Original Research Article

# Investigating Factors Responsible for High Poverty Index among Women in Gidan Madi Community

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**Abstract:** High poverty undermines rural women's productivity and lowers their purchasing power, thereby denying them access to quality education, health care, and basic needs. Despite this, most previous poverty studies, especially in Nigeria, did not focus on women. This study, accessed the poverty status of women in Gidan Madi community and identify the factors responsible for their poverty status. Multistage Sampling technique was use to select 540 rural women in Gidan madi community. Primary data, collected using structured questionnaire and analysed with descriptive statistics and logistic regression. The result revealed that rural women in Gidan Madi community were less educated, had an average of 56 years and 78% of them were married with an average household size of fifteen persons. Mostly involved in small scale business, the factors contributing to the high poverty rate among women in Gidan Madi community are age, household size, lack of quality education and access to credit facility were the inhibiting factors. The study recommends the provision of credit facilities, access to extension services, birth control measures, and intensification of education as a means of alleviating poverty among women in Gidan Madi community of Sokoto State.
**Keywords**: Gidan Madi, Poverty status.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Poverty level is among the major determinants of the degree of economic growth and development, and welfare of people in a country. Yet, the high poverty rate is one of the major challenges facing the world today. This prompted the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to put eradication of extreme poverty and reduction of the number of poor people by half by 2030 as the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The high rate of poverty in the world especially among developing economies remains a major concern among policymakers, government, and non-governmental organisations globally. Over 80% of extremely poor people in the world live in rural areas with the majority in developing countries (De La O Campos *et al.*, 2018). More than half of the population in Africa

lives in extreme poverty with 82% of the extreme poor living in rural areas (Allen *et al.*, 2018; World Bank, 2019a). Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 56% of the world's extreme poor (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019; World Bank Group, 2018) and nine out of ten extremely poor people will be from sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 (Barne & Wadhwa, 2018). The poverty rate in Nigeria is worrisome and disturbing despite several programmes that have been put in place to curtail it by the government. Over 85 million people—accounting for 40.1% of the population—are poor, with the vast majority in rural areas (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020a). Over 70% of the rural populace in Nigeria are poor (Emefesi & Yusuf, 2014). Nigeria has the largest proportion of poor people in Africa as it accounts for about one-quarter of Africa's poor people. More than

70% of the Nigeria population lives in rural areas and is widely engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

Nigeria is an agrarian country endowed with natural resources. Agriculture contributes immensely to the nation's economy by accounting for 22% of the GDP (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics 2020b) and serves as a source of employment for two-thirds of the nation's population (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2020; Oladimeji *et al.*, 2014). The agrarian communities in Nigeria are characterized by low income and poor infrastructures such as poorly equipped health centres, poor portable water supply and electricity, and bad road networks which are characteristics of high poverty in the area. Rural poverty is concentrated and widespread among young people and women (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], n.d.). More than half of women in Nigeria reside in rural areas and engage in agriculture as their means of livelihood (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015; Bishaw, 2014). A low income among women will thus reduce the household's income and increase the chances of a high poverty rate in households. Rural women assist in providing households' basic needs, contribute to family wellbeing, community development, and economic development of a nation (Handragama *et al.*, 2013, as cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015). Their involvement in agricultural activities and other income-earning activities is, therefore, very important to improve households' economic status and reduce the poverty rate. Rural women in Nigeria contribute significantly to agricultural activities especially in the areas of processing and marketing but do not have enough capital to increase their level of operation from small scale to large scale due to high levels of poverty. Poverty undermines rural women's survival, productivity, health, livelihood, and wellbeing. It further reduces their contribution to households' needs. Poverty reduces rural women's purchasing power, thereby denying them access to quality education and basic needs. It also exposes them to malnutrition and disease, thereby lowering their life expectancy. Several studies have assessed the poverty of rural communities (e.g., Ayanwale & Adisa, 2012; Bogale, Hagedorn & Korf, 2005; Bogale & Korf, 2009; Etim & Patrick, 2010; Etim & Ukoha, 2010; Fakayode *et al.*, 2015; Falola *et al.*, 2015; Oladimeji, 2013; Oladimeji *et al.*, 2014; Olorunsanya *et al.*, 2011; Omotesho *et al.*, 2007; Pelemo *et al.*, 2020. However, none of these studies concentrate on rural women of Sokoto state and Gidan Madi community in particular who are more prone to poverty. There is thus a need to fill this gap in literature by investigating Gidan Madi women's poverty status. Therefore, the aim of our study is to investigate the poverty status of women in Gidan madi community of Sokoto State Nigeria. Our study further describes the socioeconomic characteristics of rural women and identifies the driving factors of rural women's poverty status. This would allow the understanding of women's poverty in Gidan Madi community in a bid to eradicate poverty and enhance rural development. Identification of the underlying social, economic, and institutional driving factors of women's poverty will ensure proper intervention to meet rural women needs, improve their wellbeing, and alleviate poverty among women. The findings of this study will, therefore, be appropriate for policymakers and the government as it will provide deepened insights into the major problem facing these disadvantaged women. It will enhance and form a basis for formulating appropriate policies to eradicate poverty, especially among rural women in Sokoto state and Nigeria at large.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Sokoto State Poverty according to the Advanced Learners dictionary by Hornby *et al.*, (1963) is the state of being poor. The poor can be defined as those individuals and families whose resources overtime falls seriously short of the resources commanded by the average individual or family in the community in which they live. There are two levels of poverty, which are usually defined in either absolute or relative terms (NAPEP, 2001). Absolute poverty denotes a condition in which a person or group of persons are unable to satisfy their most basic and elementary requirements of human survival in terms of good nutrition, clothing, shelter, footwear, energy, transport, health, education and recreation. Relative poverty on the other hand, is defined as the minimum economic, social, political and cultural goods needed to maintain an acceptable way of life in a particular society (NAPEP, 2001). Sokoto State is one of the 36 States that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It was created from the former North Western region in 1976. The development of Sokoto is traceable to the Fulani Jihad of the early 19th Century. Presently Sokoto is one of the seven states that constitute the North West geopolitical zone of Nigeria and has an estimated population of over 4 million people in 2012. Despite this number population studies have shown that there is high rate of poverty among in different local government areas of the state. The proportion of people living in relative poverty in Sokoto State increased from 37.9% in 1992 to 83.9% in 1996 but declined to 76.81 % in 2004. The proportion of those living in absolute poverty was 70.54% during the same period (SSG, 2012). These figures are huge enough to suggest the need for the state government to take necessary steps to reduce poverty in Sokoto state. In fact, the prevalence of poverty in in Sokoto (76.81%) was higher than the national average of 54% in 2004 (SSG, 2012). This situation constrains utilizations of maternal health care services. Further

studies on poverty have revealed that in Sokoto State, 13 out of 23 local government areas have more than half of their population living in poverty with over 97% of the population of Gidan Madi community in Tangaza Local Government living in poverty (Muazu *et al.*, 2013).

There is a dearth of information on determinants of Gidan Madi women's poverty status. This is the gap the present study intends to fill as it will serve as a reference point on rural women's poverty status. It therefore became pertinent to examine factors influencing this poverty status.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Study Area

This study was conducted in Gdan Madi community of Tangaza Local government, Sokoto State. The high rate of poverty in Sokoto state according to latest National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), especially among women, motivated selection of the study area. Sokoto state is an agrarian state with the majority of its populace living in rural areas and engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

### 3.2 Sampling Procedure

A multistage sampling technique was employed in this study. The first stage involved a random selection of 226 houses; the selected households were those with women. The second stage involved a random selection of one woman from each house using a table of random numbers.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Primary data were collected from 226 women of Gidan Madi community. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire coupled with an interview schedule–guide. The interview schedule was done to get the required information from Gidan Madi women due to high rate of illiteracy among them. The data were collected by the researchers and research assistants who understand the local languages for easy communication with the rural women. Data collected covered relevant information such as their demographic, institutional, social, and economic features.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the demographic features of the Gidan Madi women. This includes the use of frequency, percentage, and mean.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Gidan Madi Rural Women

### 4.1.2 Household Distribution in the study Area

The following Sections show how the residents of the study area responded to the socioeconomic survey administered to them. A total of 226 questionnaires were administered to some selected women in Gidan Madi community with a 100% return. Based on the survey, the 226 respondents have a total of 1314 household members.

### 4.1.3 Gender, Age and Household Size Distribution

The survey data indicated male/female distribution of 53/47% for households in Gidan Madi community. The gender distribution in the household data is reflected in Figure 4-1.
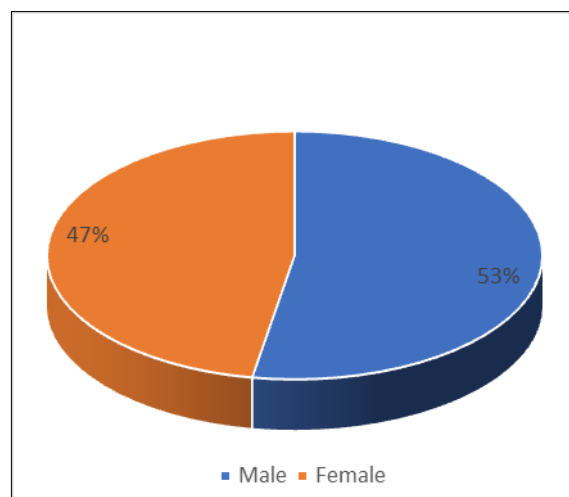


**Fig. 4-1: Gender Distribution of Households**

Women in the project area are mainly involved in farming and home-keeping.

The age distribution data (Figure 4-2) indicated that the percentage of household members 21 years of age and below for Gidan Madi women is 57%. About 2% of the household members in the area are in their 60s and above. The survey further showed that 35% are within the youthful ages of between 22 and 45 years while 7% of the household members are between the ages of 46 and 60 years. The high percentage of the number of household members of ages 21 and below is reflective of the growing concentration of the youths in the area. There is clearly an increasing trend of unemployed youthful persons among women as reflected in the percentage of youths below 45 years in the households (Figure 4-2).
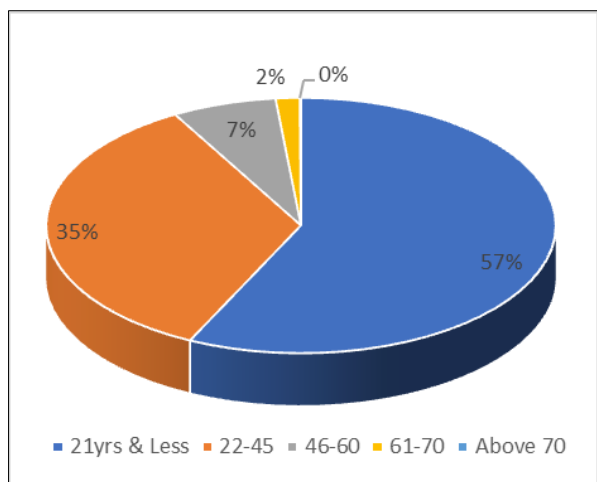
**Fig. 4-2: Age Distribution of Households**

The women household size distribution for the Gidan Madi community from the survey ranged from a minimum of one person to a maximum of 25 persons. The average size of households is 6 persons in the community. On the extreme household size ends, Gidan Madi community has 6% of the households with one to two members and 14% of the households with more than 8 persons (Figure 4-3). About 29% of the households has sizes of 5 or 6 persons in the study community. The data showed 23% with household sizes of 7 or 8 persons. The data also showed 29% of the households have sizes of between 3 and 4 persons for Gidan Madi community.
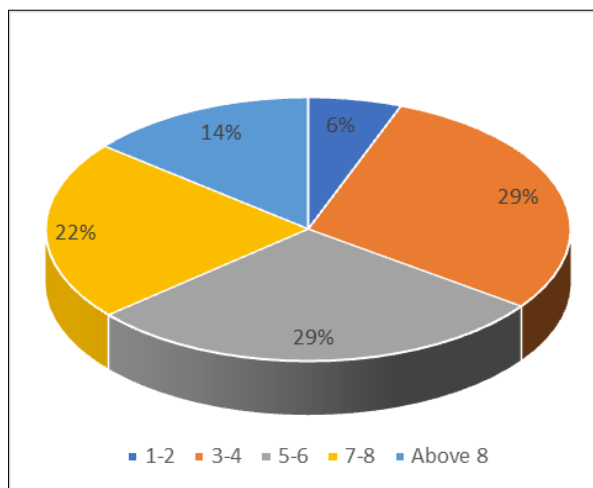


**Fig. 4-3: Household Size Distribution**

### 4.1.4 Marital Status of Respondents

The survey data showed that 41% of respondents of Gidan Madi women population are married, 27% are children of non-marriageable age, 31% are single and 1% widowed. (Figure 4-4).
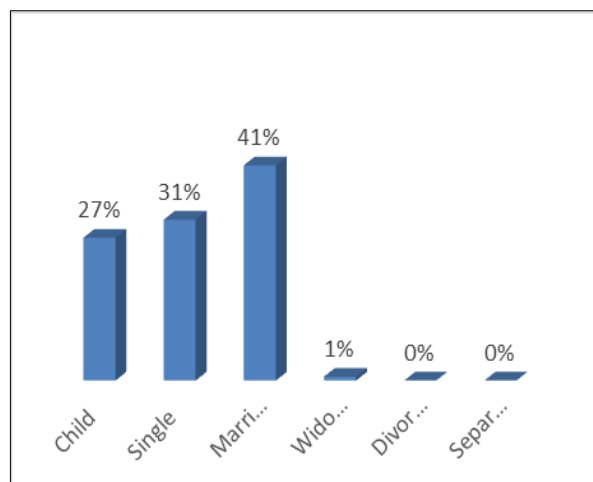


**Fig. 4-4: Marital Status of Households**

### 4.1.5 Access to Education

The survey responses indicate that 38% of the population of schooling age never attended school (Figure 4-5). The level of basic education for the Gidan Madi women population is relatively moderate with 62% of the surveyed population having attained the basic primary (FSLC) level of education and higher. The data further shows that 1% of households are graduates of universities while 59% attended and/or have graduated from the primary and secondary education. This moderate literacy level within the project area is also a reflection of the literacy rate among women in Gidan Madi community as a whole. Generally, education in Gidan Madi community and indeed the entire LGA seem to be reflective of the existing educational infrastructure support within the area. There are few primary and secondary schools located within and around to serve the community.
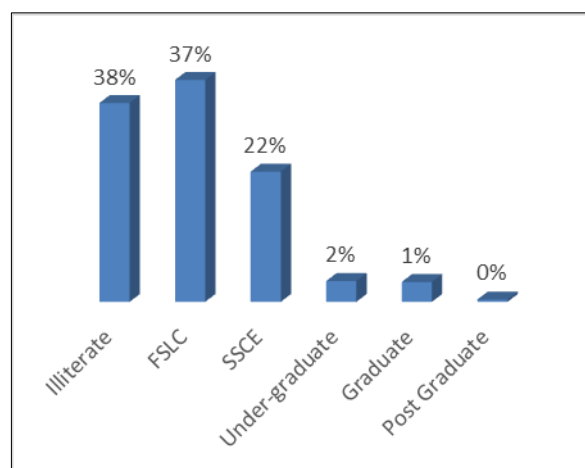


**Fig. 4-5: Educational Distribution of Households**

### 4.1.6 Access to Health Infrastructure

The common diseases among women of Gidan Madi community include diarrhea, malaria, typhoid, pneumonia, cough, skin diseases, deficiency

diseases, eye diseases, ear diseases, and waterborne diseases resulting mainly from malnutrition and lack of hygiene. Due to poverty, the quality of the health care services in the areas is generally poor with most residents patronizing quacks and medicine shops for their medical treatment.

### 4.1.7 Access to Socioeconomic Infrastructure

The socioeconomic infrastructures (roads system, electric power and access to water) in Gidan Madi community are generally in poor state. Public access to potable water is non-existent and power is generally not steady. It should be anticipated that there will be increased pressure in the demand for social infrastructures and amenities among women population.

### 4.1.8 Occupational and Income Distribution of Respondents

The occupational distribution data from the questionnaires indicated that of surveyed women households, 5% are farmers, about 37% are employed in the private sector, 3% are civil servants, 42% are students and 17% are unemployed (Figure 4-6).
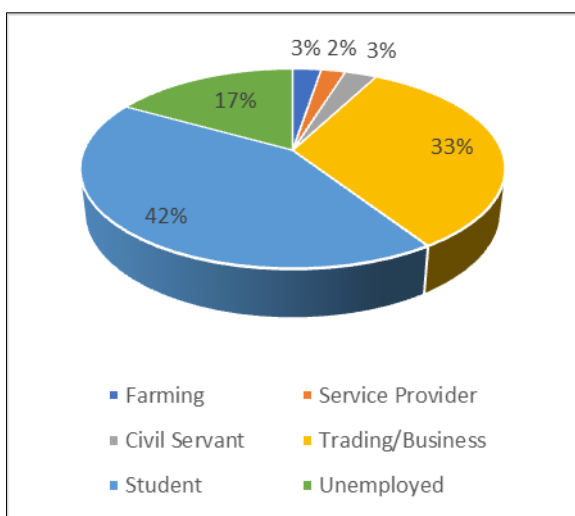


**Fig. 4-6: Occupational Distribution of Households**

The main source of income for the women households surveyed came from farming and trading/business across the community. Based on the income data provided among women of Gidan Madi community, 18% earned less than N21,000 monthly, 19% earned between N21,000-30,000 monthly, 20% earned N31,000-45,000 monthly, 20% earned N46,000-60,000 monthly, 14% earned N61,000-120,000 monthly and 9% earned above N120,000 monthly (Figure 4-7).
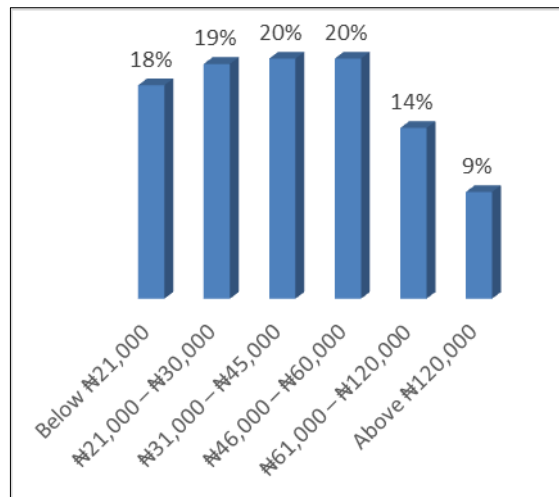


**Fig. 4-7: Monthly Income Distribution of Households**

### 4.1.9 Household Waste Disposal

Most of the respondents in the communities indicate that their household wastes are disposed of at convenient locations including crevices and drainage channels. In many areas, the wastes are also indiscriminately dumped inside the water canals or at illegal dumpsites created only as a matter of convenience. Solid waste management in the project areas is a considerable hazard to the health of the population and the effective functioning of the storm water drainage systems which compounds their poverty status due to. The unmanaged refuse causes regular obstruction of the storm water drainage systems. The situation in the communities are indeed a reflection of the poor waste management and waste disposal mechanisms in most part of the state.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on Gidan Madi women who were mostly rural smallholder farmers. The study assessed their poverty status including its driving factors. The study concluded that poverty is pervasive among rural women in the study area. The positive driving factors which contributed to high poverty among the rural women were age, household size, and practicing the mono-cropping system; while level of education, access to credit, farm size, marital status and extension contacts were the factors that may reduce the poverty level among rural women.

### 5.1 Recommendations

To eradicate the high poverty rate among rural women, we recommend the following:
1. Gidan Madi women community need to be encouraged to have household sizes that their resources can cater for. This can be achieved through enlightenment programs on family planning and birth control measures.

2. More agricultural extension agents need to be deployed to Gidan Madi and other surrounding rural areas to increase their contacts with rural women. The agricultural extension agents will thus educate women farmers on the best cropping systems and encourage them to practise intercropping to boost their output and reduce the incidence of poverty.

3. The level of education among women of Gidan Madi community needs to be boosted. This can be done through adult education with the provision of incentives such as free educational materials to encourage more participation. This would not only boost rural women's educational status but also increase their access to information, improve their decision making, and reduce the high poverty rate among them.

4. Provision of available and accessible credit at an affordable interest rate and convenient repayment plan to the women of Gidan Madi community is very important. This will not only increase their productivity but also boost their income which will, in turn, lower the poverty incidence among them.

5. Women should be given more access to farmland to increase their level of production. Increase in agricultural production would lead to a high farm income, thereby lowering the incidence of the high rate of poverty among them. These would not only move the rural women in general above the poverty line but also lead to rural development in the long run.

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