

Gender Differentials in Household Poverty Reduction Activities of Rural Children

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ABSTRACT In developing countries such as Nigeria, impact of religion and culture which make parents/guardians have full control over their children/wards, and poor economic conditions encourage the use of children as a source of either household income generation or household expenditure/cash outflow reduction to alleviate poverty. This study examines and compares the contributions to family welfare of male and female children aged between 5 and 14 years and living in the rural area of Iwo Local Government Area of Osun State of Nigeria. Data were collected on the various types; the degree of involvement; and the attitudes of male and female children towards their participation in Household Poverty Reduction Activities (HPRA); and were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, regression technique and attitudinal measures. Children contribute to household poverty alleviation with their labour. The amount of hours per week, involvement in domestic activities, and the proportion contributing to family welfare are significantly higher for girls than boys. Boys rather than girls put in significant extra hours per week in family farm labour and hired labour; significant less hours in household food preparation, and in caring for infants; and almost equal amount in street trading and other household chores. Ranking revealed family farm labour and household food preparation as the most important for boys and girls respectively. High proportion of children has unfavourable attitudes towards their involvement in household poverty alleviation, which is significantly higher for boys than girls, because participation affects their leisure and time for study. Since children have negative attitudes and HPRA differ between boys and girls, gender-specific policies are needed to free children for their future capacity building.