

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Pattern of livelihood and household food security among rural dwellers: Case of women pastoralists in Oyo state of Nigeria

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The study of the pattern of livelihood and household food security among rural dwellers case of women pastoralist was carried out in Oyo state, Nigeria. Data were obtained from 100 women. The women are purposively sampled such that their husbands were pastoralists or that they are involved in pastoral farming. Structured and validated interview schedule was used to elicit necessary information through interviews. The data were analyzed with appropriate statistical tools. The majority of pastoral women was still young and was between the ages of 21 - 30 years. They therefore had strength to face the rigors and tasks involved in maintaining household food security. Also they were actively involved in income generating activities such as sewing, weaving mats and trading apart from dairy work. These activities enabled the women pastoralists in Oyo state to function effectively in ensuring that their households were food secured. The respondents were engaged in livestock farming with varying numbers of different domestic animals including ducks, chicken and goats. About 59% kept ducks, 54% had chicken while 58% had goats. Majority of them (78%) processed daily products such as “wara”, “nono” and butter. Over 90% of the respondents processed their products by boiling, while 69% used salt to process. They spent all the money realized to supplement family feeding by buying various food items needed for their families. The  $\chi^2$  showed that there was no significant difference between the marital status and numbers of wives, home structure and providing household food security. Based on the findings, it was recommended that storage facilities should be provided for the women pastoralists so as to curb wastage of their farm produce and other perishable commodities. They should also be given access to credit facilities so as to improve and increase the quantity and quality of their products.

**Key word:** Household, food, security, women pastoralists.

## INTRODUCTION

Food security is a situation in which all people (nation, household and individual) at all times, have physical and economy access to sufficient, safe and nutrition food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy living. This is the utmost desire of every nation and so the government, non-governmental bodies, individual farmers and most especially the women want to maintain adequate food security.

Women's roles and contributions, both at the household and national level have not been being fully recognized. They are being by-passed by policy makers and researchers and most of their contributions are

regarded as unpaid labour. Women also face a lot of constraints, which serve as hindrances to their roles. It was against this background that the study sought to analyze women's roles in maintaining household food security, among members of the family (Adekoya and Oladele, 1998).

The concept of food security is generally accepted as entailing not only food availability through domestic production, storage or trade but also and perhaps more importantly food access through home production, purchase in the market or food transfers. On the other hand, food insecurity can be permanent or temporary (Olukosi et al., 1991; Adekanye, 1985).

The situation of food insecurity is likely to continue well into 21<sup>st</sup> century unless concerted efforts are made to remove the obstacles to food security and promote overall rural development and poverty eradication,

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**Table 1.** Socio-economics characteristics: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents.

S/N	Age distribution (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	0 - 20	24	24
2.	21 - 30	58	58
3.	31 - 40	5	5
4.	41 - 50	3	3
5.	Not sure	10	10
	Total	100	100
S/N	Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Married	90	90
2.	Widow	8	8
3.	Single	2	2
	Total	100	100
S/N	Family structure	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Monogamy	43	43
2.	Polygamy	55	55
3.	Single	2	2
S/N	Position as wives	Frequency	Percentage
1.	First	55	55
2.	Second	30	30
3.	Third	13	13
Others	Total	2	2
	Total	100	100
S/N	No. in the family	Frequency	Percentage
1.	1 - 5	15	15.31
2.	6 - 10	50	51.31
3.	11-13	21	21.43
4.	16-20	6	6.12
5.	21-25	6	6.12
S/N	Livestock farming	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Duck	59	59
2.	Chicken	54	54
3.	Goat	58	58
4.	Sheep	54	54
5.	Cattle	70	70
6.	Not engaged	5	5
	Total	100	100

especially in countries most affected by food insecurity (FAO, 1995; World Bank, 1998).

Women, according to Alamu (1993) were by then seen only as money spenders and men as wealth or money providers. Women were mainly full time housewives in good old days. However, today's dwindling oil revenue and its attendant's structural adjustment policy, instability in prices of food items, rising family sizes and globalization of food industries is affecting this. The accompanying pressures to raise productivity and efficiency and to lower costs decreased employment and increased wages of rural workers and particularly males, no longer

permit women to sit at home and adopt the wait-to-be-fed attitude.

Women are now faced with the task of playing dual roles, which include taking care of their household and fending for them, much more than their husbands in the family (Egunjobi, 1991). The roles women play in agriculture vary from region and from country to country. Women are responsible for most household food production and small-scale cash cropping with low levels of technology.

FAO (1990) shows that in sub-saharan Africa, women contribute 60 - 80% of the labour in both food productions for household consumption including the sales of some of these produce. They also play a major part in tedious work such as sowing, weeding, application of fertilizers and pesticides, harvesting, threshing, food processing (e.g. "garri" making, palm oil processing, "fufu", transportation and marketing), etc. In some countries such as in Tanzania, they participate fairly equally with men in site clearing and land preparation. They are often responsible for feeding and milking of all livestock.

Every household is supposed to be food secured. That is a condition in which all its members have access to adequate and sufficient food (FAO, 1994; Gittinger et al., 1991). This is an attempt to measuring whether individuals consume enough food or have the means to purchase enough food to enjoy a minimum desirable level of physical health.

Food security implies assuring availability and access to sufficient quantities of food for all, including the poor (Shelties, 1996). It is a situation whereby a country or a group is able to produce enough food for its own needs or has enough money to buy food in the market (Adegboye, 1988).

This study attempts to identify the various activities carried out by women pastoralists in maintaining household food security and determine the personal characteristics of the women in the study area.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Oyo state. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted such that the women pastoralists were included in the sample. Oyo west and Iseyin local government areas were purposively selected for the study. The women were sampled through personal interview and using structured and validated questionnaire. The data collected were then analyzed using appropriate statistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

90% of the women pastoralists were married and 8% were widowed and just 2% were single. This is in line with the fact that the study was focused on women pastoralists who were in their husband's household Table 1.

Table 1 also indicates that the respondents had varied marriage types. 55% of the sampled women were from

**Table 2.** Distributors of respondents income generating activities.

Product	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Seldomly		Not engaged	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Wara	78	78	16	16	2	2	3	3	1	1
Nono	72	72	22	22	3	3	2	2	1	1
Butter	61	61	20	20	11	11	7	7	1	1
Yoghurt	45	45	20	20	09	09	10	10	16	16
Glue	65	65	07	07	07	07	10	10	2	2
Other	78	78	16	16	2	2	3	3	1	1

**Table 3.** Distribution of respondents for crop farming activities.

S/N	Crop farming	Frequency	%
1.	Maize	48	22.33
2.	Beans	33	15.35
3.	Vegetable	60	27.91
4.	Other	41	19.07
5.	Not engaged	33	15.35
	Total	215	100.00

polygamous homes, 43% were from monogamous homes while only 2% were single. Polygamy is a practice, which is religiously minded, Christians and educated women find it objectionable and cite as a case of gender inequality. In the study, it is a case of one man to more than one wife. This is in line with the report of Kissekk (1980) that polygamy is much rooted in the homes of African cultures. The high rate of polygamy can also be attributed to the religion of the Fulani, which was mainly Islam.

Table 1 shows the position of the respondents in the family make up about 56% were the first wives, 31% were second while the rest 13% were third wives.

Table 1 shows that different types of livestock are kept by the respondents such as chicken, duck, goat, sheep and cattle. The percentage of cattle, duck and goat are the highest, when analyzed from the Table 1.

This shows that duck, goats and cattle are livestock, which can easily be reared by women pastoralists without spending so much money and at the same time making much gain to enhance improvement of family standard of living and also for consumption. This is in support of the view of Ogundipe (1991) that livestock research on food security shows that fowls, duck, pigs, goats, sheep and rabbits are being kept in some families and the number kept per family varies. The animals are purposely reared as a source of income to tide over emergencies and for consumption.

### Income generating activities

Table 2 reveals that rate of processing products of the

respondents such as "a war", "a nono", butter, yoghurt, glue and others which are 78, 72, 61, 45, 65 and 78% respectively were processed highest on a daily basis. The rate of processing decreased progressively from daily to not engaged for wara, nono, butter, yoghurt, glue and others.

This is in line with Egunjobi (1991) who reported that Africa is a region of female pre-eminence. An important area of woman involvement in farming is the fact that those who are agropastoralists by their daily activities make animal protein available to the general populace in forms, which conform to local tastes and at cheaper prices than the modern imported products.

It can be observed from Table 3 that 28% were vegetable farmers while 22% were maize farmers, 15% into beans and others were 19%. Although most of them had access to farmland which is either their own or family plot and participate in crop farming so also is livestock farming along with their major income generating activities.

51% carried out trading, milking of cow and weaving mats had the same percentage, which is 29% and sewing had the least 16%. It thus shows that the respondents were more involved in trading as well as farming activities. A farmer that is expected to process and market her farm produce will thus be a trader.

Most of the sampled women receive between five hundred and fifty naira and one thousand naira (N550 - 1000) as food allowance from their husbands for a month as revealed in this amount may be sufficiently sustain such large families of individuals between 1 - 10, which is predominant in the study area.

Majority of them had farms and were most subsistence

**Table 4.** Distribution of women's periodical contribution to food security.

S/N	Period	Frequency	%
1.	Whenever food is needed	59	59
2.	Whenever money given is not enough	28	28
3.	When I have the means	13	13
	Total	100	100

farmers which means their produce is mainly for feeding their immediate family in order to supplement the amount received from the husbands. The women must have other income generating activities to be able to sustain their family and ensure food security. This is in line with the result obtained that the women's major income generating activities is trading. 8% were not sure of the amount collected and only 4% collected between ₦1, 550 - 2000 from their husband for food. This confirms the position of O'Connel (1994) that the inadequacy of male income is a fact and so women had real need for income.

### Contribution to livelihood and food security

In Table 4, 59% of the respondents (women) contributed towards getting adequate food for their family whether financially or materially whenever food is needed, while 28% contributed whenever money given by their husband is not enough to satisfy their needs in their home and 13% contributed only when they have the means. The fact still remains that women contribute towards ensuring food security for their family.

### Preservation of food products

It can be deduced that the respondents used boiling and salting 48.7 and 35.8%, respectively, as the major method of preserving their product while 0% was for refrigeration and 15.0% of the respondents was for other methods.

It can be seen from Table 5 that most of the respondents has no access to improved storage technology. This is in line with FAO (1994) which reported that women tend to be by passed by researchers and technology designers. The author further explained the most technologies are designed for men, thus women carry out their task using crude implement like hands, cutlass, salting and sun drying.

### Purchased food items

From Table 6 it can be seen that the respondents bought vegetable always (62%) with contribution to foodstuff while 27% often bought and 4% never bought. 34% often bought yam while 28% always bought meat while 15%

**Table 5.** Method of product preservation.

S/N	Method	Frequency	%
1.	Refrigerating	-	-
2.	Boiling	94	48.7
3.	Salting	69	35.8
4.	Others	29	15.0
5.	Not engaged	1	0.5
	Total	193	100

and 13% rarely and ever bought for fish, 50% always while 31, 10 and 9% often, rarely and never bought, for fruits, it is 56% always, 25% often and 14% and 5% rarely and never. We can notice the progressive decrease this may due to inadequate money being contribution by the women.

### Personal characteristics and food security

In Table 7 the test of association between some selected personal characteristics of women perstorialists and their efforts in maintaining household food security showed no association between marital status and maintaining food security. Number of wives and type of marriage were not significantly related to maintaining food security. Polygamous marriage and multiple wives in homes make them free to engage in food security activities needed to sustain the family unit.

Adekoya and Oladele (1998) said that the roles of women in farming are extensive and multifaceted which varies widely though concentrated around the home because of their household chores and for cultural and religious reasons.

### Household food assessment

Table 8 shows that 81% of the households in the study area had good food security while 91% had partial security and none of the respondents had no food security in their homes. Thus for food security to be ensured, women from various household have to continuously contribute to their household needs either materially or financially.

**Table 6.** Items bought in contribution to the family feeding.

Item	Always		Often		Rarely		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Vegetable	62	62	27	27	7	7	4	4
Yam	28	28	34	34	22	22	16	16
Meat	35	35	37	37	15	15	13	13
Fish	50	50	31	31	10	10	9	9
Fruits	56	56	25	25	14	14	5	5
Milk	55	55	26	26	10	10	9	9
Others	4	4	88	88	4	4	4	4

**Table 7.** Relationship between personal characteristics and maintaining household food security (n = 100).

S/N	Personal characteristics	X <sup>2</sup> CAL	X <sup>2</sup>	TAB	Remarks
			0.01	0.05	
1	Marital status	6.50	11.34	7.82	H <sub>0</sub> accepted
2	Number of wives	8.11	6.63	3.84	H <sub>0</sub> accepted
3	Type of marriage	8.13	9.21	3.99	H <sub>0</sub> accepted

**Table 8.** Distribution of respondent household food assessment.

S/N	Household security	Frequency	%
1.	Good security	81	81
2.	Partial security	19	19
3.	No security	0	0
	Total	100	100

## Conclusion

The study revealed that women have been identified to be playing vital roles in ensuring household food security. Most of these roles end up unnoticed and constitute unpaid labour and in most cases, very difficult to evaluate.

Based on the findings, women pastoralists in Oyo state were contributing immensely in the maintenance of food security in their household. This was so because majority of them were middle-aged and could cope with the rigors involving in processing, marketing and utilization of the various dairy products obtained from their cattle. They were also actively involved in vocational work such as sewing, weaving mat and trading. The associated numbers of wives and type of marriage were significantly different to their involvement in maintaining household food security.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made. Storage facilities should be provided for the women pastoralists so as to curb wastage of their farm produce and other perishable commodities. Pastoral

women should be given access to credit facilities so as to improve and increase the quality of their product. More female extension agents should be sent to the women pastoralists for disseminating information because they do not give opportunity to be taught by male extension agents.

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