

URBANIZATION ON SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD OF WOMEN IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract. The study assessed the effect of urbanization on the sustainable livelihood of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Structured interview schedule was used to elicit information from 105 women using the simple random technique. Purposive sampling method was used to select 7 core areas based on their state of rural before urbanization. The areas selected were Borokiri and Abuloma (Phalga), Eneka (Obalga), Obibo (Oyigbo), Akpajo (Eleme) and Igwuruta (Ikwerre). Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics. Findings from the study revealed that 27% of the respondents were in the age range of 30-39, a higher percentage (41%) is married and can read and write (89%). The mean farming experience is 18 years and a higher percentage (24%) has been farming for 21-25 years. Furthermore, the study revealed that crop farming (21%) is predominately the source of livelihood for women including fishing (19.19%) and snail farming (19.1%). The perceived areas of urbanization were farm lands ($m = 2.93$), streams ($m = 2.63$), forest ($m = 2.72$), houses (2.60) and town halls ($m = 2.55$). The effects of urbanization on the sustainable livelihood of women in the study area were; urbanization has affected their social life ($m=2.90$), cultural activities ($m=2.60$), reduced farming activities ($m=3.10$), development of the area ($m=2.90$), led to high crime rate ($m=2.55$), resulted to no landed inheritance for future generation ($m=2.61$), congestion ($m=2.52$) and pollution ($m=2.50$). They study recommended that women should be taught how to use improved technologies and methods in order to increase their production on the available land farm.

Keywords: Urbanization, Sustainable Livelihood, Women, Port Harcourt Metropolis

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is the process by which more and more people leave the country side to live in the cities (Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2005). It is the influx in population within a city over a period of time. Population increase is due to natural causes such as high birth rate (Albert & Nne-Cosy (2014) and immigration as they participate in social activities and organizations in more than one place (Trager, 2000). There is a direct correlation between population growth and urbanization. This means that economic growth must be encouraged for optional sustainability (Islam & Clarke, 2005). Urbanization dilemma confronts economic growth and sustainable development. It is important to promote a favourable environment through government population planning, participation and empowerment to reduce the effect of urbanization in an area (Rogers, 2006). Rural to Urban migration is happening on a daily basis due to population process and lack of resources in rural area. Therefore, there is the quest for good pastures or livelihood and more profitable job opportunities for better standard of living.

According to Loubser (1995) livelihood is the totality of the means by which people secure a living, have or acquire a living. It is the requirement for survival and satisfaction of needs in all aspects of their lives. The sustainability of people livelihood will lead to a better standard of living and the development of the area. Sustainable livelihood is the means or act of sustaining life through proper management of livelihood resources (Belaler. 1990). It is when the system is economically efficient, firmly grounded in social equity, ecologically

sound, able to preserve or restore resources for use by future generations, resilient and capable of coping with shocks and stresses (David & Olamiye, 2001). The sustainable livelihood of rural women relates to the ability of the rural women to satisfy their needs by harnessing and mobilizing resource provided by nature, coupled with skills and industrialization for the production of goods and services for a long period (Wallace, 1990).

The word livelihood means a person's ability to earn a living. It is everything that makes an input on a person's life, education, health and access to food/livelihoods concerned worldwide (Ekpo *et al*, 1999). There is social and economic link between rural, cash and kind including food products. There is a profound effect on the livelihoods of people and occupational ties. Women are engaged in various activities to sustain a living. These activities can either be monetary or non-monetary in reward. Monetary activities include production and marketing of palm oil and palm kernel, selling of crayfish, lobsters and periwinkle collected from creeks and swamps. A good number of women also make reasonable income from farming and selling of fishes. Women also form the bulk of hired farm labour in the areas of cleaning, planting and weeding (Husseini, 1993). In Nigeria, three quarters of the agricultural work are done by women (Ofuoku *et al*, 2014). The non monetary activities include fetching of fire wood, collection of mushrooms, vegetables and non-timber forest products. Others include harvesting of fruits (oranges) and weeding of crops. These activities have been effective and attractive for sustaining the lives of women (Charles, 2012).

Carney (1998) and Simones (1998) suggested that, sustainable livelihood must be accompanied by industrial diversification and economic growth, and grounded on capital assets fundamental to the development of communities. Urbanization is a mixed blessing. It has both positive and negative effects. The positive is that urbanization and industrialization has brought a new ease of life on people, apparels for women, generate employment to thousands of people and geared up many business. Ekpo *et al*, (1999) added that community life which has been gentle and unhurried before has now taken on a different appearance as people flux into new industrial areas. Benefits such as improvement in economy, growth of commercial activities, social and cultural integration, efficient services and resources of utilization are met. Urbanization and industrialization affects the rural communities in at least two obvious negative ways.

The removal of natural resources as raw materials, the production process itself which result in waste material of various categories capable of polluting the environment (Udo, 1996). According to Okali *et al*, (1997) the removal of natural resources for infrastructural and industrial development affects the ecological balance of the environment and also reduce the extent, adversity and stability of the forest. Meagher (1999) and Albert *et al*, (2014) added that a greater percentage of rural populace depends on agriculture and natural resource for their income.

Over the years the city of Port Harcourt which is the capital of Rivers State has developed drastically. This development has overflow to the neighboring local government areas of the state. In 1956 the discovery of Oloibiri crude oil turned Port Harcourt economy into petroleum deports. Modernization and industrialization such as investment of oil firms, building of airport and refinery, areas such as Oroworukwo, Rumuodomaya, Rumudara, Choba and other communities were mostly urbanized and modernized. These have resulted to the construction of more roads, overhead bridges, and schools among others. It is therefore necessary to assess the effect of urbanization in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Women had been a major agent involved in contributing their quota to the economic development and socio economic of keeping of the family. According to Husseini (1993)

women play an active role in improving the economic situation of their family through the formation of cooperative societies, and also produce over 85-90 percent of domestic food supply of which food crops accounted for 75-80 percent. Women in Port Harcourt Metropolis have been helping or sustaining their lives and that of their immediate families on the activities from the forest, cultivated land (farming), creeks and mangrove swamps.

Recently, there has been a reduction in cultivated land, swamps and forest as urbanization advances into higher population size and the demand for infrastructural facilities increases. These have led to the construction of more roads, bridges, markets schools, health – centres, housing units and other social amenities. The construction of these infrastructural facilities have led to the demolition of some churches, town halls of some communities, shops, houses, deforestation and swamps owned by the rural women.

A higher percentage of their lands have been taken over by government or sold to visitors to build and forest burnt and clear for same purposes. Rivers and Stream have been sand filled thereby depriving the rural women from farming, fishing and also get products from the forest like snails, bush meats among others. These have affected, if not stop the traditional source of livelihood of the women in the metropolis. It is on this premise the study want to find answers to the following questions. What are the traditional economic livelihoods of the women? Where the areas of urbanization in Port Harcourt Metropolis and what are the effects of this urbanization on the women livelihood? Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the traditional economic livelihoods of the women;
2. describe the perceived areas of urbanization; and
3. examine the effects of urbanization in the sustainable livelihood of the women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Port Harcourt metropolis comprises all areas in Port Harcourt local government area such as Elekahia, Trans-Amadi, Abuloma, Ogbunabali, Town, GRA, D-line, Amadi flat, Diobu and Rumuomasi. All communities in Obio/Akpor local government area, some communities in Ikwerre local government area such as Igwuruta, Aluu, some communities in Eleme local government area such as Akpajo and Alesa and some communities in Oyigbo local government area such as Afam and Oyibo.

The main occupation of the people in these local government areas is farming and fishing. Purposive sampling method was used to select 7 core areas based on their state of rural before urbanization. The areas selected were Borokiri and Abuloma (Phalga), Eneka (Obalga), Obibo (Oyigbo), Akpajo (Eleme) and Igwuruta (Ikwerre). The simple random technique was used to select fifteen (15) women from each of the selected areas, making a total for 105 women that were surveyed. Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics. The effect of urbanization was analyzed using a four point Likert type scale with options: Very effective (4), Effective (3), less effective (2) and Not Effective (1) was used to analyze the effect of urbanization. The values 4 to 1 were added to get 10 which were further divided by 4 to get 2.50. The 2.50 was used for decision rule. Any value equal to or greater than 2.5 was regarded as effective while values below 2.50 were regarded as not effective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in Table 1 shows that 27% of the respondents were in the age range of 30-39. This indicates that the women are in their active years which suggest high inspirations and desire to contribute for the survival and substance of their families. A higher percentage (41%) is married and can read and write (89%). The mean farming experience is 18 years with a higher percentage (24%) that have been farming for 21-25 years. This indicates that the women have been farming for a long time and so they have enough knowledge on the effect of urbanization on their livelihood.

Table 1
Socio-Economic Characteristics Of The Respondents Characteristics

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
20 – 29	24	23.0	37 yrs
30 – 39	31	30.0	
40 – 49	22	21.0	
50 – 59	15	15.0	
60 - 69	12	11.0	
Total	105	100.0	
Marital Status			
Single	11	10.4	
Married	38	36.2	
Widow	33	31.4	
divorce	23	22.0	
Total	105	100.0	
Educational Level			
Non-formal education	12	11.4	
Primary education	33	31.4	
Secondary education	38	36.2	
Tertiary education	22	21.0	
Total		100.0	
Farming Experience (Yrs)			
1 – 5	19	18.1	18 yrs
6 – 10	18	17.2	
11 – 15	15	14.3	
16 – 20	12	11.4	
21 – 25	25	24.0	
26 - 30	16	15.0	
Total	105	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Traditional livelihood of women in the study Area. From the results in Table 2, crop farming (21%) is predominately the source of livelihood of women in the study area. Also, fishing (19.19%) and snail farming (19.1%) has helped to provide income for the women. This indicates that farming, fishing and forest products is the traditional livelihood of the women in the study area. This confirms Albert (2012) who stated that the traditional livelihood of the Rivers people before oil exploration was farming and fishing.

Table 2

Traditional Livelihood of women in the study areas

Primary livelihood	Frequency	Percentage
Crop farming	22	21.0
Fishing	20	19.1
Palm oil processing	15	14.4
Trading	12	11.4
Snail farming	20	19.1
Craft work	16	15.0
Total	105	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Perceived areas of urbanization. Table 3 shows that farm lands ($m = 2.93$), streams ($m = 2.63$), forest ($m = 2.72$), houses (2.60) and town halls ($m = 2.55$) have been urbanized. Farmlands were taken over by the state government for development of Greater Port Harcourt City. Also, streams and rivers were sand filled by the state government and individuals for residential purposes. This is in line with Williams and Lizzie (2008) who described areas such as Ogu-Bolo, Eleme, Ikwerre, Obio-Akpor, Okirika and Etche, respectively as been affected by urbanization.

Table 3

Perceived areas of urbanization

Areas of urbanization	Mean score (M)	Decision
Roads	2.20	Disagreed
Streams	2.62	Agreed
Forests	2.72	Agreed
Town halls	2.55	Agreed
Houses	2.60	Agreed
Farm lands	2.93	Agreed
Schools	1.80	Disagreed
Churches	2.20	Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Effects of urbanization on sustainable livelihood. Table 4 shows the effects of urbanization on the sustainable livelihood of women in the study area. Urbanization has affected the social life ($m=2.90$), cultural activities ($m=2.60$), farming activities ($m=3.10$), led to high crime rate ($m=2.55$), resulted to no landed inheritance for future generation ($m=2.61$), congestion ($m=2.52$) and pollution ($m=2.50$). Also, urbanization has positively affected the lives of the women. It has led to the development of the area ($m=2.90$). This implies that urbanization has bought positive and negative effects. In as much as it affected farming activities which is the main source of livelihood for the women, it has also brought development in the study areas. Bryant (Online) stated that urbanization is the removal of natural resources as raw materials and the production process itself results in waste material of various categories capable of polluting the environment. However, Chambers (1997) opined that no nation or area can firmly develop economical and socially without urbanization, as urbanization is the prime mover of development.

Table 4

Effects of urbanization on sustainable livelihood

Effects	Very Effective	Effective	Less Effective	Not Effective	Means score	Remark
Social life	10	20	35	30	2.90	E
Cultural activities	15	25	35	20	2.60	E
Farming activities	10	15	30	40	3.10	E
Alternative livelihood	13	17	35	30	2.82	E
Development of the areas	13	17	38	40	2.92	E
Congestion	24	27	25	20	2.50	E
Pollution	23	28	26	21	2.51	E
High crime rate	20	30	26	19	2.62	E
Loss of traditional value	32	43	10	10	2.31	LE
High job opportunity						
High rate of noise	60	25	7	3	1.50	LE
Lack of land for future generation	45	35	10	5	2.30	LE
	44	36	9	6	2.53	E

Source: Field Survey, 2012

*Effective

*Less Effective

CONCLUSION

The women in Port Harcourt Metropolis Rivers State have contributed increasingly towards food production and provision of food to their immediate families through the sustainable livelihood activities such as crop farming, fishing and snail farming. In order to development the area, streams and rivers were sand filled, farm lands and forest deforested, and town halls and houses demolished in order to construct roads and build bridges. Urbanization has brought mixed blessings, It is multifaceted. Urbanization has actually brought reasonable development in the areas; it has also replaced the traditional livelihood of the women. Therefore, there is the need to train women on the use of improved technologies and processes in order to increase their production.

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