

Assessment of Household Livelihood Diversification and Fisheries Conservation Strategies among Fishermen in Coastal Areas of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract : This study assessed the association between household livelihood diversification and fisheries conservation policies among fishermen in coastal areas of Ogun State, Nigeria by adopting a multistage sampling procedure. The sample size was 90 fishermen from six randomly selected fishing communities (Abureji, Agbalegiyo, Ilamo, Imosan, Iseku and Wharf) along the coastline in Ogun State, Nigeria. Data were collected using pre-validated interview schedule and subjected to descriptive and inferential analytical techniques. Results revealed that majority of the fishermen were married (98.9%), in the age bracket of 41-60 years (71.1%) with mean age of 49 years, had household size of 6-15 persons (91.1%) with mean household size being 9 persons, from extended families (90.0%), either either no formal (43.3%) or only primary education (41.1%), were non-members of social groups (62.2%), and had no other occupations (93.3%). It was also reported that there was generally low level of household livelihood diversification across the fishing communities. Gill nets were the most commonly used fishing gears across the fishing communities (80.0%). This was followed by seine nets (63.3%), traps (56.7%) and trawl nets (53.3%) while fish aggregating devices (35.6%), cast nets (37.8%) and hook and line (24.4%) were the least used fishing gears in the study locations. Results further revealed that coastal fishery was characterised by conflicts among water users (64.4%), absence of protected fishing areas (81.1%), and experience of water pollution (36.7%). Majority (71.1%) of the fishermen across the study locations agreed with closed season policy as a coastal fisheries conservation strategy. This was followed by gear restriction (30.0%). Results of Chi-square analysis revealed that there were significant associations between level of household livelihood diversification and fishermen's agreement with gear restriction ($\chi^2 = 15.545$, $df = 5$), and closed season ($\chi^2 = 11.214$, $df = 4$). The study concluded that coastal fisheries is in a poor state and that it could be improved through the introduction of gear restriction and closed season policies. The study recommended that youths in the coastal areas should venture into fishing, and that government and non-governmental agencies should organize sensitization programmes on fisheries conservation policies across the coastal areas in Ogun State.

Keywords : coastal, fisheries, conservation, livelihood

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