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## Socio-Economic Characteristics and Livelihood Assets of Wetlands Users at Ede Region, Southwestern Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study examines the socio-economic characteristics of the users of wetlands, the relationship between their status and their resources with a view to land reform in the region. The study employed primary and secondary data. Primary data explored 566 structured questionnaires administered on wetland users using the snow-ball method soliciting information on: respondents' indicators of livelihood assets, resources, human capital, socio-economic characteristics, quality of dwelling, sanitation and ownership of land. Secondary data was sourced from conventional sources. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results show that over 70% of respondents were above 41 years of age and were predominantly small scale food-farmers. Furthermore, 59.4% of respondents lived in Brazilian type of houses "face me I face you" with 49.0% of the houses in faire state that need maintenance, 60.3% had bare ground floors while 44.3% were personal houses and 31.7% family houses. Similarly, it was established that the depth of poverty in relation to landed assets showed that 58.6% of the rich compared to 20.7% of the moderate poor and 20.7% of the poorest ranked households owned more than 10 ha of land. The implications of this is that a greater proportion of productive assets (Land) in Ede region were in the hands of the non-poor ranked households which has continued to widen the gap between the rich and the poor and if poverty has to be tackled, then there must be a way forward through "land reform" to make this very important livelihood asset available to the extreme poor.

**Key words:** Land reform; Poverty; Housing conditions; Livelihood assets; Wetlands

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### INTRODUCTION

It has generally been established that, 60-70% of rural dwellers in Nigeria and other developing countries in the Global South who depend on agriculture as their source of sustenance are living in absolute poverty (Ekong, 1999; Kolawole & Torimiro, 2006; Gysue, 2009). To be precise 70.2 % of Nigerians live below the poverty line (World Bank and FOS, 1997). However, despite this, it was observed by Oyesiku (2009), that the share of people living in poverty is larger in African cities than any other region in the world (UNICEF, 2009; Kessides, 2006; Booth et al, 2000). Furthermore, Oyesiku (2009) while quoting Mekomen (1994) emphasized that 52% of sub-Sahara Africa's population was poor in 1985, which rose to 63% in 1990 and was estimated at 63.5% in 2009 (UNICEF, 2006). However, according to World Bank (2001) and Fields (2000) poverty is a rural phenomenon.

Ekong (1999) observed that rural communities especially, in Nigeria are seriously marginalized in terms of most basic elements of development and the inhabitants tend to live at the margin of subsistence and opportunities. These rural communities lack potable water, electricity, health care, educational and recreational facilities. They also experience high population growth rates, high infant and maternal mortality, low life expectancy and a peasant population that lacks modern equipment that can guarantee sustainable exploitation of the natural resources on which they live (Oyeranti & Olayiwola, 2005).

Land seems to be the most valuable asset at the disposal of the rural dwellers to meet their developmental

needs for housing as well as agriculture. Over 60 percent of the population of West and Central Africa is dependent on land for subsistence or commercial agricultural production. The remaining 40% of the population though not directly require land for residences and places of employment in cities, towns and villages (Gyuse, 2009). In a study by FOS (1999) poverty in rural Nigeria was identified to manifest in land holding ability of the rural dwellers in relation to farm size, use of improved inputs and farm credit facilities. The land use decree of 1978 which has gone into history as the most controversial and ambiguous legislations has dispossessed the rural poor of the rights to their land (CRP, 1999).

In Nigeria, wetlands cover over 24,009 km<sup>2</sup> (Kio & Ola-Adams, 1990). Meanwhile in Ede region it's estimated at 2587.93 ha in 1986 and was reduced to 889.66 ha in 2002. Wetlands are under serious threats from population pressure, urbanisation, agriculture, road construction as well as deforestation. Conscious of all these, the Federal Government of Nigeria embarked on a series of measures since the 70's to reduce the impact of poverty on Nigerians but very little or no success has been made in that direction. Some of these measures amongst others include; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), River Basin and Development Authorities (RBDAs) and the Green Revolution programme (Table 1). The failure of these measures and policies within the wetlands, to address the plight of the poor despite its enormous potentials has motivated this study. Given the multifaceted nature of poverty, any solution towards its eradication must be multi-dimensional in nature. It was at this backdrop that the study was conceived to assess the socio-economic characteristics of the users of wetlands, the relationship between their status and their resources with a view to land reform in the region. This, if achieved, will provide a framework for improving the socio-economic conditions of the residents in wetlands areas.

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## 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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### 1.1 Poverty

Theoretically, there are three prominent views as far as the definition of poverty is concerned. The first view looks at poverty as material deprivation that can be assessed in monetary terms but fails to recognize non-material forms of deprivation such as illiteracy and social discrimination among others (Oyeranti & Olayiwola, 2005; Townsend, 2006). The second conceptual view is directly linked with the work of Sen (1999) and has been used by the Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty Index (HPI), which defines poverty as the failure to achieve basic capabilities such as being adequately nourished, living a healthy life, possession of skills to participate in economic and social life, permission to take part in community

activities just to mention but a few. This opinion therefore recognizes multidimensional nature of poverty. The third conceptual view came to the limelight in the 1990s and looks at poverty from the subjective point of view. The strong point of this view is that poverty must be defined by the poor themselves or by the communities where the poor live. The subjective view of poverty opines that poverty has both physical and psychological dimensions. The poor people themselves strongly emphasize violence and crime, discrimination, insecurity and political repression, biased or brutal policing, and victimization, neglectful or corrupt public agencies (Narayan et al, 1999 & Chambers, 2006). According to Tomlison (2002) the former country director of World Bank, one out every five persons "are critically poor" and one in every four persons in Nigeria never get a clean glass of water and live on less than \$1US a day.

The scope of poverty alleviation has evolved over the years and in the 1970s the scope changed from lack of income and recognized the need for education, health and other essential services (DFID and ILO). In the 1980s the scope of poverty was further broadened to encompass non-monetary aspects, such as vulnerability to shocks, food security, assets and inequity. Whereas poverty refers to different forms of deprivation that can be explained in a variety of terms (income, basic needs, human capabilities), equity is concerned with distribution within a population group under real egalitarian conditions. Vulnerability is the measure of insecurity; defenselessness and the risk of falling into poverty. These include effects of discrimination on the grounds of gender, class, disability, race, age or ill health, which may make it more difficult for people to earn a living. They also include natural and man made shocks such as economic collapse, drought or floods which have more impact on the poorest as they have fewer assets to cushion their effect (DFID, 2005; John & Regaly, 1997). Food security refers to the ability of individuals and households to meet their staple food needs all year round.

Karlsson (2001) observed that given the present understanding, poverty goes beyond material and capabilities deprivation and therefore business as usual will not reduce poverty. The World Bank Report (World Bank, 2001) extends the concept of poverty beyond income and consumption plus education and health, to include risk and vulnerability as well as voicelessness and powerlessness. However, it may not necessarily be the case that shocks affect the poor disproportionately, but it is clearly the case that they are more vulnerable, since their economic margin is slim. Therefore the poor are often exposed to highly fluctuating incomes, and, particularly, in rural areas and it is common for households to move in and out of poverty (Dercon, 2000; World Bank, 2001). The main issue that comes here in relation to poverty is social exclusion. Social exclusion within the concept of poverty focuses on those aspects of social deprivation that

impede people from participating fully in their society and its development. It further recognizes the root problem of lack of material resources but also help us to understand the processes, including social and political processes that lead to poverty. For instance, people who are poor may be excluded from land or employment and therefore a livelihood, meaning that they are effectively politically powerless to change their situation.

To further illustrate the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, poor people are often illiterate or have little education, making it much difficult for them to find employment and much more likely to suffer from ill health. Social exclusion draws attention to the viscous cycle of poverty whereby a breadwinner becomes sick, the family income falls and child malnutrition ends in early death. It is difficult to separate the economic, social and political factors contributing to poverty or to say where one influence ends and another begins. The term exclusion recognizes this overlap and synergy between the processes

that cause poverty. For instance, decisions made in an urban centre may effectively exclude rural people from control over resources. Women's exclusion from decision making within the household and the community, or from ownership of land and assets, partly explains why women are likely to be poor. Other areas of exclusion include; markets, welfare provision, family, community rights, practical participation, resources and relationships (David, 1994; Igawa 2001; DFID, 2005).

The poverty situation in Nigeria today, presents a contradictory paradox considering the country's immense wealth and the fact that the poverty situation has worsened despite the enormous human and material resources that have been devoted by successive governments for its eradication with no substantial success (Oyeranti & Olayiwola, 2005; Gasu, 2011). The World Bank (1996) attempted a classification of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria between the years 1975-2001 as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**  
**Classification of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria From 1975-2001**

Programme/Scheme	Focus/Approach
<b>1. Agriculture</b>	Food Security
(a) Operation Feed The Nation (OFN)	
(b) Green Revolution	Food Security
(c) River Basin Rural Development Authority (RBRDA)	Water resources management and Irrigation for Agriculture
(d) Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRI)	Multi- sectoral approach (Urban and Rural)
(e) National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA).	Commercial agriculture
(f) Agriculture Development Programme (ADP)	Support to rural farmer/food security
<b>2. Health</b>	Guinea worm/water and sanitation
(a) Guinea Worm Eradication Task Force (GWETF)	
(b) Primary Healthcare (PHC)	Children's Health
(c) Roll Back Malaria (RBM)	Improved Health for all
<b>3. Education and Employment</b>	Education for nomads
(a) Nomadic Education Programme (NEP)	
<b>4. Economic and Social</b>	Housing for the employed
(b) National Housing Fund Scheme (NHFS)	
(c) National Directorate of Employment (NDE)	Skills formation and employment
(d) Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF)	Multi-sectoral financing
(e) Federal Assisted Mass Transit programme (FAMTP)	Assistance to the private sector in financing transportation
(f) National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND)	Fund for reconstruction
(g) Family Economic Advancement Fund (FEAF)	Economic support for family improvement
(h) National Poverty Eradication programme (NAPEP)	Economic support for family improvement
(i) Family Support Programme (FSP)	Economic support for family improvement
(h) Better Life Programme	Economic support for improvement
(j) Community Bank (CB)	Community based financial programme
(k) People Bank of Nigeria (PBN)	National-oriented system for financial for the poor
(l) Oil Mineral Production Areas Development Commission (OM-PADEC) Now Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).	Multi-sectoral and geographical focused scheme for the Niger Delta.

Source: Adapted from the World Bank, 2001

Kolawole and Torimiro (2006) observed that the World Bank reported that all these programmes failed because they were unsustainable and ad-hoc in approach, as they were borne out of the traditional “Top down” strategy and that for any programme to succeed it must receive the blessings of the beneficiaries. Furthermore Tomlinson (2000) noted that the engagement of the beneficiaries is a catalyst which will help the Government to tailor interventions more closely to the needs of the poor, who will drive coordinated solutions as the key to sustainable development. It was further documented that these past efforts to rid the country of poverty have produced very little results for the following reasons;

- Policy inconsistency and bad governance
- Ineffective targeting of the poor (leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries).
- Unwieldy scope of the programmes resulting in resources being spread among projects.
- Overlapping of functions which ultimately led to institutional rivalry.
- Lack of mechanism in various programmes and projects to ensure sustainability.
- Lack of complementarities from the beneficiaries.
- Uncoordinated sectorial policy initiative
- Lack of involvement of social partners in planning and evaluation
- Poor human capital development and inadequate funding.
- Lack of involvement of the people at grass root.
- Absence of agreed poverty reduction agenda that can be used by all concerned (Ajakaiye and Olomola, 2003; Oyeranti and Olaiyiwola, 2005; Kolawole and Torimiro 2006, Gasu, 2011).

## 1.2 Land Reform Models

Land reform is not new to the African continent since the era preceding independence from various European colonial rule especially in the West African Subregion (Gyuse, 2009). What is new is the toll it has taken on the African masses especially in Nigeria. Ouedraogo et al (2006) observed that without exception, the reforms have been in the direction of abolition of customary ownership and replacement with a statutory form where ownership of land were vested in some cases exclusively in the State with citizens holding users rights. For instance, Benin Republic in 1972, Burkina Faso in 1984 and The Nigerian Land use decree of 1978 in all these cases the land was acquired compulsorily. Amongst the cases that of Nigeria was a complete robbery attempt by the authorities in power to dispossess the Nigerian masses of their most valuable asset and means of livelihood.

According to the land use decree, all lands except the Federal lands were vested in the Governor of the State who is to hold it in trust for the people of the state and for all Nigerians (“Land Use Act”, 1978, Section 1). In practice the decree is supposed to make it easier to acquire

land for both public and individual purposes. This was not the case, for only those with socio-political connections were able to acquire land in rural areas for agricultural purposes even though we are yet to see the impact in this area (Gyuse, 2009). Under the act, tenure was not secure for tenure was granted only for a period of 99 years in the case of state allocation and 33 years in the case of Local Government allocation. Gyuse (2009) noted that this meant that the land and its development could not be passed on to the descendants.

The Land use decree is plagued with many controversies amongst which include the fact that many indigenous land owners still lay claim to their land. The decree expropriates land from the original owners (compound/families) and confer the ownership on the executive governor of each of the states of the federation. The act favours Government as well as those in Government and therefore creates serious difficulties for the common man to acquire land (Akinola, 2007). The practice therefore, is that if anyone acquires a piece of land from government one still has to sign an agreement with the indigenous owners which is usually backdated before 1978 leading to double payment. In retrospect, the law is of colonial inspiration and feudal inclination for the purpose of exploiting, expropriating and oppressing the citizens (Akinola, 2007). Another controversy which was equally described as oppressive by Akinola (2007) was in the area of compensation which was confirmed in a study in 1991 by Akinola and Awotona (1997) to be ridiculously lower than the actual or real market value of the property by 33.0% for rural areas and 57.6% for urban land.

Omotola quoted in “Shelter Watch” 1996 observed that the act is no doubt infested with many ambiguities, contradictions and confusion which have made those concerned with its administration (civil servants) uncomfortable with its provisions (Akinola, 2007). Many of the controversies generated by the decree have proved difficult to be resolved by the judiciary as “judicial interpretations of the different sections, words and phrases used in the land use act have resulted in long drawn and bitter legal battles” often going as far as the supreme court (CRP, 1999).

Another model of land reform which was very original to Africa was that of Tanzania under the distinguish leadership of Dr. Julius Nyerere which was based on the principle of rural villages conceived as communal organization (collectivization). The Tanzanian model was made public by Nyerere in 1962 in his publication Ujamaa “the Basis of African socialism” in which Ujamaa was described as the socialist attitude of mind which in the tribal days gave to every individual the security of belonging to a widely extended family. The Tanzanian model became a policy in 1967 during which Nyerere rejected rural capitalism and turned the Ujamaa of 1962 into a national policy. Ujamaa was implemented in three phases (1967-1969), (1969-1973), and (1973-1976). The

villagization scheme had remarkable impact on population redistribution in Tanzania whereby in 1968 about 60,000 people were resettled in 180 villages and by 1973 about two million people were regrouped in 57,200 Ujamaa villages (Adepoju, 1983; Okafor & Onorkerhoray, 1994). It has equally been documented that by 1974 about 4 million people have been resettled. The policy ended up with very mixed results as Ujama villages still had a long way to go in raising rural welfare and narrowing the gap between town and village life.

### 1.3 The Chinese Land Reform

Incidentally China has only about 10% of world's cultivable land with about one-fifth of the world's population (1.3 billion people) and yet they are self-food sufficient with excess for export. China today presents one of the leading worlds' economies with an average growth rate of over 10.7% between 1980s and 2006. Industrial activities (manufacturing, mining, and construction) contribute the largest percentage of the country's G.D.P amounting to 48 percent while agriculture contributes to about 18% GDP (Clunas et al, 2009). China has succeeded in eliminating absolute poverty and solving the problems of unemployment and inflation, the three most serious problems facing developing nations (Aziz, 1978).

The most striking feature of Chinese agriculture has been the relative scarcity of cultivable land with the total arable land per person living in the rural areas estimated at 0.25 ha. As observed by Aziz (1978) the Chinese farmers' precarious situation was compounded by natural calamities with constant threat of climatic uncertainty in the South and persistent drought in the semi-arid North and North West. It was at the backdrop of all these that the Chinese revolution evolved its own approach to socialism based on agriculture and rural development. A very important feature of the Chinese model is the land reform which came as a response to challenges such as; series of socio-economic problems of rural areas, scarcity of land and traditional land holding. Before the land reform in China, the poor who constitute 70% of the population owned less than 10% of the land while the rich who constitute about 10% owned 2/3 of the arable land (Okafor & Onorkerhoray, 1994). As observed by Aziz, (1978) the total liquidation of the traditional system of land ownership and social stratification could not be completed until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Agrarian Law of 1947 provided the policy framework for the implementation of the land reform programme which resulted in the redistribution of land and property among the poor and middle peasant including the landlords and rich peasants who were prepared to reform themselves and live on allotted holdings (Okafor & Onorkerhoray, 1986). Official figures revealed that 46.6 million ha of land was distributed among 300 million landless and land poor peasants with each receiving an average of 0.15 ha. The Chinese land reform was therefore

poised to create a new communal order (collective ownership of land) where all would work together unselfishly for common goals, for the Communists first redistributed property (Aziz, 1978; Clunas et al, 2009).

Agricultural collectivization followed land reform in several stages. First, farmers were encouraged to join mutual-aid teams of usually less than 10 families. Next, they were instructed to set up cooperatives, consisting of 40 or 50 families. From 1954 to 1956 the Communists created higher-level collectives (also called production teams) that united cooperatives. At this point, economic inequality within villages had been virtually eliminated. The state took over the grain market, and peasants were no longer allowed to market their crops (Clunas et al, 2009).

The institutional framework for the success of the Chinese land reform was made possible by a system of production teams, production brigades, communes, provinces and the central planning commission. Olanrewaju (1980) described a production team to be a historic hamlet or cluster of houses with 20-40 families or 100-200 members. Production teams make up production brigades and brigades combine to make up the people's communes. Counties are multi-commune government units while counties combine to form provinces and at the national level the central planning commission coordinates the national production plans and targets. In this bureaucratic set up, the basic unit for rural transformation in China is the people's communes. A Chinese commune is a composite unit of local government that encompasses the whole range of economic, social, administrative and political functions for the rural community (Aziz, 1978). The essential purpose of this bureaucratic structure is to organize and mobilize the rural population to develop their land and other resources in order to meet their essential needs on the principles of self-reliance, while at the same time reducing social inequalities and creating a rural society based on justice and equality. The system of commune provides a very effective mechanism of local planning in accordance with the simple philosophy: from bottom up and from the top down fondly referred to as planning from below (Olanrewaju, 1980; Okafor and Onorkerhoray, 1986; Clunas et al, 2009).

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## 2. STUDY AREA

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The study was conducted in Ede Region Osun State, Nigeria. It is located between latitude 7° 31' and 7° 55' North and longitude 4° 15' and 4° 40' East. Ede region accommodates the wetland areas of Ede South and Ede North LGAs. Ede is bounded to the South by Ayedade, to the East by Atakumusa and Osogbo, to the North by Egbedore and to the West by Ejigbo and Ayedire Local Governments Areas of Osun State. The region is drained by Rivers Shasha and Osun along with their tributaries. The soils are associated with Iwo and Egbeda associations.

They have been mapped out as montmorillonite soils with inherent poor drainage because of the presence of 2:1 clay minerals (Okusami, 2011). The low-lying nature of the area makes possible the deposition of alluvial soils rich for agriculture and digging of shallow wells.

The two LGAs had a population of 159, 866 at the 2006 census (NPC, 2007). Even though the area is in the tropical rainforest belt natural-vegetation is depleted largely for crop cultivation which is the dominant economic activity. It is characterised by tufted savannah grasses and dotted with trees especially oil palms (Symth & Montgomery, 1962). The main crops are foods such as cassava, maize, beans and yam. Cash crops such as cotton, cocoa and palms serve the local cottage industries such as cotton weaving, cottonseed milling, cocoa and palm processing.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted the Snow-ball technique where pre-tested and validated structured interview schedule was developed and administered to solicit information from the respondents covering a wide range of spatial-economic activities on livelihood assets and household relative poverty as it relates to resources (human capital), Socio-economic characteristics of respondents, quality of dwelling including water and sanitation, ownership of land and other valuable assets amongst other social and environmental issues. This approach resulted to a total of 566 questionnaires for the study administered on 40 settlements but 451 were actually returned for data analysis representing a response of 79.6%. In a typical snow-ball fashion, one wetland user was identified and who in turn identify the next user(s) and it continued in that same manner until all the users required were identified.

Information on wetlands, farms locations, infrastructure like roads and social facilities like solid waste disposal, water sources, health and schools were gotten through direct observation, direct measurement, and oral interview by the researcher during visits. Statistical analysis made use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) used to establish relative poverty household classes of (extreme poor, moderate poor and non-poor income levels) based on \$1US a day earning. The classification was now used for the inferential statistics (cross tabulation) (Fadare & Gasu, 2012; Gasu, 2011).

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results in Table 2 show that 43.8% of respondents were above 51 years of age. Furthermore, result shows that of 43.9% of the respondents have 5-10 children while 40.1% have less than five children in the family which is a typical rural African characteristic where large families are usually desired because they are seen as a major source of farm labour. Similarly, the results show that 71.2% of respondents were predominantly small scale food-farmers farmers which is in consonance with earlier studies by Ekong, (1999); Kolawole and Torimiro (2006); Gasu *et al*, (2007), while trading was (10.4%), mixed occupation (8.2%) and civil servants 10%. The result also reveals that 39.0% of the respondents earned below 60,000 naira annually, 29.7% earned between 60,100 and 100,000 annually while 26.4% earned between 101,000 and 200,000 naira annually. Furthermore, 59.4% of respondents lived in Brazilian type of houses “face me I face you” with 49.0% of the houses in faire state that needed urgent maintenance while 60.3% live in houses that had bare ground as floors.

**Table 2**  
**Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

Age of respondent	Frequency	Percent	Household size	Frequency	Percent
18-30	74	16.2	<5 person	118	40.1
31-40	73	16.1	5-10 persons	198	43.9
41-50	108	23.9	10-15 persons	54	12.0
51-60	95	21.1	>15 persons	18	12
Above 61	101	22.7	Total	451	100
Total	451	100	<b>Owner of Building</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	Family	148	32.9
Male	332	73.6	Self	200	76.1
Female	119	26.4	Rented	103	22.8
Total	451	100	Total	451	100
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Type of housing</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Single	41	9.1	Brazilian (face to face)	268	59.4
married	384	85.1	Modern Villa	27	6.0
Divorce	4	4.6	Single Family	75	16.6
Widow	22	4.7	Multi-unit	60	13.3

To be continued

Continued

Age of respondent	Frequency	Percent	Household size	Frequency	Percent
Total	451	100	Fulani	21	4.6
Educational level	Frequency	Percent	Total	451	100
Non- Formal	178	39.5	Floor materilas	Frequency	Percent
Primary School Cert.	119	26.4	Bare ground	272	60.3
SecondarySchool Cert.	82	18.8	Cemented	140	31.0
ND/NCE	25	5.5	Concret	18	4.1
First Degree	7	1.6	Tiles	5	1.1
Others	40	8.9	Others	16	3.6
Total	451	100	Total	451	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Housing Conditions	Frquency	Percent
Farming	317	71,2	Fair	221	49.0
Trading	47	10.4	Good	139	30.8
Mixed	37	8.2	Poor	82	18.2
Civil Servants	45	10	Total	451	100
Others	1	0.2	Annual income	Frequency	Percent
Total	451	100	Below N50,000	133	29.5
Water sources	Frequency	Percent	N51,000-N60,000	38	8.4
Private well/Tap	47	10.4	N61,000-N70,000	29	6.4
Shared Well	211	46.8	N71,000-N80,000	19	4.2
Bore hole	41	9.1	N81,000-N90.000	34	7.5
Public Tap	69	15.3	N91,000-N100,000	47	10.4
Rain	11	2.4	Above N100,000	135	29.5
Spring	40	6.2	No Response	16	3.5
River/Stream	32	7.1	Total	451	100
Total	451	100			

Authors' Field Survey September, 2012

Table 3 shows that 58.6% of the non-poor ranked households owned more than 10 hectares of land compared to 20.7% of the moderate poor and 20.7% for the extreme poor ranked households in the same category. Similarly, the result shows that 42.2% of households ranked as moderate poor income compared to 34.7% and 23.1% rank as extreme poor and non-poor households respectively owned less than 2 hectares of land. In a study by FOS (1999), poverty in rural Nigeria was identified to manifest in land holding ability of the

rural dwellers. The implication of this was that a greater proportion of livelihood assets (land) in the Ede region were in the hands of non-poor ranked households. This scenario was equally observed in an earlier study by FOS (1999) which could continue to widen the gap between the rich and poor. Therefore, if poverty has to be tackled, then there must be a way forward through land reform to make available this very important livelihood asset to the extreme poor as we have witnessed in China and Ujamaa in Tanzania.

**Table 3**  
**Cross Tabulation of Farm Size and Poverty in Ede Region**

Farm size in hectares	Poverty group			Total
	Extreme poor	Moderate poor	Non poor	
Less than 2	34.7%	42.2%	23.1%	100%
2-4	33.3%	33.3%	33.4%	100%
4-6	44.7%	40.4%	14.9%	100%
6-8	57.9%	26.3%	15.8%	100%
8-10	48.6%	31.4%	20.0%	100%
Greater than 10	20.7%	20.7%	58.6%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The results in Table 4 show that 38.6% of the moderate poor ranked households compared to 38.0% and 23.4% of extreme poor and non-poor ranked households respectively were farmers. Similarly, 80.8% of the highest ranked households compared to 12.8% and 6.4% of the moderate and extreme poor ranked households respectively were traders. It could also be deduced from the results that, 48.9% of the non-poor ranked households compared to 28.9% and 22.2% of the moderate and extreme poor ranked households respectively were civil

servants. The results were as expected since most of the rural dwellers in the region were farmers as observed in earlier studies by Ekong, 1999; Kolawole and Torimiro, 2006 and Gasu, 2011 and also, the fact that most of those who live above the poverty-line must do something extra than farming, as indicated by most traders who live on a higher income level than farmers. The chi-square test in Table 5 also reveals the differences to be highly significant which goes to reinforce relative poverty amongst the households in the region.

**Table 4**  
**The Cross Tabulation of Various Households Occupation and Poverty in Ede Region**

Occupation	Poverty group			Total
	Extreme poor	Moderate poor	Non poor	
Farming	38.0%	38.6%	23.4%	100%
Trading	6.4%	12.8%	80.8%	100%
Mixed occupation	37.8%	24.4%	37.8%	100%
Fishing	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100%
Transportation	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100%
Civil servants	22.2%	28.9%	48.9%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2010

**Table 5**  
**Chi-Square Test of Cross Tabulation**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	72.281 <sup>a</sup>	10	0.000
Likelihood ratio	70.904	10	0.000
Linear-by-linear Association	11.951	1	0.001
N of valid cases	451		

<sup>a</sup> 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.33.

Source: Field Survey 2010

Results in Table 6 illustrate that 50.0% of the non-poor ranked households compared to 38.9% and 11.1% of the moderate and extreme poor ranked households respectively live in houses with concrete floors. On the other hand, 40.1% of the extreme poor ranked compared to 35.0% and 24.3% of the moderate poor and non-poor ranked households respectively live in houses with bare

ground while 38.9 % extreme poor ranked households compared to 35.7% of non-poor and 33.0% of moderate poor ranked households respectively live in houses with cemented floors. These results were as expected as they conformed to the three distinct poverty groups and reaffirmed the relative nature of poverty amongst the households in the region.

**Table 6**  
**Cross Tabulation of Materials for Floor and Poverty in Ede**

Materials for floor	Poverty group			Total
	Extreme poor	Moderate poor	Non poor	
Bare ground	40.7%	35.0%	24.3%	100%
Cement/Sand	31.3%	33.0%	35.7%	100%
Concrete	11.1%	38.9%	50.0%	100%
Tiles	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	100%
Others (wood, Terrazzo)	75.0%	25.0%	.00%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2010



## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Poverty was highly epitomized in the study area in relation to livelihood assets ownership especially the most valuable asset is land. Land is everything to the rural dwellers and the study shows that 58.6% of the non-poor ranked household owned more than 10 hectares of land compared to 20.7% of the moderate poor and 20.7% of the extreme poor ranked households in the same category. Similarly, the result shows that 42.2% of households ranked as moderate poor income compared to 34.7% and 23.1% rank as extreme poor and non-poor households respectively owned less than 2 hectares of land. The planning implications of this is that a greater proportion of productive asset (land) in the Ede region is in the hands of non-poor ranked households which were equally observed in an earlier study by FOS (1999) which could continue to widen the gap between the rich and poor. If poverty has to be tackled, then there must be a way forward (land reform) to make available this very important livelihood asset to the extreme poor as has been observed in earlier studies in China and Ujamaa in Tanzania.

In conclusion, over 70% of respondents were above 41 years of age and were mostly involved in small scale food-farming. The housing conditions particularly the walls, roofs and floors need a complete overhaul. The general sanitation of the environment equally needs an urgent attention. For wetlands to yield the required results by contributing to the transformation of the rural areas, agricultural activities need to move away from; farm fragmentations, the use of rudimentary tools and manual labour to mechanisation and value addition to farm produce through processing and the use of improved irrigation methods like river channelization. There is also need to carry out land reforms which should involve the total restructuring of institutions and agencies that deal with land matters and organization of the rural dwellers into farming organizations or cooperatives. This will ensure that they could attract funds from funding organizations or banks since most of them in the rural areas do not have "title on land" in the form of land certificates or certificates of occupancy (C of O), hence could not afford collateral security to collect loans for rural agricultural developmental activities.

There is therefore, an urgent need to amend the Land Use Decree of 1978 in order to give it a human face, to be people focused and with their active participation by them. Land reform is like giving back to the neglected rural majority access to their most important livelihood asset, which will also give them the opportunity to own a title on land (C of O), the basis for their existence, the foundation of their life and the agent with which to transform their economy, life and status.

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