigawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Bauchi and Kwara States. In Jigawa for example, more than 96% of the population lived below the poverty line. The poverty incidence was less than 25% in Bayelsa, Anambra, Abia and Oyo states. The poverty incidence in Kano state was about 61.3% (Taiwo, 2008 in Idris, 2009).

Food insecurity is an important index of poverty. Household are food secure when they have year – round access to the quality and quantity of foods their members need to lead active and healthy lives. Food shortages, whenever they occur lead to anxiety and even national insecurity. In addition, adequate food availability and security is important for health, national productivity, and mental and physical development of citizen. Similarly, price stability is a major factor facilitating access to food in Nigeria.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE 3.1: POVERTY INCIDENCE IN KANO

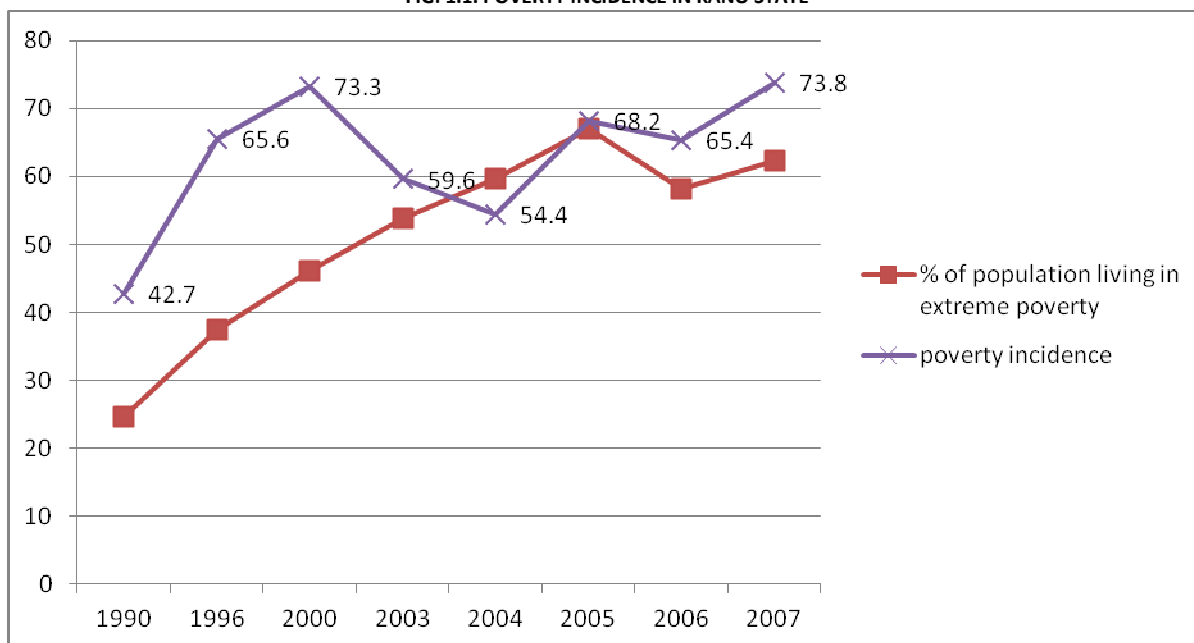
Indicators	1990	1996	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of people living in relative poverty	42.6	61.9	57.2	53.5	69.1	67.4	67.8	71.9
Percentage of population living in extreme poverty(consuming 2,900 calories or lower daily)	24.6	37.5	46.2	53.9	59.6	67.1	58.2	62.4
Percentage of underweight children	18.3	26.7	39.6	46.9	44.3	41.8	49.9	51.8
Poverty incidence in the State	42.7	65.6	73.3	59.6	54.4	68.2	65.4	73.8
Dollar per day poverty incidence (%)							76.8	
Income inequality in the State (Gini coefficient)	0.19	0.29	0.31	0.36	0.466	0.39	0.497	0.42

Source(s): (i) Aighbokhan, B. E. (2000); (ii) National Bureau of Statistics (2006); (iii) K-SEEDS, (2005); (iv) Nigeria MDGs Report (2005); (v) UNDP (2004)

From table 3.1 above, absolute poverty was found to have a steady increasing trend from 24.6% in the early 1990's to 67.5% in 2005. In 2006 and 2007, a total of 58.2 percent and 62.4 percent households were discovered to live in extreme poverty in the State respectively. Meaning that over 70% of the population spends more than one-third of their income on food. By the national poverty line (1/3 of the average annual expenditure), 76.8 percent of households in Kano are poor in 2006. However, relative poverty that compares the welfare of those with the lowest amount of resources with others in the society without necessarily specifying minimum requirement was found to portray a higher incidence of poverty. Over 40 percent of the households were classified as poor in 1990. The relative poverty increased to 53.5% in 2003, 67.4 in 2005 and 71.9 in 2007. This represents 9.1 annual average percentage growth rate of relative poverty in the State given the specified years. On self classification of household economic situation, almost half (44.6%) of households reported their household economic situation now as better than before, while over one-fourth (29.5%) of the households described their economic situations as worst now than one year ago.

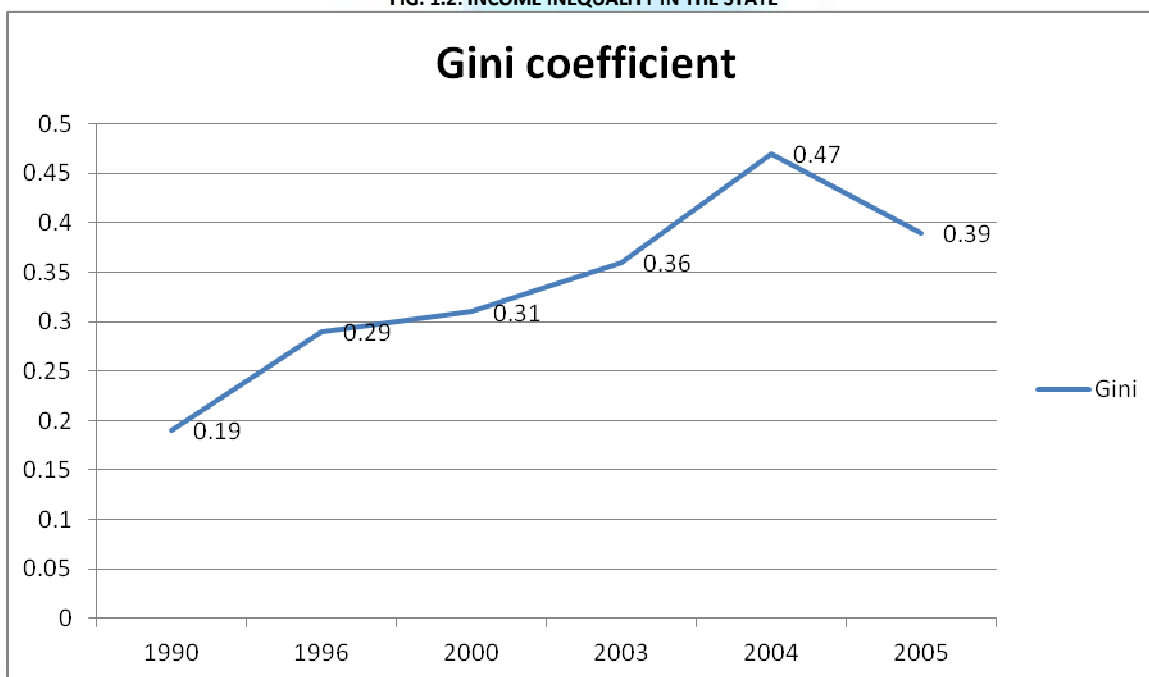
Poverty incidence is more pronounced in rural areas with 50.9% of the households classified as poor than in the urban areas where 41% of households classified as poor lived. The incidence is higher among female - headed households. This by implication means, male – headed households are less poor in the State. The incidence is also high among people with disability. The poverty gap (Gini Coefficient) in Kano State was 0.39 in 2005 indicating that the state has a relatively significant level of income inequality. Since the magnitude and extent of poverty in any country depends on the average level of national income (per capita income) and the degree of inequality in its distribution, the Gini coefficient of 0.39 indicates greater inequality and the presence of absolute poverty. The situation is that the proportion of the population that live in absolute poverty from 1990 to 2006 was rather increasing significantly, from 0.19 in 1990 to 0.36 in 2003 and 0.49 in 2006. Attesting to the above fact, are the figures for dollar per day poverty incidence which is 76.8% indicating majority of the State population are living below poverty line. Further, there is the existence of high percentage of underweight children (50% as against the MDG target of 17.9%) resulting from malnutrition.

FIG. 1.1: POVERTY INCIDENCE IN KANO STATE



Another indicator of poverty incidence is, indeed, income inequality. Where the spread of income is fair, poverty incidence and purchasing power of people tends to be fair, but where it is lop-sided to some extent at extremes, poverty incidence used to be chronic and disastrous to growth and development. The paper presents and subsequently makes inferences from the Gini-coefficient results below.

FIG. 1.2: INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE STATE



One variant version of poverty regards anybody who spends at least one-third of his income on food as poor. As such, households that have no year-round access to the quality and quantity of foods their members need to live active and healthy lives they are food in-secured.

TABLE 3.2: THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM HUNGER IN KANO STATE

Indicators	1990	1996	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006
Percentage of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (based on 2900 calories) or food poverty level as measured by 2900 calories	23.6	21.4	49.2	52.1	56.3	58.6	57.9
Percentage of underweight children	21.9	19.7	33.4	51.2	48.8	53.1	48.5

Source(s): (i) Kano Ministry of Health; (ii) Kano Ministry of agriculture

Food security is, therefore, an index of poverty. Where there is food security among people, productivity increases and poverty decreases. From the above table, the percentage of people below minimum level of dietary energy consumption and the percentage of underweight children (under – 5 years) in Kano state has an increasing trend from 23.6% and 21.9% in 1990 to 52.1% and 51.2% in 2003; and 57.9% and 48.5% in 2006 respectively. The steady fall in the quality and quantity of food people take as well as in the weight of their children shows the rising level of absolute poverty, and the, unlikely nature of achieving the objective of halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger. In fact, the state has one of the highest prevalence (51%) of chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five. The ever increasing prices of food stuff leading to fall in purchasing power and changes in the weather condition explain reasons for the limited access to food in the State.

FIG. 1.3: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW MINIMUM LEVEL OF DIETARY AND UNDERWEIGHT CHILDREN IN KANO STATE

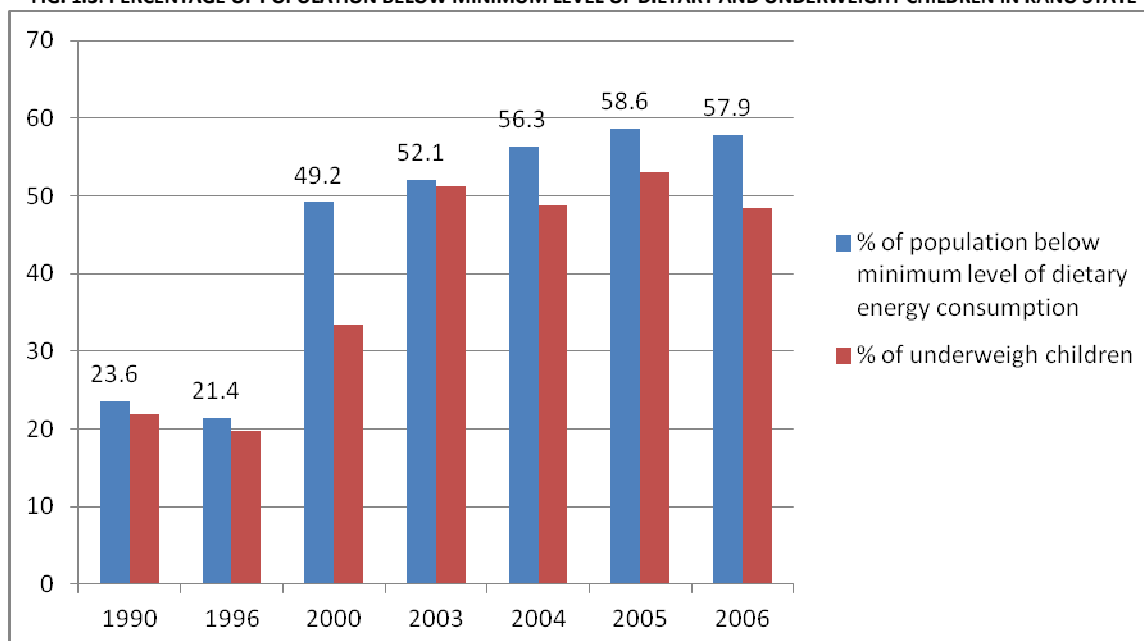


Figure 1.3 above specifies clearly the incidence of poverty and the level of food insecurity in Kano state. It can be inferred from the chart that incidence of poverty in Kano is above 50% on the average and food insecurity, is therefore, more pronounced. Although, food insecurity is an index of poverty but where the poverty incidence is high, the level of food insecurity overshoots. Precisely, poverty causes food insecurity in Kano.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kano state is blessed with agricultural potentialities, commercial viability and population growth which could help in stimulating growth and eradicating poverty. However, insufficient political will to implement policies and programmes that have direct bearing with the living standard of people adequately, insufficient data at all levels, un-conducive investment climate, inadequate monitoring capacity, cultural inertia and insufficient investible fund have been some of the challenges of poverty reduction in the State. Other challenges are illiteracy, massive importation of cheap consumer goods, large families characterised by high dependency ratio, neglect of agriculture, policy inconsistency, insufficient funding and bureaucratic problems.

Furthermore, the existence of vast fertile land for farming and dams for irrigation activities gives the State an opportunity to be able to produce food for self sufficiency and for export. But, the sector could not provide the quantity required at home, talk less of export. These challenges if well managed; the state would go a long way in ensuring poverty reduction and food security.

- Research and Development (R&D) in the agricultural sector should be intensified thereby liaising with research centres and universities to conduct development oriented researches.
- Timely disbursement of fertilizer to farmers has an important implication on employment generation, supply of food and the food prices.
- Prices of agricultural outputs are the main disincentive factors that are contributing in crowding out investors. Where price does not cover significantly, the cost of production, investors often quit production, which could further generate food in-security
- Infrastructure in terms of rural road networks linking the farm and the market and improved storage facilities are among the challenges for the attainment of the goal of adequate food supply.
- Awareness should be created to avoid resistance to change due mainly to low level of education among farmers.
- Building and improving capacity of the available research centres and institutions
- Capacity building in terms of adopting an integrated agricultural and food security programmes in the state
- Assistance should be sought for from UN and Donor Agencies in the provision of basic infrastructure like rural roads and storage facilities.

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