

Social capital investment and rural poverty reduction in Kogi state (2012-2022)

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ABSTRACT

This study measured the social capital investment of households in rural Kogi state and new ways that social capital investment of households could be strengthened, increased and used for rural poverty reduction in Kogi state. The study used analyses of variance to test whether poor households in rural Kogi state have inventory of social capital investment for rural poverty reduction. The analyses indicated that poor households in rural Kogi state have; inventory of structural and cognitive social capital, diversified sources that provides access to structural social capital and over ninety percent of the rural households in Kogi State are in a position to increase their social capital investment. The findings implied that giving the high level of poverty ravaging these rural households, it's imperative for the government and all development stakeholders to increase their use of these stock of social capital in tackling rural poverty in the state. This may begin with existing social capital networks that can then be used for other purposes. NGOs and other poverty reduction organizations should adopt the use of groups and networks in the implementation of their programmes in the rural communities; this will help to increase the level of participation and trust in the groups and networks. It is further recommended that government and other development actors pay significant attention to developing the local leadership capacity of existing community groups and networks; this will increase their capacity to identify, harness and utilize the stock of social capital existing in their communities to improve the wellbeing of the rural households while using bottom-top approach in the design and implementation of rural poverty reduction programmes.

Keywords:

Social Capital, Poverty, Rural Households, Kogi State, Poverty Reduction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the gravest challenges facing the world today. A 2022 report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicates that “across 111 countries, 1.2 billion people—19.1 percent—live in acute multidimensional poverty (referred to as “poverty” throughout). Half of these people (593 million) are children under age 18. The developing region where the largest number of poor people live is Sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 579 million), followed by South Asia (385 million)” (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2022). The World Bank reported that the incomes of the poorest 40 percent of the world's population likely fell by 4 percent in 2020. As a result, the number of people living in extreme poverty likely increased by 11 percent in 2020—from 648 million to 719 million. This increase pushed the extreme poverty rate 1.2 percentage points higher than projections going into the year (extreme poverty had been expected to fall). Globally, extreme poverty continues to be a rural phenomenon despite increasing urbanization. And out of the world's 1.2 billion extremely poor people, 75 percent live in rural areas and, they largely depend on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related activities for survival, Gustavo and Kostas (2007). Most of the poor live in the developing world i.e. in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Africa the World Bank Report (2000) estimated that over 200 million people are wallowing in abject poverty. On the average, 45 to 50 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africans live below the international poverty line of one American dollar a day (World Bank, 2000). In West Africa, it is reported that almost all the countries, including Nigeria are classified as either low income economies by the World Bank or low human development countries by the UNDP (Alaye-Ogan, 2008). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently released Multidimensional Poverty Index in Nigeria (MPI, 2022), sixty three percent of the people- 133million – are multidimensionally poor. Multidimensional poverty is higher in rural areas, where 72% of people are poor, compared to 42% of people in urban areas. The report further noted that approximately 70% of Nigeria's population live in rural areas, yet rural areas are home to 80% poor people, and their intensity of poverty is also higher: 42% in rural areas compared to 37% in urban areas. The poverty level varies widely across the

geopolitical zones of the country, with higher levels in the northern parts of the country compared to the south, and in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Kogi State is the 5th largest state in Nigeria by size with a total land area of 30, 3354.74 square kilometres (Kogi State Social Protection Framework 2016) and a population of about 4,473,490 people (National Population Commission, 2016). Although, there are very minimal literatures on social capital investment and poverty reduction in the state, but observations suggests that there is an abundance of social capital available in the state. However, the state has no coordinated social protection policy and thus spends less on social protection, with over 70% of its overall social protection expenditures going to political cronies and loyalists (Kogi State Social Protection Framework 2016); this has made it difficult to measure the impact of social protection programmes in the state. Despite the absence of a coherent/comprehensive social protection policy and implementation framework, many programmes exist that can be classified as some form of social protection activity geared towards addressing poverty in the state (ibid). According to the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), 2.88million of the state population are multidimensionally poor with the highest rate in Kogi East at 77% while Kogi Central stand at 50% with Kogi West at 45% (MPI 2022). In Kogi state, the sight of rural communities is a definition of poverty all-encompassing in itself. The rate of poverty is so alarming, that people are wallowing in abject poverty in all ramifications. The MPI 2022 further reported that “over half of the population are multidimensionally poor and deprived in cooking fuel, high deprivations are also apparent in sanitation, time to healthcare, food insecurity and housing”. It is against this backdrop that this study; social capital investment and rural poverty reduction in Kogi State, (2012-2022) was carried out to measure the social capital investment of rural households and to further examine how social capital could be harnessed to reduce the worsening rural poverty situation in Kogi State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The government and development partners at various levels in Nigeria have always been committed to reducing the worsening poverty

status as the consequences are very grave. Since mid-seventies, successive governments in Nigeria have come up with a lot of laudable programmes geared towards poverty alleviation (Idachaba, 2006). The resultant effects from many of these programmes were virtually unsatisfactory and ineffective due to several factors. These factors includes duplication of functions or efforts, errors of inclusion and exclusions, poor utilization of local resources and adaption to the context of programme beneficiaries.

Through the years, Kogi State has participated in many poverty reduction programmes both by the government and other development partners. Some of these programmes had attempted to harness social capital investment of rural households in their implementation approach; for instance, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implemented the Sustainable Mechanism for Improving households Livelihoods and Empowerment (SMILE) project from 2013-2018 in the state. The Goal of the SMILE project was “to see that the wellbeing of OVCs and caregivers are improved through sustainable, comprehensive & coordinated programming” (CRS 2018). The strategy of the SMILE project included the formation of small groups known as Savings and Internal Lending Communities; through these groups, the project was able to harness the social capital investments of rural households as a leverage to human and financial capital to reduce rural poverty of households in participating communities. The project had significant impacts on the lives of its beneficiaries and achieved its set goal; however, like many other donor driven poverty reduction interventions, the project was limited in geographical coverage as it could only cover about 8 LGAs out of the 21 LGAs in the state, in addition, most of the small groups formed could not be sustained beyond the project period because the operating structures were not well integrated into the community structures before the project closed out.

Furthermore, the FADAMA II and III project was also implemented in Kogi State from 2003-2019. The development objective of Fadama III Project which was sponsored by the International Development Association (IDA) was to sustainably increase the incomes of Fadama users (Innih, Dimelu, & Olaolu 2014). The FADAMA II project introduced a groundbreaking Community-Driven Development model and helped institutionalize local stakeholder engagement in community decision making. Group formation was the foundation of the design, with various users—crop farmers, pastoralists, fishermen and women, and on- and off-farm entrepreneurs—sensitized to the advantages of doing business as a group. (Jenane&Oredipe 2022). The impact assessment report of the project indicated that the group approach supported rural communities to strengthen local associations and promoted their engagement in planning and decision-making as a means of satisfying each community’s particular needs more directly. This strengthened social capital, increased collaboration and cooperation among different groups, ensured inclusiveness and accountability, and avoided the potential for conflict (ibid). Despite all these interventions, the poverty situation in Kogi state is still very high and getting worse by the day with more than half of the state population living in multidimensional poverty. The multidimensional Poverty rate is 77% in Kogi East, 50% in Kogi Central and 45% in Kogi West (Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022). If the government and other development stakeholders are to succeed in poverty reduction programmes in Kogi State, a new approach has to be employed; consequently, the researcher carried out this study on social capital investment and rural poverty reduction in Kogi State, (2012-2022) to measure the various dimensions of social capital investment of rural households in Kogi state and to further examine how social capital investment could be harnessed to reduce the worsening rural poverty situation in Kogi state.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Social capital

Social capital is defined in several ways and experts disagree on the definitions. According to Goodwin (2003), in contemporary industrialized economies, the term “social capital refers to the stock of trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and socially held knowledge that facilitates the social coordination of economic activity”. Recognition of this concept by economists is fairly recent, and has been strengthened by the observation that variations in social capital across communities and societies can help to explain some of the differences in their economic development. This view suggests to us that the meaning of social capital largely varies from community to the other, thus contextualisation is key

in understanding the meaning of social capital. In the words of Putnam (2001), “the central idea of social capital, in my view, is that networks and the associated norms of reciprocity have value. He further added that “operationally what I will mean by social capital in what follows is the degree to which a given state is either high or low in the number of meetings citizens go to, the level of social trust its citizens have, the degree to which they spend time visiting one another at home, the frequency with which they vote, the frequency with which they do volunteering, and so on”. The opinion of Putnam clearly indicates to us that social capital is directly linked to meeting attendance and participation by citizens and how much citizens could trust their neighbours in social relations without fear of being outsmarted. According to World Bank (2004), in the contemporary academic literature, social capital is discussed in two related (but clearly different) ways. The first, primarily associated with sociologists Ronald Burt, Nan Lin, and Alejandro Portes, refers to the resources (such as information, ideas, support) that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people. These resources (“capital”) are “social” in that they are only accessible in and through these relationships, unlike physical (tools, technology) or human (education, skills) capital, for example, which are essentially the property of individuals. The structure of a given network—who interacts with whom, how frequently, and on what terms—thus has a major bearing on the flow of resources through that network. This school of thoughts hold strongly that been in a relationship isn’t enough to qualify as possession of social capital but it is anchored on the individual’s ability to leverage such relationship for economic benefits, this is what translates to social capital for an individual.

The second (and more common) approach to social capital, one most closely associated with political scientist Robert Putnam, refers to the nature and extent of one’s involvement in various informal networks and formal civic organizations. From chatting with neighbors or engaging in recreational activities to joining environmental organizations and political parties, social capital in this sense is used as a conceptual term to characterize the many and varied ways in which a given community’s members interact. So understood, it is possible to conduct a map of a community’s associational life, and thus with it a sense of the state of its civic health. A range of social problems— crime, health, poverty, unemployment—have been linked empirically to a community’s endowment of social capital (or lack thereof), and with them a sense of concern among citizens and policymakers alike that new forms of social capital must be imagined and constructed as other or older forms decline (for example, as a result of technological or demographic change). These issues are relevant to both high and low income countries. Social capital is also defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”. In this definition, we can think of networks as real-world links between groups or individuals. Think of networks of friends, family networks, networks of former colleagues, and so on, our shared norms, values and understandings are less concrete than our social networks. This definition seems to deemphasize the economic value attached to networks and associations, nevertheless, it still holds strong that network and associations are key in human relations and accomplishments.

2.2 Types/forms/dimensions of social capital

Collier in Jjaiya, Sakariyau, Dauda, Paiko, Zubairu(2012) noted that generally, there are two types of social capital “government social capital and civil social capital”. He further distinguished “government social capital” from “civil social capital” by referring to government social capital as governmental institutions that influence peoples’ ability to co-operate for mutual benefit. These institutions include the enforceability of contracts, the rule of law, civil liberty and the extent of economic liberty that are permitted by the state. While civil social capital encompasses common values, norms, informal network and associational memberships affecting the ability of individuals to work together to achieve common goals. In further classification, social capital is widely recognized as a multi-dimensional concept with dimensions such as relationships, trust, reciprocity, and action for a common purpose. Some of these dimensions such as relationships can be further broken down. Claridge (2018) while defining different types of social capital opined that it can have descriptive value, each ‘type’ is not distinct and exclusive – there is significant overlap and interrelationships between each type. He further added that structural social capital is tangible and can be readily observed by the existence of network ties (i.e who knows who) as well as roles, rules, precedents, and procedures. The relational dimension however is intangible since it is what and how people think and feel. It is therefore ‘cognitive’ since it is a

function of people's cognition and has regularly been termed as such. While citing Bastelaer (2001), Yuan (2006), Grootaert, Narayan and Woolcock (2003); Krishna and Shrader (1999), Uphoff (1999), Claridge added that it is common in the literature to find reference to two dimensions: structural and cognitive social capital. Three different dimensions or types of relationships are further described by Woolcock (2000); bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital. He described bonding as the relationships that we have with people who are like us, and typically refers to those relations among members of families and ethnic groups. Bridging refers to those relationships we have with people who are not like us. These may be people who are from a different socio-economic status, from a different generation or a different ethnicity. He described linking social capital as the relationships people have with those in power. Linking social capital enables individuals and community groups to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate community radius.

2.3 Measurement of social capital

There is almost universal agreement that social capital is difficult to measure with a high degree of validity and demand for relevant empirical measures has continued to outstrip supply (Claridge, 2017). Nevertheless, in order to achieve theoretical rigour in social capital measurement, a clear understanding of the concept, upon which to base an empirical framework, is essential (Australia Institute of Family Studies 2001). The Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) (2020) opined that the methods of measuring social capital are roughly divided into two categories: using existing researches or statistical data for analysis and developing measurement tools according to the needs of individual researches. Citing Halpern (2005), CIIF further noted that social capital in social and economic development can be derived from three levels, including micro-level, meso-level and macro-level. Among them, the micro-level refers to the social capital from individuals and families; the meso-level refers to the social capital established in communities (e.g., among neighbours) or work units (e.g., an enterprise); the macro-level refers to the social capital of countries beyond the integration of different parts of society. The World Bank (2004) developed a structured tool entitled the Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital (IQ-SC) which was targeted for household measurement of social capital in developing economies. The integrated questionnaire is divided into six dimensions addressing twenty seven questions as follows; groups and networks is the dimension that considers the nature, extent and diversity of the participation of a member of a household in various types of social organizations and informal networks. The trust and solidarity dimension seeks to collect data on trust in neighbors, key service providers, and strangers, as well as to determine how these perceptions have changed over time. The dimension of collective action investigates how household members have worked on joint projects for the community. The sources of information dimension concerns the means by which poor households receive information about market conditions and public services, as well as where they have access to infrastructure communication. Considering that people in a community can be quite different, the questions regarding the social cohesion and inclusion dimension seek to identify the nature and size of these differences. In the last section, it is important to ascertain the feeling of happiness or the personal effectiveness and ability of household members to influence local events and broader policy responses.

The measurement of social capital therefore depends on the level of analysis (individual, group and organizational, community and national), and also on the interests of researchers – whether they are interested in the source, form or consequences of social capital. Our study used the World Bank Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital (IQ-SC) to measure/quantify household social capital investment of rural households in Kogi State across the six dimensions of social capital; groups and networks, trust and solidarity, collective action and cooperation, information and communication, social cohesion and empowerment and political action.

2.4 Poverty

Over time, there has been no agreed upon definition of poverty due to its multi-dimensional nature. By using the standard of living as a criterion for poverty, World Bank (1990), Central Bank of Nigeria (1999), Oghene and Achoja (2001), Ifamose (2001) and Magaji (2002) in Oba and Onuoha (2013), all see poverty as a condition in which resources of individuals or families are grossly inadequate to provide a socially acceptable standard/condition of living. Furthermore, poverty is the state of not having enough material possessions or income for a person's basic

needs. Poverty may include social, economic, and political elements. Absolute poverty is the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. The floor at which absolute poverty is defined is always about the same, independent of the person's permanent location or era. On the other hand, relative poverty occurs when a person cannot meet a minimum level of living standards, compared to others in the same time and place. Therefore, the floor at which relative poverty is defined varies from one country to another, or from one society to another. In our context, poverty is perceived as a state of multidimensional deprivation of the basic necessity of life that increases the vulnerability of an individual or family.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The broad theoretical framework for this study is the “social change theory” proposed by Spencer (1873, 1876). Spencer linked social evolution to biological evolution. According to Spencer, biological organisms and human societies follow the same universal, natural evolutionary law: “a change from a state of relatively indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity to a state of relatively definite, coherent, heterogeneity.” In other words, as societies grow in size, they become more complex; their parts differentiate, specialize into different functions, and become, consequently, more interdependent. More specifically, the study is anchored on the “economic theory of social change” proposed by Marx (1867). Karl Marx was highly influenced by evolutionary ideas which led to the Marxian distinctions between primitive communism, the Asiatic mode of production, ancient slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and future socialism which may be interpreted as a list of stages in one evolutionary development. The originality of the Marxian theory of social development lay in its combination of dialectics and gradualism. In Marx's view social development was a dialectical process: the transition from one stage to another took place through a revolutionary transformation, which was preceded by increased deterioration of society and intensified class struggle. Underlying this discontinuous development was the more gradual development of the forces of production (technology and organization of labour). The Marxian theory rests on this fundamental assumption that changes in the economic ‘infra-structure’ of society are the prime movers of social change. For Marx, society consists of two structures—‘infra-structure’ and ‘super-structure’. The ‘infra-structure’ consists of the ‘forces of production’ and ‘relations of production’. The ‘super-structure’ consists of those features of the social system, such as legal, ideological, political and religious institutions, which serve to maintain the ‘infra-structure’ and which are moulded by it. The relevance of the Marx Economic theory of social change to this study is based on the proposition that social capital can bring an alteration in the means of production in the society that can lead to social and economic change in the society.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used survey research method for this study. The data collected from the survey were statistically analysed using tables and econometrics models to draw meaningful research conclusions. The data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources; the primary data were obtained from pre-selected research participants through interviews and administration of questionnaires. The secondary data came from the review of academic documents related to the study including but not limited to textbooks, periodicals and journals. The population for this study were the thirteen (13) rural Local Government Areas in Kogi State with a total population of 2,433,500. Because of the heterogeneous nature of the state, the sample was designed to be representative across the three senatorial districts of the state. To obtain the sample size for the study, the researcher used two stage stratification and simple random probability sampling. The State was first stratified based on its three senatorial districts of; Kogi East, Kogi West and Kogi Central. Afterwards, one LGA was randomly selected from each senatorial district to represent each senatorial district. The randomly selected three LGAs along with their population are listed below;

Table 1. Sampling Table

SN	LGA	Senatorial District	Population
1	Ofu	Kogi East	258,500
2	Ijumu	Kogi West	160,100
3	OgoriMagongo	Kogi Central	53700
Total			472,300

Source: National Population Commission 2016

The sample size for the study was obtained using the formula below;
 $N = \text{Population Size}$

z = z Score
e = Margin of error
P = Standard of deviation

$$\frac{z^2 xp (1 - P)}{e^2}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{1 + (z^2 xp (1 - P))}{e^2 N}$$

Working with a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error and 50% standard of deviation, from the population of 472,300, we obtained 384 sample size for the study.

N = 472,300, z = 1.96, e = 0.05, p = 0.5. Substituting into our formula, we obtained our sample size of **384**. Through the use of a structured questionnaire, the researcher solicited information from the participants which were carefully analysed to draw meaningful research conclusion. The use of structured questionnaire was complimented with the use of interview. Participants were interviewed and the data transcribed, interpreted and analysed for research conclusion. The researcher used tabular presentation and econometrics in analysing the research data leading to policy recommendations and conclusions. This involved working with numerical variables using tabulations— including statistics, percentages, calculations, testing and measurements.

Proofs from the tested hypotheses and further analyses of the data gathered provide the basis for us to summarise our findings as follows:

1. Rural households in Kogi state have inventory of social capital investment; there is availability of structural and cognitive social capital for rural households in Kogi State.
2. Rural households in Kogi State have more structural social capital than cognitive social capital; this is supported by the involvement and participation of the households in more groups and networks.
3. Over Ninety (90%) of the rural households in Kogi State are in a position to strengthen and increase the inventory of their social capital. This is revealed by the high level of social cohesion and inclusion, access to communication facilities and moderate level of empowerment and political participation among rural households in Kogi State which are the variables that measures strategies for increasing and strengthening household social capital.

4. CONCLUSION

Thus far, this study has established that there is increased inventory of social capital for rural households in Kogi State that should be utilised for the reduction of rural poverty in the state. Considering the high level of poverty ravaging these rural households, it's imperative for the government and all development stakeholders to increase the use of these stock of social capital in tackling rural household poverty in the state.

4.1 Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of this research, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

Poverty reduction involves gaining access to new resources and more fully employing existing resources. Evidences from the study indicates that poor households in the state have rich social capital resources through their groups and network participation. Therefore, the study recommends that local groups use this worthwhile opportunity to organize and more fully use existing levels of social capital. This may begin with existing social capital networks that can then be used for other purposes. Non-governmental organizations and other poverty reduction organizations should adopt the use of groups and network in the implementation of their programmes in the rural communities, this will help to increase the level of participation and trust in the groups and networks.

Local leadership development: Local leadership is a major key to effective utilization of social capital. In the words of a prominent leadership expert, "everything rises and falls on leadership". Hence, the study recommends that government and other development actors pay significant attention to developing the leadership capacity of existing community groups and networks. This will increase their capacity to identify, harness and utilize the stock of social capital existing in their communities to improve the wellbeing of the rural households.

Bottom-top approach in programme design and implementation: More often than not, most poverty reduction programmes that are targeted at the poor rural households are designed using the top-bottom approach, this approach tend to neglect the inputs of the poor rural households in the programmes that will help them come out of extreme poverty. With the bottom-top approach, programme designers will be able to identify the

social capital base of the households and factor such into their programmes to help the poor rural households.

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