

EFFECT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS' REMITTANCES ON HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN DELTA CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Ofuoku A. U.

Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Delta State University, Asaba
Campus, P.M.B. 95074, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *This study was purposed to assess the contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances on household food security in Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria. Three (3) local government areas were randomly selected for this study from where three (3) rural communities were also randomly selected and 165 household heads were purposively selected from the communities. Primary data were collected from these household heads. Most household heads in the migrants' households were males with average age of 55.5 years, were married and had one form of formal education or the other. They had average farming experience of 21.30 years and average household size of 8.0 persons. Most migrated household members were in the age bracket of 20-30 years. The migrants remitted more money back home than was remitted to them. The food security index was 0.64. Remittances from migrated household member had significant and positive relationship with household security. It was recommended that rural-urban migrants' should continue to remit money to their households for continuous provision of food for the household members back home.*

KEYWORDS: Rural-Urban Migrants, Household Food Security, Migrants' Remittances, Internal Migration, Agricultural Activities.

INTRODUCTION

Rural urban migration is on the increase in Nigeria with consequences on Agricultural production, urban development and family structure. Migrants think that they have better opportunities to contribute to the family and village development but the long term impact may not be that positive. However a few lucky individuals have returned to the rural areas to make impact in the areas of mechanized farming, monetary remittances and modern market among others to make agriculture more lucrative in their various villages as a way of improving household food security.

Food security, a widely debated issue that gained prominence after the World Food Conference of 1974, has attracted so many definitions from various organizations and individual researchers. Food security was defined in the 1974 World Food Summit as ***“availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices”***.

In Nigeria, there was a general increase in the production of some staple foods during the period of 1870-1998. The per-capita food production (calculated based on the combination of all food items which include nuts, pulses, fruits, cereals, vegetable, sugarcane, starch roots, edible oils, livestock and livestock products) have been on the increase .

A country is food secure when a majority of its population has access to food of adequate quantity consistent with decent existence at all times (Reuttinger,1985, Idachaba, 2004).

At the household level, food security refers to the ability of the household to secure food either from its own production or through purchases of adequate food for meeting the dietary needs of all member of the household. The nutritional status of

each member of the household depends on several conditions being met. Not only that the food available to the household must be shared according to individual needs; the food must be of sufficient variety, quality and safety; but each family member must have good health status in order to benefit from the food consumed (FAO, 2010).

Food security is broad concept that has various definitions. However, all definition seems to revolve around three pillars, namely; food availability, accessibility and nutritional factors (World bank 2010). The problem of availability of food can be guaranteed by food production in the country or by trade. Measures to enhance access to food for the household both rural and urban are essential. These measures could be growth in rural non-farm activities been encouraged, promoting agricultural growth, developing the human capital of the households which can be through education and better health facilities and also ensure that the farm household are not excluded from income earning opportunity by social custom or government policies. With all these in place the farm household would be able to overcome the problems associated with availability and accessibility (ESA, 2003).

Furthermore, the national living standard survey (NLSS) data collected for rural Nigeria has been used to estimate a multi-national logic model of the economic and demographic determinant of migration and remittances in rural Nigeria. From the view of literature, it is clear that most of the rural-urban migration studies done in Nigeria virtually excluded the impact of these rural-urban migration on the rural sending communities, and villages in the Delta Central Agricultural zone are not left out. There is therefore, a need for studies that will determine the impact of rural-urban migration on household food security in villages in central Agricultural zone.

Rural 'migrants are' mainly young people who should be actively involved in farming. 'As a result' of their exodus, many farming activities are labour intensive have been abandoned and substituted for other farming activities that require less labour. This might be the farming system embarked upon by the farmers. Farming system may be defined as the combination of physical and socio-economic resource with the available technology to produce what every man needs in a given environment to improve his welfare (Gerald 1966). Judging from what is still currently witnessed; this definition describes adequately the system of traditional agriculture in Nigeria.

Migration of potential farmers from the rural areas to the urban centres however, reduces the absolute number of the workforce available within a family. Successive scheme in the field of agriculture introduced by the past government were aimed at reducing the influx of rural dwellers into the urban centres as well as making Nigeria to be self-sufficient in basic food production. Such scheme includes Farm Settlement Scheme (1956), Operation Feed the Nation Programme (1967), Green Revolution Programme (1979), and the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP).

Two major problem brought about this study. Firstly, the active members of the rural areas which are mainly the youths have migrated to urban settlements and are therefore, not available to execute the agricultural jobs. According to Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012), as a consequence of rural –urban migration of youths, there is a short fall in the productivity of plantation agriculture in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Secondly, food insecurity and increasing level of poverty in Delta Central Agricultural Zone call for concern. Ofuoku (2008) implicated human trafficking (another form of migration) as cause of food insecurity in Nigeria.

This study was therefore to examine the impact of rural-urban migrant's remittances on household food security in the villages in Delta Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study were to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the household heads; ascertain the rate of migration by age; determine the food security status of households; ascertain the contribution of migrants' remittances to source household food security; determine the impact of migrants' remittances on source household food security. It was hypothesized that rural- urban migrants' remittances do not have significant effect on rural household food security.

METHODOLOGY

This study was done in Delta Central Agricultural Zone, Delta State, Nigeria. This Agricultural zone is sandwiched between Delta North and South Agricultural Zones. It is constituted by 10 local government areas. This zone has the highest number of urban settlements in Delta state. It is also a home for numerous rural settlements. The zone is known for crop, fish and livestock farming activities. It lies under Fresh Water and Rain Forests covers.

The population for this study includes all rural households that has lost their members to migration.

During the preliminary survey, 3 local government areas was randomly selected thus; Ethiope East, Ughelli north and Sapele LGAs. From each of these local government areas, three typical rural communities were randomly selected resulting to selection of 9 communities. With the help of informants, mostly primary and secondary school teachers, households that had their members migrated were identified and purposively selected to be used for this study. At the end of the exercise, 165 household heads were selected.

Data were collected from participant through the use of interview schedule on non literate respondent and questionnaire was administrated on literate respondents. Research assistance were also employed to facilitate the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires

Data analysis was by the use of frequency counts, percentages and means derived from a 4-point likert type scale of strongly agree= 4, agree =3, disagree= 2, and strongly disagree= 1, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient analysis will be employed to test the hypothesis already postulated.

Obectives i and iii were achieved with descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentage. Objective ii was addressed with the use of mean derived from 4- point likert type scale of strongly agree= 4, agree =3, disagree= 2, and strongly disagree= 1, with a cut-off score of 2.50.

Objective iv was met with 4- point Likert type scale adapted to four categories of measuring household food security used by US Department of Agriculture (2000). The categorization are i. Food secure, ii. Food insecure without hunger, iii. food insecure with moderate hunger , and food insecure with severe hunger. They will be assigned scales in the manner of 4-point likert type scale thus:

Food secure= 4, food insecure without hunger= 3, food insecure with moderate hunger= 2, food insecure with severe hunger=1. The security status mean will be computed by dividing the food security status mean by the number of respondents. The grand food security status mean will be calculated by dividing the total mean score by the number of local government areas covered. The food security status index will be calculated by dividing the grand food security status mean by the number of food security status categories (4).

According to the US Department of Agriculture (2000), *food secure* households are households (HHs) that show no or minimal evidence of food insecurity; *food insecure without hunger* HHs are those ones that have evidence of food insecurity in their members' concern about adequacy of the HH food supply and on the adjustment made towards food management, such as reduced food quality, rise in coping manner, and little or no reduction in members' food intake. *Food insecure with moderate hunger* HHs are those where food intake by adults has been reduced so much that the adult members repeatedly experienced physical sensation of hunger. *Food insecure with severe hunger* HHs refer to those in which children's food intake is reduced to an extent where children experience hunger. Objective v was met with the use of contingency table showing the amount of money remitted by migrants for five years and the amount that went into Household (HH) domestic food crops production and purchase of food items for the Household food security .

Objective iv was achieved by the application of Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- economic characteristics of respondents

Most (63.80%) of the household (HH) heads were males (table 4.1). the household heads had an average age of 55.5 years and were mostly (65%) married. Apart from 2.50% who had no formal education, the rest of them had one level of formal education or the other, with average of 21.30 years of farming experience and average household size 8 persons. They had an average farm size of 1.75 hectares.

Rate of migration by age

Table 2 **indicates** that the trend of rural urban migration is age selective since most (29.17%) of the migrants were in the age bracket of 26-30 years. Likewise, 24.48% were in the age range of 31-35 years, other (21.35%) in the age range of 36-40 years, while 13.54% were in the age range of 20-25 years. The least percentage (8.34%) were in the age bracket of 41-50 years. This is in consonance with Ekong (2003); Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012) who opined and found respectively that rural –urban migration is age selective and most migrants tend to be relatively young.

This implies that most of them are engaged in one income generating or the other, in their urban communities of sojourn. Another implication is that they must have left a vacuum at home with respect to their labour contribution to their various household food security. These set of people are usually energetic and are the major labour supply of their respective household. In such a situation, the household head may resort to engagement of hired labour since the migration of the household member has created labour shortage.

Table 4.2 : Rate of migration by age (N=384)

Communities	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50
Afiesere (n=94)	0 (0)	32 (34.04)	16(17.02)	26 (27.70)	16 (17.02)
Amukpe (n=26)	2 (7.70)	10 (38.50)	8 (30.80)	6(23.10)	0 (0)
Ekue (n=38)	4 (10.53)	6 (15.80)	12 (31.60)	12 (31.60)	6 (15.80)
Elume (n=56)	10 (17.90)	20 (35.71)	10 (17.90)	14 (25)	2 (3.60)
Kokori (n=18)	8 (44.4)	0(0)	6 (33.3)	4 (22.2)	0 (0)
Ororokpe(n=54)	8 (14.81)	18 (33.3)	14(25.93)	10 (18.52)	0 (0)
Oria (n=52)	6 (11.54)	16 (30.80)	16 (30.80)	4 (7.70)	4 (7.70)
Udovie (n= 46)	14 (30.4)	10 (21.74)	12 (26.10)	6 (13.04)	4 (8.70)
Total	52 (13.54)	212 (29.17)	94 (24.48)	82 (21.35)	32 (8.49)

Remittances From Urban To Rural Households And From Rural Household To Migrants

Table 4.3 indicates that there is great difference between the aggregated total remittances from the migrants to their respective household in the rural areas and aggregate total remittance from their respective household in the rural areas.

The aggregated total remittance from the migrants is higher (# 7,724,000) than the aggregated total remittance (#3,652,000) from their respective households in the rural area to the migrants. This indicates a difference of # 4,072,000. This implies that the migrants remitted more money to their households than they received from their households. This finding is in consonance with Ekong (2003), Dustmann and Mestres (2010) who asserted that most migrants send money to their households on regular basis. However, it is at variance with Ofuoku (2015) who found that more remittances were made from the rural folks to their migrant household members. This is an indication that the migrants are currently gainfully employed in the urban areas.

Table 3: Remittances from and to migrants (aggregated)

Communities	Remittance from migrant(#)	Remittance from migrant(#)	Difference (#)
Kokori	194,000	114,000	80,000
Oria	750,000	408,000	342,000
Ekue	1270,000	240,000	1030,000
Amukpe	320,000	210,000	110,000
Elume	610,000	420,000	190,000
Ofuoma	460,000	400,000	60,000
Afiesere	2300,000	840,000	1,460,000
Orerokpe	1,220,000	570,000	650,000
Odovie	600,000	450,000	150,000
Total	7724000	2852000	4,072,000

Utilization of remittance on rural HHS

The bulk (67.63%) of the remittances (#5,224,100) was spent on procurement of food items by the rural households, while 21.90% (#1,691,500) was used to hire farm labour (Table 4), farm inputs took 11.76% (#908,400) of the remittances. The bulk was spent on foods because the HHS could not produce all the foods they needed and during off season, food is scarce as most of their produce had been sold. Heith the labour vacuum created by the migrants the HH heads have no action than to hire labour Tuan et al (2000) Ekong (2003) Adewale (2005) Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012) Ofuoku (2015), found that farm labour tends to be depleted by migration of young men and women from rural areas. Ofuoku (2015) observes that the remittance from rural –urban migrants supplemented what their households pay for hired labour.

Table 4: Utilization of remittances

Communities	Food	Farm labour	Input (farm)	Total
Kokori	116,400	48,500	29,100	194,000
Oria	375,000	262,500	112,500	750,000
Ekun	889,000	254,000	127,000	1,270,000
Amukpe	144,000	96,000	80,000	320,000
Elume	457,500	91,500	61,000	610,000
Ofuoma	299,000	92,000	69,000	460,000
Afiesere	1,656,000	414,000	230,000	2,300,000
Orerokpe	927,200	182,000	104,800	1,220,000
Odovie	360,000	150,000	90,000	600,000
Total	5,224,100	1,691,500	908,400	7,724,000

Household food security status of farming households

Household in 6 communities in the study area are food secure since they have mean score of ≥ 2.50 (Table 5). However household in 3 communities in the study area are food insecure since they have the mean score ≤ 2.50 . Household food security index of 0.64 implies that 64% of the household in the study area are food secured. This confirms the finding of Yusuf et al (2015) who found that many households in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State, Nigeria were food secure. This is an indication that most households in the study area are living above poverty line. Adams and Page (2005) found that remittances from rural-urban migrants impact positively on farming household level of dept and severity of poverty. Through remittances, in Egypt, the population of poor farming household reduced by 9.8 percent (Adams, 1986).

Table 5: Household food security status of farming households

Communities	Food secure (4)	Food insecure without hunger (3)	Food insecure with moderate hunger (2)	Food insecure with severe hunger (1)	Score	mean
Kokori (n=16)	4 (16)	6(18)	4(8)	2(2)	44	2.75
Oria (n=18)	4(16)	2(6)	10(20)	2(2)	44	2.40
Ekue (n=16)	6(24)	6(18)	2(4)	2(2)	48	3.0
Amukpe (n=10)	4(16)	0(0)	6(12)	0(0)	28	2.80
Elume (n=16)	4(16)	0(0)	8(16)	6(6)	30	1.88
Ofuoma (n=14)	0(0)	2(6)	12 (24)	0(0)	30	2.14
Afiesere (n=34)	6(24)	6(18)	22(44)	0(0)	86	2.53
Orerokpe(n=16)	4(16)	2(6)	10(20)	0(0)	42	2.63
Odovie (n=20)	4(16)	8(24)	8(16)	0(0)	56	2.80

Grand mean =2.55

Household food security index = 0.64

Estimation of the effect of rural – urban migrants remittances on household food security

Table 6 shows that rural- urban migrant's remittances impacted positively and significantly on rural household food security ($r= 0.778$). This means that remittances from rural – urban migrants contributed immensely to rural household food security. This confirms the observation of Lachard (1999) as he proved that the member of farming households living below poverty line reduced by 7.2 percent in Burkina Faso as a result of remittances from rural – urban migrants.world Bank (2007) asserted that remittances from migrants have been identified as a roadway for moving out of poverty for rural household in developing countries. This means that rural – urban remittances to their rural households are utilized in hiring farm labour, increase farmsize, purchase farm inputs and food (Ofuoku, 2015).

Table 4.6 : Estimation of the impact of rural – urban migrants remittances on household food security.

Variable	Remittance	Hosehold food security status
Remittance	1.000	0.778
Household food security status	0.778	1.000

CONCLUSION

The migrants remitted more money then what was remitted to them. The remittances from the migrant were used by the household heads for purposes that meant attempt to ensure household food security. Most of the households in the study area were food secured. Since there was significant positive relationship between remittances from migrated household members and household food security, such remittances contributed to household food security.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the aforementioned facts, it is recommended that the rural-urban migrants should continue to remit money to their households for the continuous production of in order to raise the standard of living of their rural farming households.