

Economic Impact Assessment of Social Protection Intervention Programme among Widow Farmers in the Flood Belt of Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract— *The incidence of widowhood in this Bayelsa State is magnified by the loss of their spouses to militancy in the Niger Delta Region. This has assumed a worrisome dimension and has consequently attracted some level of intervention from government and donor agencies. It is important to assess the economic impact of such intervention of on the welfare of widow farmers in Bayelsa state. The broad objective of the study was to assess the economic impact of social protection intervention programme on widow farmers. Primary data were obtained with a combination of questionnaire and interview schedule. All the 37 registered widow farmers were involved in the study. Collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools, T- test and multiple regression analysis. The result shows that income of widow farmers was significantly higher ($P < 0.05$) after participation in social protection intervention programme. Percentage of benefiting widow farmers in the middle and upper classes increased. The Gini coefficient of 0.13 indicates a relatively even distribution of the impact of the programme among widow farmers. Cases of vulnerability to property loss flood hazards significantly ($P < 0.05$) reduced after participation in the programme. Social protection intervention programme had a multiplier effect on their households in the area of school enrolment (43% returned to school after the flood hazards and subsequent intervention); school drop-out rate reduced by 35%; and malnutrition of children of school age reduced by 62%. Intensity of participation of widow farmers significantly influenced effectiveness of the intervention programme. This study has contributed to knowledge by establishing the linkages between social protection intervention programme and welfare upgrading of climate change-based-vulnerable widow farmers and their households. We recommended among others that widow farmers' register in the state should be updated periodically to accommodate more widow farmers particularly in the rural areas and more stake holders should give of social protection support in addition to Bayelsa State Government.*

Keywords— *Economic Assessment, Social Protection, Intervention, Programme Women Farmers, Bayelsa State.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Nigeria government had tried to developed social protection scheme in other to tackle poverty in the country, which is in no avail since the country is facing numerous challenges; thereby falling short of the needs of the poor and the vulnerable. This had led numbers of policies recommendations for government to develop on and strengthened (Odi, 2011). The recent food, fuel and financial crises amplifies many of the existing vulnerabilities facing the poor, and almost half of the population work in the agricultural sector, has a poverty rate of 62.7% (Ojowu *et al.*, 2007). Nigeria has a low ranking according to OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), Social institutions and gender index had put inequalities in human capital and economic participation between men and women farmers.

A mapping of current social protection on land-landscape in Nigeria indicates that a significant number of actors are involved in finding and implementing social protection, including those from government, donor, international non-governmental organizations and civil society. Before now, no study has shown the actors that significantly contribute to the social protection of widows in Bayelsa State. There is therefore, the need to investigate the impact of the various actors/stakeholders on widow farmers in the study area,

Widows are among the three quarter of the world's poor and hungry in rural areas (USAID, 2005). In many African countries, widows undergo series of unruly circumstances as a result of their husband's death. This has affected them psychologically, economically and financially; for them to cater for themselves and that of their households. Social protection is an intervention response to alleviate poverty. It is usually rendered by the Government and Development Partners in order to reduce

commonly found shocks among the poor and vulnerable, including widow farmers in the society. These shocks are in the form of social, economic and psychological. Social shocks such as stigma and withdrawal syndrome are commonly found among widows when their spouses die. The demise of their spouses can increase the social and economic responsibilities of the widow and reduces the welfare status of the households. Widows are the bread-winners/household heads, with very little capacity to perform. Their children are more among the school drop-outs, delinquents, and under-nourished. Widows are vulnerable to poor health status, common victims of societal rejection and often ejected by Land Lords due to inability to service house rents. They are most losers of land use conflicts cases and often cultivate small farms due to their resource poor status. They are often associated with low farm output and rely on small farm income to cater for their families. The sudden increase in their economic and social responsibilities coupled with their inability to satisfy basic needs of the family poised a serious welfare challenge.

There is an increasing concern about the social and economic problems confronting widows in the society. Such problems include poverty, inequality and deprivations. These problems are often influenced by limited economic opportunities in the society.

Most times widow farmers lack the ability to break out of poverty trap and assort. Despite the magnitude and the importance of the welfare crisis, there has been no study conducted to assess the level of welfare of widow farmers who had benefitted or otherwise, from social protection intervention programme in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This necessitates a comprehensive empirical investigation on the economic impact assessment on the welfare of widow farmers in social protection intervention programmes in Bayelsa State. The present study seeks to analyze the economic impact assessment of social protection intervention programme on the welfare of widow farmers in Bayelsa state, Nigeria.

The finding of this study is useful to the government in the area of welfare policy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, the outcome of this research would be useful to stakeholders and donor agencies as a tool for monitoring and evaluation of social protection intervention programme in the study area.

1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The broad of objective of this study is to determine the effect of social protection programmes on the economic well being of widow farmers in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives include to:

- i. identify the types of support and the corresponding stakeholders of social protection intervention enjoyed by widow farmers in the study area;

- ii. assess the impact of social protection intervention on widow farmers in terms of income, property loss and land ownership in the study;
- iii. assess the effect of participation in social protection programme on the welfare of households of widow farmers in the study area;
- iv. ascertain the factors that influence the effectiveness of social protection programme among widow farmers in the study area.

1.2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses (Ho) were formulated and tested to guide the study:

- i) **HO₁**: - The selected factors have no significant joint effect on the effectiveness of the social protection intervention programme among widow farmers in the study area.
- ii) **HO₂**: - There is no significant difference between the welfare (income) level of widow farmers before and after participation in the social protection intervention programme in the study area.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The area was chosen for the study because the researcher had observed the plight of widows who lost their spouses to militancy during the crisis in the region. Purposive sampling procedure was used to obtain members of population for the study. They were drawn from the list of registered Widow Farmers in all the Local Government Area of Bayelsa State; gotten from the State Ministry of Women Affairs Commission. The sample frame of the study was equaled to the total sample size of 37 respondents. Structured questionnaire, interview schedule and focus group discussion were used to obtain primary data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into sections according to the specific objectives of the study. The following analytical tools were used to analyze the collected data so as to realize the stated objectives of the study..

(i) Analysis of Types of Support and Stakeholders of Social Protection Intervention for Widow Farmers

The distribution of types of social protection supports and the relevant stakeholders were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, frequency table and pie chart).

(ii) Analysis of the Impact of Social Protection Intervention on Widow Farmers

Three dimensions of impact was analyze in this study using the student T- test such as income of widow farmers before and after participation, vulnerability to property loss before and after participation, and vulnerability with respect to land ownership before and after participation.

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_p - \bar{X}_{np}}{\sqrt{\frac{S^2_p}{n_p} + \frac{S^2_{np}}{n_{np}}}}$$

Where;

\bar{X}_p	=	Mean before participation
\bar{X}_{np}	=	Mean after participation
S^2_p	=	Variance before participation
S^2_{np}	=	Variance after participation
n_p	=	Numbers before participation
n_{np}	=	Number s after participation

(iii) Analysis of the Effect of Participation in the Social Protection on Welfare of Widow Farmer’s Household Members

The effect of participation in the social protection intervention programme on welfare of households of widow farmers were analyzed using percentage difference of the relevant variables before and after participation such as:

- Cases of ability to support children school enrolment
- Cases of children school drop-out
- Cases of inability to pay rent and ejection by landlords
- Cases of malnutrition among children of school age

(iv) Analysis of Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of social protection Intervention Programme.

The factors influencing the effectiveness of social protection intervention programme were analyzed using Multiple Regression. Effectiveness was measured on 5-point Likert-type Scale (**very effective = 5, effective = 4, moderately effective = 3, slightly effective = 2, not**

effective = 1), while the independent variable were measured on 3 Point Likert-Type-Scale as follows:

- **Intensity** = Mild intensity = 1; Limited intensity = 2; Widespread intensity = 3
- **Duration** = One-off = 1; Moderate = 2; Persistent = 3
- **Frequency** = Rare = 1; Moderate = 2; Common = 3

Model Specification

Model 1: Impact of Social Protection Programme on welfare of the widow farmers (Counter Factual Assessment)

Vulnerability is the degree of exposure to shocks. Accordingly, the vulnerability of widow farmers is assessed by the difference between their economic wellbeing before and after the demise of their spouses. This accounts for economic wellbeing (protection) lost by the widow farmers.

This was achieved using students T- test as represented below:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_p - \bar{X}_{np}}{\sqrt{\frac{S^2_p}{n_p} + \frac{S^2_{np}}{n_{np}}}}$$

For Income, where;

\bar{X}_p	=	Mean income of widow farmers before participation (₦)
\bar{X}_{np}	=	Mean income of widow farmers after participation (₦)
S^2_p	=	Variance of income of widow farmers before participation (₦)
S^2_{np}	=	Variance of income of widow farmers after participation (₦)
n_p	=	Number of widow farmers before participation
n_{np}	=	Numbers of widow farmers after participation

Then the **5-point Likert Scale** was used to rate the degree of vulnerability such as: (**very serious = 5, serious = 4, moderately serious = 3, slightly serious = 2, not serious = 1**), while the use of student **T-test** was used to compare the

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_p - \bar{X}_{np}}{\sqrt{\frac{S^2_p}{n_p} + \frac{S^2_{np}}{n_{np}}}}$$

For Property Loss, where;

- \bar{X}_p = Mean of property loss before participation
 \bar{X}_{np} = Mean of property loss after participation
 S^2_p = Variance of property loss before participation
 S^2_{np} = Variance of property loss after participation
 n_p = Numbers of widow farmers who loss property before participation
 n_{np} = Numbers of widow farmers who loss property after participation

For Land Ownership, where;

- \bar{X}_{np} = Mean of land ownership before participation
 \bar{X}_p = Mean of land ownership after participation
 S^2_p = Variance of land ownership before participation
 S^2_{np} = Variance of land ownership after participation
 n_p = Numbers of widow farmers who owned land before participation
 n_{np} = Numbers of widow farmers who owned land after participation

Model 2: Determinants of Effectiveness of Social Protection Intervention Programmes among Widow Farmers.

This was achieved with the use of multiple regression models as stated below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1DR + \beta_2INT + \beta_3FRQ + e_i$$

Where;

Y = Effectiveness Scale (**Likert scale: very effective = 5; effective = 4; moderately effective = 3; not effective = 2; not very effective = 1**).

DR = Duration of participation in social protection programme

INT = Intensity of participation in social protection programme

FRQ = Frequency of participation in social protection programme

β_0 = intercept term

$\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Coefficient of parameter estimate

e_i = error term

III. FINDINGS

The results of the study are presented and discussed in this section

3.1. Types of Social Protection Intervention Programme enjoyed by Widow Farmers

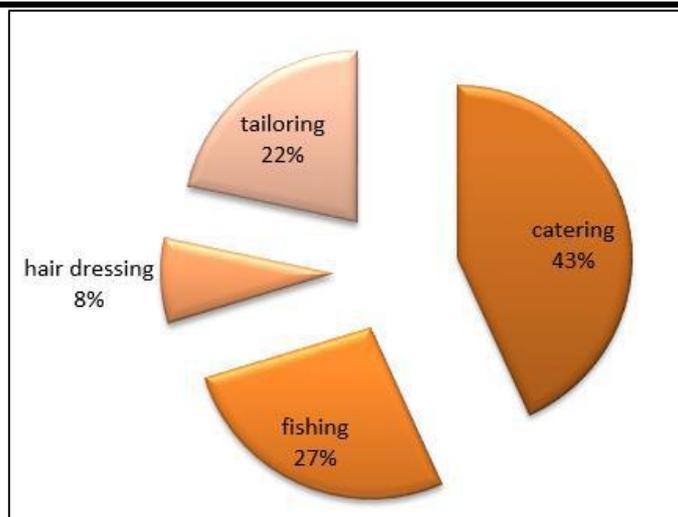
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Table.1: Distribution of types of Social Protection intervention enjoyed by widow farmers

Types of Support	Freq	%	Stakeholders/ Intervener
Catering Skill	16	43.24	Government of
Fishing Skill	10	27.03	Bayelsa State
Hair Dressing Skill	3	8.11	
Tailoring Skill	8	21.62	
Total	37	100	
Cash Transfer (Starter Pack)	37	100	Government of Bayelsa State
Total	37	100	

(Source: 2017 field data)

Tables 1 shows the level of supports enjoyed by the widow farmers in terms of skill acquisition programmes and cash transfer made in other to elevate their welfare. 43% of the widow farmers acquired skills in Catering; 27% acquired skills in Fishing; 8% had skills in Hair dressing; while 22% had skills in Tailoring, making it a total of 100% participation. Also cash transfer (Starter Pack) was made available to all the widow farmers who participated; making it total of 100% supports made available by the Government.



(Source, 2017 field data)

Fig.1: Distribution of skills acquired by widow farmers after intervention represented in a pie chart

3.2. Impact of social protection intervention on widow farmers in terms of income, (Counterfactual Assessment).

Table.2: Statistical difference between mean income before and after participation in social protection programme

Paired differences							
Variables	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	T	N	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Income level before participation (₦)	41216.21	9004.50338	1480.33124	30.672	37	36	.000
Income level after participation (₦)	86621.62						

Table 2 shows the statistical difference between mean income before and after participation in social protection programme. Table 2 shows that there was a mean difference of ₦45,405.41. The difference was statistically significant at 1% level, implying that there is a significant difference in the income level of widow farmers before

and after participation. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the welfare (income) level of the widow farmers who participated in social protection intervention programme is rejected and the alternative accepted.

Table.3: Distribution of income of widow farmer before and after participation in social protection programme

Welfare Status	Income Before (₦)	Income After (₦)
Core Poor	21,923	57,276
Poor	46,000	78,460
Not Poor	66,666	110,000

(Source: 2017 field data)

Table 3 shows the distribution of welfare status of widow farmers before and after participation in social protection intervention programme. The Table 3 reveals that before participation, some of the widow farmers were extremely core poor (₦21,923); some moderately poor (₦46,000)

and others not poor (₦66,666). After participation in the social protection intervention programme, cash transfers were made and therefore increasing their welfare status to ₦57,000 (core poor); ₦78,460 (poor) and ₦110,000 (not poor) respectively.

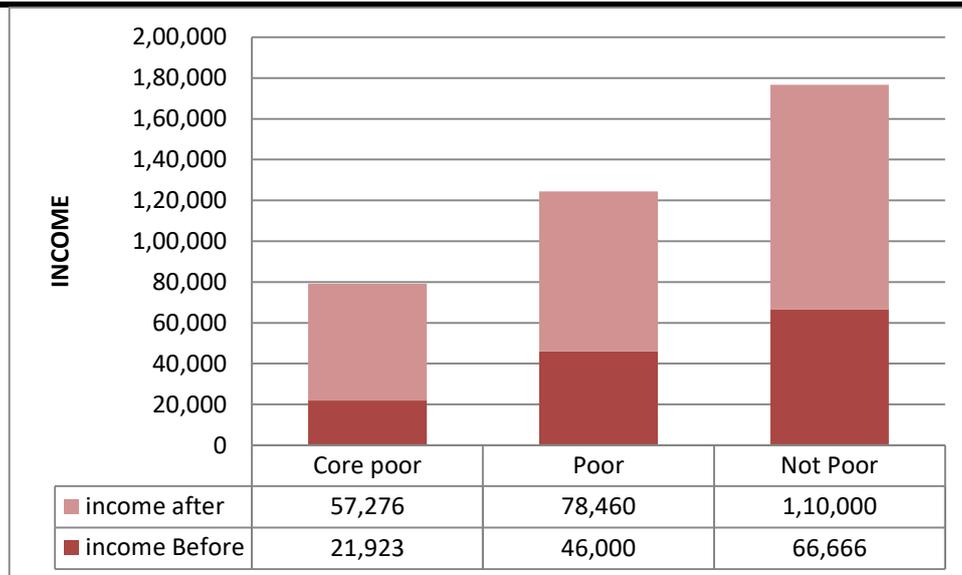


Fig.2: Income Effect of Social Protection on Widow Farmers

Figure 2 presents the Income distributions of social protection intervention on widow farmers before and after participation.

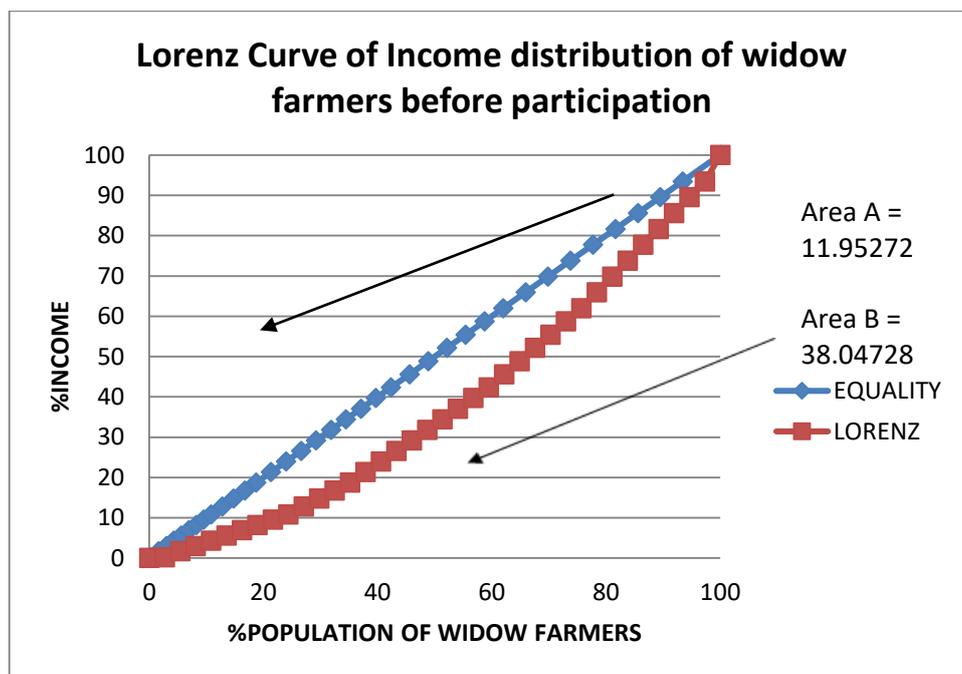


Fig.3: Income distribution of widow farmers before participation

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Gini coefficient} &= \text{Area A} / \text{Area A} + \text{Area B} \\
 &= 11.95272 / (11.95272 + 38.04728) \\
 &= 0.2390544
 \end{aligned}$$

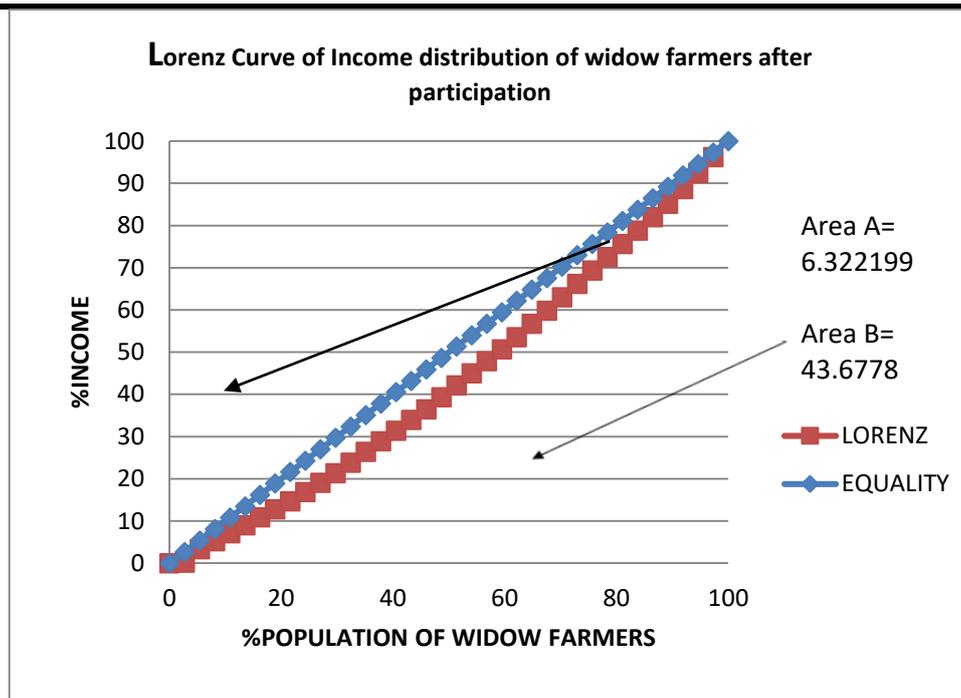


Fig.4: Income distribution of widow farmers after participation

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Gini coefficient} &= \text{Area A} / (\text{Area A} + \text{Area B}) \\ &= 6.322199 / (6.322199 + 43.6778) \\ &= 0.12644398 \end{aligned}$$

The Gini coefficient of widow farmers before participation in social protection intervention program was 0.239 while it was 0.126 after participation in social protection intervention program. The result of the Gini coefficient shows that there was a more equal distribution

of income among widow farmers after participation than before participation in the social protection intervention program. This also shows that almost all the widow farmers benefited equally in the social protection program. The more the Gini coefficient tends to 1 the more the inequality while the more it tends to zero (0) the lesser the inequality of income distribution.

Table.4: Distribution of widow farmers according to welfare classes before and after participation in social protection intervention programme.

Welfare Classes	Before Intervention	After Intervention	% Difference
Core Poor (Lower Class)	52%	16%	-36%
Poor (Middle Class)	21%	34%	13 %
Not Poor (Upper Class)	27%	50%	23%
Total	100%	100%	

(Source: 2017 field data)

Table 4 shows the distribution of widow farmers according to welfare classes before and after participation in the social protection intervention programme. Before participation, 52% of the widow farmers were core poor indicating a lower class; 21% as middle class (Poor); while 27% were in the upper class (Not Poor). After intervention in the social protection programme, the lower

class significantly improved (16%) with a degrees in mean difference of 36%; those in the middle class (34%) was higher with a mean difference of 13%, while those classified as upper class (50%) was also higher with a mean difference of 23%. This implies that the social protection programme was impactful in changing their welfare classes.

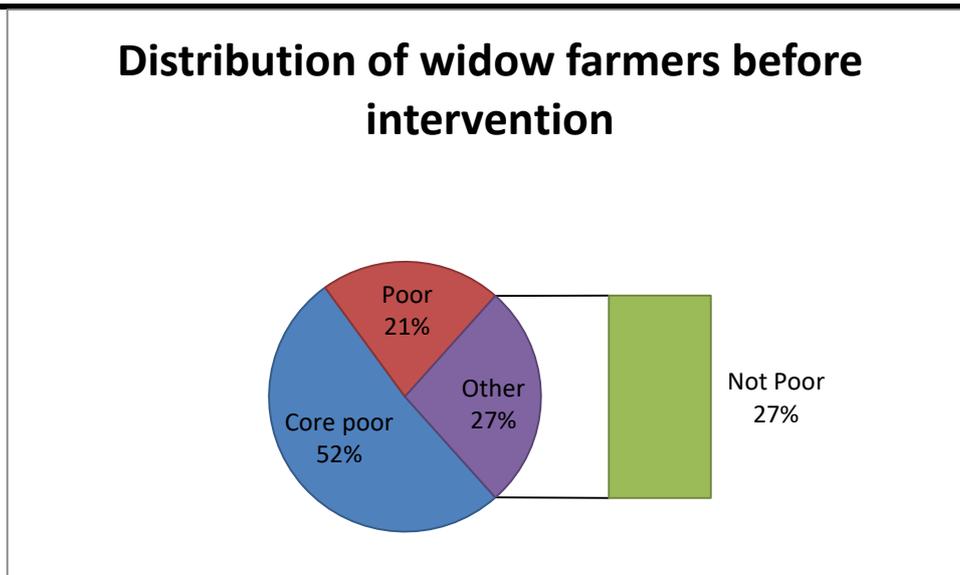


Fig.5: Distribution of widow farmers' welfare classes before participation in the social protection program

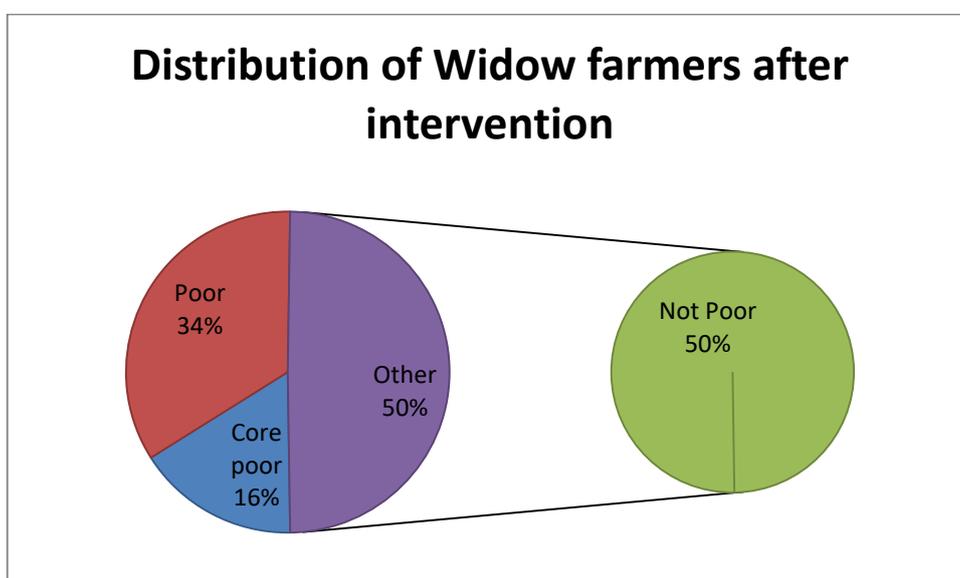


Fig.6: Distribution of widow farmers' welfare classes after participation in social protection programme.

3.3. The Effect of Participation in the Social Protection on Welfare of Households of Widow Farmers

Table.5: The Effect of Participation in the Social Protection on Welfare of Households of Widow Farmers

S/N	Variables	Before participation (N=37)		After participation (N=37)		% Impact	% Impact Ranking
		Freq (Yes)	%	Freq (Yes)	%		
1	Cases of ability for children School Enrolment	10	27.02	26	70.27	43.23	2 nd
2	Cases of children School Drop Out	21	56.76	8	21.62	35.14	3 rd
3	Inability to pay rent and Ejection by Landlords	18	48.65	6	16.21	32.44	4 th
4	Malnutrition among children of school age	30	81.08	7	18.92	62.16	1 st

(Source: 2017, field data)

Table 5 shows the level of vulnerability faced by the households of widow farmers, as result of demise of their spouse, and the intervention/effect of social protection programme on the households.

3.4. Widow Farmers’ Households Vulnerability and Social Protection Intervention Programme

Before participation in the social protection programme, 27% of the widow farmers had cases of inability for enrolment of children to school; 57% had cases of children school drop-out; and 49% were not able to pay their house rent and were ejected by their landlords; while 81% of the widow farmers had cases of malnutrition among their school children. This indicates that the welfare status of households of widow farmers before participation was very poor, since the widow famers had automatically become the bread winner of the households as a result of their deceased spouse. This situation had left many widow farmers traumatized.

After participation in the social protection, Table 5.shows that the numbers of children school enrolment increased to 70%; numbers of school drop-out reduced to 22%; the ability to pay house rent increased and the ejection by Landlords reduced by 16% and cases of malnutrition

among school children improved to 19%. This implies that social protection intervention programme was very effective on the households of the widow farmers and their livelihood.

The impact of social protection intervention on widow’s welfare cannot be over-emphasized as it added more value to the households. The cases of ability for school enrolment had a mean difference of 43%; cases of children school drop-out decreased with a mean difference of 35%; the widow farmers were now able to pay their rents with a mean difference of 32%, and the level of malnutrition reduces drastically with a mean difference of 62%. This implies that the social protection intervention programme was effective as it affects their economic standards positively and there by eradicating poverty.

3.4.1., Impact Ranking

The decrease in cases of malnutrition among children of school age ranked 1st; cases of ability for children school enrollment ranked 2nd; cases of school drop-out ranked 3rd; and lastly the ability of widow farmers to pay rent ranked 4th.

3.5. Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Social Protection Intervention Programme.

Table.6: Factor influencing the effectiveness of social protection intervention

Model summary					
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	
	0.531	0.282	0.216	1.08301	
ANOVA					
	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Regression	15.186	3	5.062	4.316	0.011
Residual	38.706	33	1.173		
Total	53.892	36			
Variables in the equation					
	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t-Ratio	P
(constant)	2.526	0.637		3.967	0.000
Intensity	0.871	0.397	0.341**	2.193	0.035
Duration	0.532	0.334	0.264	1.594	0.121
Frequency	0.641	0.339	0.328*	1.891	0.067

**significant at 5%

a. Dependent Variable: level of effectiveness in terms of skills acquired

Table 6 shows the level of effectiveness in terms of skills acquired during social protection programme of widow farmers in Bayelsa State. The result from Table 6 indicates that the R² of 0.282 which is the coefficient of determination and the goodness of fit test suggest that 28% of the total variation on changes in the level of effectiveness in terms of skills acquired during social

protection programme of widow farmers was explained by intensity, duration and frequency combined together.

3.5.1. Intensity of social protection intervention programme

The skills acquired were able to affect the welfare of the widow farmers when used with intensity. Intensity was measured on mild intensity, limited intensity, and widespread intensity. The volume of supports widow farmers received had a widespread impact because all the

respondents (37 respondents) participated in the social protection intervention programme in the following areas such as catering, fishing, hair dressing, and tailoring. Table 6 shows the coefficient of intensity (0.341) which has a positive linear relationship and is statistically significant at 5% probability level. This implies that at 1% increase in intensity will lead to a corresponding increase in the level of effectiveness in terms of skills acquired. Therefore intensity is said to be widespread across all the widow farmers which in-turn added value to the lives of the widow farmers and in elevating their status.

3.5.2. Duration of social protection intervention programme

The duration of social protection programme on widow farmers was measured such as; one-off, moderate, and persistent. From the respondents, duration of the programme wasn't enough and was too short (one-off) for one to acquire full knowledge of skills. From Table 6, the result indicates that the coefficient of duration (0.264) was positive but was not statistically significant. This is so because the longer the duration of the social protection intervention programme the more the impact on their performance but the lesser the duration the lesser the impact.

3.5.3. Frequency of social protection intervention programme

Frequency was measured with rare, moderate, and common. From the respondents; the level of supports received wasn't enough (rare) to stimulate continues livelihood. The coefficient of frequency (0.328) had a positive linear relationship with the level of effectiveness in terms of skills acquired, at 5% probability level. This implies that the more the frequency, the more impact the widow farmers receives, the lesser the frequency, the minimal impact the widow farmers receives. Therefore the result indicates that; an increase in frequency of skills acquired by 1 unit will lead to corresponding increase in the level of effectiveness of social protection intervention programme. Thus the coefficient of frequency was positive but not statistically significant.

However, the effectiveness of social protection intervention programme on widow's welfare was effective when used with intensity but not with frequency and duration. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that the selected factors have no significant joint effect on the effectiveness of social protection intervention programme among widow farmers is rejected and the alternative accepted. This is in line with the World Social Protection Report (2014/15), 'Better social protection, including support in coping with financial consequences of life events and access to health care, will help for worker (widow farmers) to find and sustain decent and productive employment (skills)'. Also, the African Union (AU) views Social Protection as a range of public

(government funded) measures that gives support to all citizens and helps individuals, households, and communities to better manage risk and participate actively in all sphere of life.

IV. DISCUSSION

The finding in Table 1. implies that all the 37 registered widow farmers in the State were giving supports. The major support giving was fish farming, but additional supports were added to add value and fetch more income for the widow farmer's welfare. This finding is in agreement with the earlier assertion of Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler (2004) who opined that Social Protection is a public and private initiatives that provide income transfer to the poor; protect vulnerability against livelihood risks; enhancing social status and rights with the overall objectives of reducing economic and social vulnerability of the poor and marginalized groups. The findings in Tables 2, Table 3 and Fig 2 imply that the intervention of social protection programme had a positive impact on widow farmer's welfare, in improving their economic well-being. This result supports Barrientos and Hulme (2008) who observe that the initially dominant conceptualization and social protection as social risk management "has been extended by approaches grounded in basic human needs and capabilities" and that "social protection practice has changed from a focus on short term social safety nets and social funds to much broader armory of policies and programmes that combine intervention protecting basic levels of consumption among poor and poorest households, facilitating investment in human capital and other productive assets which provides escape routes from persistent and intergenerational poverty; and strengthening the agency of those in poverty so that their capability to overcome their predicaments is increased.

The result in Table 5.shows that the reduction in malnutrition of households ranked the highest; implying that the social protection supports provided was able to enhance food security of the widow farmer's households. This finding agrees with World Social Protection Report (2014), which states that Social Protection policies are an essential elements of realizing children's rights, ensuring their well-being, breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability, helping all children realize their full potential.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vulnerability to economic shocks and attendant intervention initiatives through social protection programme was exhaustively investigated in this study. Evidence obtained from registered widow farmers in Bayelsa State indicates that government sponsored social

protection intervention programs was administered through skill acquisition and cash transfer. Beneficiary widow farmer's individual welfare was upgraded after participation. Household welfare also improved through increase in enrolment of children of school age. Their food security status was also upgraded. Effectiveness of social protection programme would require more intensive approach by other stakeholders such as UNICEF, UNDP, Oil Companies and NGOs in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The government of Bayelsa State was the only support of the social protection programme. Therefore, other stakeholders as UNICEF, UNDP, Oil Companies, and NGOs should come to aid of the widow farmers in the State.
- ii. Social protection stakeholders should enhance the intensity of the programme in the State since it is the most significant factor that influences its effectiveness.
- iii *Widow farmers' register in the state should be updated periodically to accommodate more widow farmers particularly in the rural areas*

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