

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF PETTY TRADING AMONG RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN SHAGARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the opportunities and constraints of petty trading among rural households in Shagari Local Government Area of Sokoto State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the increasing role of non-farm activities in supporting rural livelihoods and reducing household vulnerability. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 250 petty traders through structured questionnaires using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and mean ranking analysis. The findings revealed that females constituted 60.8% of the respondents, indicating the dominance of women in petty trading activities. Furthermore, 54.4% of the respondents derived more than 50% of their household income from petty trading, highlighting its importance as a livelihood source. The major opportunities identified were immediate cash income (mean = 4.72), flexible working hours (mean = 4.65), improved household food security (mean = 4.42), and low capital requirements (mean = 4.35). However, lack of access to capital (mean = 4.78), low profit margins (mean = 4.55), market competition (mean = 4.38), and poor infrastructure (mean = 4.25) emerged as the most significant constraints. The study concludes that petty trading plays a crucial role in sustaining rural livelihoods and improving household welfare, but its full potential is hindered by financial, infrastructural, and institutional challenges. The study recommends improved access to credit, rural infrastructure development, entrepreneurship training, and enhanced market security to strengthen the contribution of petty trading to rural development.

Keywords: Petty Trading, Rural Livelihoods, Non-Farm Activities, Income Diversification, Household Welfare, Rural Development, Shagari Local Government Area, Sokoto State.