

Assessment of the Vulnerability Level of Women Livelihood Activities in Lapai Local Government Area, Niger State

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Abstract

Studies have shown that the livelihood activities of women are affected by social, economic, religious and political factors, which could lead to them being vulnerable. The happenings within these different sectors of the society is the start point of women deprivation and lack of access to physical assets, finances and social responsibilities, which results in the ideology that women are at the lowest rung of the poverty ladder (poorest of the poor). Available statistics from the studies carried out by Obadan, (2001) and Barnes (2010) indicate how precarious life has become for the average Nigerian woman over years in the face of overpowering levels of poverty. Niger state as at 2014 has a poverty rate of 61.20% with women experiencing a high 55% of the poverty within the state. This study will employed qualitative approach making use of structure questionnaires to carry out a purposive sampling technique for the 10 wards within Lapai local government area. A total of 383 women in the different wards would be randomly sampled to determine their livelihood activities and to which extent their activities are vulnerable. The study established that the women experience different environmental, social and financial susceptibility in their livelihood activities. This is due to the location of the study area and also to the little capacity and financial enumeration received for their services. The study findings suggest a need for modern environmental policies that would help limit the reoccurring nature of flooding within some parts of the study area. This study also serves as a call to the government to ensure adequate security as crisis can stimulate the loss of livelihoods and properties.

Keywords: Livelihood, Livelihood Vulnerability, Environmental Vulnerability

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Livelihood according to Shyamalie and Saini (2010) involve the flow of monetary and non-monetary resources that are exploited for continuous sustenance. Vincent and Cull (2010) established that poverty is a product of livelihood vulnerability. As Livelihood becomes vulnerable when it is exposed to risk, which results to deprivation and livelihood insecurity. Vulnerability is not poverty, according to Shaffer (2001), different authors have conceptualized poverty but in all the aspect it has been looked at it is not poverty. It just pronounces the prospect of sinking into poverty or falling into a sense of total deprivation. Vulnerability describes the degree of exposure to risks and the capacity to respond to the pressures. Adger (2006) considered vulnerability as the condition of susceptibility to harm due to shocks and stresses. He observed that vulnerability is an outcome of social, economic and environmental changes on one hand, and weak adaptive capacity on the other.

The link between vulnerability and resources used logically indicates the need to evaluate livelihood vulnerability at the individuals and households level Rignall and Kusunose, (2018). In the opinion of Vincent and Cull (2010), vulnerability of livelihood is a serious factor that can result in collective susceptibility; thus, it requires collective action. Livelihood vulnerability does not occur due to devastation of the physical environment alone but is a result of limitation in participation within the political, economic and social environment.

Livelihood vulnerability affects all livelihood assets, although in different dimensions and to different extents However, based on the arguments of Vincent and Cull (2010), the vulnerability of livelihood activities in developing countries is exhibited in household's social and environmental vulnerability. Several scholars according to Amos *et al* (2014) have argued that

ate change is the foremost predictor of livelihood vulnerability. However, Pandey *et al* (2017) served the primary factor responsible for the vulnerability of livelihoods is insufficiency. Men, all over the world, suffer from various forms of inequalities and discriminatory practices. Despite the fact that women, especially the women entrepreneurs in developing countries are better finance utilization in the different sectors of the economy than the men. Barnes (2010) painted a grim picture of the Nigerian women as those trapped in a vortex of declining productivity, abject and abnormal poverty. This he attributed to the lack of security and vulnerability in their livelihood activities.

STUDY AREA AND THE SOCIO ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Lapai is a Local Government area in Niger State located on the south-eastern part of the state, it shares borders with Paikoro and Agaie local government area. The local government has a total land area coverage of 3,051 km² and a total population of 110,127 as at 2006 census (Niger State Bureau of Statistics 2012). The Local Government area is located on longitude 9°03'00"N and latitude 6°34'00"E near the Gurara River. Lapai local government area is an urban center and as such is multidimensional in nature as it covers enormous expanse of land, and accommodate diverse economic activities (Raji, 2013). The residents of Lapai local government area are predominantly farmers and as such Lapai serves as a market center for the Sorghum, Yams, Millet, Shea nuts, Cottons and many fruits, Lapai town operates a weekly market every Tuesday, when people from neighboring villages bring their farm produce to sell. The local government headquarters is located within Lapai town.