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Extended Abstract

The Internal Migration and livelihood strategies of the Benue children and Youths in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States in Nigeria due to Ripple effects of Global Economic downturn

Benue state is named after the River Benue, one of Nigeria's two principal rivers. It is located in the North-Central geo-political zone in Nigeria. It is bordered on the North by Nasarawa state, the East by Taraba state, and the West by Kogi state and in the South by Cross River, Enugu and Ebonyi states. The Cameroonian border is located on the Southeast.

As with most central states, Benue is a boiling pot of ethnic groups dominated by the Tiv and Idoma people. Other ethnic groups indigenous to the state include Igede, Etulo and Abakwa. Benue state is a rich agricultural region that produces crops such as yam, rice and cassava, and fruits such as oranges and mangoes, with yam and cassava being the main crop, . The state also has a vibrant fishing community. According to the 2006 census the state is home to over 4 million people and has 23 local government areas (LGAs) with the capital located in Makurdi LGA. Most people in Benue State live in rural areas. Farming is the key livelihood activity in Benue State for male heads of household living. Sources of livelihood diversification include agro-processing, trade and crafts, which are linked to access to urban centres and market places. Migration to urban areas or rural areas elsewhere in Nigeria, such as cocoa plantations in the South, is another important livelihood strategy.

Households and individuals employ hired labour on their farms if they have the means to do so. Most women do not own land, but are given access to fields by male relatives and in-laws to cultivate their own crops, in addition to their work on the family fields. Compared with men, women have fewer assets and are less likely to cultivate cash crops. Female-headed households rely more on trading and agro-processing to make a Nigerian average income per capita was estimated at US\$ 290 in 2001 (www.unicef.org/statis), and as many as 65% of the people in Benue State were estimated to be living in poverty in 1996 (NCS-data, FOS 1999). Infrastructure

and basic services are in a dilapidated state, and public investment in these sectors is limited. Moreover, over the past two decades farming in Benue has actually become more labour-intensive per unit of harvest because of declining soil fertility, poorly functioning input markets and worsening terms of trade. These developments increase the vulnerability of both households and communities, leading to migration of youths in search of good livelihoods in other parts of Nigeria especially Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States. Benue children of less than eighteen and a little over eighteen years work as housemaids, shop attendants and farm workers and other menial jobs in the case studies of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States of Nigeria

Methodology

A community-based selection of respondents was used in Ikeja, Ota and Ogbomosho, Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States. Twenty-four (24) villages were randomly selected: two in each of the twelve (12) purposeful selected local government areas (LGA). These LGAs represent the variety of livelihoods in Benue State and the main ethnic groups since the Tiv, Idoma and Iggede are living in distinct local government areas. Nine (9) selected LGAs are classified as rural and 3 as (peri)-urban.

Data collection and analysis

The outline of the study design was developed in close consultation with stakeholders in Lagos , Ogun and Oyo States and resource persons. The research questions were based on a review of other impact studies. Data collection focused on demographic trends, and reasons for migrating, livelihood strategies, and causes of vulnerability. These data were gathered at individual, household and community level, mainly through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Field workers who have the knowledge of local languages and also originated from Benue State were selected. They received a two and half-day training on participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) and the specific research tools developed for this study. The study took great care to respect confidentiality and all data has been anonymised. At community level, local leaders were introduced to the objectives of the study and asked for their approval and cooperation in carrying out the study. Selected respondents were again informed about the objectives of the study and their oral consent to participate in the study was asked for.

In each of the 10 study sites, a five-day qualitative research exercise was carried out between October , 2010 and January 2011. To gather the detailed data required by the study's goals and questions, a triangulation of people and data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials) were used

People are more available and access to communities is easier. Over 120 respondents were selected for in-depth interviews based on socio-economic background, gender and the extent to which they had been affected by the global economic downturn that has a ripple effect on the Nigeria's economy.

Data were entered and analysed using SPSS. Comparisons were also made for variables between the different ethnic groups and wealth categories⁵. Statistical significance was analysed using Chi-square tests for categorical variables. The results of the qualitative research and household survey were also triangulated. In this article, most findings are reported in an integrated way; data originating from the household survey are presented as percentages.