

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS' REMITTANCES TO FARMING HOUSEHOLD (HH) FOOD SECURITY IN DELTA CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Albert Ukaro Ofuoku✉

Delta State University, Asaba

**Abstract.** This study was purposed to assess the contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances to household food security in Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria. Three (3) local government areas were randomly selected for this study from which three (3) rural communities were also randomly selected and 165 household heads were purposively selected from the communities. Primary data was collected from these household heads. Most household heads in the migrants' households were males with average age of 55.5 years, were married and had some form of formal education. They had average farming experience of 21.30 years and average household size of 8.0 persons. Most migrated household members were in the age bracket of 20–30 years. The migrants remitted more money back home than was remitted to them. The food security index was 0.64. Remittances from migrated household members had significant and positive relationships with household food security. It was recommended that rural-urban migrants' should continue to remit money to their households for continuous provision of food for the household members back home.

**Keywords:** rural-urban migrants, household food security, migrants' remittances, internal migration, agricultural activities

## INTRODUCTION

Food security, a widely debated issue that gained prominence following the 1974 World Food Conference, is

defined in multiple ways by various organizations and individual researchers. According to the definition adopted at the 1974 World Food Summit, it means the “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices.”

In Nigeria, there was a general increase in the production of some staple foods in the 1970–1998 period. The per-capita food production (calculated based on the combination of all foodstuffs, including nuts, pulses, fruits, cereals, vegetable, sugarcane, starch roots, edible oils, livestock and livestock products) was on the increase till after then.

A country is food secure when a majority of its population has access to food of adequate quantity consistent with decent existence at all times (Reutlinger, 1985; Idachaba, 2004). At the household level, food security refers to the household's ability to secure food either from its own production or through purchases of adequate food in order to meet the dietary needs of all household members. The nutritional status of each member of the household depends on several conditions being met. Not only that the food available to the household must be shared according to individual needs; the food must be of sufficient variety, quality and safety; but each family member must have good health status in order to benefit from the food consumed (FAO, 2010).

✉ PhD, Albert Ukaro Ofuoku, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Delta State University, Asaba Campus, PMB 95074, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria, e-mail: ofuokua@delsu.edu.ng

Rural-urban migrants are mainly young people who should be actively involved in farming. As a result of their exodus, many labor-intensive farming activities have been abandoned and substituted by other ones that require less labor. This might be the farming system embarked upon by the farmers.

At this juncture, it will be worthwhile to throw some light on the meaning of the farming system. It may be defined as the combination of physical and socioeconomic resources with the available technology to produce what every man needs in a given environment to improve his welfare (Gerald, 1966 as cited by Ofuoku, 2015). Judging from what is still currently witnessed, this definition provides an adequate description of the traditional agriculture system in Nigeria. This situation is prompted mainly by the rural-urban migration of rural youths who should be the potential farmers. However, the migration of potential farmers from the rural areas to the urban centers reduces the absolute number of workforce available within a family. The objective of successive agricultural programs implemented by the previous government was to reduce the influx of rural dwellers into urban centers and to make Nigeria self-sufficient in basic food production. However, though the migrants remit money to their homes, such contribution does not outweigh what is sent to them by their families in terms of cash and farm produce (Ofuoku, 2015). It is expected that the remittances from the migrants to their families would be enough to take care of farm labor, inputs and foods. However, Ofuoku (2015) found that a positive relationship exists between arable crop production and remittances from rural-urban migrants. This implies that such remittances contribute to arable crop production volumes.

The active members of the rural area, mostly young people, become rural-urban migrants and are no longer available to perform the farming work. As a consequence, there is a decline in the productivity of plantation agriculture in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria (Ofuoku and Chukwuji, 2012). Ofuoku (2015) found that the young migrants remit money back home and remittances are used for food/agricultural production.

Food insecurity is common in Nigeria. Ofuoku (2010) believed this to be caused by human trafficking (another form of migration) in Nigeria. However, these migrants also remit money back home. Therefore, a question arises on the share of the remittances in the

amounts spent by rural households on food security related activities.

As a consequence, the purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances to household food security in the villages of their origin in the Delta Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was performed in the Delta Central Agricultural Zone (Delta State, Nigeria) which is sandwiched between Delta North and South Agricultural Zones and is composed of 10 local government areas. This zone has the highest number of urban settlements in the Delta state, and is home for numerous rural settlements.

The population covered by this study includes all rural households with migrating members. During the preliminary survey, 3 local government areas were randomly selected, namely: Ethiope East, Ughelli North and Sapele LGAs. From each of them, three typical rural communities were randomly selected, resulting in a group of 9 communities. A "typical" rural community is small in size and population. For the purposes of this study, typical rural communities were selected as they experience out-migration caused by the lack of social amenities and employment opportunities. The study was conducted between January and August 2016.

With the help of informants, mostly primary and secondary school teachers residing and working in schools in the local villages, households with migrating members were identified and purposively selected to be used in this study. Ultimately, 165 household heads were selected.

Data was collected from the participants through the use of an interview schedule for illiterate respondents and a questionnaire for literate respondents. Research assistants were also employed to facilitate the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires.

The data was analyzed with the use of frequency counts, percentages and means derived from a 4-grade Likert scale: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient analysis was employed to test the hypothesis. The 4-grade Likert scale was adapted to four categories of household food security measurement, as used by the US Department of Agriculture (2000). The categorization is as follows: I. Food

secure; II. Food insecure without hunger; III. Food insecure with moderate hunger; and IV. Food insecure with severe hunger. The above categories were arranged in accordance with the 4-grade Likert scale, namely: food secure = 4, food insecure without hunger = 3, food insecure with moderate hunger = 2, food insecure with severe hunger = 1. The mean security status was calculated by dividing the food security status score by the number of respondents. The grand food security status mean was calculated by dividing the total mean score by the number of local government areas covered. The food security status index was calculated by dividing the grand food security status mean by the number of food security status categories (4). According to the US Department of Agriculture (2000), “food secure” households are households (HHs) that show no or minimal evidence of food insecurity; “food insecure without hunger” HHs are those where insecurity is evident in household members’ concerns about adequacy of the household food supply and in adjustments to household food management, including reduced quality of food and increased unusual coping patterns (little or no reduction in members’ food intake is reported). “Food insecure with moderate hunger” HHs are those where food intake by adults has been reduced so much that the adult members repeatedly experienced physical sensation of hunger. “Food insecure with severe hunger” HHs refers to those where children’s food intake is reduced to an extent where children experience hunger.

The hypothesis was addressed with the application of the Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient. The formula is stated as follows:

$r_{xy}$  is given as:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X) \cdot (\sum Y)}{\sqrt{N(\sum X^2) - (\sum X)^2} \cdot \sqrt{N(\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2}}$$

With:

$X$  = HH food security status

$Y$  = remittances from rural-urban migrants

$\Sigma$  = summation

$\sqrt{\quad}$  = square root

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Most (63.80%) of the household (HH) heads were males. On average, the household heads were 55.5 years old and were mostly (65%) married. The average age is indicative of the fact that they were in their old age years. This is expected to have implications for farm labor demand. Apart from 2.50% who had no formal education, the rest of them had some level of formal education, with an average of 21.30 years of farming experience and an average household size of 8 persons. Their level of education is expected to affect their utilization pattern of remittances from migrating HH members. They were mostly small farmers as they had an average farm size of 1.75 hectares.

### Rate of migration by age

The trend of rural-urban migration is age selective, since most (29.17%) of the migrants were in the age bracket of 26–30 years. The remaining population fell into the following age groups: 31–35 years old (24.48%), 36–40 years old (21.35%) and 20–25 years old (13.54%). People aged 41–50 were the smallest group (8.34%). This is consistent with Ekong (2003); Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012) who opined and found respectively that the rural-urban migration is age selective and most migrants tend to be relatively young.

This implies that most of them are engaged in some kind of income-generating activities in the urban communities where they reside. Another implication is that they must have left a vacuum at home with respect to their labor contribution to household food security.

### Remittances from urban to rural households and from rural households to migrants

As shown in Table 1, a great gap exists between the aggregated total remittances from the migrants to their respective households in the rural areas and the aggregate total remittances from their respective households in the rural areas.

The aggregated total remittance from the migrants is higher (NGN 7,724,000) than the aggregated total remittance (NGN 3,652,000) from their respective rural households to the migrants. The difference is NGN 4,072,000.

This implies that the migrants remitted more money to their households than they received from them. This

**Table 1.** Remittances from and to migrants (aggregated)

**Tabela 1.** Środki pieniężne przekazywane przez osoby migrujące i do osób migrujących (kwoty zagregowane)

Communities Gminy	Remittance from migrant Kwoty przekazywane przez osoby migrujące (NGN)	Remittance to migrant Kwoty przekazywane osobom migrującym (NGN)	Difference Różnica (NGN)
Kokori	194,000	114,000	80,000
Oria	750,000	408,000	342,000
Ekue	1270,000	240,000	1030,000
Amukpe	320,000	210,000	110,000
Elume	610,000	420,000	190,000
Ofuoma	460,000	400,000	60,000
Afiesere	2300,000	840,000	1,460,000
Orerokpe	1,220,000	570,000	650,000
Odovie	600,000	450,000	150,000
Total Razem	7724000	2852000	4,072,000

Source: field survey.

Źródło: badania terenowe.

finding is in consonance with Ekong (2003), Dustmann and Mesters (2010) who asserted that most migrants send money to their households on a regular basis. However, it is at variance with Ofuoku (2015) who found that more remittances were made from the rural families to their migrant household members. This suggests that the migrants are currently gainfully employed in urban areas. Generally, the rural population tends to look up to their HH members who have migrated to urban areas, asking them for help. They believe the migrants to be more financially and socially empowered than those left behind in the village. However, they may not require financial assistance from the migrants to be food secure. The new urban dwellers voluntarily and regularly send money back home to their families as a gesture of care.

#### Contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances to their rural HHs' food security

Remittances from rural-urban migrants to their families significantly contributed to their rural HHs' food security, representing a share of 68% in the total expenditure of their rural HHs on food security related activities (Table 2). Ofuoku (2015) asserts that the remittances from rural-urban migrants to their rural homes contribute to

food security related activities of these rural HHs. However, Ekong (2003) suggests that contributions from rural-urban migrants through remittances back home do not have a significant impact. This is because, in most cases, the migration of able-bodied and energetic young men and women to urban settlements caused a gap between the farm labor demand and supply. In order to bridge this gap, a part of the remittances from rural-urban migrants is expectedly spent on labor, while the rest is used for other food security related activities of their rural HHs.

#### Utilization of remittance in rural households

The bulk (67.63%) of the remittances (NGN 5,224,100) was spent on procurement of foodstuffs by the rural households, while 21.90% (NGN 1,691,500) was used to hire farm labor (Table 3). Farming inputs represented 11.76% (NGN 908,400) of the remittances. The bulk was spent on foods because the HHs could not produce enough food to address their needs. Also, during the off-season, food is scarce as most of their produce had been sold. To address the labor vacuum created by the migrants, the HH heads have no other option than to hire workforce. Tuan et al. (2000), Ekong (2003), Adawale (2005),

**Table 2.** Contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances to HH food security (2010–2015)

**Tabela 2.** Udział środków finansowych przekazywanych przez osoby migrujące z obszarów wiejskich do miast w zapewnianiu bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego gospodarstw domowych (w latach 2010–2015)

Community Gmina	Amount spent by HHs on food related activities Wydatki gosp. domowych związane z żywnością (NGN)	Amount of remittances used Wykorzystana kwota przekazów pieniężnych	
			%
Kokori	250,200	194,000	77.54
Oria-Abraka	1,361,050	750,000	55.10
Ekú	1,610,140	1,270,000	78.88
Amukpe	550,210	320,000	58.16
Elume	1,620,150	1,020,150	62.97
Ofuoma	856,000	460,000	53.74
Afiesere	2,610,120	2,300,000	88.12
Orerokpe	1,560,220	1,220,000	78.19
Odovie	1,415,310	600,000	42.39
Total Razem	11,233,400	7,724,000	68.76

Source: field survey.

Źródło: badania terenowe.

**Table 3.** Utilization of remittances

**Tabela 3.** Wykorzystanie przekazów pieniężnych

Communities Gminy	Food Żywność	Farm labour Siła robocza gospodarstwa rolnego	Input (farm) Nakład (gospodarstwa rolnego)	Total Razem (NGN)
Kokori	116,400	48,500	29,100	194,000
Oria	375,000	262,500	112,500	750,000
Ekú	889,000	254,000	127,000	1,270,000
Amukpe	144,000	96,000	80,000	320,000
Elume	457,000	91,500	61,000	610,000
Ofuoma	299,000	92,000	69,000	460,000
Afiesere	1,656,000	414,000	230,000	2,300,000
Orerokpe	927,200	182,000	104,800	1,220,000
Odovie	360,000	150,000	90,000	600,000
Total Razem	5,224,100	1,691,500	908,400	7,724,000

Source: field survey.

Źródło: badania terenowe.

Ofuoku and Chukwuji (2012), Ofuoku (2015) found that farm labor tends to be depleted by the migration of young men and women from rural areas. Ofuoku (2015) observed that the remittance from rural-urban migrants supplemented what their households pay for hired labor.

#### Food security status of farming households

In 6 communities covered by this study, the households are food secure since their mean score is  $\geq 2.50$  (Table 4). However, there are 3 communities with a mean score  $\leq 2.50$ , suggesting the households are food insecure. A household food security index of 0.64 implies that 64% of the households in the study area are food secure. This confirms the finding of Yusuf et al. (2015) who noted that many households in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State, Nigeria were food secure.

This is an indication that most households in the study area live above the poverty line. Adams and Page (2005) found that remittances from rural-urban migrants have a positive impact on the farming households' level of debt and severity of poverty. In Egypt, such remittances resulted in reducing the population of poor farming households by 9.8 percent (Adams, 1986).

#### Estimation of the contribution of rural-urban migrants' remittances on household food security

Table 5 shows that the rural-urban migrants' remittances had a positive and significant impact on rural household food security ( $r = 0.778$ ) at a significance level of 5%. This means that the remittances from rural-urban migrants contributed immensely to the rural households'

**Table 4.** Household food security status of farming households

**Tabela 4.** Status bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego rolniczych gospodarstw domowych

Communities Gminy	Food secure (4) Stan bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego (4)	Farm insecure with- out hunger (3) Brak bezpieczeń- stwa żywnościowe- go; brak głodu (3)	Food insecure with moderate hunger (2) Brak bezpieczeń- stwa żywnościowe- go; umiarkowany głód (2)	Food insecure with severe hunger (1) Brak bezpieczeń- stwa żywnościowe- go; dotkliwy głód (1)	Score Wynik	Mean Średnia
Kokori (n = 16)	4 (16)	6 (18)	4 (8)	2 (2)	44	2.75
Oria (n = 18)	4 (16)	2 (6)	10 (20)	2 (2)	44	2.40
Ekwi (n = 16)	6 (24)	6 (18)	2 (4)	2 (2)	48	3.0
Amukpe (n = 10)	4 (16)	0 (0)	6 (12)	0 (0)	28	2.80
Elume (n = 16)	4 (16)	0 (0)	8 (16)	6 (6)	30	1.88
Ofuoma (n = 14)	0 (0)	2 (6)	12 (24)	0 (0)	30	2.14
Afiesere (n = 34)	6 (24)	6 (18)	22 (44)	0 (0)	86	2.53
Orerokpe (n = 16)	4 (16)	2 (6)	10 (20)	0 (0)	42	2.63
Odovie (n = 20)	4 (16)	8 (24)	8 (16)	0 (0)	56	2.80
Total n = 160 Razem n = 160						22.93

Grand Mean = 2.55

Household food security index = 0.64

Cut off = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = food security,  $\leq 2.50$  = food secure)

Source: own calculation based on field survey data.

Średnia ogólna = 2,55

Wskaźnik bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego gospodarstw domowych = 0,64

Punkt odcięcia = 2,50 ( $\geq 2,50$  = bezpieczeństwo żywnościowe,  $\leq 2,50$  = brak bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego)

Źródło: obliczenia własne na podstawie danych zebranych w terenie.

**Table 5.** Estimation of the impact of rural-urban migrants remittances on household food security

**Tabela 5.** Oszacowanie wpływu środków pieniężnych przekazywanych przez osoby migrujące z obszarów wiejskich do miast na bezpieczeństwo żywnościowe gospodarstw domowych

Variable – Zmienna	Remittance Przekazy pieniężne	Household food security status Status bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego gospodarstw domowych
Remittance Przekazy pieniężne	1.000	0.778
Household food security status Status bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego gospodarstw domowych	0.778	1.000

$\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance.

Source: own calculations based on filed data using SPSS 16.0.

Poziom istotności  $\alpha = 0,05$ .

Źródło: obliczenia własne na podstawie danych zebranych w terenie, wykonane przy użyciu oprogramowania SPSS 16.0.

food security. This confirms the observation of Lachard (1999) who proved that the number of farming households living below the poverty line had reduced by 7.2 percent in Burkina Faso as a result of remittances from rural-urban migrants. The World Bank (2007) asserted that remittances from migrants have been identified as a roadmap out of poverty for rural households in developing countries. This means that rural-urban migrants' remittances to their rural households are used to hire farm labor, increase farm size, and purchase farm inputs and food (Ofuoku, 2015).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the rural HH heads were males with an average age of 55.5 years, with some level of formal education or the other, and with an average HH size of 8 persons. The average farm size was 1.75 ha, suggesting that most of them were small farmers. Migration was age selective. Higher migration rates were recorded in the rural population aged 25–40. The remittances from migrants to their rural families were much higher than the remittances to migrants.

Most of the households were food secure. Since there was a significant positive relationship between remittances from migrating household members and the household's food security, such remittances contributed to improving the food security. Therefore, remittances from rural-urban migrants used by the rural population had an immense impact on the food security of farming

households. Most of the rural or farming HHs were food secure, and the remittances from rural-urban migrant members of the HHs contributed to that status. Note however that the migrants made such remittances even though they were not a necessary condition for the food security of their HHs.

Considering the above, it is recommended that the rural-urban migrants continue to remit money to their households for the uninterrupted production of agricultural products in order to raise the standard of living of their rural farming households.

The rural-urban migrants should be encouraged to help the rural population with the procurement of farm inputs from the producers or wholesalers, usually based in urban areas, since the inputs attract higher prices once delivered to rural markets, thereby increasing the cost of food production in rural farming HHs.

Rural-urban migrants who fail to remit money home need to be educated on why they need to do so. Note that this group of migrants originated from those very few rural HHs that were food insecure in the area covered by this study.

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## UDZIAŁ ŚRODKÓW FINANSOWYCH PRZEKAZYWANYCH PRZEZ OSOBY MIGRUJĄCE Z OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH DO MIAST W ZAPEWNIANIU BEZPIECZEŃSTWA ŻYWNOŚCIOWEGO GOSPODARSTW DOMOWYCH ROLNIKÓW W CENTRALNEJ STREFIE ROLNICZEJ DELTA W NIGERYJSKIM STANIE DELTA

**Streszczenie.** Celem niniejszego badania jest ustalenie, w jakim stopniu środki finansowe przekazywane przez osoby migrujące z obszarów wiejskich do miast przyczyniają się do zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego gospodarstw domowych rolników w Centralnej Strefie Rolniczej Delta w nigeryjskim stanie Delta. Na potrzeby badania wybrano losowo trzy okręgi samorządowe, z których następnie wybrano losowo trzy gminy wiejskie. W ich obrębie metodą doboru celowego wytypowano 165 głów gospodarstw domowych, od których uzyskano dane podstawowe. Większość głów gospodarstw domowych stanowili zonnaci mężczyźni o średniej wieku 55,5 roku, którzy zdobyli wykształcenie w ramach edukacji formalnej. W ujęciu średnim ich doświadczenie w prowadzeniu działalności rolniczej obejmowało okres 21,30 roku, a liczba osób w ich gospodarstwach domowych wynosiła 8,0. Większość migrujących członków gospodarstw domowych należała do przedziału wiekowego od 20 do 30 lat. Osoby te przekazywały do swoich domów więcej pieniędzy, niż same otrzymywały. Wskaźnik bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego wynosił 0,64. Przekazy pieniężne od migrujących członków gospodarstw domowych miały znaczny i dodatni wpływ na bezpieczeństwo żywnościowe gospodarstwa domowego. Zaleca się, aby osoby migrujące z obszarów wiejskich do miast w dalszym ciągu przekazywały środki pieniężne do swoich gospodarstw domowych w celu zapewnienia nieprzerwanych dostaw żywności do gospodarstwa domowego po ich powrocie do domu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** osoby migrujące z obszarów wiejskich do miast, bezpieczeństwo żywnościowe gospodarstw domowych, przekazy pieniężne od osób migrujących, migracja wewnętrzna, działalność rolnicza

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