The Socio-economic Characteristics of Rice Marketing Actors in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The main objective was to examine the socio-economic characteristics of rice marketing actors in Benue State of Nigeria. Primary data were collected from 180 randomly selected respondent comprising rice producers , assemblers, processors, wholesalers and retailers, using descriptive statistics. The finding indicated that all the marketing actors were within the age of 40 years. The result also reveal that all the marketing actors were dominated by male except the retailers(78.1%)were female. The analysis of the data shows that 70% of the marketing actors had household size between 4 and 6 persons. It was also observed that on the average, 61.2% of the actors attended school (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary).*

Key words: *Socio-economic characteristics, rice marketing actors*

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1. Introduction

Rice is one of the most important cereals in Benue State among other cereals in terms of marketing (Atom and Bashi, 2010). In line with Atom and Bashi 2010, Benue State is considered as one of the highest State in marketing in Nigeria because its rice is produced and marketed in all the Local Government Areas in the State.

Benue State has experienced rapid growth in per-capita rice consumption during the last three decades from 5kg in the 1990s to 25kg in the late 2010 (National Agricultural Rice Development Agency, 2013). However, rice development programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Back to Land (BTL) among others in place after the independence, have made very little impact on food supply (NARDA, 2013).

Notwithstanding the various policy measures, local rice production and marketing has not kept up with the domestic consumption demands of the Nigerian populace and Benue State in particular. Consequently, imported rice now represents more than 20% agricultural imports and half of the total rice consumption (NARDA, 2013). Nigeria has thus become a major rice importer, second only to Indonesia over the last five years (2008-2012) (NARDA, 2013). In 2010, the value of import was 300 million dollars, and as high as ₦ 96 billion in 2012 (FAO 2013). The importation has a negative effect on the balance of payments as well as hinders the poverty reduction efforts of the government.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the Socio-economic characteristics of rice marketing actors in Benue State of Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to determine the

average, age, sex, household size, formal education, and experience among rice marketing actors in the State.

2. Methodology

Study area and sampling technique

The study was conducted in Benue State of Nigeria. Sampling frame was not available for the study but 180 respondents made of paddy rice producers, assemblers, processors, wholesalers and retailers were randomly selected from six markets in six Local Government Areas (Kwande, Vande-ikya, Gboko, Makurdi, Otukpo and Oju) spread across the three agricultural zones in Benue State based on their intensity of rice processing and marketing.

2.1. Data collection

Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data for the study. Primary data were collected on Socio-economic characteristics of rice marketers and processors age, sex, household size, formal education and years of experience in marketing. Secondary data were sourced from browsing the internet.

2.2. Data Analysis Techniques

Data for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables, mean and percentages.

3. Result and Discussion

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were discussed with respect to their age, sex, household size, number of years spend in formal education and years of experience. The socio-economic profile of the rice market actors are presented in the table below

Age: The result in the table shows that majority (60.0%) of the paddy rice producers were in the age bracket of 36-40 years while 24.4% were between the ages of 31-35 years. Majority (61.0%) of the rice assemblers were 40 years and above while 29.4% fell between the ages of 36 and 40 years and 6.5% were between 31 and 35years. However, 66.7% of rice processors ages were between 36 and 40 years, while 26.7% were between 31 and 35 years. Most of the rice wholesalers (62.7%) were within the age of 36 and 40 years while 22.0% were within 31 and 35years were 40% in the study area. The table also indicated that 50.2% of the rice retailers were between the ages of 36 and 40years, constituting the majority, while 20.1% were within the ages of 31 and 35 years.

The result implied that, the respondents in the study areas were dominated by young (26-40years) people. This is because the business requires a lot of energy and is labour intensive such that the old (45 years and above) people cannot withstand the stress involved in the activities of rice processing and marketing.

Evidence from the study conducted by Akaru (2012) showed that about 53.3% of rice producers in Udu local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria were between the age of 35 and 40 years. Similarly, Anum (2002) in his study showed that 60% of rice producers in Logo Local Government of Benue State, Nigeria were between the ages of 30 and 40 years. Also considering World Health Organization average life expectancy chart 2011 of 52 years for Nigeria, rice producers in Benue State were within their productive stage. These findings are in agreement with Adebayo (2012) who posited that people in age bracket of 40 and 45 years are more economically active and independent than those in the age group of less than 21 years and above

45 years. These are also in line with Amusa, *et al*. (2011) that people within the age of 30-40 years are more healthy and hardworking than those in the age of above 45 years.

These finding also agree with Agwu, *et al*. (2011) that young people within the age of 35-40 years are stronger and active than those less than 20 years and above 50 years in Nassarawa State, Nigeria. The result agrees with Adinya (2009) that 60% of rice retailers in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria are within the age bracket of 30-40 years. In his study, Fapojuwa (2010) confirmed that 55.6% of rice retailers in Ogun State, Nigeria were within the age of 30-45 years

Sex: From the table, majority (88.5%) of the paddy rice producers were male while 11.5% were female. Also, 61.3% of paddy rice assemblers were male while 38.7% were female. The result shows that paddy rice processors had male as majority (66.7%) with female minority (33.3%). The male were the majority (54.3%) in polished rice wholesale business while 45.7% polished rice wholesalers were female. The result on the other hand indicated that female formed the majority (78.1%) in polished rice retailing business while the male followed with 21.9%.

The result from the table can be attributed to the fact that males in the study area had right to land as a productive resource than females. Akaru (2012), reported that there has been a great disparity between women and men in the size of landholdings and that the mode of women participation in agricultural production varies with the land-owning status of households. The male domination of rice production may also be due to high demands of time and energy required to work in such enterprise. This agrees with the study of Anum (2002).

The stress involved in moving from one village to the other, assembling paddy rice for marketing, may be difficult for the female to withstand because of the nature of a woman in the family. Some of the roles of a woman in the family are cooking, taking care of the children at home and to also do some petty retailing at home (Anum 2002). The study is in line with Adinya (2009) study in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria that 65.5% of male are into activities of rice processing and marketing.

The result is, however, different in the polished rice retailing business where the female formed the majority (78.1%), followed by the male (21.9%). This is an indication that the male had left the business of rice retailing in the hands of the female because the male had to go to offices, farms and other places in order to ensure the provision of the capital (money) required for family transaction while the female are engaged in rice retailing at home or even in an open market but close to the house.

Household size: From the table, majority (70.0%) of paddy rice producers had household size ranging from 4 to 6 persons. About 10.0% had from above nine persons while 19.2% had a household size of 7 and 9 persons. None of the respondents had household size of more than 10 persons. The result also confirmed that majority (61.3%) of the paddy rice assemblers had a household size of between 4 and 6 members and 35.5% had between 7-9 persons, while 3.2% had above 9 persons. The table further shows that most (41.7%) of paddy rice processors had between 4-6 persons and 7-9 persons respectively while 16.7% had above 9 persons. The table also revealed that, majority (48.6%) of polished rice wholesalers had household size of 4-6 persons followed by 42.9% having from 7-9 persons while 8.5% had above 9 persons. But none of the respondents had above 10 persons. Considering the result, majority (56.2%) of the polished rice retailers had a household size of 4-6 and 34.4% had 7-9 persons while 9.4% had

above 9 persons.

The implication of the result is that though large family size can sometimes be an asset to the marketers in terms of available work force/labour, often time a marketer is faced with the challenge of providing social and welfare facilities such as feeding, education, sheltering, healthcare and other living expenses for such a large number of dependants. These expenses may account for low saving at the end of every year, aside the fact that rice purchased is consumed by the large household members. In related study, Fasoranti (2012) also found low overall output from cassava marketing as a result of large household size.

Formal education: The table shows that majority (46.2%) of paddy rice producers had tertiary education and 42.3% attended secondary school while 11.5% attended primary school. The result showed that 48.4% paddy rice assemblers had tertiary education and 38.7% had secondary education while 12.9% were holders of primary school certificates. The results indicated that 61.15% of paddy rice processors had tertiary education followed by 25% who were holders of secondary education certificates while 13.9% had primary education. The result further shows that majority (45.7%) of the polished rice wholesalers had secondary education and 40% had tertiary education while 14.3% had only primary education. Further result on the table shows that the polished rice retailers had secondary education constituting 43.8% followed by 37.5% who had tertiary education while 18.8% had only primary education.

The results suggest that almost all the respondents were literate enough to give room for effective communication in their local dialect in doing their rice processing and marketing business. Their educational status is enough to provide them with the ability to read and write, handle and interpret messages relating to their processing and marketing activities of rice in the instruction manuals on input and machinery uses and also enable them to appreciate extension services.

Gilbert (2007), opined that education is a major determinant of the nation's economy. He further argued that the level of formal education attained by an individual goes a long way in shaping his/her personality, attitude to life and adoption of new and improved practice. Education has also been regarded as an investment in human capital, which is capable of raising the skills and quality of the man, narrow his information gaps and increase his location efficiency, thereby leading to more productive performance (Hock, 2012). Therefore, the introduction of new ideas and adaption of new innovations and technology in rice production may be easy with increased education. This will in turn increase yield and income

Years of experience: The table indicates that majority (76.9%) of the paddy rice producers had between 6 and 10 years of experience in rice production and 15.3% had between 11 and 15 years, while 4.8% had below 6 years. The paddy rice assemblers on the other hand had between 11and15 years of experience forming the majority (74.2%), followed by 20.0% who had below 6years, while 3.2% had 6 and 10years and above 15years of experience were 2.6%. The result also showed that 60.0% of the paddy rice processors had 6-10 years of experience; next to them were those who had between 11 and 15 years (25%), while 12.2% had below 6years and 2.8% had above 15years of experience. Majority (60.0%) of polished rice wholesalers had between 6 and 10 years of experience in the business and 31.4% had between 11 and 15 years while 5.7% had above15years and 2.9% had below 6years of experience. The result further shows that 60.0% of polished rice retailers constituting the majority had between 11 and 15 years of experience,

followed by 12.5% having between 6 and 10 years and 6.2% had above 15 years, while 5.2 had below 6 years of experience.

The result is a clear indication that the business of rice processing and marketing is generally growing and developing in the state. On the average, the number of years of processing and marketing rice experience of the respondents was 10 years. Dolan and Humphrey (2000) noted that, Sokoto people depend on rice because over 80% of the population was engaged in the processing and marketing of rice their general belief was that rice is a source of food. Processing and marketing of rice is the only source of business that will create wealth, financial security and also generate employment for the youths. Therefore, the number of years put in the business (experience) is very important.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of Rice Producers, Assemblers, Processors, Wholesalers and Retailers

	Percentage of Rice Market Actors				
Socio-economic Characteristics	Producers %	Assemblers %	Processors %	Wholesalers %	Retailers %
Age					
26-30 years	20.5	3.1	4.6	5.0	16.1
31-35 years	24.4	6.5	26.7	22.0	20.1
36-40 years	60.0	29.4	66.7	62.7	50.2
Above 40 years	5.1	61.0	12.0	10.3	13.6
Sex					
Male (M)	88.5	61.3	66.7	54.3	21.9
Female (F)	11.5	38.7	33.3	45.7	78.1
Household Size					
4-6	70.8	61.3	41.7	48.6	56.2
7-9	19.2	35.5	41.6	42.9	34.4
Above 9	10.0	3.2	16.7	8.5	9.4
Educational Level					
No formal edu.	6.2	8.4	11.1	10.0	7.5
Primary Edu.	11.5	12.9	13.9	14.3	18.8
Secondary edu.	42.3	38.7	25.0	45.7	43.8
Tertiary Edu.	46.2	48.4	61.15	40.0	37.5
Experience					
Below 6yrs	4.8	20.0	12.2	2.9	5.6
6-10 yrs	76.9	3.2	60.0	60.0	12.5
11-15 yrs	15.3	74.2	25.0	31.4	60.0
Above 15yrs	3.0	2.6	2.8	5.7	6.2

Source: Field survey 2014

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined the socio-economic characteristics of rice marketing actors in Benue State of Nigeria. The findings indicated that all the marketing actors were within the age of 40 years and were dominated by male, except the retailers (78.1%) were female. The analysis of the data also shows that 70% of the marketing actors had household size between 4 and 6 persons. It was also observed that on the average, 61.2% of the actors attended school (primary, secondary and tertiary).

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study;
  i.   The elderly (above 40 years) marketers should be encouraged not to live the business for the younger (below 40 years) marketers alone since they (younger marketers) lack adequate experience in rice production and marketing.
  ii.   The female should be given adequate education to participate fully in the business of rice production and marketing to reduce over dependence on their husbands.
  iii. The marketing actors should increase their household size by accepting extended family members to train them in the business of rice production and marketing, to increase their labour force.

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