

PERI-URBANISATION AND LIVELIHOODS DIVERSIFICATION OF WOMEN IN OSOGBO, NIGERIA

1.0 Introduction

Studies have reported that the massive change of land use in Nigeria's peri-urban areas threatens their residents' livelihoods, informing diversification and poverty (Dekolo et al, 2014; Lasisi et al, 2018; Abdullahi, 2020). Sadly, women are drastically more affected due to their high level of dependence and low level of resilience. Also, African culture places women at a disadvantage with less access to land resources, and high exposure to risks and impacts of land decisions. Hence, submissions that urbanisation at the peripheries creates new opportunities and choices for social support services to survive (Eliss, 1998; Tacoli, 1999; Oduro et al., 2015) may not apply to women in Africa.

Peri-urbanization in Nigeria raises concern about the poverty of women and the achievement of goals 1, 2, and 11 of the Global Agenda. Unfortunately, there is no documented effort to investigate the impact of urbanization on the livelihood of women in the peri-urban areas of Nigerian cities. Drawing evidence from the peri-urban areas around Osogbo, Nigeria, this study examines the impact of peri-urbanization on the livelihood diversification of women. It particularly probes the impact of land commoditization associated with peri-urbanization and the economic responses of women. How has peri-urbanisation affected the occupation of women? What is the livelihood impact of peri-urbanization? How have women responded to this? Are there governmental, non-governmental, and societal efforts toward addressing this impact? What are policy and intervention options that are available for addressing this situation? The study is aimed towards framing policies and action points that will secure the livelihoods of these vulnerable individuals.

2.0 Theoretical focus

This study is hinged on three theoretical foci: peri-urban, land governance, and inclusive growth - which are also linked. The peri-urban area in this discussion is seen not only as a center of transition between the rural and the urban but also as a hub of opportunities – which sadly are transferred from the vulnerable to the elites. It is discussed as a place where resource transition reflects injustice, and non-inclusion and abysmally affects women. Linked with land governance, peri-urban areas are places without distinct administrative jurisdiction and are abandoned by both urban and rural governments. These areas are poorly serviced with infrastructure and lack economic opportunities that can absorb displaced locals.

Inclusive growth is an intentional alternative to the management of urbanization – which has come to stay in African societies. How will the potential of urbanization be optimized to meet the needs of the landowners – in this case, women, and how can their livelihoods be preserved are part of the interest of this concept. The concept as exemplified in this study reflects that addressing the livelihood impact of peri-urbanization requires an integration of social construct and good governance rather than hardware interventions that are currently in place in African urban areas.

3.0 Methodology

For the study, the four peri-urban areas of Osogbo were considered. These are Abeere, Ofatedo, Dagbolu and Owoeba. The satellite imagery of the areas for a period of 30 years (1992 to 2022) was obtained from Google Earth at an interval of 5 years. From this imagery, land use maps were generated and analyzed in the ArcGIS environment. Also, the list of women groups in the areas was collected from community associations while 100 women were drawn from each area. Key informant interviews were also conducted on representatives of women groups in the study area. Information obtained, among others, includes previous occupation, current occupation, and average weekly income. Data obtained were triangulated and subjected to land use and descriptive analysis. Poverty Index was calculated to evaluate the impact of livelihood diversification on women in the area.

4.0 Findings

Preliminary results reveal that there is a land use conversion from Agriculture to other urban developments in the last 30 years. The rate of conversion was 0.20 between 1992-1997. However, it was drastic in the last 5 years accounting for 0.65. As a result of peri-urbanisation, 55% of local women have lost their farmlands to land commoditization while another 30% is currently threatened. However, only 3.5% of the women have been involved in the transfer of their farmlands to other users. Not less than 60% of the women have experienced livelihood diversification – switching to petty trades and menial jobs. About 10% resort to artisanal jobs. As a result, about 65% of the women have witnessed a decline in income while 15% of the women currently do not have any source of livelihood. With a poverty index of 0.54, there is growing poverty among women in the peri-urban areas because of livelihood diversification associated with peri-urbanization. The study, therefore, recommends inclusive urban planning and granting loans to aid small-scale businesses.