



Dynamics of the Non-Farm Sector and Poverty Alleviation In Babessi Sub-Division, North West Region, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT: The non-farm sector which has suffered long term disregard from policy makers has in contemporary era received substantial consideration at local, regional, national and global levels. This study brings to focus the contributions of the non-farm sector to poverty alleviation in Babessi Sub-Division. The study made use of information from published and unpublished sources (secondary data). A field survey was carried out and 250 questionnaires were administered to the local population. Data was recorded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel version 10 and SPSS version 7. The Results shows the existence of multiple non-farm activities with variations in distribution within the four villages that makeup the Sub-Division in terms of sectors of production, industries of production and scale of operations. The contributions of the non-farm sector to poverty alleviation were examined via indicators of poverty reduction. The non-farm sector in this Sub-Division presently face numerous challenges such as poor nature of roads, socio-political crisis, lack of finance, high level of illiteracy amongst others. The study concluded that an increase in technical and financial assistance by the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations to stakeholders involved in the non-farm sector is a major strategy to boost the sector in Babessi Sub- Division.

KEYWORDS: Non-Farm Sector, Non-farm activities, Poverty, Poverty alleviation, Babessi Sub-Division.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Although agriculture remains a main source of employment in the world and traditionally accounts for a large share of rural household income, a great percentage of the world's rural population still suffers from food insecurity and poverty (World Bank, 2020). This is compounded with high population pressure, constrained land resources and unfinished agricultural reforms (Vasaco *et al.*, 2015) as cited in Gassner (2019). This has exacerbated rural poverty forcing many people to solicit for other means of livelihood in the non-farm sector (World Bank, 2018). The rural non-farm sector which has been neglected for long by policy makers has in the contemporary era received substantial consideration. This has been rooted on the new found enthusiasm that the non-farm economies may hold the key to the impediments of rural poverty alleviation and unemployment predicaments in the world. Rural non-farm development has a key role to play in the reform of rural economies of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Most of these developed economies have only 29% of village households and 40% of the rural population still depending on agricultural activities. This is in comparison with non-agricultural income making up 60% for these village households (Salamun and Sarah, 2020). The North American data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999) cited in Adewunmi *et al.* (2017) indicated that in the 1930s, 30% to 41% of farm households' personal income came from off-farm sources. The number of farmers working off the farm increased from approximately 27% in 1944 to about 58%. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, almost 94% of U.S. farm operator households engage in the rural non-farm sector.

In order to survive, the rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) generally construct their livelihoods from multiple income sources, contrasting the traditional image that they are mainly peasants who obtain their income only from farming. With this, the rural non -farm sector is hailed as a magic bullet for

alleviation of chronic poverty and elimination of food insecurity in rural areas across the developing world (Haggblade *et al.*, 2010). In West and Central Africa, the rural non-farm sector offers employment for the landless poor in the low and middle income countries as 30%–50% depend on rural non-farm employment for their livelihoods as a pathway out of poverty.

In Cameroon, increasing evidence posits the fact that non-farm activities are fairly evenly divided across commerce, manufacturing and services. They are directly or indirectly linked to local agriculture or small towns, and are largely informal rather than formal. Some are services of all types and commerce which are the fastest-growing non-farm sector activities (Baye and Njong, 2011). Non-farm incomes for poverty reduction accounts for 42% of total rural incomes, higher than in the 1960s with 28%. The Non-farm sector has evolved over time yielding both positive to rural welfare and livelihood opportunities with a substantial part of the population involved in activities of this sector (FAO, 2019).

The rural non-farm sector is a good option to generate income, supplement agricultural household income and alleviate poverty (Wirba and Njong, 2019). With the agricultural sector changing, poverty having a rural face and being an unavoidable plaque afflicting rural areas in the world, many rural communities faces challenges of food insecurity and poverty. As a result of this, most rural households engage in non-farm activities to hedge against both income and non-income poverty. Evidence shows that the rural non-farm sector have the potential to provide employment to a large number of young people who would otherwise migrate to cities in search of jobs and the capacity to create immediate short-term employment opportunities which can be more easily tapped by young people (World Bank, 2007). However, to date, non-farm activities in rural areas have been small scale in nature and face constraints that limit their growth. Because of the limited studies undertaken on the contribution of rural non-farm activities on poverty alleviation, and the resulting lack of empirical data and information on the role of the rural non-farm sector, the government and other development practitioners have tended to neglect the contribution of the dynamics of the rural non-farm sector to the overall development process in rural areas (Vasco, 2017). This situation, in turn, has resulted to the lack of a clear policy on the promotion of the rural non-farm sector and suffocation of these activities by stagnation of their growth despite their great potential for alleviating poverty in rural areas.

Despite the importance of the non-farm sector to rural households in both social and economic terms, they lack policy, financial and promotional support from the government due to the diversity of the activities of this sector (Tabi and Ndam, 2013). These activities range across many sectors from farm input supply of agro-processing, manufacturing, transport, construction, wholesaling, retail commerce and personal services. No single line ministry holds clear responsibility for rural non-farm sector activities (Ndamsa and Baye, 2011). This study brings to focus the dynamics of the non-farm sector and its contribution to poverty alleviation in Babessi Sub-Division, North West region of Cameroon.

II. THE STUDY AREA

Babessi Sub-Division (BSD) is located within the Ndop Plain which has a relatively flat topography. It is found in the North West Region of Cameroon (Figure 1) precisely in Ngoketunjia Division. This area is distinctively located between Latitude $5^{\circ}52'0''\text{N}$ and $6^{\circ}8'0''\text{N}$ of the equator and between Longitudes $10^{\circ}32'0''\text{E}$ and $11^{\circ}0'0''\text{E}$ of the Greenwich Meridian. Babessi Sub-Division covers a total surface area of about 240km^2 (Babessi Council and PNDP 2012). It is linked to Ndop and Bamenda by a tarred road and is made up of four second degree villages; Babessi, Baba I, Babungo and Bangolan.

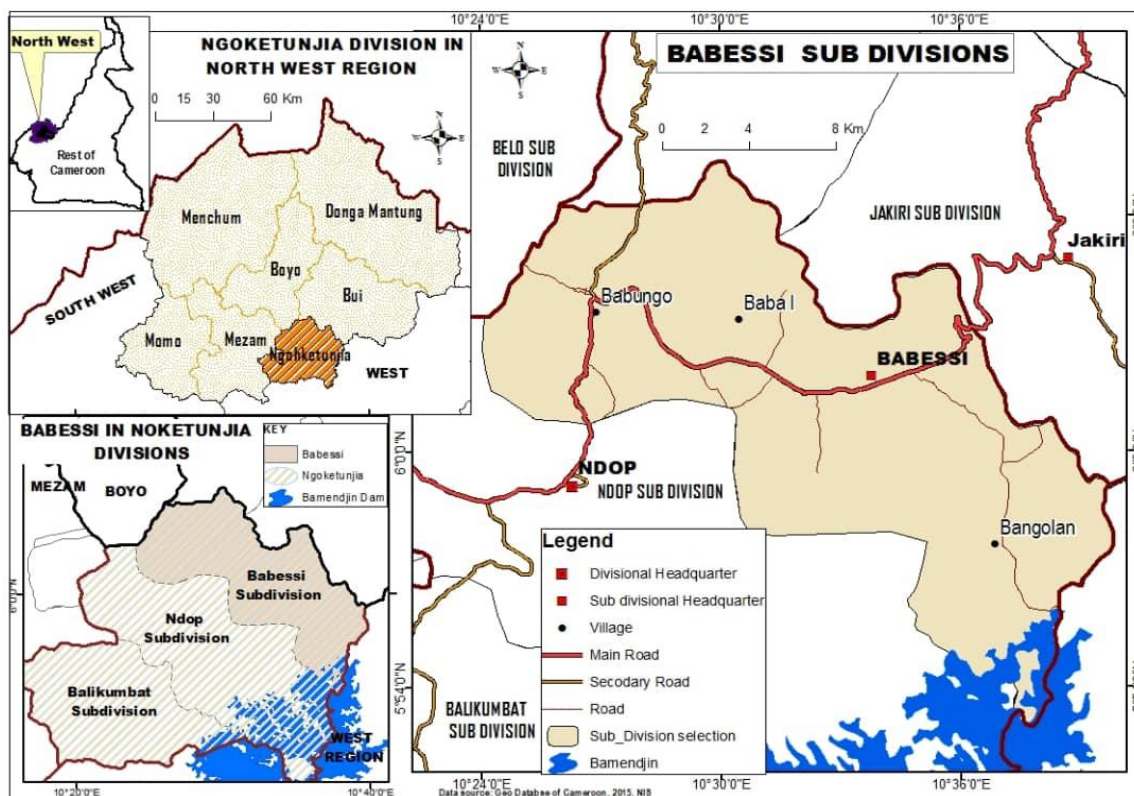


Figure 1. Babessi Sub-Division

III. METHODOLOGY

Two main sources of data were exploited and used in this study. Already existing information that has been previously collected and documented was exploited. This was important in the introductory part of the study to fit it in a scientific context. This consisted of a selected review of published and unpublished documents on the non-farm sector in several parts of the world and its contribution to poverty reduction in rural areas. Primary data was collected and comprised of original quantitative and qualitative data from the field. The quantitative tool used was a structured questionnaire and it provided the main primary data for the study. A total of 250 copies were administered distributed within the four villages that make up the Sub-Division using the purposive random sampling technique to stakeholders directly involved in the non-farm sector. The data was sorted and imputed into Excel where it was tabulated and frequencies calculated. This was then presented in the form of simple tables of other illustrations. The analysis was done in Microsoft Excel software Version 2010 and SPSS Version 7. Cartographic production used ArcGIS version 20.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

IV. I. The State of the Non-Farm Sector in Babessi Sub-Division

Like other economies, Babessi Sub Division is made up of Farm and non-farm activities. The economy which is rural depends largely on farm activities which are not different from the national economy. Agriculture occupies a very important place in the economy of the study area. Though a large part of the population is involved in farm activities as a whole, it should be noted that many persons are involved in both farm and non-farm activities, some in non-farm activities only and others in farm activities only (Table 1).

Table 1: Population involvement in Farm and non-farm activities in Babessi Sub-Division

| Activity | Farm activity only | Non-farm activity only | Farm and non-farm activity |
|------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Percentage | 45 | 25 | 30 |

Source: Field survey, 2020

While 45% of the population in Babessi Sub Division is involved in farm activities only, 25% are involved in non-farm activities. Also 30% of the population are involved in both farm and non-farm activities. This gives a total non-farm activity involvement of the population at 60%. This confirms the high non-farm activities in the sub division. The non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division is diverse in nature. It constitutes a multitude of activities which over the years have evolved from individual initiatives to activities that are family-

based, Common Initiative Groups, NGOs and community based. Due to the changes in nature and pattern over the years the distribution of the non-farm activities therefore encompasses the dynamic patterns of the different activities in the production system and is classified into sectors of production; primary secondary, quaternary and tertiary.

1. Classification and variation of Non-Farm activities by Sectors of Production in Babessi Sub Division

The production sectors identified in Babessi Sub-Division include the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary. Table 2 presents a non-exhaustive list of the non-farm activities identified and classified by sectors of production and variations in population involvement per sector of economic activity.

Table 2. Classification of non-farm activities in different sectors in Babessi Sub-Division

| Sector | Some Non-farm activities | Number of persons involved | Frequency |
|--|--|----------------------------|------------|
| Primary sector | Digging of soil | 65 | 30 |
| | Harvesting of wood | | |
| | Stones mining | | |
| | Sand mining | | |
| | Stones mining | | |
| | Iron Ore extraction | | |
| | Exploitation of biodiversity resources (Plants and animals) | | |
| Secondary sector | Harvesting of forest resources | 92 | 45 |
| | Sundry blocks production | | |
| | Wood processing for roofing of houses and furniture production | | |
| | Shaping and construction | | |
| | Production of cement blocks, building houses, Flooring and plastering of houses | | |
| | Sundry blocks production | | |
| | Traditional health care delivery | | |
| | Local craft production through carving of stools and drums and weaving of baskets and mats | | |
| | Production of knives, spades, dig axe, kitchen utensils and other tools | | |
| | Traditional health care delivery | | |
| | Carving of stools and drums and Weaving of baskets and roofing mats | | |
| | Restaurants, corn flour manufacturing | | |
| | Traditional meat processing, processing of hides and skins, | | |
| Tertiary sector | Services like repair works, tailoring, Barbing and grinding mill operations. | 42 | 20 |
| | Micro finance, money transfer, mobile money | | |
| | Retail Shops Operation and Road Side Vendors. | | |
| | Tourist guides | | |
| | Modern health care and | | |
| | Driving, Bike riding and Tractor Operation | | |
| | Truck pushing, Call Box And Mobile Money Operations. | | |
| Call box, internet services, fax and postal services | | | |
| Quaternary | Government office services and council services | 10 | 5 |
| | Teaching and training (Kindergarden, primary, secondary and high school, higher education | | |
| | Research in IRAD and MIDENO farms | | |
| TOTAL | | 209 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2020

These activities are classified according to sectors of production. There exist variations in the concentration of these activities in the different sectors as well as their distribution in the different sectors in the four villages that make up the Sub-Division. Variations in the distribution of these activities are accounted for by available natural resources, indigenous knowledge and location of villages. Table 3 shows variations in the distribution of non-farm activities in the different sectors and villages.

Table 3. Variations in the distribution of the non-farm activities in the different sectors of the villages of Babessi Sub-Division

| Sector | Babessi Sub Division | Number and Percentage of activities per village | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| | | Babessi | | Babungo | | Baba 1 | | Bangolan | |
| | Number of activities | Number of activities | % | Number of activities | % | Number of activities | % | Number of activities | % |
| Primary | 65 | 18 | 8.6 | 17 | 8.1 | 16 | 7.6 | 15 | 7.1 |
| Secondary | 92 | 27 | 12.9 | 25 | 11.9 | 20 | 9 | 20 | 9 |
| Tertiary | 42 | 22 | 10.5 | 10 | 4.7 | 8 | 3.8 | 6 | 2.8 |
| Quaternary | 10 | 3 | 1.4 | 3 | 1.4 | 2 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.9 |
| Total | 209 | 70 | 33 | 55 | 26 | 46 | 21 | 43 | 20 |

Source: Field survey, 2020

While the highest non-farm activities are found in the secondary sector (27%), the least is found in the quaternary sector of activities which has a focus on education, public sector services and research for development. Babessi village which is the Sub Divisional headquarter harbors 33% of the entire non-farm activities. It has a very large population compared to the other villages with several public and private sector activities like the council and delegations of ministries operating there. This is followed by Babungo village which benefits from its proximity to Ndop, the head quarter of Ngoketunjia division. Ndop is gradually extending into Babungo village and this has led to the presence of several non-farm activities therein. Some workers in Ndop live in Babungo village and easily commute to and from Ndop. Bangolan village has the least in terms of all the activities. It is a village located closer to the Bangourain Sub Division of the West region of Cameroon. It is the furthest village in the Sub Division. It should be noted that this is the village with the lowest literacy rate in the Sub-Division. Baba I village benefits from the centrality of her location. It is found closer to Ndop town compared to Babessi village and also is the closest to Babessi village from Ndop town. Its central position provides it with an added advantage in terms of non-farm activities presence. Several processing activities using local raw materials like the processing of wood and fiber into different products are common in this village. Each sector of the economy makes a specific contribution to the functioning of non-farm activities in the Sub Division.

2. Sector analysis of Non-Farm activities and services in Babessi Sub-Division

Activities of the non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division are classified and carried out according to sector of production. These production sectors are based on local and modern expertise for the harvesting of raw materials and their transformation and production of goods and services for poverty alleviation. The primary and secondary sectors of non-farm activities are analyzed together since the raw materials extracted in the primary sector are transformed in the secondary sector. The tertiary sector activities are analyzed together with the quaternary sector activities which are all non-farm service provision activities.

3. Non-farm activities and services of the primary and secondary sectors in Babessi Sub-Division

The population in Babessi Sub-Division is involved in different activities and services based on the sector of production. The primary sector of production deals with the extraction of raw materials from the environment and in the secondary sector the raw materials are transformed into finished products through the use of skilled or unskilled labor and machinery. These sectors of non-farm activity and services are very important since they involve a bulk of the population and require basic and/or formal education and training. These activities and services are directly involved with getting production materials in their original or natural state for further transformation into finished products (Table 4).

Table 4. Non-farm activities and services of the primary and secondary sector in Babessi Sub-Division

| Sector | Examples of Activities | Number of persons involved | Percentage | Sector | Examples of Activities | Number of persons involved | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------|--|----------------------------|------------|
| | Digging of soil from the environment | 8 | 5.2 | | Sundry blocks production | 26 | 16.7 |
| | Harvesting of wood | 7 | 4.7 | | Wood processing for roofing of houses and furniture production | 16 | 10.5 |
| | Stones mining | 7 | 4.3 | | Shaping and construction | 15 | 9.5 |
| | Sand mining | 8 | 4.7 | | Production of cement blocks, building houses, | 35 | 22 |

| Primary | | | | Secondary | Flooring and plastering of houses | | |
|---|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|--|-----------|
| | Total | 30 | 19.1 | | | | 92 |
| | Exploitation of biodiversity resources (Plants and animals) | 17 | 11 | | Traditional health care delivery | The same persons involved at the primary level | |
| | Harvesting of forest resources | 13 | 8.1 | | Local craft production through carving of stools and drums and weaving of baskets and mats | | |
| | Iron Ore extraction | 5 | 3.3 | | Production of knives, spades, dig axe, kitchen utensils and other tools | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 35 (22.4%) | | | | | | | |
| Primary:65 (30+35)+ Secondary:92=157 | | | | | | | |
| Total | 157/209= (75%) | | | | | | |

Source: Field survey, 2020

In Babessi Sub Division, 75% of the population is involved in the primary and secondary sectors of non-farm activities. The remaining 25% of the population are involved in the tertiary and the quaternary sectors. In the proportion of the population involved in the primary and secondary sectors of non-farm activities, 19.51% are involved in only the primary sector activities, 58.5% are involved in the secondary sector activities only while 22.4% are involved in both sectors of activities.

In the study area, the population is highly involved in activities of the primary sector of production are concerned with the exploitation of raw materials for further direct use or transformation into finished products. Digging of the soil for construction through the production of sun dry blocks is an important activity and involves 5.2% of the population. In Babessi Sub Division, about 95% of the houses are constructed with sun dry blocks, even vertical houses of several levels. The use of soil in construction involves persons of every living standard. Very few houses in this area are not constructed using the sun dry blocks produced from a mixture of soil and water and molded. The molding of soil is the secondary activity that accompanies the primary activity of digging of the soil to transform it into a finished product which is sun dry blocks and involves 16.7% of the population. The youths as well as adults are involved. This activity is carried out between the months of November and mid-March which is the dry season in the area. This soil is also extracted and used to fill construction areas in swampy sites. The Sub Division which is part of the Ndop plain in the upper nun valley has a vast swampy area. Another primary sector activity is sand mining or extraction (4.3%). Sand is extracted and sold to the population in other Sub Divisions in the study area and also to Bamenda. It is the second lead activity because it is used as a support material in the construction of houses with sun dry blocks. It is also used in flooring of houses and in plastering. Several social amenities are constructed using sand like schools, hospitals, markets and public as well as private service provision buildings for offices. There are several sand deposits in the Sub Division. There are quarries in Ndokebah, Mbinzeh in Babessi, Nkwikang in Baba I. Also, there is a sand pit in Nkwikang and Mumbah in Baba I. Other non-farm activities include stone mining which is supplied to construction sites for houses and bridges in the study area and in Bamenda.

The secondary sector activity that follows stone mining is stones shaping by skilled workers and used in the construction of retaining walls. Though its extraction doesn't require skills, shaping is a very technical and skilled activity. The extraction of iron ores has 3.3% of the people involved accounted for by the fact that it is very laborious and time consuming and has gradually been reducing because the use of traditional iron ore to manufacture farming tools, kitchen utensils and hunting equipment have been replaced by modern manufactured goods which are imported and sold in the area. Traditional health care delivery (11%) and local craft production (8.1%) are activities which are carried out only by skilled persons. They both occupy the last in terms of persons involved. Craft activities within the Municipality involve the weaving of fiber bags, baskets and wall mats, the making of bamboo chairs, baskets, ceilings and benches. The materials for these works are locally available in large quantities. Prominent areas of craftworks are Babungo and Bangolan. Traditional health care providers inherit the knowledge of plants harvesting for specific health issues from their parents while the production of local craft requires several years of informal or formal training. While in some activities other persons are involved in extraction of the raw material and others are involved in their transformation and use, local craft resources like logs of trees, raphia palms fibers just like tree backs and plants for medicinal purposes are carefully harvested by the same person who has to transform and use them.

More persons are involved in the non-farm secondary sector activities (58.5%) compared to the non-farm primary sector activities (19.1%). The non-farm activities in Babessi Sub Division are therefore dominated by the secondary sector where most activities are carried out. To both sectors should be added the 22.4% of those who are involved in both the non-farm primary sector and the non-farm secondary sector because of the

specific nature of their activities. These are persons involved in the exploitation of biodiversity resources for traditional health care delivery, the harvesting of forest products for local craft production and the exploitation of iron ore for blacksmithing. They are involved in the harvesting and collection of the raw materials as well as in their transformation into finished products. Secondary sector non-farm activities like building and roofing are less physically demanding and less dangerous compared to the primary non-farm activities like stone and sand mining.

4. Non-farm activities and services of the tertiary and the quaternary sectors in Babessi Sub-Division

The non-farm tertiary and quaternary sectors are fast growing in Babessi Sub Division. These non-farm sectors have been undergoing transformation and having an increasing trend since the creation of the Sub Division in the early 1990's. The administrative uplifting of Babessi village to a Sub divisional headquarter was immediately followed by the influx of several persons to work in public and private offices, to seek for education and to benefit from other services which were newly created like the Babessi council. Most of these services existed in Ndop only which was the head quarter of the former sub division, raised to a division in 1995 by presidential decree N° 95/082 of 24th April 1995. Several sector Ministries are implanted in the Sub Division: Basic Education, Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Youth Affairs and Civic Education, Sports and Physical Education, Social Affairs, Forestry and Wildlife and Territorial Administration and Decentralization and Local Development. The Sub Divisional office is also found in Babessi Village. The staff provides non-farm services that fall under the tertiary sector.

The tertiary sector is also very important as it involves several types of non-farm activities. It is generally referred to as the service non-farm activity sector. The service sector is involved with the aspect of service provision to consumers and business. Manufactured goods produced in the secondary sector from raw materials harvested in the primary sector are retailed in the tertiary sector. Retailing is a very important non-farm activity in the study area. It also provides banking and finance services. In Babessi Sub Division, this non-farm service sector has evolved rapidly during the last three decades.

Leading in this sector as a whole is Babessi village, the Sub Divisional head quarter. Because of its large population, there is need to permanently serve the population with services such as repair works of all types, tailoring, barbing and grinding mill services. These are services which in Bangolan do not all operate permanently but only on market days. In some quarters in Babungo and Baba I like around the Fon's palace, these activities operate permanently but at a reduced scale.

Formal micro finance activities and money transfer exist only in Babessi Sub Division through Express Union and Express Exchange agencies. Each village in this sub Division has a credit union; Bangolan cooperative credit union, CPAC, Babungo cooperative credit union, Papiakum cooperative credit union, and Babessi cooperative credit union. There is also the Baba I Community Bank (BACOB). Nevertheless there is a growing mobile money transfer sector by MTN and Orange telecommunication companies which is now available in all the villages. The population of Babungo, Baba I and Bangolan must not go to Ndop or Babessi village to withdraw or send money. In the transport sector, the use of bikes is at an increasing trend during the last two decades. There is an old tradition to use bicycles in Babessi Sub Division to move from one place to another in the absence of taxis. Small vehicles transport passengers to the different villages on market days and to Bamenda and Ndop daily. Bikes are cheaper, faster and transport passengers to any destination of their choice. Circulation or movement from one village to the other and from one quarter to the other is now done using the bike whose services are available even to transport farm produce or products to the homes or to the markets. The bike sector involves a large part of the youths who are educated or not but unemployed. Information and communication services exist provided by the mobile telephone companies, MTN and Orange. The population uses the social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and others to communicate and carry out business. Modern health facilities exist and involve experts in the sector such as Medical Doctors and Nurses. There are sixteen health centers in the Sub Division with the major ones found in Babessi village; the Medicalized Sub Divisional Health Centre, YIMSO Health Centre and the Islamic Integrated Health Centre.

The tertiary sector involves just 20% of the entire population since some of the activities can be provided only by experts in the domain. Also there is need for financial capital to start a tertiary activity. This large amount cannot be easily raised by the population. Several services are provided by a few employed staff such as in the micro finance domain.

The quaternary sector is the intellectual sector of the economy. In Babessi Sub Division, it involves just 5% of the population. It includes education, training, the development of technology, research and development. It involves innovation, high technology and information. It is the knowledge sector and involves law and education.

It is a sector which is still at an embryonic stage. There are 54 educational establishments in the Sub Division involved in the provision of education and training services have more than 100 teachers. In the field of

research, there is the IRAD seed multiplication centre and experimental site at Babungo, which has as main activity to carry out experiments and multiplication of seed. There is an on-going test of vulgarization of local materials for construction of houses in Babessi. There are 04 houses constructed using locally produced materials by MIPROMALO in the Sub Division.

IV.II. Dynamic trends of the Non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division

The non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division has undergone changes in terms of types of activities, diversification of the economy, change in the purpose, scope and the nature of practice of these activities highly in two periodical trends. These periods include 2000-2010 and 2011-2020. These dynamics in the different trends have taken place over space and time and are a reflection of the different socio-economic activities of the area that are linked to income generation from the inhabitants of the area. Before the year 2000, most of the people of Babessi Sub-Division were more involved in on-farm activities for their livelihoods. This doesn't mean that there were no non-farm activities. They existed but at a very small scale. The period from 2000-2010 was the period of little significant introduction of multiple non-farm activities in the area.

In Babessi Sub Division, 78% of non-farm activities from 2000-2010 falls within the range of less than 5 activities practiced in all the villages. This analysis from the population points to the fact that before this period the major highway crossing the study area was not yet tarred and movement of some stakeholders to introduce these activities in the area was very difficult. Also the level of awareness on the non-farm sector activities as an alternatives means for livelihoods and poverty alleviation were not yet created in the population to diversify their income generating activities in this sector. This explains why between 2000 and 2010, only 6% of non-farm activities were within the range of 11-15 according to the population. The numbers of NFAs in this period are seen in figure 2.

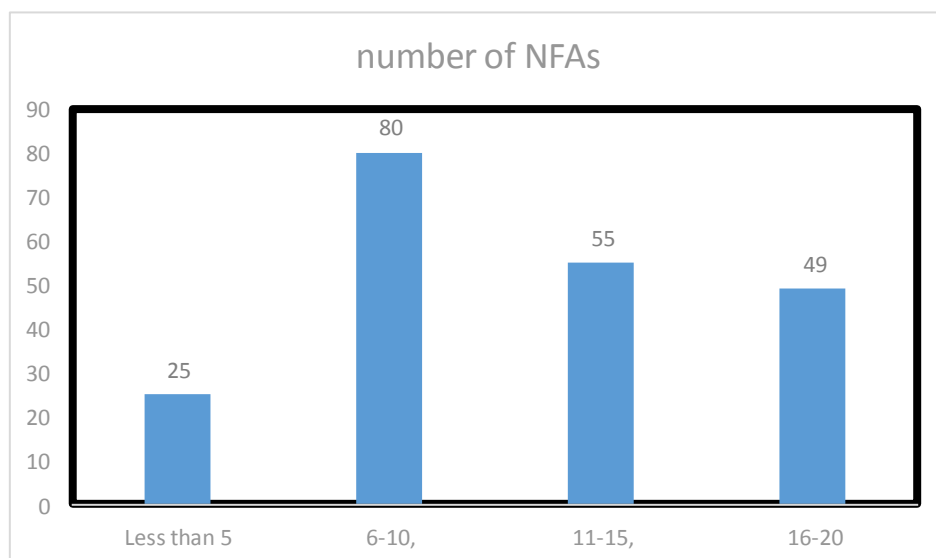


Figure 2. Dynamics in the number of Non-Farm activities from 2000-2010 in Babessi Sub-Division

Source: Field survey, 2020

The scales of the activities throughout the villages were comparatively smaller compared to the preceding period. Across all the villages the scale and number of the population involved in this sector was glaring only in Babessi village while other villages have a significantly unnoticed activity. Most of the rural and remote areas of the study area had no trace of modern non-farm activities in this period. The few activities in the non-farm sector were those based only in the local surroundings and indigenous knowledge of the population. In the early 2010s more activities were gradually being introduced into the economy still at a small scale but higher as compared to the proceeding trends. This was due to the fact that the agricultural practices during this trend did not permit them to meet their livelihoods hence, the need for economic diversification.

The second periodical trend in the non-farm sector of Babessi Sub-Division was from 2011-2020. Multiple non-farm activities were introduced due to increasing population from net migration and natural increase. The primary sector activities were gradually being suppressed. The secondary and tertiary sector activities were taking pre-eminence. Service oriented activities were introduced more into the sector. The commercial sector was more implanted in these sector activities. In addition to the reasons accounted for in the first trend, other drivers were the fact that many more stakeholders like NGOs, CIGs, the state parastatals like the council, GPDERUDEP, ACEFA, MIDENO amongst others joined the indigenous population to improve the

economy of Babessi Sub-Division and fight poverty. Indigenous knowledge in modern production techniques were improved upon by these stakeholders. This explains why between 2011 and 2020, there were modern techniques and systems in non-farm activities in all the villages that make the Sub-Division. The number and rate of practice of non-farm activities in the second periodical trend increase significantly. The variations in these activities were a function of modernism, level of development in the economy, improvement in road infrastructure and the arrival into this sector of many stakeholders who introduced most of the NFAs into this area. Considering the fact that there was a general increase in the NFAs from 2011-2020, there were equally variations in these different villages with the village of Babessi having the greatest proportions of all the NFAs practice in this Sub-Division.

The period from 2011-2015 had most of the NFAs ranging from 6-10 (80%) activities per village. 55% of the activities were all between the range of 11-15. This is proof that the level of awareness on this sector of activities was increasing and population became more interested in the alternative incomes generated in the sector to supplement the incomes from farming activities. This has also explained the sharp drop of the range of NFAs on the range less than 5 from 78%-25%.

IV.III. Contributions of the Non-Farm Sector to Poverty Alleviation in Babessi Sub-Division

The contributions of the rural non-farm sector to poverty alleviation have not yet received the desired recognition based on the general consideration that rural development is mostly driven by agriculture. However 75% of the population revealed that even though non-farm activities in Babessi Sub-Division are temporary, low skilled and low return activities, the informal rural non-farm sector provides the bulk of non-farm employment for rural households and greatly contributes to poverty alleviation in this Sub-Division. To assess the degree to which the non-farm sector reduces poverty in the Sub-Division the poverty line was evaluated. Many households are unable to generate enough resources to satisfy their basic needs which include food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities of life. As it is already clear that poverty in this rural economy is at significant levels, there is need to find out the causes of poverty in this area. The major causes of poverty in order of weight in the Sub-Division are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Order of major causes of poverty in Babessi Sub-Division

| Perceptive Causes of poverty | Frequency | % |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Unemployment | 87 | 41.6 |
| Limited education | 38 | 18.2 |
| Low per capita incomes | 25 | 12 |
| Lack of roads | 20 | 19.1 |
| No job security | 15 | 7.2 |
| Poor management of resources | 12 | 5.7 |
| Poor land tenure system | 7 | 3.3 |
| Others | 5 | 2.4 |
| TOTAL | 209 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2020

According to table 5 many factors act as drivers to the poverty situations in Babessi Sub-Division. Among these factors is unemployment which is the major cause of poverty in this area. The 41.6% rate of this factor causing poverty is accounted for by the fact that there are many youths in this area that are willing and able to work but cannot find jobs. Also 18.2% of the poverty situation in this area is caused by lower rates of education. Lower literacy rate makes a population to take up jobs only in the informal sector.

In Babessi Sub-Division, the number of people exceeds the capacity to which agriculture alone can provide sustainable livelihoods. Many have engaged in activities of the Non-farm sector as a means to generate household income and alleviate poverty and this is observed through the indicators of poverty alleviation like access to basic services, income earnings from the non-farm activities, level of education and training, improvement in living standards for the population, rate of economic diversification, level of employment, availability of shelter and socio-economic stability. All these indicators point out that the non-farm sector is the best way to enhance poverty alleviation and combat massive unemployment. Table 6 shows the contributions of the non-farm sector to poverty alleviation.

Table 6. Contributions of the non-farm sector poverty alleviation in Babessi Sub-Division

| Contributions of the non-farm sector to poverty alleviation | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Absorbs surplus labor in rural areas | 75 | 35.9 |
| Supplement to agricultural income | 70 | 33.5 |
| Income potentials in agricultural off- season | 36 | 17.2 |
| Economic diversification | 18 | 8.6 |
| Help farm-based households spread risks | 10 | 4.8 |
| Total | 209 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2020

The non-farm sector contributes significantly to poverty alleviation in Babessi Sub-Division. The sector absorbs surplus rural labor (35.9%) of the population in the area. The high percentage of this perspective in poverty alleviation is supported by the fact that the major cause of poverty in this area is the high rates of unemployment in the different villages. The absorption of the rural labor is a means of reducing the rural unemployment in this area. The population indicated that 33.5% of income from non-farm activities supplements agricultural incomes as a means of poverty alleviation. This is only when considering the fact that agriculture being the main economic activity in this area is still largely subsistence, small scale and generating incomes that are insufficient to fight the excruciating poverty levels in this area.

There are variations in the degree to which the NFS has been involved in the process of poverty alleviation in Babessi Sub Division. From 2000-2010, the impact of the NFS in poverty alleviation was significantly lower than the period from 2011-2020. The rate and patterns of poverty reduction by the NFSAs have not only shown dynamics in the two periodical trends but its impact is also evident in the different villages of the study area. The temporal and spatial variations and dynamics in the process of poverty alleviation in BSD are seen in figure 3.

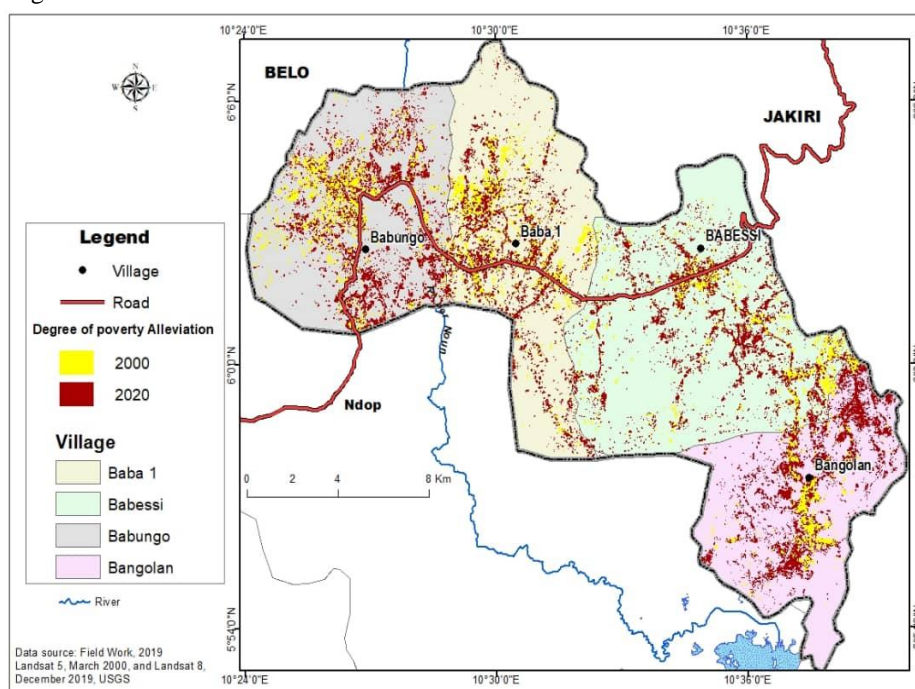


Figure 3. Spatial and temporal variations in the rate of poverty alleviation by the Non-Farm Sector Activities in Babessi Sub-Division

There are differences in the rate of poverty alleviation in the two periodical trends. In the year 2000 most of the non-farm activities were concentrated in Babessi and Babungo villages. The least concentration was in Baba I village. By the year 2020, there were wide spread non-farm activities across this Sub-Division. Even though all the villages had an increase in the number of activities by 2020, Babessi villages still has the highest degree of concentration. This is accounted for by the fact that the population numbers in Babessi are more than that the other villages. There is also a high concentration of administrative institutions that has had a great influence in the flourishing of the non-farm sector activities in this Sub-Division.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

The degree of existence of the NFS activities in Babessi Sub Division is a confirmation of the findings of Salamun and Sarah, (2020) who stated that in rural areas, about 60% of the population are involved in NFS activities. It should be noted that in the study area the population is involved in either the farm only, the non-farm only or both. Also the findings are in line with that of Wirba and Njong, (2019) on the point that the rural non-farm sector is a good option to generate income, supplement agricultural household income and alleviate poverty.

The low performance of the agricultural sector accompanied by compounded high population pressure, constrained land resources and poverty being an unavoidable plaque afflicting rural areas has made livelihood diversification a common phenomenon in rural areas today. The rural non-farm sector which has suffered long term disregard from policy makers and in the contemporary era yielded positively to rural welfare and

livelihood opportunities needs to receive substantial consideration as the key to the impediments of rural poverty alleviation and unemployment predicaments in the world. Resulting from its rich and diverse nature, the non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division contributes greatly to poverty alleviation. There is the dominance of NFAs in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Multiple stakeholders such as indigenous persons, State, NGOs and local institutions support the growth of the sector. Their domains of operations in the NFSAs were varied across the different villages with the high concentration in Babessi village and the lowest in Bangolan. The stakeholders' operations were a function of the population growth and indigenous knowledge in the operational activities. The sector helps offer job opportunities reducing the problem of unemployment which is the major cause of poverty in the Sub-Division. The NFS has a link with poverty alleviation as the employment and income generated from this sector have contributed to the diversification of the rural economy, improves living standards; provides incentives for rural development, education, supplementing agricultural incomes and improving household infrastructures which are all indicators of rural poverty reduction in BSD. The visible results of infrastructural development, accessibility to health services and educational services stems from incomes generated from the nonfarm sector which acts as supplement to agricultural income. Nevertheless, there is still the need to promote the non-farm sector in Babessi Sub-Division where it is still growing such as the provision of financial and technical support to stakeholders operating in the sector.

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