



Effect of wage employment on rural transformation

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Abstract

This research examined the effect of wage employment on rural transformation in Makurdi, Benue State using the instrument of Benue State Rural Development Authority. Both primary and secondary source of data and information were used for the study and questionnaire was used to obtain information from the primary source while journals and internet constituted secondary source of information. The population for this study is one hundred and thirty seven (137) respondents from the study area. The statistical tools employed were the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients (r) to examine all the hypotheses of the study. The findings of the study indicate that an inverse relationship exists between Rural Transformation (RUTF) and Employment in the study area. The result of the study indicates that the strength of the relationship is 0.092^{**} or 9.2% and the relationship is not statistically significant ($p > 0.01$). On the basis of p -value of the estimate, we accept the null hypothesis; that is, we accept that there is no statistically significant relationship between employment and rural transformation. A positive or direct relationship between Wealth among (WAMP) and Rural Transformation (RUTF) in Benue State and the relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). A positive or direct relationship between Crime Rate (CRM) and Rural Transformation (RUTF) in the study area State and the relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It was concluded that the study concludes that there is greater emphasis not only on generating more employment opportunities but also on improving the quality of new and existing jobs so that it can lead to increase in wealth and standard of life of the people.

Keywords: wage, employment, rural, transformation, Benue, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Rural employment and wages are the important factors which influence the livelihood status of rural households. It is widely witnessed that as economy grows, the labour force shifts from farm to non-farm sector and this migration is determined by the total factor productivity of both the sectors. Similarly, experience in the developed countries has shown that during structural transformation, the contribution of agricultural sector to total GDP falls down, and the secondary sector (industry sector) leads for some period and finally the tertiary sector (service sector) constitutes the largest part of GDP (Eswaran et al., 2009) [23].

Employment pattern in the developing countries has revealed that development of alternative employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector is a necessity for productive farm employment of labour force under the rapid growth of population (Chaudhry and Chaudhry, 1992) [19]. The lack of sufficient employment opportunities and stagnant wages may cause economy-wide problems like high incidence of poverty in the rural areas. A similar process has been observed in China where growth of rural non-farm employment (RNFE) has revealed a significant impact on poverty reduction (Janvry et al., 2005) [32]. The study on rural employment and wage trend is important and useful in many ways. For example, rural wages being the significant source of rural income are the major determinant of livelihood security of rural households. The agricultural wages have also been used as a proxy for studying poverty and living standards in the rural areas

(Deaton and Drèze, 2002; Lanjouw and Murgai, 2008) [22]. Under this scenario, identification of factors which significantly influence the agricultural wages would help in formulating the suitable strategies to sustain the growth rate of wages. In this context, this study was carried out to explore the trends in rural employment and growth rates of rural wages. The study has also examined the impact of agricultural productivity growth, RNFE and availability of labour on rural agricultural wages. The problem statement of this study is encapsulated in the following thoughts: unemployment is common in the rural area where most of the people are not really engaged to earn a living. The rate of poverty is very high that majority of the people are poor. The rate of illiteracy is very high because the people cannot afford to pay school fees. The crime rate is high especially among the youths. The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of wage employment on rural transformation. The specific objectives of the study are to: To create employment that will engage the majority of people, to create wealth among the people, to ascertain literacy where people will acquire knowledge and to ascertain crime free rate in the society. This study is guided by the following hypotheses which are:

1. There is no significant relationship between employment and rural transformation
2. Wealth among the people has no significant relationship with rural transformation
3. The high literacy rate among the people has no significant relationship with rural transformation.

4. Crime rate has no significant relationship with rural transformation.

2. Literature review

Theoretical Framework

Classical development theories

Classical development theories and empirical works in applied economics highlight that productivity gains can have an impact on wage rates and employment conditions, as well as on the overall functioning of the labour market (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Todaro and Smith, 2012) [27, 46]. Much attention went to empirically explain low/high wage rates in small or large enterprises with their respective productivity levels (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Satch and Temple, 2009) [27, 43]. Recent work around the employment-economic growth nexus emphasizes the importance of the quality of employment and working conditions, as coined by the very concept of decent work and its policy agenda. There is greater emphasis not only on generating more employment opportunities but also on improving the quality of new and existing jobs, for example, by ensuring that fundamental rights at work are respected. The implications of decent employment on productivity, living standards, social justice and sustainable development are increasingly acknowledged (Anker et al., 2002; Ghai, 2002; Vandenberg, 2004; Buchanan, 2006; Evans and Gibb, 2009; Dorward, 2013; Burchell et al., 2014) [6, 26, 20, 12].

At the empirical level, the concepts and theoretical formulations often encounter issues related to data availability (Anker et al., 2002; Ghai, 2002; Burchell et al., 2014) [6, 26, 12]. Despite that, there is some analytical evidence on the role of employment and decent work on economic performance in some sectors, especially in manufacturing and, more recently, services. Many of those studies focus on the impact of specific employment dimensions, such as length of the labour contract and tenure stability, or shared profit and management on productivity of manufacturing firms (see Yao, 1997; Conyon and Freeman, 2002; Auer et al., 2004; Ortega and Marchante, 2010) [18, 4, 37]. There exists also some empirical evidence on the role of “fair”, “efficient” and higher wages on the level of productivity and improvement of service provision (Katz, 1986; Akerlof and Yellen, 1990; Levine, 1992; Mas, 2006) [1, 34, 35]. However, the decent work literature on the developing countries is rather thin and even more so when applied to agriculture and rural areas. And yet it is precisely in these contexts where the link between (quantity and quality of) employment and productivity has more relevance in regard to an effort towards reducing poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the majority of the poor and food insecure people live, rural poverty is mostly related to the lack of productive employment in agriculture and poor performance of the rural non-farm economy (Haggblade et al., 2010; FAO, 2012) [29, 26]. Therefore, rural poverty reduction is no longer conceived as a matter of just being employed or generating some type of income, but as holding a productive and decent job both in rural farm and non-farm activities (Rao et al., 2004, ILO, 2006; Dorward, 2013) [41, 20].

Conceptual Framework

Wage Employment

Wage employment includes any salaried or paid job under contract (written or not) to another person, organization or

enterprise in both the formal and informal economy. People with disabilities often face many barriers to finding decent wage employment; however, access to wage employment should always be considered an option for people with disabilities interested in work. This is supported by article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Through inclusive wage employment programmes, potential barriers can be diminished and people with disabilities have increased opportunities to access to paid work opportunities. Sub-Saharan Africa is a very diverse geographical, social, economic and political entity. Generalizations about development, growth, inequality and labour are at least as problematic as they can be in any other region in the developing world. However, much of the economic literature on Africa continues to offer general and apparently common accounts of development challenges and outcomes. African essentialism is indeed a feature of the growth literature focused on the negative dummy variable for Africa that emerges in regression analysis (apparently unexplained below par growth performance), as well as the poverty literature, which highlights Africa as the only region where poverty related MDGs are unlikely to be met. African attributes are also common in the literature and available evidence on labour. For example, conventional wisdom and official data on rural employment in sub-Saharan Africa suggests the following stylized facts’ (see for critical assessments Sender, 2003; Sender et al., 2005; Leavy and White, 2003): agriculture mainly consists of small subsistence’ peasant farmers, most of them poor and inequalities between them are hence not very significant; (b) defenders of the urban bias’ hypothesis continue to believe that rural-urban gaps are more important than other drivers of inequality, and generally overlook the significance of rural inequalities; (c) the non-farm economy is thought to comprise mainly self-employed individuals, in particular own account workers and contributing family workers; (d) as a corollary of these features, rural labour markets are regarded as thin or absent and rural wage employment as uncommon; (e) besides, cooperative/reciprocal labour exchange is often seen as more common than wage labour, partly reflecting supposedly greater degrees of equality and more widespread poverty. Of course, not everyone agrees with these broad stylized facts, which, as field evidence accumulates, can become part of a mythology of development in Africa. Exceptions to these aspects of the conventional wisdom are now often noted and qualifications arise more frequently (see World Bank, 2007; Barrett et al., 2000; Jayne et al., 2003) [15, 31]. In fact, some influential reports such as the World Bank’s 2008 World Development Report (see World Bank, 2007) have begun to consider more seriously two aspects of rural African economies: (a) the small holder population is more heterogeneous than often thought and less of a standard’ social category; (b) the scope and importance of paths beyond own account farming towards wage employment (sometimes via migration) or nonfarm activities is much greater than usually acknowledged (see World Bank, 2007: ch.9). For example, the 2008 World Development Report recently recognized that In other words, socio-economic differentiation in rural Africa is

more significant than we normally think. By socio-economic differentiation we mean a process whereby inequality increases together with a growing fragmentation of labour into groups of people who increasingly depend on working for wages and groups who manage to accumulate a bit and employ other people's labour, and between groups who still depend on farm activities and groups who become increasingly reliant on non-farm sources of income. Whether there are clear cut links between processes of socio-economic differentiation, growing rural inequalities and the extent to which people depend more on off farm activities (including rural wage employment) is not very clear from the available evidence, although some recent influential research on the declining importance of land based livelihoods suggests that the link exists (Bryceson, 2002; Raikes, 2000; Rigg, 2006) [13, 38, 39].

Unfolding the complex relationship between employment, labour supply, factor markets and productivity is a crucial aspect in development research and policy design (Alic, 1997; Rao *et al.*, 2004; Barrett *et al.*, 2008; Satch and Temple, 2009; Todaro and Smith, 2012) [5, 41, 15, 46]. Uncertainties regarding the interdependence of economic and population growth, sustainability, labour, poverty, as well as working and living conditions generated a great deal of discussions since the first economic development theories came to play (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Alic, 1997; Ortega and Marchante, 2010) [27, 5, 37].

Rural economic activities are usually divided into farm (agriculture) and nonfarm activities, with agriculture as the predominant sector. The share of agriculture in GDP has been declining over the years, and rural nonfarm employment has become more widespread. However, subsistence food production, i.e., food production for own consumption is still prevalent. Moreover, agriculture still accounts for a substantial share of the labour market a majority share in many developing countries and the world's poor are predominantly found in the agricultural sector of developing countries. That agriculture's share in GDP has declined on the whole more rapidly than employment implies that productivity in agriculture has declined. Productivity is in particular apt to be low in subsistence agriculture, seasonal agricultural wage labour and informs of non-farm self-employment. The incomes generated are consequently not very high, often just enough to ensure basic food security and to serve as coping mechanisms to alleviate poverty or escape outright destitution. Although this study paints a picture of wage employment as a key element of improving household well being, in rural areas the labour market, at least agricultural wage employment, has often been viewed negatively with a general perception that it is a refuge sector for the rural poor (Lanjouw, 2007).

Along with this negative perception of agricultural labour, the rural labour force is growing at a rate faster than the agricultural labour force limiting the ability of the agricultural sector to absorb rural labour (World Bank, 2008). If this is correct, it raises questions about the potential for agricultural

labour as a pathway to the middle class. Of course, one alternative option for rural labour in developing countries is to migrate to cities where there may be greater potential for steady employment. There is evidence that the poor have indeed been migrating to urban centres at a rate faster than the rest of the population, although the number of poor in rural areas remains substantially higher than in urban areas (Ravallion, Chen & Sangraula, 2007).

Rural Transformation

Rural Transformation is a process of comprehensive societal change whereby rural societies diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on agriculture; become dependent on distant places to trade and to acquire goods, services, and ideas..."In many low and middle-income countries, rural areas are undergoing fundamental processes of change that affect not only their economic structure but also their social, cultural and political fabric. High crime rate has been associated with developed agricultural areas. There has been considerable recent discussion of the changes that are taking place in rural development both in terms of the nature of the changes underway within rural economies and in terms of the approaches adopted towards rural policy (Ravallion, Chen & Sangraula, 2007). Historically, rural transformation is often compared to the economic transformation from agricultural to industrial economies witnessed in many parts of Europe in the 19th century and across Asia and Latin America in the 20th century. Yet this concept does not suffice to describe the various simultaneous and intertwining dynamics that impact the rural space of developing countries today and the more complex and rapidly changing framework conditions that they are set in.. The predominant characterization is of a single change, commonly from an approach focused fundamentally on the agricultural sector towards one focused on rural territories and more diversified economic activity (Van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000; Léon, 2005; OECD, 2006). However, we argue that there has been a more steady process of economic and social change in rural areas over a longer period of time.

3. Methodology

This research employed descriptive research design. The study used primary from the sampled population and secondary sources like textbooks, journals, internet resources. For the primary sources of data collection, views of staff of Benue Rural Development Agency Makurdi, Benue State were studied.

The population for this study is one hundred and thirty seven (137) respondents from the study area. The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method to select these respondents. The research instrument is a four-point scale type of questionnaire which captured four questions for each of the objectives. The statistical tools employed were the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients (r) to examine all the hypotheses of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Testing of the Hypotheses

Table 1: Correlations

		RUTF	EMPL	WAMP	CRMR
RUTF	Pearson Correlation	1	-.092	.108	.363
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.736	.007	.017
	N	16	16	16	16
EMPL	Pearson Correlation	-.092	1	-.233	.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.736		.386	.464
	N	16	16	16	16
WAMP	Pearson Correlation	.108	-.233	1	-.336
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.386		.203
	N	16	16	16	16
CRMR	Pearson Correlation	.363	.197	-.336	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.464	.203	
	N	16	16	16	16

Source: Author's Computation, 2018

a) There is no significant relationship between employment and rural transformation

An inverse relationship exists between Rural Transformation (RUTF) and Employment in the study area in the study area. The result of the study indicates that the strength of the relationship is 0.092** or 9.2% and the relationship is not statistically significant ($p > 0.01$). On the basis of p -value of the estimate, we accept the null hypothesis; that is, we accept that there is statistically significant relationship between employment and rural transformation. This is in line with the study carried out Janvry *et al.* (2005) [32] and found that rural employment and wage trend is important and useful as they are significant source of rural income and the major determinant of livelihood security of rural households

b) Wealth among the people has no significant relationship with rural transformation

A positive or direct relationship between Wealth among (WAMP) and Rural Transformation (RUTF) in Benue State. The result of the study indicates that the strength of the relationship is 0.108** or 10.8% and the relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). On the basis of p -value of the estimate, we reject the null hypothesis; that is, we accept that the estimate Wealth among (WAMP) is statistically significant. This means that there is a significant relationship between Wealth among and rural transformation. This is in line with the findings of Rao, *et al.*, (2004) [41] who found that rural poverty reduction is no longer conceived as a matter of just being employed or generating some type of income, but as holding a productive and decent job both in rural farm and non-farm activities, which in effect can create wealth among rural populace.

Crime rate has no significant relationship with rural transformation

A positive or direct relationship between Crime Rate (CRMR) and Rural Transformation (RUTF) in the study area State. The result of the study indicates that the strength of the relationship is 0.363** or 36.3% and the relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). On the basis of p -value of the estimate, we reject the null hypothesis; that is, we accept

that the estimate CRMR is statistically significant. This means that there is a significant relationship between Crime rate and rural transformation. This is in line with the high crime rate has been associated with a developed agricultural areas. There has been considerable recent discussion of the changes that are taking place in rural development both in terms of the nature of the changes underway within rural economies and in terms of the approaches adopted towards rural policy (Ravallion, Chen & Sangraula, 2007).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of wage employment on rural transformation in Makurdi Benue State through the instrument of Benue rural development Authority. The study concludes that there is greater emphasis not only on generating more employment opportunities but also on improving the quality of new and existing jobs so that it can lead to increase in wealth and standard of life of the people, for example, by ensuring that fundamental rights at work are respected. The implications of decent employment on productivity, living standards, social justice and sustainable development are increasingly acknowledged as it has shown that a relationship exists between proxies of wage employment such as employment payment, wealth among people and crime rate on rural transformation.

Wage employment provides employees with means of income, which invariably leads to wealth among the employees and other members of the community as a multiplier effect. Crime rate is associated with a developed society as more people floods the community from different places in search of a decent means of livelihood. Hence, our result has shown a direct relationship between crime rate and rural transformation. Everyone has a right to decent work. Each jobseeker is an individual with his/her own interests, goals, skills, abilities and education levels. These individual factors, the demands of the labour market and available support are a key factor that serves as a precursor to rural transformation.

6. Recommendations

1. The communities within the area need to team up to create employment through cooperative societies
2. The rural dwellers need to invite NGO's and well to do people in the society to establish investment that will create wealth so that the masses will tap from it
3. The community has to protect the entire people and their properties by establishing security outfit that will secure lives and properties so as to decrease crime rate

7. References

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