IMPACT OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMMES ON WELFARE IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.

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ABSTRACT

The global fight on poverty has been consistently defeated at the sub-Sahara African front, as this social menace strengths its grips in the region. In Nigeria, the issue of poverty is widely discussed and new policy strands articulated from a broader perspective are cropping up in order to put the soaring rise in poverty incidence in check. This renewed interest on the topic stems from the fact that policy formulators have taken into cognizance that poverty is a multi-dimension concept that requires a well-articulated and multi-dimension strategy. A strategy that transcends beyond nominal proclamation or budgetary allocation to combating poverty to a strategy that tackles poverty in its context and root causes. Adopting an ANCOVA-regression model on primary survey data obtained from two socio-cultural and economic distinct rural communities in Eastern and Northern Nigeria, this paper examines the impact of household composition and anti-poverty programmes on household welfare. The results got from the decomposed regression model show that the impact of household composition on welfare is contingent on the underlying geographical, socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the area. Also, ownership of productively viable assets helps in explaining how household size affects household welfare. Moreover, the impact of anti-poverty programmes was found to yield significant result at Ikeje study area because these programmes are targeted towards the major livelihood engagement (agriculture) of the people. While anti-poverty programmes could not achieve same significant results at Anaocha study area due to its inability to take into cognizance the different livelihood engagements of the people. The policy implication it engenders is that anti-poverty policy should recognize area specifics, thus allowing for proper integration of the poor in the policy formulation and implementation. Policy should be aimed at both agricultural and non-agricultural activities.
Key words: Household Composition, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Ikeje, Anaocha, ANCOVA

1. Introduction

Poverty is wide-spread and a global phenomenon that cut across all countries of the world. No nation, not even the most technically and economically advanced economy, could boastfully assert the absence of at least a single dimension of poverty within her economy. However, poverty seems to be predominantly a fundamental trait among developing and the Less Developed Countries alike. In a recent report, 70 percent of the developing world's 1.4 billion people live in abject poverty or are impoverished with at least a poverty trait (RPR, 2011). The situation is worrisome in sub-Saharan African economies, especially at its western fronts. The region is characterized as a low-income group, with most of her inhabitants living below the poverty line of US$2 per day. This goes to tell that poverty is institutionalized in the region.

With half of the West Africa population living in Nigeria- a nation richly endowed with bountiful human and natural resources-, the country has been trapped in a multi-dimension poverty net since time immemorial. The most recent National Living Standards Survey (NL5S, 2004) presented by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2007) estimated that about 69 million Nigerians were living below the poverty line, which represents 54.5 percent of the country's population. Reviewing this datum and affirming this, Sanusi (2010), using the poverty rate as a proxy for growth, posits that 70 percent (105 million) of Nigerians now live below the poverty line, up from 54 percent a year or two ago. This is a glaring paradox and sometimes subtly incomprehensible that a country blessed by nature is ranked among the league of top, poverty- stricken nations in the world.

Poverty reduction seems nearly insuperable and the most intractable challenge facing the country's polity. It is widely acclaimed that in pursuance of pro-economic growth- a growth process the places human development at the center of developmental policy- the issue of poverty would first be tackled. However, Nigeria represents a glaring disappointment towards this goal as the poverty incidence approaches extreme dynamism. Besides relative poverty, other deprivation and social indicators show that gender inequality is still an issue of concern, with the enrollment of female gender in schools consistently below 50 percent and the active engagements of women in the political and economic set-up abysmally poor; life expectancy is unsatisfactory low at 54 years (this figure is more disappointing considering the life expectancy of Nigeria by **WHO**); infant mortality stands at 77 per 1000; and maternal mortality at 704 per 100,000 live births are among the highest in the world (MDGs Report, 2011).

This increasing dynamism of poverty incidence has been of serious concern to successive governmental administrations in Nigeria. In other to give poverty a tough fight, a plethora of poverty alleviation programmes have been instigated to reduce the pervasiveness and incidence of poverty in the country. Prominently among are: National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP);Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); the Green Revolution Programme (GRP); National Directorate of Employment (NDE); the Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); Better Life For Rural Women (BL); Family Support Programme (FSP); Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). These institutions were instigated to promote the rural economy in a sustainable way by increasing employment opportunities, reducing regional income disparities, stemming premature rural-urban migration, and ultimately reducing poverty at its very source (Udeaja, 2012). Similarly, at the dawn of democratic dispensation in 1999, estimates put that more than 70 percent of Nigerians lived in poverty, instigating the Obasanjo-led administration declaring in November 1999 that the N470 billion budgets for the subsequent year was targeted towards fighting poverty in Nigeria.

However, doubts have been raised regarding the effectiveness of these programmes in achieving their overarching goal of poverty alleviation and promoting household welfare, as the country experiences soaring and wide-spread poverty incidence. A close inspection of these programmes reveals priority

misplacement. Anyanwu (2012) asserts that most policy direction towards the fight against poverty in Nigeria has never been structurally designed to focus on those options that significantly alleviate poverty in its context. The inability of most poverty programmes in the past and of the present to achieve significant outcomes has been the outright neglect or unclear understanding on the part of policy formulators of what the problem truly is: who are the poor, why are they poor, what kind of poverty do they face, and where do they live. Incorporating these salient but important issues in evolving a poverty antidote instill a comprehensive insight on why most Nigerians lack the capabilities to function effectively. For instance, in a bid to improve living conditions in Zariagi, a rural community in Kogi State, Nigeria, monetary aid was disbursed to some selected household heads. Records showed that the beneficiaries were unable to improve their lots, as their standard of living remained almost the same. This is as a result of lack of financial education on the part of the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, a new literature, literally developed from a social perspective, has been brewing on the impact of household composition on poverty. With a tenacious, dependent-bond family structure, a typical Nigerian family is relatively large. Recalling Anyanwu (2012), the Nigerian family system is like a *host-parasite relationship,* where the latter relies on the former for its existence; the socio-cultural practice of the ethnic tribes flourishes on a large family size.   Some empirical studies have investigated changes in household composition and its influence on household welfare (Olaniyan, 2000, Duncan, 2003; Olaniyan et al 2005, Bolarin, 2009; Oni and Yusuf, 2007; Azubiuke, 2012; Gang et al) and found that changes in household compositions significantly influence poverty rate. Azubiuke (2012) found that the larger a household becomes, the more poverty-ridden it is. She argues that the African setting with her extended families ties create rooms for more dependent relatives which put strains on the income of the household head. This kind of family setup is evident in the northerner part of the country, where families live in cluster and where strong loyalty and reverence are duly accorded to the household head. Such type of family unionism impoverishes the household as a result of many dependent relatives who cannot reach or make productive decisions individually and contribute insignificantly to the household income growth.

Contrarily, there is a different view that changes in household compositions could alleviate poverty in a household. This assertion is contingent on the premise that the members of the household contribute significantly to the household income relative to what they consume. A typical household could be composed of mature individuals who through engaging in productive activities earn incomes to complements the income of the household head. In this line of argument, such household composition escapes poverty traps. Though with uncertainty on how changes of household composition affect poverty, it is plausible to argue that their effect on household welfare depends on the overall net gains arising from such changes in a typical household set-up.

Studies have been done to identifying the remote causes of poverty and evaluate the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria *(Udeaju, 2011; Azuibuike, 2012; Olaniyan 2005, Obadan, 2003; Ogwunike, 2002; Obadan, 1997; Dike, 1997, Anyanwu, 1997, Anthonio, 1975, inter alia)*. Most of these studies are either narrowly sectorial specifics or involved broad analytic framework. Some of these studies do not capture the innate and overt characteristics of their study areas as it explains why such study areas are impoverished; thus generalization of the study findings could be unreliable because of apparent socio-cultural and geographical differences among areas. This study is a step forward to providing a comparative analysis on the impact of household composition and the effectiveness of poverty programmes by examining this across regions in Nigeria. Though country specifics, this would provide insight whether regional characteristics reinforces alleviation programmes to combat poverty, i.e., if the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes is contingent on execution areas, as well as the impact of varying household composition on welfare. These sample areas are structurally different in many aspects and would provide empirical

evidences that would help to constructively inform polices on poverty reduction in different areas in Nigeria and its sub-region.

Following the introduction, this work is further divided into four sections: section II reviews related literature on the topic. Section III set out the research methodology, while Section IV presents and analyses the empirical results. Section V rounds it up with the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review: Conceptual Issues on Poverty

Informed by the complex dimension of poverty, Anyanwu (1997) posited that any study on poverty must begin with a definition of poverty in order to provide a focus by which one can determine the limits of its understanding. However, reviewing the literature, there seems not to be a unanimous definition of what poverty real is. This stems from its multitudinous and dynamic traits. Aboyade (1995) opines that poverty is like an elephant; it is more easily recognized than defined.

A broader definition of poverty could be got from the basic needs approach to poverty. This approach states that poverty is the inability to meet basic material needs, which include food, water, clothing, shelter, education, health as well as basic non-material needs including participation, identity, dignity and being incapacitated to function as beings (Amartya, 1990; Romer, 2005). Adopting a narrower definition, Ravallion (1994) sees poverty as a situation where the income of families was insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of physical efficiency, while Beck (1994) defines poverty also as a situation when the resources of individuals or families are inadequate to provide a socially acceptable standard of living.

Defining poverty is not so simple; poverty is not just an economic concept, it is also a human condition. Poverty is a plague afflicting people all over the world. It is considered one of the symptoms or manifestation of underdevelopment. Poverty is a vicious social disorder which keeps the poor in a state of destitution. It affects many aspects of human conditions; hence there has been no universal consensus on its definition. Good health and longevity; adequate education; access to land, credit, or other productive resources; supportive families and communities; justice; freedom from discrimination, abuse and violence, are all elements often missing from the lives of the poor (Azubuike, 2012)

However from most definitions of poverty in the literature, one could distinguish three magnitudes of poverty-absolute poverty, relative poverty, and material poverty. Absolute poverty being the most severe is the extreme inability to lead an acceptable standard of living due to lack or limited access to the basic necessities of living. Relative poverty measures, comparatively, the living standards that prevail among societies, while material poverty is the lack of ownership of productive assets.

2.1. The Nigerian Poverty Profile

Nigeria is ranked among the top, poverty-ridden countries of the world in spite of her robust human and natural resource deposits. The causes of the high rate of poverty in Nigeria are overt, and these forces act and react upon each other to keep the people trapped in poverty net. As observed by Oladumi (2004), the rate has reached an alarming stage with more than 45 percent of the population live below the poverty line, while 67 percent of the poor are extremely poor. The Federal Office of Statistics published that for the period 1980 and 1996; about 67 million Nigerians were subjected to abject poverty. It also indicated that during same period, the percentage of rural dwellers and urban inhabitants in the core poverty bracket rose from 6.5% and 3% to 14.8% 5%, respectively. As currently put, Nigerian poverty profile is above 65 percent of the country's population (Sanusi, 2011). The table below presents absolute poverty rate as a percentage to the population. As the table reveals, there seem to be a positive correlation between total population and the number of people tagged absolutely poor. With reference to percentages, in spite the slight drop from 46.3 percent in 1985 to 44 percent in 1990, recording such high values of 74, 88 and 70 percent in 2000, 2002 and 2010, respectively, is heartrending for a nation like ours.

Table 1: Estimated Total Population and Rate of Poverty in Nigeria (1980-2010)

Period	Total Population Estimated (in Million)	Absolute No of Poor people	% That are Poor
1980	64.6	18.1	28.1
1985	75.4	34.9	46.3
1990	86.6	38	44.0
2000	111.3	77	74.0
2002	116.4	86	88.0
2010	150	105	70.0

Source: Gafar et al (2011), CBN (2011)

It is evident that poverty is persistence in Nigeria. The table reveals that absolute poverty increases with total population.

Furthermore, poverty seems to be concentrated mostly in rural communities relative to urban centers in Nigeria. This could be attributed to the lack of basic facilities which would have influenced positively their capabilities to function as beings. In a review on poverty profile in Nigeria reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (2007), in 1980, 28.3 percent of the rural population was poor. This increased to 63.8 percent in 2004. Also, historically, there appears an asymmetrical distribution of poverty, geographically. North east, north south and north central have been the most poverty-ridden zones in Nigeria. Both social and economic factors are reliable for such high figures. In 1980, 38, 36, and 32 percent of the people in the northwest, north east and north central lived below moderate poverty line, respectively. The southern part was relatively less affected by poverty in 1980 as about 13 percent of the people in the south east, south west, and south-south lived below the poverty line. From 1985, poverty became pervasive in all the zones with the northern zones still maintaining a higher share of poverty in Nigeria (Ogwumike, 2002). Moreover, in terms of poverty incidence, depth and severity, the North region still leads. The North West, North East and North Central zones have the highest poverty incidence, depth and severity in descending order while the South West, South East, and South-South have the lowest poverty incidence, depth and severity in ascending order (Bolarin, 2009).The pie chart reveals poverty distribution among zones as a percentage of poor people in total population for 1996 and 2008.

Figure 1. % of Poor People among Zones (1996 and 2008)
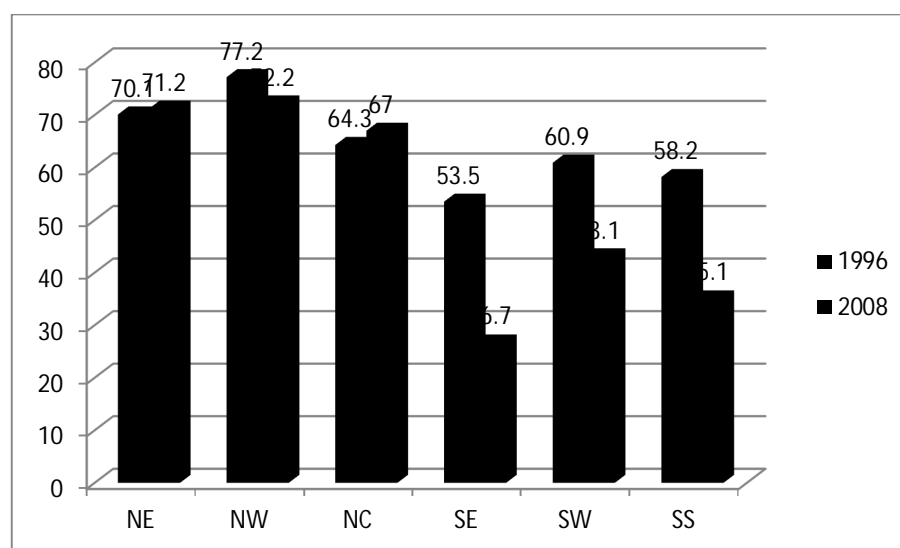
Source: NEEDS, 2005; Kpakol, 2011

The figure shows that North-West has more than 70 percent of her inhabitants living below the poverty line, while the least is south-east with approximately 27 percent of her population impoverished from 2008 figures. Nigerians in general are becoming increasingly impoverished. This is as a result of their lack of opportunities to have a long life and enjoy a decent standard of living. The life expectancy rate of an average Nigerian is about 45 years, 45% of the population is illiterate, one-third of the population is without healthy services, and about two-thirds are without safe water and reasonable nutrition (Oladunmi, 2004).

2.2. Poverty Alleviation Programmes In Nigeria

High poverty rate has become a fundamental trait and an overt characteristic in the Nigerian economy, despite her nature's riches. This has posed challenges in developmental trajectory of the country. The escalating poverty rate in Nigeria is not wholly a result of the nonchalant attitude and non-recognition of the problem at hand- lack of response by the government to the yearning of the poor to be emancipated from their rather deplorable state of near-despair. The fact is that no Nigerian Government, be it military or civilian, has come without introducing and leaving behind one form of poverty alleviation meant to reduce the level of poverty, given hope and succor to the poor and, or move towards some sort of wealth creation. Strategies, policies and plans have been articulated; programmes and projects have been formulated and executed over the years. For instance, at the nation's independence in 1960 and for the best part of the '60s, the need to eradicate poverty was on the increase and education was the central focus. This was because education was seen as the key to economic, technological and intellectual development of the nation. "Show the light, and the people will find the way'' was at the time, an oft-quoted mantra by Nigeria's First President, the late Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Corollary, in view of government's concern for poverty reduction, numerous policies and programmes have been designed subsequently, least to meet the pressing and special needs of the rural poor. The advent of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986 brought out more forcefully the need for policies and programmes to alleviate poverty and provide hope for the poor. This emphasis arose from an awareness of the unintended negative effects of structural adjustment policies on the vulnerable groups in the society. While structural adjustment had its partial salutary effects on economic growth, it lacked emphasis on development and also exacerbated socio-economic problems of income inequality, unequal access to food, shelter, education, health and other necessities of life. It indeed, aggravated the incidence of poverty among many vulnerable groups in the society. As a result of the continuous deterioration of living conditions in the late 1980s, several poverty alleviation programmes came on board. These programmes were designed with the following objectives amongst others: training to improve available skills, income generation, increased accessibility to credit, improved health care services including family planning, nutrition and immunization and the provision of greater welfare services to the poor (Udeaja, 2012). (*See appendix for a summary of poverty alleviation programmes).*

Most of these anti-poverty programmes are in oblivion due to their failure to achieve their objective, or lack of support from the government, which is caused by discontinuity in policy formulation resulting from governmental power changes. Like the NEEDS document (2005) states, *"none of these programmes had a significant, lasting, or sustainable positive effect".* It listed traceable reasons and lapses why past poverty alleviation programmes could not achieve its overarching goals. These include:

- Poor coordination
- The absence of a comprehensive policy framework
- Excessive political interference
- Ineffective targeting of the poor, leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries
- The unwieldy scope of programmes, which caused resources to be thinly spread across too many projects

- Overlapping functions, which led to institutional rivalry and conflicts
- The absence of sustainability mechanisms in programmes and projects
- Lack of involvement of beneficiaries in project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

2.3. Household Composition and Poverty

It is widely believed and accepted that changes in household compositions have an impact on poverty, but the direction of such impact on poverty remains controversial. Changes in household compositions could take different forms. It could be a change in the education status of members or household head; change in household size; age of household head; change in the gender of household head, or a change of the employment status of the household head, etc. As observed, these changes could help to combat or reinforces poverty; however, this depends on the net gains of such compositional changes in the household.

In Nigeria, so much structural changes in household composition have occurred since 1980. There has been an increase in sizes of household, and the educational status of the household head has been declining with the level of education. The table below reveals some household demographics in Nigeria. From the table, it is plausible to argue that the increase in household size and the declining educational status of household head partly explains the rise in absolute poverty rate in Nigeria. Recalling Ajakaiye (2007) the educational status of the household head relate positively with his income, thus affecting growth consequently; while large household size is believed to put strains on household income, vice versa. Age of household head influences the household welfare. Welfare rises with age because human capital through learning-by-doing accumulates experiences which improve his income-capacity earning. Moreover, the male gender has always dominated the gender of household head; however, female-led household head has been on the rise in recent time. This is evident among ethnic communities with the matriarch family system in Nigeria.

2.4. Household Composition and Poverty: Empirical Evidences

There is a dearth of empirical studies, especially in Nigeria, on the impact of household composition on poverty. This is because empirical investigation of this nature is done on a micro scale. However, research interest has flourished in the area of tracing the significance of government expenditure, economic growth and investment in alleviating poverty. According to Aigbokhan (2000), education being a measure of human capital, is hypothesized to be positively related with income and therefore welfare. According to him, households with formal education have higher welfare than households without formal education. Education has a positive impact on poverty reduction; this is because access to education does result in the increase of the stock of human capital, labour productivity and wage, thus a reduction in household poverty. Using a different dimension, Ray (2002), Aliber (2001), Muyanga (2008) hypothesized the gender head of household. Their findings suggest that female-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty, implying that being a single mother by choice or by circumstances, or head of a household is closely connected to poverty. They argue that men have more access to formal education and other productive resources than their female counterpart, thus wage differential. Mckay et al (2001), opine that household dwelling in urban settings has better welfare in comparison to those in rural settings. This stems from the fact that productive facilities needed in helping household escape poverty are more readily accessible in urban settings than in rural communities.

Utilizing the combined data of the General Household Survey (GHS, 1996) and National Consumer Survey (NCS, 2004), Olaniyan et al investigated the effect of human capital and capabilities on rural poverty in Nigeria. Adopting a probit model to determine the probability of being poor for an area survey that covered the whole country, the findings reveal that higher education attainment of the household head reduces the probability of being poor in a household. Human capital (proxy as education level) has a decreasing effect of being poor, whether they are engage in farm activities or non-farm activities, they postulated.

The household size composition has been the most extensive research area with regards to household demographics. Azuibuike (2012) in a sectoral analysis asserts that large household size impoverishes the household. Supporting this, Eldomonds et al (2001), find that smaller households are better-off than larger households. They argue that increase in household size put extra burden on the family. The larger the size of the household, the larger the resources required to meet basic needs of food and other necessities. Mckay et al (2001) also posits that large household size experiences poverty relative to their counterpart.

In a comprehensive survey, Oni and Yusuf (2007) examined the determinants of expected poverty among rural households in Nigeria. Analyzing a merged data got from GHS and NCS of 1996 using a three stage Feasible Generalized Least Squares (FGLS), the observed that higher expected correlate with large household size, low education attainment, and being older or a male-headed household. Using same set of data, Olaniyan (2000) studied how household endowments determine poverty in Nigeria. His findings reveal among the following: an increase in the size of household led to an increase in the probability of being poor; increase in the age of the household head raised the probability of being poor; the ownership of other business enterprises reduced the probability; and female-led household is associated with rural poverty.

3. Research Methodology and Data Sources
3.1 Survey Method and Description of Study Area

This study adopts a survey research methodology. It is because the research seeks the opinions of rural dwellers about the effect of the poverty alleviation programmes and the impact of household composition in their communities. This methodology is germane given the comparative sectorial analysis of the study, hence facilitating the process of eliciting first-hand information on the impact of poverty alleviation and household composition on welfare. Data were gathered from two agro-ecological distinct rural communities in Eastern and Northern Nigeria.

The sample design followed that of Federal Office of Statistics (F0S, 2003) two-stage stratified sampling technique. The first stage involves clustering of housing units called Enumeration Area (EAs). And the second stage involves random selection of housing unit. The sample size is determined from two EAs-Ikeje and Anaocha in Kogi and Anambra states, respectively. Out of the clustered housing units in the two EAs, 100 housing units were picked from each EA by simple randomization. These enumeration areas were carefully chosen in other to allow for cross-examinations and proper evaluation of our research objectives. This could be achieved because of the obvious heterogeneity, geographical and social differences of the study areas. On this account, structured questionnaires relevant to our objectives where shared among the selected housing units in Ikeje and Anaocha L.G.A areas in Kogi and Anambra states, respectively

3.2. Anaocha Study Area

Anaocha is a resource-poor rural area located in Anambra central senatorial district in Anambra State. The area is made up of ten communities namely; Adazi-Ani, Adazi-Enu, Adazi-Nnukwu, Agulu, Aguluzigbo, Akweze, Ichida, Neni, Nri and Obeledu. The occupational engagement of the area is distributed among agricultural/, commercial activities and engagement in the public sector, with yam and cassava being the major agricultural proceeds. Most of the inhabitants outsourced other means of survival due to limited agricultural lands. There is absence of economies of scale due to land scarcity and land fragmentation among natives.

The people are predominantly Christians, maintain a close family ties, practice the monogamy type of marriage and a patriarchy family system. Household size averages 2-4 and 5-9 people per family and household members (excluding children still in school) are, mostly, not entirely dependent on the household head. Moreover, Governmental poverty alleviation programmes both of federal, state and local interventions are in existence in the area. For instance, the L.G.A. secretariat has a FADAMA desk housed in the secretariat complex that aids in financing and executing poverty relief projects. Also, the community hosts a modern cassava and grain processing plant (Built by FADAMA) that helps to improve value-added from cassava and grains and providing both direct and indirect employment to the natives of the community. Primary survey data originate from a cross-sectional, simple random sampling of 100 household units.

Ikeje Study Area

In contrast to Anaocha, Ikeje is a resource-rich rural area located in Igala kingdom of Kogi states (one of Nigeria's largest states in terms of land mass). Predominantly, the people are framers; producing mostly vegetables and tuber crops. The climate clime is conducive with moderate precipitation, rich soil content, and ample sunshine appropriate for agricultural production. Agricultural engagements are engaged, relatively, on a large scale because of the availability of fertile agricultural farm lands

The people of Ikeje have strong affinity to traditional practices, with relative few Christians and Muslims population. Polygamy and patriarchy marriage system is mostly the family set-up of the people, however, traces of female-led household were also observed. Household size ranges from 5-9 and 10-20 per household, and members are firmly attached to the household head for their welfare. Like Anaocha, government anti-poverty programmes are in place to support the agricultural rural dwellers. Primary survey data originate from a cross-sectional, simple random sampling of 100 households.

3.3. Data Analytic Technique

The study's objective is to determine comparatively the impact of household composition and anti-poverty programmes between two rural areas which are structurally and contextually different in many aspects. Thus, the study adopts an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression technique to ferret out empirical estimates for our variables and evaluate our study objective as against sophisticated but limited dependent variable models (probit and logit models). Ravillion (1996) espoused that the significance of a model lies in its ability to capture and determine what it ought to and not in its sophistication. Therefore, in evaluating the objective, we specify two ANCOVA, regression-based decomposition models (for each study area) where the main constituents of household composition are entered as individual regressors in the model and also including a dummy variable for anti-poverty programmes in Nigeria. It is specified thus:

$Y = X_i\beta_i + \varepsilon_i$

Where Y is the disposable income of household head (a measure of welfare in naira); X_i is a row vector matrix of independent variables (I = 1…….n); β is a vector of regression coefficients; and ε is the stochastic residual term. More specifically, we specify the following household compositions discussed in the literature:

$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \varepsilon$

X_1 = **Household Size**

X_2 = **Education of Household Head (in years: adopting the 6-3-3-4 education system)**

X_3 = **Age of Household head (in years)**

X_4 = **Number of Household Members earning income**

X_5 = **A dummy variable representing Male-led Household (Male 1, 0 otherwise)**

X_6 = **A dummy variable representing Female-led Household (Female 1, 0 otherwise)**

X_7 = **Dummy variable for the impact of poverty alleviation programmes on welfare (1 for those who said yes, 0 otherwise).**

Equation 2 is a regression equation without the intercept term. It was purposefully removed in other to avoid the dummy variable trap. Thus, with the intercept term suppressed and allowing two dummy variables for each category, β_5 and β_6 represent the mean values of these categories.

4. Analysis of Survey Result

The data of analysis were based on responses got from the questionnaires on questions relating to the study objectives on the impact of anti-poverty programmes and household composition (size, age, educational status, No. of productive members etc.). We were meticulous, persuasive and extremely observant in ensuring that all questionnaires got filled with near accuracy by the household heads.

From *Table 4a and Table 4b,* the descriptive statistics for both sample areas reveal that average household income is higher for Anaocha than Ikeje study area. From the education status, household heads in Anaocha, on the average, have secondary education. This is in contrast with Ikeje, with most household heads possessing only basic primary education. Additionally, household size is larger in Ikeje relative to Anaocha: Household size averages twelve per household as against 7 per household in Ikeje and Anaocha, respectively.

From *Table 4c*, the regression results for Ikeje study area show that the education status of household (X_2), both male and female-led household (X_5 and X_6), and the impact of anti-poverty programmes (X_7) have the expected signs and they are significant at 1, 5 and 10 percent levels of significance. Also, household size (X_1) has a direct relationship with income but it is statistically insignificant. However, Age of household head (X_4) and numbers of household members earning income (X_5) have negative relations with household welfare.

From Anaocha, education status of the household head was seen to be positively related to household welfare and significant at 1 percent. Moreover, age of household head, number of household member earning income, male-led household and the dummy variable for anti-poverty programmes all have direct impact on household welfare, but are not significant. In contrast, household size and female-led household negatively affect household welfare.

Juxtaposing the results from our sample areas, strikingly, as the household size becomes larger, household welfare increases in Ikeje. This is an antithesis of what is obtainable in Anaocha; household welfare diminishes as household size grows. A discernible explanation to this is that most households in Ikeje have productive agricultural farm lands. Most of these farm lands are relatively bigger than most household human resources. And since the subsistence agricultural practice is predominantly practiced, an increase in household size supplies more agricultural labour, hence increase in farm produce and household welfare. Contrarily, Anaocha is densely populated, with most of the productive farmlands completely fragmented. Additionally, most commercial asset owned are, to a greater extent, operated at a small scale; in absence of extensive division of labour which would help to absorb household members. Thus, increases in household size put strains on household welfare. This finding supports previous works of Azuibuike (2012); Eldomonds et al (2001); Mckay et al (2001).

Furthermore, Anaocha result confirms Muyanga (2008) and Aliber (2001) hypotheses and findings that female-led households are more vulnerable to poverty. The Igbo traditional places the woman outrightly under the man. The system forbids women from inheriting assets and designs this gender as housekeepers. From this traditional lens, women are less productive than men, thus a seismic wage differential. This shared belief among the Igbos, in which Anaocha is part of, is different from Ikeje (the Igalas). Women are not disinherited from the sharing process and do more than housekeeping. They are productively engaged in the farming engagement, and most times allowed to retain the proceeds they got from it. Thus a female-led household is near viable as its male counterpart in Ikeje. Also, from table 4, household welfare declines as age of the household increases at Ikeje. Given agriculture as the main occupation with its crude technical process that requires physical strength, intuitively, it is plausible to argue that as the household head grows older, its physical labour vigor diminishes, hence affecting his productivity adversely as well as his welfare. However, the premise of the argument is reversed looking at the result from Anaocha. Household welfare rises with the age of the household. With more than 60 percent of the population actively engage in commercial services and in the public sector, we should expect a positive correlation between age of household head and welfare. For instance, in the civil service, the longer years spent, the higher the income earned through promotion. Also, as an individual stay in a particular line of trade, he amasses wealth of experience which leads to the growth of the business, thus significantly affecting his welfare.

Anti-poverty programmes both have direct impact on household welfare in both areas but it is only significant (at 10 percent) for Ikeje study area. This significant discrepancy is partly explained from the fact that most anti-poverty programmes at Ikeje are directed towards the felt needs of the people, which are agricultural inclined. Anaocha, at the other hand, is not purely an agricultural settlement, but most anti-poverty programmes are directed towards agriculture, thus crowding off other inhabitants from benefiting from such programmes (See Appendix for field survey responses).

5. Conclusion

This study has investigated the impact of household composition and poverty alleviation programmes on welfare in Nigeria, while adopting a comparative analysis between two study areas which are characteristically different in socio-cultural, geographical and economical context. According to the above data analysis, the impact of household composition on welfare, to a large extent, is regional specifics; it is contingent on the underlying economic and socio-cultural setup of the place. For instance, large household size correlates positively with household welfare at Ikeje due to the ample availability of productive assets (especially fertile agricultural farm lands), while it is negative for Anaocha, a near-resourceless community. Moreover, age of household head has a negative relationship with welfare at Ikeje, resulting from the occupation type (agriculture) and its technical process; while the result is in the positive in Anaocha resulting from their occupational setup. Also, unlike Anaocha, the socio-cultural setup at Ikeje does not disinherit or deprive the female gender, thus explaining while a female-led household could cater for a household relative to its counterpart at Anaocha.

Anti-poverty programmes are modestly targeted to the felt need of the inhabitants at Ikeje through their major occupational engagement. With above 70 percent of the people actively engage in agriculture, and anti-poverty programmes targeted to this sector, its result is positive and significant in alleviating poverty in the area. However, same programmes at Anaocha are myopic to take into cognizance the diversity of livelihood engagements of the people. Concentrating mainly on agriculture at Anaocha would displace others not involve in the sector, thus failing to yield a significant result. The policy implication of this is that anti-poverty programmes should recognize area specifics, thus allowing for proper integration of the poor in the policy formulation and implementation.

Table 2.3: Household Poverty Incidence in Nigeria (% to Total Population: 1980-2004)

Household Size	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
1 person	20	7	29	13.1	
2-4 people	8.8	19.3	19.3	59.3	
5-9 people	30	50.5	15.5	74.8	
10-20 people	51	71.3	66.1	88.5	
Above 20	80.9	74.9	93.3	93.6	
Head of Household					
Male	29.2	47.3	43.1	64.4	59.9
Female	26.9	38.6	39.9	58.5	38.5
Age of Household Head					
15-24	16.2	25.3	28.7	37.4	
25-34	17.8	33.4	28.5	52.7	
35-47	26.7	46	42.1	64.6	
45-54	27.1	49.7	45.7	71.3	
55-67	39.7	55.7	48.2	69.9	
Older than 65	28.8	49.1	49.5	68	
Education of Household Head					
None	30.2	51.5	46.4	72.6	
Primary	21.3	40.6	43.3	54.4	
Secondary	7.6	27.3	30.3	52.0	
Post-Secondary	24.3	24.4	25.8	49.2	

Source: NEEDS, 2005;

Table 4a: Analysis of Descriptive Statistics- Ikeje Study Area

	Y	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7
Mean	20355	12.37	6.84	47.72	0.81	0.69	0.31	0.63
Median	19250	12.00	6.00	45.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Maximum	70000	25.00	16.00	75.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	4000	2.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Std. Dev	14275.30	5.71	5.11	15.06	1.25	0.46	0.46	0.48
Skewness	1.41	0.38	0.16	0.12	1.48	0.82	0.82	0.56
Kurtosis	4.88	2.42	2.00	1.59	4.40	1.68	1.69	0.56
Jarque-Bera	47.93	3.91	4.55	8.48	44.58	18.56	18.56	12.64
Probability	0.00	0.14	0.10	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Observation	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	74

Source: Data analysis, 2012

Table 4b: Anaocha Study Area

	Y	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7
Mean	33770	7.11	9.72	47.29	1.70	0.89	0.11	0.26
Median	28500	7.00	12.00	45.00	1.50	1.00	0.00	0.00
Maximum	120000	15.00	16.00	75.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	5000	2.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Std. Dev	22760.10	3.29	4.27	12.71	1.69	0.31	0.31	0.46
Skewness	1.27	0.21	0.30	0.17	0.46	2.49	2.49	1.05
Kurtosis	4.61	2.22	2.34	2.19	1.93	7.21	7.21	2.10
Jarque-Bera	37.71	3.33	3.37	3.25	8.39	177.58	177.58	15.42
Probability	0.00	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Observation	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	71

Source: Data analysis, 2012

Table   4c: Summary of Regression Result

Variable	Ikeje			Anaocha		
	Coefficient	t-statistic	Prob.	Coefficient	t-statistic	Prob.
X_1	30.61296	0.144120	0.8858	-188.3281	-0.479309	0.6334
X_2	1400.977	5.880367	0.0000*	2144.403	5.819527	0.0000*
X_3	-63.16173	-0.74390	0.4595	32.52921	0.418719	0.6768
X_4	-298.6757	-0.23109	0.8179	1815.350	1.039313	0.3026
X_5	7040.95	1.69567	0.0946***	3612.128	1.491550	0.1407
X_6	11899.12	2.22294	0.0296**	-1432.392	-0.477549	0.6346
X_7	3781.228	1.91898	0.0592***	4174.925	1.157291	0.2515
	R^2	0.50			R^2	0.76
	F-Stat Prob.	11.4 (0.000)			F-Stat Prob.	33.7 (0.000)