

*Les Travaux en cours*  
*Works in Progress*



TRAVAUX N° 1

PAUVRETE ET POLITIQUE SOCIALE  
POVERTY AND SOCIAL POLICY

Observatoire du Changement et de l'Innovation Sociale au Cameroun

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Observatory of Change and Innovation in the Societies of Cameroon

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## **Les Travaux en cours**

B.P. 1857 Yaoundé Tel : 23 - 95 - 34  
CAMEROUN

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## Préface

Cette série intitulée "Work in Progress" en anglais, et "Travaux en cours" en français est dédié aux résultats d'animation, aux projets d'étude ou de recherche, aux recherches non totalement finalisées, ou non encore publiées dans des revues nationales ou internationales. Elle présente les travaux des animateurs, des chercheurs individuels et des membres des laboratoires et observatoires qui font tous partie du programme Ocisca, Observatoire du Changement et de l'Innovation Sociale au Cameroun.

Y sont présentés toute sortes de thèmes concernant l'activité courante d'Ocisca comme, par exemple, les comptes-rendus des Mardis d'OCISCA, et les recherches ou études en cours sur les comportements des différents acteurs économiques dans le contexte actuel de la crise économique et des politiques d'ajustement structurel qu'elle suscite. Les conditions de vie des ménages, l'examen des situations de vulnérabilité et de pauvreté, l'analyse des comportements sociaux, les innovations sociales, l'impact social des mesures d'ajustement comme la dévaluation, la conception de politiques sociales sont autant de thèmes dont les projets et travaux des recherches ou d'études sont présentées dans cette série.

Ces documents, tirés en un nombre limité d'exemplaires, visent à informer régulièrement les bailleurs de fonds et les membres d'OCISCA de l'évolution des idées et des travaux recherches au sein du programme.

C'est en conformité avec cette optique que ce premier numéro présente les propositions de recherche et d'étude élaborées au cours de l'année 1994 par le laboratoire sur la pauvreté et la politique sociale.

Les thèmes qui sont présentés dans les pages suivantes recouvrent un certain nombre de facettes différentes de la pauvreté. Tout d'abord, deux textes abordent les problèmes conceptuels. Ils donnent des éléments pour mieux saisir le concept même de pauvreté et aider à la conception d'une politique sociale propre au Cameroun. Ensuite trois articles abordent les problèmes du lien entre la santé des populations et la pauvreté. Dans le premier cas, il s'agit de mesurer par des modèles quantitatifs et d'expliquer par des entretiens qualitatifs le niveau de mortalité infantile. Dans le second cas il s'agit de mesurer la relation entre le niveau de revenu et l'accès aux services de santé et aux médicaments. Enfin le troisième article établit un lien entre la pauvreté et le SIDA.

Les quatre propositions d'étude suivantes ont trait à la réaction contre la pauvreté tant rurale qu'urbaine. Dans les deux premiers cas ce sont les femmes de la province de l'Extrême-Nord et de l'Ouest qui sont étudiées dans leurs comportements quotidiens et les stratégies de survie qu'elles mettent en oeuvre. Dans le troisième cas, on étudie les réalisations des agriculteurs et le changement de méthode de fertilisation. Enfin on aborde les stratégies des femmes de Yaoundé et leur recours au secteur informel pour se procurer des revenus supplémentaires.

Les trois textes suivants abordent le lien entre l'éducation et la pauvreté, en étudiant l'importance du niveau d'éducation sur le niveau des revenus, les inégalités conséquentes dans la distribution des revenus, et l'impact de la pauvreté sur l'éducation des enfants.

Enfin les trois dernières propositions de recherche traitent des problèmes environnementaux, gestion des ressources et pollution toujours en liaison avec le niveau de pauvreté.

Toutes ces propositions de recherche ou d'étude couvrent le large éventail des problèmes sociaux qui sont couramment liés à la pauvreté. Leur réalisation effective, une fois que les financements auront été trouvés pour les entreprendre, permettra de formuler une série de recommandations visant à aider les décideurs dans la conception d'une politique sociale propre au Cameroun.

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# I - CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

## VISION FOR THE 21st CENTURY: Poverty Alleviation and Sharing of wealth

par

*Jean-Luc Dubois*

This paper presents a classification of some ideas, raised in a coherent way, in order, to help the reader to build on this presentation, by bringing new ideas and appropriate examples. When integrated in the framework of this paper, the practical aspects of worldwide events, innovative parts of individual experiences, and personal choices, will ensure their link with the reality of our daily lives.

If we want to foresee the possible future of poverty, three key questions need to be raised : (i) what is the current situation of poverty ? This will give a clear idea of where we stand; (ii) are the present definitions of poverty, wealth and equity still appropriate ? This will show that a widening of the usual definitions may lead to a better understanding of poverty and its links with wealth and equity; and (iii) what framework could be proposed for the future ? This will show that the combination of scientific and spiritual knowledge could provide guidance for an adequate social behavior. These key issues will be addressed in the next three parts.

### **1. What is the current situation of poverty ?**

It is necessary to give, as a departure point, some background information on the worldwide situation of poverty. It is, then, helpful to discuss, based on this information, what are the reasons for fighting poverty, and, therefore, to review how thinking has evolved on this topic.

#### **(a) Poverty facts and trends**

Recent reports on poverty (World Bank, 1990; UNDP, 1990; IFAD, 1992) show that poverty has decreased in relative terms (there are proportionally less poor in the world now, about 30%), but it has increased in absolute terms (the number of poor has never been so large at about 1.1. billion). This is the result of three decades of development. As shown by the analysis presented in these reports, there is a direct link between growth and poverty decrease, growth being a necessary but insufficient condition for reducing poverty. As instances of this, the cases of Sri Lanka (low income per capita but good social indicators), Brazil and Saudi Arabia (high income per capita but low social achievements) are often quoted.

Since the end of the 1980s, the world economy, as a whole, faced lower growth rates. A few countries in Asia, continue to improve both their income level and their social indicators. But these are mainly exceptions in the current economic environment. The lower rate of economic growth in the other parts of the world, compared to the current population growth rate clearly implies a further rise in poverty.

Poverty is spread unevenly among regions: 50% of the poor are in South Asia where poverty is slowly decreasing, 15% are in East Asia and the Pacific where poverty is strongly decreasing, 10% are in Latin America and the Caribbean where poverty remains stable, 6% ARE IN THE MIDDLE East and North Africa and 1% are in Europe with, in both cases, a tendency to increase and 19% are in Africa and level is constantly growing with the increase, and 19% are in Africa where the level is constantly growing with the increase of the population (1990 figures). In

Europe, poverty may increase more deeply because of the war (in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and the economic restructuring of Eastern Europe and former USSR. In Africa, factors such as the political turmoil (Zaire, Togo) and the wars (Liberia Somalia, Rwanda) will probably reinforce the long-term trend in the increase of poverty.

Poverty is usually measured by the level of income or consumption per capita. People are considered poor if they are under a poverty line (a fixed level of income) This is the economic definition of poverty. In 1965, consumption per capita was US\$ 590, in 1975, it was US\$ 780, and in 1985, it was US\$ 985. But social indicators, such as infant mortality rate, life expectancy at birth, primary enrollment rates and level of literacy, also bring a social concern to the definition of poverty. These indicators have clearly improved even for the poorest countries. Life expectancy went from 51 years, in 1965, to 63 years in 1990. The primary net enrollment ratio went from 73% in 1965 to 89% in 1990. From these data, the future does not appear without hope, even if recent years have diminished these achievements. The possibility of eradicating wide-spread economic poverty, and its social consequences still remains.

A continuing concern are the local pockets of poverty in rich countries. Sometimes called "fourth world poverty". This generates an underclass society with a culture based on unemployment, drug dealing and crime. All developed countries face this phenomenon in cities, which increases when economic growth is slowing. This kind of poverty, which has economics related causes, cannot be totally understood without introducing other dimensions such as social and cultural deprivation, political integration, and other less tangible influences. The successful fighting of this form of poverty requires new approaches which are complex and costly.

#### **(b) Reasons for fighting poverty**

Facts show that poverty, prevents people from making their full contribution to the development of their society. Their frustration increases as development spreads and population increases. As they remain in poverty their suffering increases, making evolution towards higher levels of consciousness impossible. This does not fit with the Christian belief, as well as the western philosophical view, where mankind is supposed to evolve and transform itself to the better. Some of the facts are the following:

(i) Poverty brings conflict and war. With the increase of population, rise in poverty may bring more conflict since the world will have to compete and to readjust to share existing resources. We see that the richest nations tend to unite, like the countries of the EEC, while the poorest tend to fight or fragment, like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. It is the fear of the future as a result of poverty and related insecurity, that increases the risk of conflict and separation. An example was recently given by France during the vote for the Maastricht Treaty: all the poorest regions, with the highest rates of unemployment voted against the Treaty the ones with modern industries and regular trading relations with other European regions, voted in favor. Similar examples of such behavior are the votes of Switzerland refusing the European Economic Space, and the vote of Denmark refusing the Maastricht Treaty.

(ii) Poverty maintains people in ignorance. Since they are struggling to survive, they do not have the time to educate themselves and lack the precious information that would improve their lives. The difficulty of communicating and the lack of knowledge keeps them permanently marginalised.

(iii) Poverty leads to disregard for the common good. Being marginalised, the poor begin to create their own underclass culture, with its own rules and constraints.

Within this framework conflicts are more easily accepted. To have a broader view of things, one needs to have possibilities for choices, but the poor have only a few choices.

These facts show that eradicating poverty is a prerequisite to the emergence of any broader vision. It is the only way to harmonious development and to the evolution toward fully realized living and corresponding levels of consciousness. This idea was developed by Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., which defines an Omega point as the place where human beings by the permanent improvement of themselves, will reach the image of God. In the Christian faith it is considered as the final objective of the whole Creation. Teilhard de Chardin, who was both a scientist and a religious person confronted this belief with its own knowledge of paleontology and the history of man's evolution. This religious but scientifically linked, vision gives a possible framework to justify the fighting of poverty: it becomes one of the essential steps for man's evolution and its improvement.

### **(c) The evolution in thinking**

Poverty always existed, and, in Europe, this concern has been constantly raised. The Gospel, for instance, is full of parables and writings related to poverty and how to deal with it. It gives the basis of what was taught to the people. In the Middle Ages the chivalry, also based on religious principles, instituted the defense of the "widow and the orphan" as an important deed. Well-known Saints acted to reduce poverty and inequity: for instance, St Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul and the St. Curé d'Ars. In France during the revolutionary periods: 1789, 1830, and 1848, the issues of poverty, sharing of wealth and equity were always addressed leading to the promulgation of specific laws. The writings of Charles Dickens in England, of Emile Zola and Victor Hugo, in France, described the difficult conditions in which poor workers' families lived as a result of rapid industrialization. As a result, many socialist thinkers (for instance Proudhon, Marx, Engels, etc...) proposed analytical concepts to explain the situation of the poor, to facilitate the implementation of trade-unions and related political parties. All this led to the design and implementation of social security systems in all European countries after World War II.

If one reviews history, one finds two tendencies in the thinking of poverty: first, there has always been a permanent fight against poverty. It was an individual concern, at the beginning as shown by the Gospel for instance. It became, later on, a community concern addressed by working groups, guilds in the towns, through the Kingdom and the State. More recently, it has become a worldwide concern which justifies the intervention of the United Nations. Our thinking has evolved from individual poverty alleviation to social poverty intervention.

As successes occur, especially in developed countries where poverty has been strongly reduced, the concept of poverty tends to become more comprehensive and to include new dimensions. It appears that the causes of poverty are not only economic but may be based on a lack of social and political rights, and on the difficulty to communicate and to integrate the current culture. The capacity to escape from poverty is often related to self-esteem, to the image of the poor and to the hope expressed by a community. This is why the vision of poverty should be broadened to include in it all that diminishes, in one way or another, our image of mankind. Remaining in the framework proposed by Teilhard de Chardin, we must consider all actions that improve, directly or indirectly, the image of mankind. These may be related to human rights such as the Declaration of Human Rights, the Rights of the Children, the Decade of Women, the fight against torture, but also to the protection of the environment, and so on.

## **2. Are the present definitions still appropriate ?**

Poverty has always been considered as an economic concept. Social concerns were only recently introduced. In the developed part of the world, economic poverty is being eradicated, but poverty remains under different forms which difficult to understand and hard to fight. These new



forms are related to social marginalization to cultural deprivation and to a lack of spiritual understanding. The definition of poverty, in its economic sense, is too restrictive. A strategy for poverty alleviation in the 21st Century will have to focus on all the different forms of poverty. It may be necessary to review the current definition of poverty and to broaden it to integrate these new dimensions.

Since two other concepts, Wealth and Equity, are also directly related to poverty, their definitions will have to be revised. Wealth is always opposed to poverty, and sharing of wealth is a way of decreasing poverty. equity is a normative concept. It determines the ethical limits between wealth and poverty which can be accepted by the whole society.

What elements should be introduced in the definition of poverty to better describe it? From current analysis of the causes of poverty, we suggest the following five dimensions: the economic dimension, is naturally the point of departure since it is already operational; the social dimension has been recently integrated, but much needs to be said on the political, cultural and spiritual dimensions.

Other dimensions could be envisaged (psychological, sociological, historical and so on). But most of these aspects could be included in one, or more of the five dimensions.

**(a) What definition should we use for poverty ?**

Poverty is usually defined by the level of income. However it is now generally admitted, even among economists, that poverty is a multidimensional concept which should include other elements. For this reason, social concerns were added to the current definition by reference to the basic needs approach. This issues was raised at the end of the 1970s, when it appears that the development of the past decades had not suppressed poverty and had increased inequity. The motto was growth with redistribution, in order to reduce inequity; satisfaction of basic needs was the way to protect the poor.

Going further on this route, one can propose a widening of the present definition of poverty by introducing new dimensions: first, a political dimension which will consider the process of democratization and its impact on poverty; second, the cultural dimension which is now requested by the revival of ethnic identities; and, third, the spiritual dimension which is the widest. Each of these dimensions as well as the relationships between them, needs to be carefully studies to build a more rigorous definition of poverty.

(i) The economic definition of poverty is usually a quantitative one. Economic poverty is based on the level of income, the corresponding consumption of goods and services and, more recently, the allocation of time. Qualitative aspects may be introduced related to the choice of certain goods, the substitution of products considered inferior, the choice of activities and the corresponding sources of income.

Poverty can be considered in its economic sense, then as exhibiting a low consumption of goods, a reduced access to services, and less freedom in the allocation of time. All this is basically due to a lack of income.

A mix appears between the economic and social definition of poverty, with the introduction of the basic needs approach, which focuses on the minimum bunch of consumption items (food security and nutrition, housing, clothing) and access to basic social services (health, education). The

economic side deals with the quantities to be consumed, while the social side is more concerned with the threshold under which people are enabled to ensure the security of their own consumption.

(ii) The social definition of poverty is more complex. Social poverty is based on a sense of solidarity, of belonging to a social entity. It refers implicitly to the sense of community. Two aspects can be taken into account: first, solidarity actions related to the economic dimension such as, for instance, basic needs, minimum wage, minimum income; second, the social network which is based on family relationships, rights and obligations, among members, and the transfer and exchange of goods through kinship, which ensures the security and well-being of all family members.

In its social sense, poverty is non-acceptance by the society, or the social network one is supposed to belong to. And the result is denied non-access to some of its minimum benefits. This creates among the poor a sense of isolated, and eventual marginalization. Social poverty is much more difficult to live with than economic poverty. In the developing world, where social networks are stronger, people may accept the risk of economic poverty to avoid social poverty. By using wealth, prudently, one will avoid marginalization. In the developed world where even the family network becomes weak, this possibility of substitution may not exist. Economic poverty, With its corresponding loss of respect, may easily lead to social poverty and initiate the process of marginalization.

(iii) A political definition of poverty is something new, but it gives relevant elements for an understanding of today's poverty in urban areas. Political poverty is based on a sense of non-recognition by those in power and of non-access to the decision-making process. These feelings lead to riots and revolution and to the request for democratization.

The problem arises when this form of poverty is added, for the same group of people, to social and economic poverty. Being marginalised and politically rejected excludes people from knowing and accepting rules and goals of a society. It erodes the sense of the common good and solidarity with others. Spontaneous riots and looting quasi-ethnic and racist conflicts in the suburbs of the big cities are a result of political poverty.

The recognition of human rights, which can be translated into respect for the individual, and the will to empower marginalized groups of the population are direct solutions to this form of poverty.

(iv) A cultural definition of poverty is strongly needed. Lack of knowledge of their own tradition and cultural references prohibits the development of self-esteem in many of the poor groups. This reduces their capacity of escaping from poverty. In multicultural societies, the lack of knowledge and understanding of the cultural habits of others increases the risks of misunderstanding among different groups.

Being culturally poor, or deprived is a natural consequence of not knowing the tradition, the basic historical events, and the main characters of the group to which one belongs. This loss generates difficulty to innovate and to integrate new ideas in the traditional cultural background. It is responsible to the absence of "cultural codes", implicitly recognized by all members of a group, and the appearance of "missing links" in the evolution. This deprivation may exist for any form of culture: esthetics or classical culture, modern or popular arts, sociological or traditional behavior, culture within an institution.

Nearly all the countries in the world contain people from different ethnic origins. With working migrations, and refugees, this cultural mix will increase. The only way to avoid cultural misunderstanding and friction is to teach the cultural differences and to show the positive aspect brought by each culture and its historical origin. For instance by comparing European and American

history one can find the explanation for differences in behavior and in reference values (quantity versus quality, freedom versus tradition, adaptability versus rigidity mass teaching versus elite education). However, nobody knows if a better understanding of Croatian, Serbian and Muslim history and culture would have helped to reduce conflict, since many other compelling causes, economic and political, were in place.

In itself, cultural deprivation does not lead to violent uprising. As a group, people are often less conscious of this aspect and they manage by creating their own subculture. This is probably why the issue is so scarcely raised. When combined with other forms of poverty: economic, social and political, cultural deprivation leads to the creation of an underclass culture where violent and racist attitudes are common. This happens frequently in the suburbs of many of the big cities. To avoid the creation of this underclass culture among marginalized urban groups, the French Minister of Culture decided recently to classify tag drawing and rap music as an art and the expression of a specific culture.

(v) The spiritual definition of poverty. Spiritual poverty means the impossibility of imagining a greater image of life, based on elevation, beauty and harmony, and the inability to conceive reaching this attainable better schema of living. It results in a sense of lack of identification, through love, with others. Therefore spiritual deprivation, in its extreme sense, allows the justification of conflict, war, and self-destruction for any objective.

Unfortunately for this definition, ambiguities come from the Gospel itself, and from other religious texts, where spiritual poverty is sometimes designated as "Poverty in Spirit," which means humility, being there for and listening to others, and giving respect. This implies, as consequence, detachment from the economic, social, political and even cultural aspects of wealth. It brings confusion with our definition where a high level of spirituality leads to detachment, but not a lack of spirituality.

High level of spirituality combined with social integration can help to overcome economic poverty, political marginalization and cultural deprivation. In Europe the ethnic war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the conflict in the former USSR, the racist attitude leading to killings in many cities are question about the causes for these events. Have the social network and level of spirituality decreased to the point where they cannot offset the new economic poverty and political issues ? Or was cultural deprivation so intense, (and so hidden by official culture) that it made it impossible for the people to respect the original culture of others ?

All these elements show that interaction between the five dimensions of poverty is a complex phenomenon. It needs to be reviewed very systematically, with reference to current facts and events. By this way new concepts could be created which are requested for the design of appropriate strategy aiming at eradicating poverty. Some examples of already existing concepts, combining the five dimensions of poverty, are some idioms and terms of our current language.

(i) The "nouveau-riche" concept describes people who are economically rich. Using this wealth, they try to be socially rich (by building a network of people attracted by their wealth), and politically rich (by attracting influential people, even through pseudo-corruption). But they are usually culturally poor (no sense of wealth as an instrument to extend their spirit, little sense of the implication of their wealth for others).

(ii) Current terms of our language reflect diverse dimensions of poverty. For instance, Misery expresses poverty in the economic, social, political and cultural senses, with spiritual wealth potentially remaining, while despair is poverty in all senses. But poverty is often only considered in the economic sense of lack of income and people frequently speak of cultural deprivation.

**(b) What definition should we use for wealth ?**

Wealth is derived through the process of accumulation. It is by accumulating things, material or non-material, that wealth is generated. Being wealthy means that one is not poor anymore. Wealth has a direct link with poverty: losing wealth may bring one to poverty, escaping from poverty implies creating wealth, sharing wealth may help to reduce poverty.

Since poverty is considered through five different dimensions, wealth could be also. Wealth could be considered as the result of accumulating goods and consuming services (in the economic sense), increasing relationships (in the social and political sense), and increasing knowledge and accumulating experiences (in the cultural and spiritual sense). Let us review these different dimensions.

(i) The economic definition of wealth is widely used. It results in increasing the number and the quality of goods possessed. The concept of capital, physical (stock of good) and monetary (currency, stocks), is a good expression of wealth. In most cases this kind of wealth is the result of savings. It can be used for consumption or for investment.

The consumption of the services is also included in this definition. Since services cannot be accumulated, unlike goods, only their consumption level can be an indicator of wealth. Greater access to scarce services as well as greater consumption are criteria of wealth. This leads to the concept of human capital which was created in relation to the consumption of services such as health, education, and nutrition. An increase in human capital is then an indicator of the increase of wealth.

(ii) The social definition of wealth is a recently developed idea. There the notion of wealth is based on the importance of social relationships. This is easily forgotten when one lives constantly in strong social networks such as kinship, family relationships, community networks, working groups, and so on. But this becomes important when these networks disappear.

The concept of social capital was created to integrate this aspect of life in the quantitative analysis of wealth. Social capital is the sum of relationships of any kind that one may lose when migrating or for other reasons.

(iii) The political definition of wealth is never considered. However, it could be introduced in two different ways. It could include the network of relationships in the field of politics; in that sense, it relates directly to the social definition of wealth just considered.

But it can also be understood as the capacity of being aware of decision making process within a country, through a group of people, and being informed about the reasons and results of this process. The concept of information capital could express this form of wealth.

(iv) The cultural definition of wealth is frequently referred to. Cultural wealth is the result of the historical accumulation of experience, which is based on tradition and which generates cultural knowledge. This cultural knowledge is transmitted through generations. At the individual level this knowledge and the capacity it gives for personal development is a criterion of wealth. Cultural wealth does not mean only the accumulation of art objects, since this is more related to the economic definition of wealth. It includes more precisely the knowledge which facilitates the selection of relevant objects. A good example is the Getty Museum in Los Angeles where the

economic and cultural aspects of wealth are combined: a few objects of great value are presented because they are the key images of specific cultures.

Cultural wealth leads to a better understanding of the history of societies and of the evolution of mankind. Each community, ethnic group, religious group, or other entity, brings something different to the whole society. Understanding cultural differences helps personal identification within a community and enhances its capacity to communicate with other communities.

The spiritual definition of wealth. Some people seem to have a high level of consciousness in all their actions. This is the result of the accumulation of spiritual experience. It leads them to a deeper understanding of human life, its various mechanisms, and the importance of relationships with others.

Wisdom results from the learning of spiritual experiences and is usually synonymous with spiritual wealth. It is expressed in a perfect consistency between beliefs and actions.

We could assume that the expectation of everybody is to get wealthy in all dimensions. This being seen as a means to evolve towards perfection. In fact, the situation is more complex. There are priorities within a specific environment regarding the kind of wealth to possess. These priorities are directly related to the hierarchy of values within that society. Economic wealth may be more important in some societies (the western world), social wealth is a key feature of Africa, cultural wealth still remains essential in countries like France, and spiritual wealth is the priority of religious groups. The qualitative aspects of wealth are sometimes considered more seriously than its quantitative aspects. One may be poor in quantitative terms but rich in qualitative terms. These examples show that interaction exists between the different forms of wealth and that a more detailed analysis of the possible substitution between them should be done. For instance, as said before, spiritual wealth, and cultural wealth to a certain extent, may lead to detachment vis-à-vis economic wealth and, even, vis-à-vis political and social wealth.

### **c) What definition should we use for equity ?**

Equity, in its substance, is related to the difference between poverty and wealth inequity in a society is the result of too great a difference between the poor and the rich. Equity is a normative concept which sets a limit to this difference in the context of a specific society. Several issues concerning the definition of equity need to be raised. As a normative concept, what sets the norms which enter into the definition of equity ? If several forms of poverty and wealth can be considered, what is the implication for equity ? Is the sharing of wealth a way to reduce poverty ? Let us discuss these issues.

#### **(i) Equity is a normative concept**

The sense of equity, and of inequity, varies between societies. In some societies, inequity is more easily accepted in the short run as a way of promoting individual initiative. This is the case in flexible societies, such as the North-American ones. In other societies, inequity is prohibited because it may destabilize the homogeneity of that society. This is the case in Europe and in France, where the structural rigidity of the society does not give much room to maneuver to individuals. In contrast, in the United States, poverty is considered the result of individual failure; while in Europe, the poor are the result of social failure : the society did not give them the chances to succeed. These two examples show that the limits set for equity are based on the ethnic values accepted by society. If these limits are not respected, dysfunctions appear in the society at different levels: lack of social rights political riots, underclass culture, and ethnic conflicts.

One needs to review the hierarchy of values within a society, such as : the role of money, religious practice, socioeconomic status, family life, investment in culture, and friendship networks. Not all societies have the same hierarchy of values. Not all kinds of poverty will be accepted in the same way: the norms set up for equity will differ from one society to another. If, throughout the world, the main focus is on economic poverty, in Europe social poverty is an important issue (especially in Holland and the Nordic countries), and in France the fight against cultural deprivation is seen as critically important. This leads us to the second issue related to the different kinds of equity.

### **(ii) Several dimensions for equity**

Like poverty and wealth, equity could be considered through a set of different prisms. Equity is usually perceived through its economic sense: insufficient redistribution of income that makes some very rich while others are very poor.

Equity in social terms will mean that everybody could be integrated in the solidarity network of the society. In political terms, it means that everybody could participate in the decisionmaking or, at least, have access to information about it: transparency and democratization are the two main words that express this political equity. For culture and spirituality, equity will mean the capacity of understanding what is meant by these concepts and realizing individual creative experience. Education is the best way to ensure these dimensions of equity.

The search for equity, in economic terms, has been a goal of many societies. Recently, due to the emergence of a new poverty, the search for social equity, hence the reintegration of marginalized people in society, became important. All recent political events, in Eastern Europe, former USSR, and Africa, show the emergence of concern for political equity and the difficulty in reaching it. For cultural and spiritual equity, much needs to be done, but these concerns are now gaining a wider audience in the world. But global harmony will probably be reached only if all dimensions of equity are respected.

### **(iii) Sharing of wealth as a solution**

Before discussing this issue we need to answer the question: how can everybody become wealth ? Here, a distribution should be made between the economic and other dimensions. The basic resources or goods included in wealth are different. Using economic concepts, one thinks in term of goods and services. Three categories are considered: the usual goods and services; the indivisible goods (justice, air); and the unlimited goods (those linked to transcendence, and to creativity.)

The economic definition of wealth brings the issue of ecological constraints. Physical resources are limited on Earth, while needs are growing through economic development. Bringing everybody to the same level of wealth in income and consumption, while the world population is still growing may exhaust our limited resources. In the meantime the differences of wealth among people are exacerbated when resources are limited. Hence the solution is not to bring everybody to the highest level of wealth, but to share existing wealth through a feasible redistribution process.

For all other dimensions, social, political, cultural, and spiritual, there are not such clear constraints. Insufficient means of communication, education, and information may be constraints that can be easily removed. Sharing of wealth should be a way of teaching people how to gain access to the process, by empowering them to take a full part in social integration, political participation, cultural creativity, and spiritual experience.

### **3. What framework should we propose for the future ?**

The definitions of poverty, wealth and equity, were broadened by adding new dimensions to answer the new forms of poverty which are appearing. Using these definitions a framework should be proposed to help design the strategy to eradicate poverty, by sharing of wealth, and therefore reaching equity, in its global sense of harmony.

How can this comprehensive framework be built ? We propose a threefold approach which encompasses: (i) the basic religious and spiritual principles, which are recognized, as guidance for what should be done, (II) the scientific approach of reasoning and analysis, as way of transforming these principles into rationales and practical rules, and (iii) the review of current human behavior at the different levels of decision: individual, community, country and world.

#### **a) Basic religious and spiritual principles**

Religious and spiritual principles express human wisdom transmitted through ages, the message from god, and our modern understanding of universal values. They are the basis of guidance for what should be done, in terms of action and behavior, when faced with poverty.

For instance, the Gospel, with other texts of the New Testament, is one of the basic sources to guide human behavior in such a way that it leads to greater harmony among human beings. Parables such as "poor Lazarus and the rich man", "The rich and the kingdom", "true and false wealth" address the issue of wealth sharing. Many texts deal with the issue of respecting ethnic difference (i.e. reference to the Samaritans), and of helping the marginalized to integrate in the society.

The Roman Catholic Church built its "Society Doctrine" on the Gospel. It was initiated in the Middle Ages by philosophers such as St. Thomas of Aquinas, it has evolved at the end of the 19th Century and the 20th Century, with Lacordaire, Sangnier and the Sillon movement, Mounier and the Personalism philosophy, Father Lebret founder of Economics and Humanism, a group who had a strong impact on the substance of the encyclical *Popularum Progressio*. This doctrine is defined through several reference encyclicals: i.e. *Rerum Novarum* (1892), *Mater et Magistra*. *Popularum Progressio*, *Centesimus Anno* (1992).

Other poetry and mystic sources express the deep values of traditional wisdom, and the feelings of human beings on this topic. One may quote « The Prophet » of Khalil Gibran, « The Little Prince » of Antoine de St-Exupéry, « Jonathan Livingstone Seagull ». They describe, in an intuitive way, the best attitudes towards global poverty.

Many philosophers wrote about the social and political dimensions of poverty in the 19th Century (Proudhon with "philosophie de la misère"). A few insisted on the cultural and spiritual dimensions. But all need to be read or reviewed with a broader vision of the five dimensions in mind.

#### **b) The scientific approach**

Even if the basic principles can be considered as elements of guidance for a correct behavior towards poverty issues, they are not sufficient to create the needed change. Their concrete practicability needs to be checked to avoid misinterpretation. Scientific methods are needed to establish links between principles and values and the definition of relevant attitudes. This could be done through the measurement and analysis of concrete experiments.

### (i) From intuition to deduction

There are two cognitive ways to understand things and to act on: the first is based on feeling and intuition, and use inference approach; the second based on reasoning, and use deduction. The complementary link between intuition and deduction is fundamental to the scientific approach. It is an iterative process where intuition gives the direction and issues to address, while deduction brings the analysis and the solutions. In spiritual terms, this process is usually called the "incarnation process". It expresses this capacity of translating the result of the intuitive approach, which is inspired by the Absolute, into practical behavior, using the deductive approach.

It is through this process that new concepts can be created and methodological tools can be developed to set up the operational rules required to direct human behavior

A lot of concepts related to poverty presently exist, mainly for economic poverty: i.e. structural poverty, absolute and relative poverty, vulnerable and at risk groups. Some of these concepts have been recently created or updated for other dimensions of poverty: for instance, basic needs, social capital, governance. They have generated new methodological tools such as poverty lines and poverty indices, human development index and political freedom index, specific households surveys, and specific use of macro-models. However, a lot of research work needs to be done to create the concepts that are required to understand and analyse poverty in its global sense.

### (ii) Measurement

Through intuition we generate the concepts needed to understand reality. We can then develop tools, using these concepts as a reference base. Then we can use these tools to validate the concepts. In human history, intuitive ideas generated concepts such as "the spontaneous generation" in the 18th century, "the flat Earth" in the 17th century; both were consistent with the principles recognized in those times, but proved to be wrong when subjected to measurement and scientific testing.

What we know about poverty, particularly economic poverty, has been tested through measurement, either in a descriptive or an explanatory way; for instance, the number of poor resulting from lack of income and consumption (by using poverty lines as measurement tools), or access to social services (based on the concept of basic needs). Only a few poverty concepts can be easily measured, most of the others lack the relevant tools. This is very much the case for the political, cultural and spiritual dimensions of poverty, where the few concepts are not always well defined. They are, however, recognized as relevant, expecting that, in the future, the appropriate tools will be created to validate them.

For instance, using the economic definition, poverty is measured using income and consumption of goods and services per capita, poverty lines, poverty indices (head-count ration or number of poor), amount of transfers requested (based on the income-gap ratio). Within the social definition, poverty is measured by: unit of basic needs satisfaction, absolute poverty lines, minimum wage, physical quality of life index, human development index, ratio of social pressure, and so on. Research is currently examining the other dimensions of poverty: measure of social capital, political freedom index, social impact of meditating groups, and so on.

Some concepts are widely accepted but not easily measured. This is, frequently the case for the social definition of poverty when considering social networks based on traditional solidarity, or the rights and obligations that an individual has towards his/her community. These networks ensure protection against poverty, and sharing of well-being among the members of a community. But they may be a constraint to individual initiative because of the importance of social pressure. Another instance is the political definition of poverty. In that case the democratization process is currently recognized as a necessary step for better development and greater harmony in the society.



Concepts related to the cultural and spiritual aspects of poverty are less easily accepted. Even, when tools exist, the results of experiments are not always recognized, i.e. the scientific research on the effect of praying or meditating. However, some institutions, and governments, try to address this issue through the building of national monuments and by public spending on culture. But little scientific research is done to generate the relevant concepts and tools which would lead to more operational processes. And this may be something that could change in the 21st Century.

### **c) Human behavior**

Concerning decision-making, human behavior can be considered at three levels: firstly, at the individual and family level (microattitude), secondly, at the community, or any kind of group, level (mesoattitude), and thirdly at the global level, country and world (macroattitude). It is necessary to understand what are the linkages between these three attitudes when dealing with poverty, wealth and equity issues. Can all be guided by the same basic principles? And can the same concepts and tools be applied to all three?

In the microattitude, the question is simple: what are the best individual and family strategies that will help decrease poverty and improve equity? We need to review what is the impact of our way of life on these two issues. In relations with others, at work, in day-to-day living, fighting poverty and deprivation, and sharing to reach more equity is a constant aim: equity in salary and status (economic side), sharing of information (social side), delegation of responsibility (political side), understanding individual reaction (cultural side), helping people to overcome their difficulties and be in peace (spiritual side). On the personal side, the choice of appropriate attitude is sometimes difficult. For instance, in the economic sense, the fact of having a car or television, while it increases isolation may also bring other forms of communication. But avoiding waste and being conscious of the use of community resources is important. In the political sense voting is a mean to express the preferred strategy.

In the mesoattitude, it is at the group level that a strategy to fight poverty has to be designed. A good example, is the World Bank's decision to set poverty alleviation as the principal objective, and to facilitate discussions on issues such as: i.e. participation (learning group), governance (thematic team), culture (specific seminars), development values (Friday Morning Group). Opposite examples could be given with the lobbying attitude of some groups, primarily interested in their own interest and refusing any sense of community redistribution. The strike organized by the French truck-drivers, in August 1992, aims at refusing the implementation of a new driving license, using a point system, which was designed to decrease the accident death rate of 10.000 a year.

In the macroattitude, the strategy to fight poverty is set up at the level of a region, a country or group of countries, and the world. Many macrodecisions have an impact on poverty, and defining the right strategy can only be the result of in-depth discussion, and analytical work, to overcome the complexity of the world environment. For instance, a devaluation by facilitating exports, and reducing imports may establish growth which will benefit the poor as a whole, but the urban poor who mainly consume imported goods may suffer. The rise in interest rates is a way of saving scarce resources, but it may generate usury rates that will discourage the informal sector, where many of the poor work. At the political level, the "devoir d'assistance" (deed of assistance) in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cambodia, decided recently at the United Nations, is an example of a new macroattitude at the world level.

## **Conclusion**

All countries, and developing countries in particular, made substantial progress in reducing poverty over the past three decades, but this momentum has been diminished in recent years. This is due to economic crisis, restructuring of economies and internal conflicts. In developed countries, poverty remains in the form of an underclass marginalized by the overall society. Fighting this new poverty requires a new way of thinking.

By reducing human behavior to the day-to-day struggle for life, poverty blocks the freedom that need to develop their full potential. If we consider, this as the final objective of our evolution, then fighting poverty is both a social duty and a biological imperative.

Historical trends have brought poverty concern from an individual level to a worldwide level. In the meantime, our concept of poverty has widened to include new dimensions. Five dimensions give a better understanding of what poverty really is: economic, social; political, cultural, spiritual. These dimensions define a spectrum that goes from the economics of poverty to the spirituality of poverty, and includes the social, political and cultural aspects. A detailed analysis of the interaction between these dimensions may focus the new concepts that we need, to understand all forms of poverty.

The search for wealth is a constant aspect of human behavior and will be better understood by taking into account all the dimensions of wealth. The hierarchy of values recognized by the society priorities some dimensions. Substitutions between different forms of wealth are possible, but this needs to be studied carefully.

Equity expresses the accepted difference between wealth and poverty. It is a normative concept, based on ethical limits which are defined by the values recognized by a society. Here also, the hierarchy of value determines the order of priority in the search for equity. Sharing of wealth, expressed in economic terms, is the best solution with respect to the ecological constraints. This leads to the concept of redistribution, in goods or services for the economic dimension, or of empowerment for the other dimensions.

Much has been written on poverty in traditional, philosophical and religious books. Basic principles, showing how to deal with poverty, can be extracted from these writings. But these precepts need to be validated by using the scientific approach which relates intuitive ideas, which generate concepts, to the analytical deduction, that creates the tools needed to measure experiments.

Through this process, basic principles are transformed into operational rules that will provide the guidance for dealing with poverty at the micro, meso, and macrolevels. The objective of fighting poverty is to improve equity, and through this, to provide a safe, fulfilling life to all people. This will generate harmony in the world and permit human beings to develop their full potential, with the faithful objective of participating in the Creation process.

## CAMEROON SOCIAL POLICY FOR REDUCTION OF POVERTY

by

*Aloysius Ajab AMIN*

The paper examines the macroeconomic economic growth since 1970s and demonstrates that since the late 1980s, the main macroeconomic indicators have been worsening: consequently the standard of living of the average Cameroonians have been falling.

So far the studies on Poverty in Cameroon are scanty with the 1983/84 household consumption budget survey and the 1978 national survey on nutritional status being the base of poverty studies.

Conceptual issues are developed and analyzed partly to show the complexity of the study on poverty, but also to bring out the relevant issues in the study of poverty. But more important to bring out the importance of public policy (or social policy) in reducing poverty.

The government social policy is to be examined at the different social sectors - namely education, Health and nutrition, population unemployment Housing and water supply and a critical look at the sources of financing the social sector. This work will be based on secondary information

### **1- Introduction**

Before the mid 1980s Cameroon achieved high economic growth rate. The average annual growth rate was about 8% in real terms. This was partly due to its rich diverse agricultural base, and petroleum production and human resource. Cameroon, therefore, maintain a high level of per capita despite a high population growth rate which was estimated to be more than 2.9%.

Agriculture remains the main support of the economy employing more than 2/3s of the population and yielding more than 40% of export revenue. The oil boom boosted the public expenditure and the government maintained a balanced budget and there was little financing. The world bank then classified Cameroon as a middle income country.

However, since 1986 almost all the key economic condition have been declining mainly due to the collapse of world commodity prices and internal structural problems as the country declines into a deep economic crisis. The major weaknesses of the Cameroon's economy were exposed, as the budget deficit increased despite many steps taken to reduce public expenditure and to some extent increase revenue both internally and externally.

The structural problems including crisis in the public finance and overgrowth of the public expenditures aggravated the economic situation. Cameroon has accumulated debt to both external and internal creditors, at the same time the government has been cutting back on public expenditure which has greatly affected investment in the social sector consequently the poor segment of the society.

### **2 - Research Problem**

The situation has surely decreased the standard of living of the average Cameroonian. The Cameroon government has recognized that because of the economic decline and structural adjustment programme many individuals remain and are becoming poor. Yet, little is being done to address this problem. And above, there been no analysis of the situation so as to have more informed policy making process

Studies on poverty in Cameroon are scanty although reference is always made with no detail on poverty. Some analysis on poverty have been based on the 1983/84 household consumption

Studies on poverty in Cameroon are scanty although reference is always made with no detail on poverty. Some analysis on poverty have been based on the 1983/84 household consumption budget survey and the 1978 national survey on nutritive status, which cannot enable a detailed poverty profile to be constructed. However, since there are no comprehensive data on household living standards, what could be use to analyze and measure poverty may be an amalgam household 1983/84 budget study, 1978 nutrition survey, agricultural survey and other indicators. With the current economic situation, a continuous household survey is necessary as a constant source of data on the welfare of households and their socio-economic status. In fact it is necessary to monitor the living standards of the poor groups of the population and the way the poor perceive their state. So as to develop appropriate poverty reduction policy

### **3 - Objectives**

To do all this we must carry out a thorough examination of all the poverty issues with the aim of providing necessary input for policy design and implementation, since no rigorous analysis has so far been on poverty in Cameroon.

Our objectives are therefore to (1) examine conceptual issues on poverty in order to show the complexity of the study but also to bring out the relevant issues in the study and also to obtain an operational measure of poverty.

(2) Assess Cameroon government social policy and bring out the importance of public policy in reducing poverty.

(3) Examine the expenditure side of the government and revenue side - we shall critically look at the government budget.

(4) Examine the different sources of finances.

### **4 - Conceptual Issues**

In studying poverty, the dynamic aspect is important because this could help in examining the changing welfare level of groups, households or individuals over time. Also a dynamic approach helps in distinguishing the temporary poor from the permanent poor. And this can also look at the pattern of poverty as it is affected by the changing economic situation. This type of analysis is limited by data requirement, although the existing data can provide enough information as a base-line for policy debate, since the poor can be identified according to pattern of expenditure and sources of income.

Yet some conceptual issues must be considered in carrying out poverty discussion in particular in analyzing nature and characteristics of poverty in Cameroon.

It is important to define the poor or poverty which is based on the standard of living. What is the standard of living would help to distinguish the poor from the non-poor. But it is not so easy to say what is meant by a certain standard of living because of its multidimensional character. For example, if we were to take direct economic approach we would tend to emphasize on the consumption of goods and services such that market items with market prices could be reduced to a simple numeraire and imputed prices could be made on items such as home produced goods. Theoretically all items consumed could be converted into monetary by using an appropriate shadow prices. But this is highly controversial such that it could become necessary to separate private consumption from basic needs items such as health, lack of basic needs may worsen income/expenditure measure. Poverty profile based on income/expenditure measure could be extended along the lines of basic needs or relate basic needs aspects to income/expenditure. Cuts in public expenditures may negate basic needs achievements. The largest portion of basic needs is normally supplied by the state.

Operationally it is preferable to use one dimensional monetary measure of living standard. But the question becomes what? Is it income or expenditure or what? Permanent income or

expenditure concept is ideal but most of our data are based on snapshot survey measuring income or expenditure for a given short period. However snapshot survey may be appropriate if we are interested in current consumption. Here too there are difficulties of measuring rural income. Besides these problems, there are differences in regions and in prices over time which must be considered.

Even if the real expenditure problem was solved, we are faced with the problem of whose real expenditure - individual, household, family or extended family? Data available is often on household expenditure and much effort could be put in to adjust for household size and composition. There may be inter household inequality, although equivalent scales may be used to correct for adult and children needs. This poses another problem which assumes that consumption is distributed according to people's needs.

What about discrimination against children or women which may also show inter and intra household inequality but it may not be incorporated into poverty measures.

Income distribution shows that there is a difference between inequality which deals with the whole distribution, poverty stresses on the lower end of distribution. It is more difficult to come into agreement about policies to reduce inequality than policies to reduce poverty, although poverty may be partly concern with distribution.

As income and structure of the economy change what constitutes poverty may also change. Stress on poverty brings out the problem of identifying poverty threshold. The relative or absolute poverty line may differ from region to region and may even change from time to time. The nature and meaning of poverty may be region or culture specific.

Preferable one would like to talk of given basket of goods and services that an individual can purchase to be considered not to be in poverty. Differences in regions may arise in specifying these goods and services and other items. Nevertheless it is important and useful to have operational poverty threshold which could be easily applicable in variety of situations. An operational device could help greatly in addressing poverty issues.

So there are many conceptual issues which should be considered, one may be forced to use concepts which are easily operational. For example, real household expenditure or income per capita can be the measure of individual welfare.

The components of expenditure and income of Cameroon household of the poor can be specified. Income could be put into two major categories - factor income and transfer income. Factor income can be classified according to:

- a) - income from rents Land,- capital
- b) - Income from employment - labour
- c) - Self employment income - labour with other factors

and transfer income - Remittances, subsidies educational scholarship etc.

On the expenditure side, one can distinguish between market purchases and imputation. The market purchases can also be classified into food and non-food items. Imputation includes goods and services publicly provided.

Examine how the poor fit into the production sector of the economy. And above all look at how patterns of income and expenditure of the poor groups fit into the economy. A critical review of the economy since 1980, examining the evolution of the major economic indicators which should reflect the health and performance of the economy. The severe economic recession since 1986 is having serious negative effects on vulnerable population groups. The Cameroon government has taken certain measures to redress the poor economic situation. Some of these measures have reinforced the negative effects on the poor groups. It is important to examine these effects on the different regions, poor and vulnerable groups in these regions.

The nature and characteristics of the poor could be discussed based on regional (including rural and urban) or provincial and gender differences particularly in expenditures and income of the households. Looking at the differences in health nutrition status, education housing and water supply, variation in unemployment which has become one of Cameroon's major problems, currently

the population growth rate is quite high and could compromise the provision of the basic needs. The assumption is that these differences are important in determining living standards.

## **5 - Cameroon Government Social Policy**

Discussion here would be on the government's social policy relative to the following areas or sectors; Education, Health, nutrition and food problems.

### **i) Education**

We would examine the educational system performance at all the different levels - primary (basic education), secondary and tertiary levels, reviewing the efficiency of educational policies, especially problems relating to quality, access and relevance of the educational system.

We would describe enrollment figures and ratios, dropout rates, school output, regional or provincial bring out differences including gender differences,. Look at teachers and school availability, What is the relation between education and poverty?

What is the real cost of education to families particularly to poor families? Is there any government's policy towards achieving (free) universal basic education for all children such as expanding primary education and targeting the poor regions. Disaggregate and discuss public expenditure at different levels of education.

### **ii) Health, Nutrition and Hygiene**

We look at the health care system with stress on preventive and primary health care as against curative care, (and concern on mortality and morbidity). We examine the inputs into the system and its performance, causes of poor health.

Look at the disease pattern and how it affects the poor such that by discussing policy relating to improving the health situation, we would look at factors affecting death rates, life expectancy for all age groups as well as the distribution by cause of morbidity and mortality. Improper personal hygiene and contamination of food, soil and water as cause of easy spread of disease. Analysis of government health expenditures and discussion of different sources of health financing.

### **iii) Population**

We will critically review government population policy and different institutions that tackle population issues and look at different constraints inherent in this sector and how population policy affect the poor.

### **iv ) Unemployment**

The unemployment situation is becoming very severe, how is the government tackling this problem. Identification of the different government measures with specially reference to training and income generating and productive activities, job creation and how the poor are targeted.

### **v) Housing and water supply**

Poverty is regarded as rural phenomenon (UNDP 1993), yet the incidence of urban poverty is increasing. There are more social services and families in town than in the rural areas, yet the urban poor do not have access to them. In fact they live in deplorable conditions with pollution, overcrowding, poor housing and hygiene. The rural poor may be free from these ills. In some region water supply is the number one problem. We would discuss the government policy on housing and water supply as it relates to the poor.

### **vi) Nutrition and food problems**

It seems as if nutritional problems are connected to cultural habits, socio-economic factors and seasonal food shortages. Seasonal food shortages in some regions may partly be due to transportation problem especially between the northern and southern part of the country. Yet the current economic situation has contributed in worsening the malnutrition situation as reported in the 1987 national nutritional survey. We would attempt to examine in detail the nutritional status taking into consideration the regional and gender differences. Policy implication here would necessary involve agriculture and agricultural pricing.

(vii) In all it would be important to examine what is being done on unemployment, inequality, children and gender issues, human freedom and on the environment. All these are closely linked to poverty and consequently to development.

## **6 - Analysis of public expenditure**

We will look at the sectoral expenditures since 1980 and evaluate the effectiveness of the public expenditure, particularly in alleviating poverty, improving economic opportunities and enhance the capacity of the poor.

## **7 - Source of financing**

We would examine - Different private sources including household and individuals

- Different government sources
- International agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors.
- Non governmental agencies.
- Cooperative and concerted efforts

## **8 - Implementing poverty reduction programmes**

It seems all parties concern must be involved in solving the poverty problem. Alleviating poverty must be the common task of government, NGOs, donors and the poor themselves - the main beneficiaries (Castaneda 1992). And on the whole, policy could be developed to help the poor themselves such as designing income generating programmes, training and productive activities. Finally providing social goods and services which are socially profitable but privately not rewarding. However policy prescription would be inferred from the macro and sectoral analysis, which we shall carry out.

## **9 - Methodology**

-Source of Information

We shall obtain very little primary information based on discussion with key information or key officials in the relevant ministerial departments and sectors. We shall mainly use the secondary (data) which shall be collected from the appropriate departments and sectors.

-Analysis of information

We shall be highly quantitative complemented with qualitative analysis

We shall make use of indices, ratios, correlations and where necessary regression analysis shall be used.

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## II - HEALTH AND POVERTY

### ETUDE REGIONALE DE LA MORTALITE DES ENFANTS AU CAMEROUN

par

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#### I. PESENTATION DU PROJET

L'Afrique au Sud du Sahara reste actuellement la région ayant la mortalité la plus élevée du Monde ( voir Etat de la Population, FNUAP 1994 ). Les conditions de vie demeurent médiocres et se dégradent dans la plupart des pays. La charge microbienne y est très élevée ; Les maladies endémiques telles que les parasitoses, les maladies infectieuses et contagieuses et les maladies liées à la nutrition touchent des centaines de milliers d'enfants en bas âge et les déciment. Pour ce qui est justement de la mortalité de moins de cinq ans, elle demeure élevée comparée aux autres régions du Monde.

Alors que l'Amérique Latine enregistre des niveaux d'espérance de vie à la naissance comparables à ceux de plusieurs pays industrialisés ( aux alentours de 70 ans ) et des risques de mortalité infanto-juvénile aux alentours de 75 pour mille, en Afrique au Sud du Sahara, l'espérance de vie à la naissance est encore proche de 50 ans et la probabilité de décès avant cinq ans avoisine les 200 pour mille. Par ailleurs, 20 pays africains ont une espérance de vie inférieure à 50 ans ( FNUAP 1994 ), d'une part, et 19 pays ayant l'indice de développement humain le plus faible sont africains, d'autre part. Toujours en Afrique, les maladies diarrhéiques sont à l'origine de 38% des décès chez les enfants de moins de 5 ans, alors que la simple réhydratation orale permet de réduire considérablement le risque de mortalité dans ce cas (Rapport Banque Mondiale 1993 : Investir dans la santé).

Des progrès significatifs ont toutefois été enregistrés depuis la fin des années 1950: "La mortalité a partout nettement baissé, indépendamment de l'évolution économique et de l'état de la production et, peut-être aussi, malgré l'inefficacité des systèmes de santé publique" ( Pison, Van de Walle et Sala-Diakanda, 1989 ). Mais ces declins sont plus ou moins rapides selon les pays, et à l'intérieur d'un même pays, selon les régions.

Le même phénomène s'observe au Cameroun où la géographie de la mortalité infantile et juvénile révèle également de très profonds contrastes. De la région du Nord-Ouest/Sud-Ouest où le quotient de mortalité infanto-juvénile est l'un des bas ( 88,8 pour mille ), à la partie septentrionale du Cameroun où un enfant a 199,2 chances sur mille de mourir entre la naissance et son cinquième anniversaire ( Source: DHS 1991 ), le spectre est particulièrement large. Ainsi, entre sa naissance et son cinquième anniversaire, un Camerounais du Nord géographique a un risque de mourir près de deux fois et demie supérieure à celle de son compatriote de la région du Nord-Ouest/Sud-Ouest. Un tel écart pourrait être mis en rapport avec de nombreux facteurs tels que les difficultés d'accès aux services de santé et d'approvisionnement en eau, l'hostilité de l'environnement physique, ainsi que les facteurs socio-culturels et économiques.

Les mêmes inégalités s'observent selon le milieu d'habitat et les variables socio-économiques telles que le niveau d'instruction, le revenu, la catégorie socio-professionnelle, la religion, l'ethnie, l'âge, etc. Comme l'affirme G. Masuy ( 1983 ), "la mort ne frappe pas les



enfants au hasard et la probabilité d'en être victime varie de manière non négligeable selon les régions, et davantage encore selon les groupes socio-culturels..." La distribution spatiale de la population camerounaise se superpose ainsi à une répartition sociale qui, non seulement évolue avec le temps mais entraîne aussi des inégalités de mortalité. La question qui vient naturellement à l'esprit est de saisir les raisons pour lesquelles les progrès enregistrés n'ont pas profité à tous de la même manière et dans le même temps. Quelles relations établir entre les spécificités socio-culturelles et régionales d'une part, et la mortalité des Camerounais de moins de cinq ans d'autre part ?

S'agissant justement des facteurs socio-culturels, on observe, en rapport avec le niveau d'instruction de la mère camerounaise, qu'un enfant issu d'une femme illétrée court un risque de décès avant cinq ans ( 198,4 pour mille ) deux fois et demie plus élevé qu'un enfant d'une mère ayant un niveau d'instruction secondaire ou plus ( 80,3 pour mille ). Cette différence de mortalité en fonction du niveau d'instruction de la mère est encore plus nette pour la période juvénile. La probabilité de mourir entre un an et cinq ans pour un enfant né d'une mère non instruite est trois fois plus élevée ( 96,2 pour mille ) que celle d'un enfant dont la mère a atteint le niveau secondaire ( 31,2 pour mille ) ( voir rapport DHS 1991 ). Les meilleures conditions de vie , d'hygiène et d'alimentation, mais surtout le recours plus important par les femmes plus instruites aux services de santé sont sans doute plus déterminants dans ces écarts. Certaines coutumes, par exemple, semblent être liées au Nord à la mortalité infantile élevée, tel le fait d'enduire de terre le nombril des nouveaux-nés chez certaines populations, qui provoquerait le tétanos ombilical.

L'efficacité d'une politique de santé est conditionnée par une parfaite maîtrise des processus responsables des niveaux élevés de mortalité des enfants au Cameroun.

La revue bibliographique relative à ce sujet fait ressortir une large préférence des auteurs au niveau collectif du phénomène, à savoir celui faisant intervenir essentiellement les taux et les quotients de mortalité. Notre réflexion se démarque de cette approche pour privilégier la mesure des facteurs individuels liés à la mère de l'enfant.

## **II. Objectifs de l'étude**

-Elaborer un indice individuel par femme (indice de Preston et Trussel ) pour mesurer "l'expérience" des mères en matière de mortalité de leurs enfants;

-Dégager l'influence des variables jugées cruciales sur l'indice individuel de mortalité des enfants dans chaque zone écologique du Cameroun; ces zones bio-climatiques sont les suivantes :

- 1) La Plaine Côtière;
- 2) La Région Ntem-Sanaga;
- 3) Le Sud-Est;
- 4) Les hauts-Plateaux de l'Ouest;
- 5) L'Adamaoua;
- 6) Les Basses Terres Tropicales et les Mandara;

-Faire une analyse comparative de l'impact de chacune de ces variables dans les différentes zones afin de pouvoir isoler l'influence du milieu écologique sur l'indice individuel de mortalité des enfants au Cameroun;

-analyser les interactions entre les facteurs jugés plus susceptibles d'influencer la mortalité infantile et juvénile et dégager une structure par le biais d'une analyse des correspondances multiples;

-Esquisser, à l'aide de la structure obtenue à travers l'analyse des correspondances multiples, une explication de la mortalité infanto-juvénile au Cameroun en combinant les résultats des approches quantitative et qualitative;

-Enfin, proposer, après une étude critique préalable de la ( ou des ) politique ( s ) antérieure(s) ou en cours, une politique de santé plus cohérente et plus efficace s'appuyant sur une connaissance approfondie des déterminants de la mortalité des Camerounais de moins de cinq ans, d'une part, et tenant compte des spécificités socio-culturelles et écologiques d'autre part.

### **III. ASPECTS METHODOLOGIQUES**

#### **III.1 Présentation des principaux facteurs retenus**

Nous nous inspirons ici du cadre conceptuel de Mosley et Chen revu par Francis Gendreau, Patrick Gubry, Thérèse Locoh et Jacques Veron ( CEPED, 1991 ), qui distingue, pour la mortalité des enfants, les déterminants proches (ou intermédiaires ) et les déterminants socio-économiques.

Les premiers agissent directement sur la mortalité: il s'agit de l'exposition au risque (présence du micro-organisme dans l'environnement, transmission de l'élément pathogène à l'enfant ), la résistance et la thérapie. Les déterminants socio-économiques, quant à eux, agissent indirectement par le canal des variables intermédiaires. Celles-ci médialisent l'impact des déterminants socio-économiques sur le risque d'invalidité chronique de l'enfant et/ou celui de décès avant cinq ans : il s'agit, comme analysés ci-dessous, de l'environnement écologique, des déterminants socio-économiques, culturels et politiques, du système de santé.

##### **III.1.1 Les déterminants proches**

La littérature suggère que le processus épidémiologique s'accomplit en trois phases. Au cours d'une première étape, l'enfant entre en contact avec l'agent de la maladie, facteur premier du processus. Dans un deuxième stade, le microorganisme envahisseur doit lutter contre la résistance opposée par son hôte. Enfin, lorsque la maladie s'est déclarée, le recours à la thérapie détermine l'issue du processus. Ces trois phases représentent, dans le modèle utilisé pour la présente étude, les trois catégories de déterminants proches: les facteurs -relatifs à l'exposition au risque de la maladie, les facteurs relatifs à la résistance contre la maladie, et les facteurs relatifs à la thérapie mise en oeuvre pour lutter contre le développement de cette maladie.

##### **III.1.2 Les déterminants socio-économiques et l'environnement écologique**

**Environnement écologique :** Il ressort des travaux réalisés par Dackam Ngatchou, Gubry et E. Ngwé ( 1993 ) que les éléments fondamentaux du milieu écologique, à savoir le climat, les sols et la végétation, peuvent influencer considérablement la santé des enfants. Le climat conditionne la régulation thermique qui est extrêmement importante pour les enfants en bas âge. Il peut aussi, d'une part, favoriser la prolifération des agents infectieux ou leurs vecteurs et d'autre part, déterminer le type et la quantité des ressources alimentaires et d'eau, plus disponibles à certaines périodes de l'année qu'à d'autres et de qualité variable.

La période de soudure alimentaire précédant la récolte n'existerait, selon ces auteurs, que dans la partie septentrionale du pays, en zone soudano-sahélienne, où les saisons sont bien marquées. D'où l'existence d'une surmortalité saisonnière.

De même, on peut rapprocher les épidémies de méningite des périodes de "brume sèche" (vent véhiculant des particules de sable en suspension ).

Les travaux de Dackam et autres révèlent aussi que Keuzeta et Merlin ( 1988 ) ont ainsi trouvé qu'au Cameroun, les enfants de moins d'un an mouraient plus de maladies diarrhéiques en zone aride ou semi-aride ( taux de 190 pour mille dans l'Extrême-Nord contre 119 pour

mille dans le Centre-Sud ). La raison serait à rechercher notamment dans les problèmes de déshydratation.

Dackam Ngatchou et les autres ( 1993 ) insistent également sur le fait que certaines formations végétales favorisent l'existence et la prolifération des vecteurs de maladies tels que les micro-organismes et les insectes pathogènes. Ces organismes ne peuvent souvent survivre que dans certaines conditions climatiques ( températures, ombrages et humidité ). C'est le cas, par exemple, de la mouche tsé-tsé, vecteur de la trypanosomiase. Dans d'autres cas, les contraintes du milieu sont beaucoup moins draconiennes. C'est ainsi que l'adaptation de l'anophèle à tous les types de climats tropicaux entraîne la présence du paludisme dans toutes les régions du pays, même s'il est plus répandu dans certaines d'entre elles.

La qualité des sols, quant à elle, détermine avec le climat, la qualité et la quantité des ressources alimentaires, influençant ainsi la nutrition de la population, élément particulièrement déterminant dans la résistance aux nombreuses maladies mortelles pour les enfants.

Cependant, il n'est pas toujours aisé d'isoler l'effet propre du climat tout comme celui des autres facteurs de l'environnement physique, en raison de son interaction avec les autres facteurs socio-économiques, tels que les revenus, la religion, les modèles culturels et autres variables comportementales.

### **Les modèles culturels**

**\*Instruction** : une instruction plus élevée peut permettre à la mère d'assurer des soins de qualité mieux adaptés au développement du nourrisson. Plus indirectement, l'instruction peut favoriser l'accès à des méthodes contraceptives plus efficaces et à une meilleure planification des naissances, évitant ainsi les problèmes liés à des grossesses trop rapprochées. Au-delà encore, l'instruction peut accroître la mobilité sociale et donner priorité à des modèles culturels différents véhiculant des images de l'enfant recherché surtout pour sa qualité et les satisfactions psychiques qu'il peut procurer ( H. Gérard, 1992 ). La majeure partie du temps et de l'énergie consacrés aux enfants est encore le fait des femmes, sinon des mères, dans tous les pays du monde. Le lien privilégié qui unit le petit enfant à la mère au Cameroun résulte de la dépendance très forte impliquée par l'allaitement, souvent prolongé, ainsi que du système de répartition des tâches entre les sexes au sein de la cellule familiale. L'éducation des enfants, au-dessous de cinq en tous cas, est la responsabilité de la mère. En tant que facteur de modification des comportements, l'instruction de la mère apparaît comme plus déterminante que celle du père, laquelle joue surtout un rôle de par son influence sur le niveau socio-économique du ménage.

L'instruction peut en outre jouer un rôle indirect sur la mortalité des enfants. Lorsque la proportion des femmes qui ont fréquenté l'école est importante dans une communauté, le phénomène de diffusion des connaissances et des comportements influence l'attitude de l'ensemble de la population, y compris celle des femmes analphabètes, en modifiant la norme traditionnelle.

**\*La religion** : "La religion véhicule un certain nombre de valeurs et de normes qui régissent la vie des fidèles sur le plan comportemental, physiologique et psychique. Elle peut refléter l'ouverture à la civilisation occidentale ( religions catholique et protestante ), le niveau des traditions des gens ( religion traditionnelle ), et parfois la situation des individus dans la hiérarchie sociale ( par exemple, dans un pays très christianisé, les catholiques et les protestants bénéficieraient d'une situation privilégiée dans la société par rapport aux musulmans ou aux adeptes d'autres religions )" ( E. Akoto, 1985, p. 185 ). L'appartenance à une religion est liée à une certaine façon de vivre et à une vision de la vie et de la mort. Les travaux d'Akoto ( 1985 ) ont d'ailleurs montré que les mères catholiques et protestantes avaient une mortalité infantile et juvénile inférieure à celle des adeptes des autres religions.

Les modèles culturels constituent ainsi une sorte de pivot sur lequel s'articule le déterminisme social de l'agir humain. Ils sont faits de normes, d'images, d'habitudes, d'idées, de nécessités, de pratiques quotidiennes, etc., à propos du risque de mortalité, et procure à l'individu des cadres de pensée et de pratiques qui sont reconnus et valorisés socialement et tout au moins en adéquation avec la vie sociale et le système socio-culturel.

Comme ils peuvent relever de la conscience collective, et même davantage encore de l'inconscient collectif, ils ne peuvent être observés directement et ne sont approchés que très partiellement soit par inférence basée sur les perceptions exprimables que les individus ont et sur les comportements de ceux-ci, soit par déduction à propos des conséquences possibles de tel ou tel élément de la vie sociale sur la signification culturelle de la mortalité. Sur le plan ethnique, par exemple, Akoto et Tabutin ( 1987 ) ont montré que les enfants des mères Bénoué et Kaka présentaient une surmortalité excessive par rapport à d'autres groupes tribaux tels que les Bamiléké, les Boulou, les Fang, etc.

La dimension culturelle prend toute son importance dans cette étude qui se focalisera particulièrement, dans le cadre de l'approche qualitative, sur le phénomène de sorcellerie ( dont une tentative de définition est actuellement en cours ) qui gagne de plus en plus de l'ampleur au Cameroun. En effet, une croyance trop marquée au phénomène de sorcellerie est de nature à freiner et même annuler le recours aux hôpitaux en cas de maladie de l'enfant, rendant ainsi inefficaces les diverses mesures de lutte contre la mortalité des enfants.

**Caractéristiques du ménage :** Le revenu et sa répartition au sein de la population et dans le ménage sont la caractéristique familiale la plus déterminante pour la santé des enfants. Les ressources économiques influencent la possession de toute une série de biens et le recours à de nombreux services susceptibles d'affecter la mortalité des enfants à travers leur impact sur les déterminants proches. La disponibilité en eau potable et en nourriture, garantes d'un bon équilibre physiologique, ainsi que la présence d'installations sanitaires, qui détermine en partie le degré d'exposition au risque pour de nombreuses maladies infectieuses et parasitaires, sont largement influencées par le niveau économique du ménage.

La quantité et la variété des aliments disponibles au sein de la cellule familiale sont des facteurs très importants du développement de l'enfant et de l'équilibre physiologique de la mère, surtout lorsque celle-ci est enceinte ou lorsqu'elle allaite.

Le revenu influence également la protection contre les variations climatiques et la quantité d'énergie disponible. Cette dernière est importante car la cuisson des aliments, la purification de l'eau, la stérilisation des ustensiles et la conservation de la nourriture en dépendent. La disponibilité énergétique influence donc la présence de bactéries dans les aliments et dans l'eau absorbés ainsi que la sensibilité aux infections respiratoires des climats froids. Enfin, le revenu permet de recourir aux moyens d'information et de circulation nécessaires pour utiliser efficacement les services de santé de la communauté. Le coût de tels services ( consultations médicales, hospitalisation, médicaments ) limite en outre leur utilisation aux classes les plus aisées de la population.

**Système de santé et autres caractéristiques de la communauté :** Comme le souligne Hobcraft (1985 ), il est nécessaire de prendre en compte les interrelations entre caractéristiques individuelles et variables communautaires pour expliquer les différentiels de morbidité et de mortalité. L'utilité des études portant sur les déterminants biologiques de la santé reste indéniable mais elles devraient être complétées par les interactions entre les attributs individuels et le contexte social, économique et politique d'une part, et la nature des services médicaux et de santé publique d'autre part.

### **a- Le système de santé**

L'efficacité du système de santé dépend en grande partie du degré d'engagement de l'Etat vis-à-vis des problèmes de santé. Les pays dans lesquels le Gouvernement a fait du bien-être physique des populations l'une de ses priorités et où il s'est donné les moyens de réaliser cette politique sont ceux où les taux de mortalité, des enfants notamment, sont plus faibles que l'on ne s'y attendrait au vu des seules performances économiques et du niveau de développement technologique. Les mesures de santé publique pouvant être prises par l'Etat et dont l'impact potentiel sur la mortalité est très puissant, concernent le contrôle des épidémies à travers les programmes de vaccinations et les mises en quarantaine; le contrôle des normes de commercialisation et de conservation des vaccins et des antibiotiques, des produits alimentaires, de la réglementation des systèmes de canalisation ( eau, égouts ), de la salubrité dans les logements, les restaurants, les lieux de travail, etc. Notre pays se caractérise par une multiplicité des lois relatives à la santé mais celles-ci semblent rarement appliquées du fait de l'absence d'un système de contrôle rigoureux et efficace.

L'intervention peut aussi concerner les subventions des prix des médicaments, les consultations médicales et certains aliments de base, mais cette deuxième catégorie d'interventions est probablement moins déterminante que la première dans la mesure où la plus grande partie des budgets de santé est destinée aux mesures curatives plutôt que préventives et aussi parce que l'utilisation de ces biens et services, même gratuite, dépend fortement des croyances et des pratiques sanitaires traditionnelles.

Enfin, l'action de l'Etat peut se traduire par des campagnes actives de promotion des services de santé et des pratiques bénéfiques à la santé. Institutionnellement, il peut s'agir de promouvoir le statut du personnel de santé et de révaloriser, en les intégrant dans le système de santé local, les guérisseurs traditionnels et les matrones de village. Individuellement, les campagnes d'information peuvent modifier favorablement l'attitude des parents, et de la mère en particulier, afin de promouvoir la santé des enfants ( Mosley et Chen, 1984 ).

### **b - Autres variables communautaires**

\* *Organisation économique* : L'influence de la quantité et de la qualité des infrastructures, de transport notamment, sur la santé n'est plus à démontrer. Historiquement, la disparition des grandes famines a résulté du développement des chemins de fer, du réseau routier, des systèmes d'irrigation, de la multiplicité des marchés et de la sécurité politique qui ont assuré un approvisionnement régulier en produits alimentaires grâce à un système de redistribution au niveau national.

L'organisation de la production est un autre facteur susceptible d'affecter la disponibilité et la stabilité de l'approvisionnement en denrées alimentaires dans la mesure où le caractère, soit individuel, soit communautaire, du système de production et de distribution des bénéfices qui en résultent influence la répartition des ressources au sein de la population. Les salaires et les prix des produits de base en sont directement dépendants.

L'organisation économique et sociale détermine en partie la densité de peuplement régional qui peut avoir des conséquences sur la prévalence des maladies infectieuses, du fait que, pour qu'une maladie contagieuse se développe dans une population, il est nécessaire que le réservoir humain et la fréquence des contacts entre les individus qui le composent soient suffisamment importants pour que l'équilibre entre individus susceptibles et individus infectés permette au microorganisme de survivre en circulant des uns aux autres.

\* *Contexte politique* : Le contexte politique - et historique en général - est souvent ignoré dans les études démographiques, surtout lorsque celles-ci sont basées sur des sources statistiques de seconde main. Les effets directs sur la mortalité des enfants de la situation politique qui règne au Cameroun sont peut-être négligeables mais les effets indirects, plus difficiles à mesurer, existent certainement. Citons à titre d'illustration l'impuissance des gouvernements fragilisés ou sans cesse remplacés à gérer certaines affaires importantes

relatives à la santé publique; la désorganisation de la production agricole et industrielle; les problèmes d'approvisionnement en produits de première nécessité ( alimentaires et médicaux en particulier ). Ce domaine de recherche demeure largement inexploité malgré l'importance de ces facteurs pour comprendre la situation ou l'évolution en matière de mortalité des enfants au Cameroun.

### **III.2 Méthodes de collecte des données**

L'analyse des principales variables retenues dans le cadre de notre étude montre que la compréhension du phénomène de la mortalité des enfants requiert à la fois une dimension quantitative et une composante qualitative ( exemple des modèles culturels ). Notre réflexion combinera par conséquent une approche quantitative et une démarche qualitative.

#### **III.2.1 Approche quantitative**

L'analyse utilise les données issues de l'Enquête de Démographie et de Santé ( DHS ) portant sur l'histoire génésique de 2839 femmes ayant eu au moins un enfant et âgées de 15 à 49 ans révolus. Pour ce qui est de l'évaluation de la qualité de ces données issues de l'enquête DHS, il convient de signaler qu'on ne dispose d'aucune information sur les orphelins de mère, ce qui peut générer l'effet de sélection : la mortalité mesurée ne peut s'appliquer à l'ensemble des enfants que si la mortalité des orphelins de mère n'est pas différente de celle des autres enfants. En outre, plus on s'éloigne de la date d'enquête, plus les naissances enregistrées sont survenues chez les femmes jeunes. Or, puisqu'il existe une relation entre l'âge de la mère et la mortalité de l'enfant, le niveau de mortalité pour les périodes anciennes peut être surestimé.

Par ailleurs, on ne dispose que des caractéristiques de la mère présumée biologique. Or, dans un contexte où le fait de confier les enfants est une pratique courante ( l'EDS révèle que parmi les enfants en vie au moment de l'enquête, plus de 24% ne vivent pas avec leur mère biologique, et parmi ceux-ci, 9% ont moins de 5 ans ), l'analyse de la mortalité différentielle peut conduire à des résultats erronés dans la mesure où certains enfants n'ont pas été replacés dans le contexte où ils ont réellement vécu.

Pour ce qui est de la méthode, il est important de signaler que les analyses faites à partir des relations agrégées, permettront de mettre en cause certaines variables dont aucune interprétation individuelle ne pouvait être avancée facilement. Citons, à titre d'exemple, l'hypothèse des relations entre la mortalité infantile et l'inégalité dans la répartition des revenus ou entre la mortalité infantile et l'inégalité dans la répartition des infrastructures sociales, qui requièrent une interprétation indépendante des comportements et des motivations individuels. Cette approche globale à laquelle nous consacrerons une partie de notre réflexion ne perd pourtant pas de vue la présence constante des effets contextuels qui exposent au risque d'inférence écologique fallacieuse, c'est-à-dire, celle qui résulte du transfert des résultats du niveau agrégé où ils sont empiriquement établis au niveau individuel. Compte tenu du fait que les quotients calculés au niveau collectif suppriment la variabilité au sein du groupe, une relation obtenue à partir des données agrégées peut être l'inverse de ce qu'on obtiendrait au niveau individuel quand on est en présence des effets contextuels. "Opérationnellement, l'existence d'un effet contextuel peut être définie comme la situation où l'unité d'agrégation agit conjointement, et parfois interactivement, avec l'une ou l'autre des variables d'intérêt et rend la relation entre ces variables instable d'une région à l'autre" (H. Gérard, cours de sociologie de la population).

Notre étude, pour être complète, se doit par conséquent d'aborder également l'approche individuelle du phénomène de la mortalité des enfants , déterminé dans une large mesure par les caractéristiques individuelles de chaque mère. C'est le premier objectif de l'approche quantitative qui, à l'aide de l'indice de Preston et Trussel, examinera, dans sa première section,

les inégalités du niveau relatif de mortalité des enfants d'une mère. Nous consacrerons la deuxième section à l'analyse des interdépendances entre les variables retenues, afin de pouvoir faire ressortir des configurations de niveaux de mortalité infantile et juvénile.

### III.2.1.1 Analyse univariée à l'aide de l'indice de Preston et Trussel

L'élaboration de cet indice est fondée sur deux hypothèses relatives aux structures de mortalité: l'hypothèse log-linéaire et l'hypothèse logit-linéaire (A. Noubissi, 1989). Le principe est le suivant: l'indice de mortalité pour chaque femme est obtenu en rapportant le nombre d'enfants décédés réellement observés au nombre qu'on observerait si la mortalité était celle du standard. La technique d'élaboration de cet indice admet plusieurs variantes parmi lesquelles nous avons opté pour le "modèle âge exact". Ce modèle est fondé sur l'hypothèse log-linéaire qui postule, une fois le schéma de mortalité standard choisi, qu'à chaque âge  $x$  :  $q_i(x) = K_i \cdot q_s(x)$ , où  $q_i(x)$  et  $q_s(x)$  désignent respectivement les quotients de mortalité (entre la naissance et l'âge exact  $x$ ) des enfants de la mère  $i$  et de la population standard,  $K_i$  étant le facteur de proportionnalité. Ce facteur est indépendant de l'âge et correspond au niveau relatif de mortalité des enfants de la femme  $i$  par rapport au standard. Cet indice, dont le calcul utilise l'âge des mères à l'enquête, le nombre d'enfants nés vivants et le nombre d'enfants survivants sera noté IPTIA.

Plus précisément, cette technique consiste à comparer l'ensemble des décès survenus parmi les enfants de la femme ( qui est ici l'unité d'analyse ) à celui des décès qu'aurait eus la femme si ses enfants, depuis leur naissance, avaient été soumis à la mortalité de la population standard. Il s'avère utile de préciser que si le choix d'un standard est important pour la méthode, le standard lui-même n'est pas important pour l'interprétation des résultats puisqu'il s'agit, pour l'essentiel, d'aboutir à une hiérarchisation des niveaux de mortalité des enfants. L'indice ainsi obtenu pourrait être appelé "indicateur d'expérience relative de la femme en matière de mortalité de ses enfants" (A. Noubissi, op. cit.) parce qu'il indique justement le niveau relatif de la mortalité à laquelle sont soumis les enfants de chaque femme, considérés comme une "population". Le calcul de cet indice qui, permet également de prendre en compte les caractéristiques propres de la femme, peut s'effectuer à partir des effectifs réduits, contrairement aux indicateurs classiques dont le calcul nécessite des effectifs assez consistants. Toutefois, en mélangeant les femmes d'âges différents, la mortalité ainsi étudiée peut ne pas avoir la même localisation dans le temps: elle peut être récente pour les enfants des femmes jeunes et ancienne pour ceux des femmes âgées. D'où la nécessité d'une hypothèse de stationarité de la mortalité depuis la naissance de l'enfant le plus âgé ( ou qui aurait été le plus âgé ) jusqu'à la date de l'enquête. Il importe aussi de relever qu'une hypothèse sous-jacente à cette technique reste le fait que les enfants de chaque femme constituent un groupe homogène vis-à-vis du risque de mortalité, ce qui empêche de tenir compte des caractéristiques propres à l'enfant telles que le rang de naissance, certaines malformations congénitales, son capital génétique, susceptibles de constituer autant de sources d'hétérogénéité.

### III.2.1.2 Analyse multivariée

L'objectif majeur visé dans cette section est d'essayer de trouver une cohérence entre variables ou entre observations (les mères camerounaises âgées de 15 à 49 ans révolus) dans le réseau de variables. La légitimité méthodologique de notre démarche qui, a pour support technique l'analyse des correspondances multiples ( ACM ), se fonde sur l'existence d'une situation d'interdépendance entre les variables. L'ACM est en effet une technique d'analyse d'interdépendance entre des variables qu'on veut analyser simultanément. Elle permet de représenter les individus par les modalités des variables qui les caractérisent; c'est l'ensemble des variables disponibles et/ou l'ensemble des observations que nous voulons saisir de façon à

mettre en évidence, simultanément, les éventuelles proximités, les liens existant entre les régions et quelques caractéristiques contextuelles et d'identification socio-culturelle recueillies lors de l'EDS.

Ces renseignements sont rassemblés dans un tableau croisant 2839 lignes (femmes âgées de 15 à 49 ans révolus ayant eu au moins une naissance vivante) et 5 colonnes (caractéristiques des femmes). Il s'agira donc d'extraire l'essentiel de l'information contenue dans le tableau de données et d'en fournir une représentation imagée se prêtant plus aisément à l'interprétation.

Cependant, comme le précise Sala-Diakanda (1980), le recours à ces techniques d'analyse n'élimine pas l'étude technique descriptive classique du phénomène étudié. Cette dernière est nécessaire pour une meilleure interprétation des proximités entre modalités observables sur les plans factoriels. L'analyse des correspondances multiples, en traitant simultanément un nombre relativement grand de variables, permet simplement de dépasser l'étape des combinaisons binaires pour une vue plus générale des données.

Elle permet donc, dans le cadre de la présente étude, de mieux caractériser les régions, en fournissant une vue d'ensemble des liens qui existent entre les diverses variables disponibles et les femmes de ces régions. Il est important de signaler que cette méthode de synthèse des grands tableaux permet de décrire exclusivement les proximités entre formes indépendamment des niveaux ou de l'intensité des phénomènes étudiés. De plus, cette analyse étant une analyse des interdépendances entre une série de variables, elle n'en privilégie pas d'un côté les variables dépendantes et, de l'autre, les variables indépendantes. Elle vise tout simplement à mettre en évidence, à visualiser, les proximités entre modalités et observations. Cette mise en évidence des ressemblances des niveaux entre individus ou groupes d'individus permet d'atteindre, avec plus d'assurance, le but même de cette section, à savoir, parvenir à une caractérisation relativement complète des régions dans les limites des données disponibles.

Un des gros avantages de l'analyse des correspondances multiples sur d'autres techniques de visualisation-telle que l'analyse en composantes principales -est justement la possibilité qu'elle offre de représenter à la fois, sur un même plan formé par les axes factoriels, les points-variables et les points-unités. Cette possibilité ouvre la voie à des analyses extrêmement fouillées des schémas de corrélations entre variables, des proximités entre groupes, et des associations structurelles de groupes et de variables. Ce genre de représentation graphique qui est un des principaux attraits de la méthode, peut d'ailleurs mettre en évidence des phénomènes moins attendus qui eux-mêmes peuvent orienter des recherches ultérieures.

En essayant de nous faire percevoir la façon dont l'univers (les mères camerounaises âgées de 15 à 49 ans révolus) est structuré et organisé, l'analyse des correspondances multiples permet, mieux que l'étude descriptive classique seule, de comprendre les mécanismes de la réalité sociale et culturelle de la population en question. En cela, elle constitue une précieuse aide à l'explication dans la mesure où elle tente de rendre plus intelligible, pour l'esprit humain, le contexte dans lequel les enfants de chaque femme vivent. Pour une meilleure compréhension des résultats, reprenons quelques principes de base de l'ACM.

L'analyse des correspondances opère à partir d'un tableau de données de dimension  $(n \times p)$  croisant deux ensembles I et J. A l'intersection de la ligne  $i$  ( $i$  appartient à I) et de la colonne  $j$  ( $j$  appartient à J) se trouve l'élément  $k_{ij}$ , un entier, qui est le nombre de fois qu'a été observé l'événement  $(i, j)$ . La somme des éléments  $k_{ij}$  est le nombre total d'événements observés;  $k_{ij}$  représenter par exemple l'effectif des femmes de la région  $i$  pratiquant la religion musulmane ( $j$ ).

L'analyse des correspondances travaille essentiellement sur les profils, c'est-à-dire des probabilités conditionnelles d'avoir la modalité  $j$ , sachant que l'on appartient à la région  $i$ , par exemple. Ces probabilités sont estimées par des fréquences relatives  $(f_{ij})$  dont la somme vaut l'unité. Ces fréquences sont obtenues par l'expression:



$f_{ij} = k_{ij}/k$  où  $k$  est la somme des  $k_{ij}$ . Dans l'analyse des correspondances, les rôles dévolus aux deux ensembles I et J sont identiques. L'on montre d'ailleurs qu'il existe une symétrie mathématique totale entre ces deux ensembles. Il en résulte donc que les transformations faites sur les données brutes sont identiques pour I et J. Cette symétrie entre les espaces I et J autorise à raisonner sur l'un d'entre eux seulement, les résultats pour l'autre espace s'obtenant par simple analogie du fait, précisément, des rôles identiques dévolus aux lignes et aux colonnes du tableau. Comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, aucune variable, aucune caractéristique n'est privilégiée dans cette méthode; la distinction entre variable dépendante et variable indépendante disparaît. Les variables et observations sont analysées dans leurs relations avec d'autres variables, d'autres observations.

Il nous semble important de rappeler avec Benzécri cité par Sala-Diakanda (1980) qu'"interpréter un axe, c'est trouver ce qu'il y a d'analogue d'une part entre tout ce qui est écrit à droite de l'origine, d'autre part, entre tout ce qui s'écarte à gauche, et exprimer, avec concision et exactitude, l'opposition entre les deux extrêmes". Une telle expression est souvent difficile à trouver car on doit rendre compte non seulement de la place des points les plus écartés à droite ou à gauche mais de celle de tous les points, ou du moins de tous ceux qui apportent au facteur des contributions absolues importantes (et ces points ne sont pas toujours les plus écartés). Pour l'interprétation des résultats, nous retiendrons les règles suivantes:

a) Deux points ont des profils semblables lorsqu'ils sont proches l'un de l'autre sur les axes factoriels et le plan qu'ils déterminent. S'il s'agit des points-régions, les réponses données par les femmes résidant dans ces régions aux différentes questions sont semblables. Si par contre il s'agit des points-variables, les réponses données par l'ensemble des femmes sont elles-mêmes voisines. Les profils sont, au contraire, d'autant plus différents que les points projetés sont éloignés les uns des autres.

b) Lorsque les points sont près du centre de gravité, cela indique généralement, s'il s'agit des points-religions par exemple, que les femmes pratiquant ces religions ou s'en réclamant ont répondu à l'ensemble des questions de façon semblable, et s'il s'agit d'autres points-variables, que ces variables ont reçu des réponses semblables de l'ensemble des femmes. Les variables n'ont dans ce cas, aucun pouvoir discriminatoire dans la population; elles sont en plus, peu corrélées avec les autres variables.

c) La représentation simultanée des points-variables et des points-régions sur un même plan factoriel, propriété importante propre à l'analyse des correspondances multiples, permet de visualiser dans quelle mesure les régions se regroupent autour de certaines variables, et vice-versa, et de caractériser aisément des groupes de régions homogènes, si elles sont mises en évidence.

d) Il faut enfin insister sur le fait que la proximité entre deux modalités (exemple: "être catholique" et "avoir un très faible niveau de mortalité" ) n'implique nullement que les mères ayant la modalité  $i$  et proches d'un point  $j$  ont toutes la caractéristique  $j$ . Cela veut simplement dire, pour prendre notre exemple ci-dessus cité, que parmi les mères catholiques, la proportion de celles qui ont un très faible niveau de mortalité est plus forte que la moyenne. Plus cette proportion s'éloigne de la moyenne, plus la modalité  $j$  concernée s'écarte de l'origine, plus donc elle est discriminante. C'est dans ce sens que nous interpréterons les proximités entre deux points.

### III.2.2 Analyse qualitative

Les enquêtes habituellement effectuées dans le cadre de la lutte contre ce phénomène privilégient généralement l'approche quantitative qui ne paraît pas très apte à saisir toute seule la globalité du phénomène. A cet égard, l'approche qualitative se présente comme étant un complément incontournable à la démarche quantitative. Comme l'écrit H Gérard ( 1992 ), "l'approche qualitative a pour objet l'observation et l'analyse de "choses" ou de parts de choses,

qui, telles qu'elles sont observées et/ou analysées, ne se prêtent pas à la quantification, soit parce qu'elles s'en passent, soit parce qu'elles sont en-déça ou au-delà de la quantification". L'approche qualitative offre ainsi l'avantage de tenir compte des particularités socio-culturelles du Cameroun.

Cette approche permet notamment :

- d'apprécier l'ampleur du phénomène de sorcellerie et sa relation avec la mortalité des enfants;
- de mesurer l'importance relative accordée à ce phénomène par rapport à d'autres causes de décès;
- de mesurer la contribution de la médecine traditionnelle à la préservation de la santé des enfants dans nos sociétés et d'analyser la nature de la collaboration que les guérisseurs traditionnels entretiennent avec la médecine moderne;
- de mieux caractériser les fonctions magico-religieuses exercées par les guérisseurs ainsi que la sorcellerie dans les sociétés camerounaises.
- d'analyser des situations particulières de groupes d'individus;
- de percevoir comment ces individus ressentent et analysent ce phénomène;
- d'apprécier la gravité des situations, leurs mécanismes de reproduction ainsi que leurs déterminants;
- d'apprécier les solutions de survie et les transformations induites par la crise économique.

Parmi les méthodes d'approche qualitative, le "Récit de Vie" a retenu particulièrement notre attention. Comme le définit D. Bertaux ( 1976 ), "le récit de vie est la vie telle que le personnage qui l'a vécue la raconte". L'objectif des récits de vie n'est pas de reconstituer les "faits historiques", ni de reconstruire la vie de l'individu malgré lui et indépendamment de lui, c'est-à-dire "objectivement"; au contraire il est de recueillir le récit d'une vie telle que celui qui l'a vécue, la vit à nouveau dans le discours, avec ses interprétations, ses camouflages, ses embellissements, ses oublis voire même ses inventions, ses hésitations et ses émotions. Comme le souhaite D. Bertaux, "traiter l'homme ordinaire non plus comme un objet à observer, à mesurer, mais comme un informateur mieux informé que le sociologue qui l'interroge..."<sup>2</sup>)

Au stade actuel de notre projet il semble impossible de dégager un échéancier des travaux et un budget fiables avant la réalisation des travaux préliminaires qui comprendront notamment la revue documentaire, des entretiens auprès des administrations concernées par la question: Ministères de la Santé Publique, des Affaires Sociales et de La Condition Féminine, etc.

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**ETUDE DU LIEN ENTRE L'ACCES AUX SERVICES DE SANTE  
ET LE NIVEAU DU REVENU DES MENAGES : Cas de Yaoundé**

par

*Claude KOUEKAM*

**APPROCHE METHODOLOGIQUE**

1. Mesure de la pauvreté à Yaoundé par l'estimation de seuils de pauvreté et le calcul d'indice numérique et volumique de la pauvreté
  2. Evaluation de l'accessibilité aux soins de santé par,
    - \* La mesure de la fréquence des consultations, (i)
    - \* La mesure du taux d'ordonnance non servie, (i)
    - \* La comparaison du coût unitaire de soin, pour les maladies les plus fréquentes, à la capacité contributive par tête de différents types de ménages.
  - 3 - Evaluation des effets secondaires de l'appauvrissement sur la santé, par la mesure de la prévalence chez les patients, de maladies liées au stress ou à l'angoisse due aux lendemains incertains. (i)
  - 4 - Mise en place d'une enquête réduite en vue d'établir:
    - Les effets de la dévaluation sur la structure des dépenses des ménages,
    - Les mobiles du recours à la médecine traditionnelle,
    - Les raisons d'achat de médicaments dans le secteur informel,
    - L'ampleur de l'automédication,
    - Les stratégies adoptées pour les maladies dont le coût est supérieur à la capacité de financement du ménage.
- (i) Ces mesures seront calculées pour 3 périodes :
- \* Avant la baisse des salaires de Décembre 1992,
  - \* Entre Décembre 92 et Janvier 94,
  - \* Après la dévaluation de Janvier 94.

**INTRODUCTION**

Depuis le début des années 80, la vie des pays africains est marquée par la crise économique et par l'ajustement conséquent des économies, qui se traduit par une compression généralisée des enveloppes budgétaires. Cette récession est vivement ressentie dans le secteur de la santé. L'insuffisance des budgets sanitaires publics se traduit par la dégradation des services de santé publics (Hôpital Jamot, CHU de Yaoundé); ce qui est une entrave réelle à la satisfaction des besoins de santé des populations. Pour faire face à cette situation devenue préoccupante, les pouvoirs publics se sont accordés pour faire supporter aux populations le coût d'un certain nombre de services qui étaient "gratuits" auparavant, par exemple les consultations, les examens de laboratoire et les médicaments.

Cette nouvelle ligne de conduite préconisée par l'Initiative de Bamako (1987) vise à relancer, dynamiser et améliorer les services de santé. Au Cameroun les ménages ont vu leur

pouvoir d'achat amenuisé par la baisse drastique des salaires dans le secteur public, les licenciements massifs dans le privé et la dévaluation du franc CFA. La capacité contributive de ces ménages est-elle encore suffisante pour soutenir ce projet salutaire ? Autrement dit, ont-ils encore les moyens de se soigner convenablement ? Quelle contribution acceptent-ils de verser pour le maintien de leur santé ?

Cette étude vise à explorer les différentes stratégies de soin des ménages, et à examiner l'effet revenu sur l'accès aux soins hospitaliers. Pour ce faire, nous évaluerons, en premier lieu, l'offre et la demande effective des services de santé. Nous mesurerons ensuite la propension à payer et la capacité contributive des ménages. Les plus pauvres devenant de plus nombreux, une attention particulière leur sera réservée. L'Hôpital Central de Yaoundé (HCY) nous servira d'illustration.

## I - LE SYSTEME DE SANTE AU CAMEROUN

L'état de santé d'une population est le reflet des prestations que les services de santé mettent à sa disposition. La capacité d'accueil, la répartition géographique des infrastructures et équipements, la compétence et l'effectif du personnel médical et la disponibilité des médicaments sont autant d'éléments qui conditionnent ces prestations.

Compte tenu de sa forte croissance démographique, environ 3% l'an, et de la précarité de son économie, le Cameroun a des difficultés à étendre, et même à maintenir, la couverture de sa population par les établissements de santé. Par ailleurs, les ressources publiques en ce domaine ont été, en général, concentrées dans l'infrastructure et les équipements de soins tertiaires, alors qu'on aurait pu mieux desservir la population avec des installations correspondant à des niveaux de soins moins perfectionnés. Ainsi par exemple le Ministère de la Santé n'a alloué que 22% de son budget d'investissement aux centres de santé, au début des années 80, contre 66% aux hôpitaux (source : Banque Mondiale, 1984).

### . Les infrastructures

Le Cameroun disposait en 1992 de 243 hôpitaux, 882 centres de santé, 312 dispensaires, 62 P.M.I., 215 pharmacies, et 142 propharmacies. Cet ensemble d'infrastructure est animé par un personnel médical de 18.592 personnes, soit 1009 médecins, 53 chirurgiens, 206 pharmaciens, 6053 techniciens et infirmiers, 5011 aides soignants. Le tableau 1 nous donne une image de la carte sanitaire du pays.

S'il est vrai que, comparé à d'autres pays sub-Sahariens, le Cameroun a une carte sanitaire plutôt flatteuse, il lui faut toutefois réduire, d'une part, le déséquilibre entre régions, et d'autre part, investir davantage dans les infrastructures et équipements de soins primaires et dans la formation d'un personnel médical hautement qualifié. Cette double action lui permettrait de rapprocher davantage sa carte sanitaire de celle des pays développés.

### . Politique sanitaire

Face aux besoins sans cesse croissants résultant de la forte poussée démographique, et au faible pouvoir d'achat des ménages, l'Etat camerounais a adopté en se fondant sur l'Initiative de Bamako, une nouvelle politique sanitaire plus axée sur la participation communautaire. L'Etat fournit les locaux, le personnel et le matériel, et la communauté participe à l'entretien du matériel et au réapprovisionnement en médicaments. Cette symbiose permettant d'espérer en retour une amélioration de la santé des populations.

Cette politique a été mise sur pied, à titre expérimental à l'Hôpital Central de Yaoundé et l'Hôpital Laquintini de Douala. Elle se répand progressivement dans les formations provinciales, départementales et enfin les structures plus modestes. L'implantation de cette politique de recouvrement des coûts a bénéficié de l'aide des organismes internationaux et des coopérations

bilatérales. Citons, entre autres, l'UNICEF et les coopérations française, allemande, belge, américaine et japonaise.

A l'origine les populations se sont montrées très réticentes. Elles croyaient qu'il s'agissait d'un trafic du personnel médical ou d'une nouvelle forme d'impôt inavouée. Face à certains résultats concrets tels que la disponibilité permanente de médicaments à bas prix, et l'amélioration de la qualité des services, les populations ont adhéré progressivement à cette nouvelle organisation.

Aujourd'hui, dans les zones non encore couvertes, il est question d'encourager les communautés à financer le démarrage de ce projet par des cotisations. Les nouvelles orientations vont même jusqu'à impliquer les communautés dans la gestion matérielle et financière des centres de santé, les médecins ne jouant plus qu'un rôle de conseillers.

### **L'offre des médicaments**

L'industrie pharmaceutique nationale ne peut fournir que près de 20% de la consommation en médicament du pays. La différence est comblée par l'importation. Celle-ci est assurée par des opérateurs économiques privés, grossistes et responsables de projets, et une structure étatique: la CIAME (Centrale Intérimaire d'Achat en Médicaments Essentiels). La liste des médicaments dits essentiels varie d'une région du pays à l'autre. Sa composition cible les maladies les plus fréquentes.

Les possibilités limitées de la production locale, les besoins sans cesse croissant, et les entraves liées à l'importation, constituent une menace permanente sur l'offre des médicaments. La crise économique aidant, les importations du secteur privé sont passées de 32 à 22,5 milliards de francs CFA entre 1989 et 1993, alors que la population a crû de près d'un million au cours de la même période. Pour atténuer les effets de la dévaluation dans le secteur pharmaceutique, le Ministère de la Santé publique a pris un ensemble de dispositions visant à limiter l'augmentation des prix à 35% dans le public et à 65% dans le privé, et à assurer un réapprovisionnement régulier (voir document en annexe).

## **II- UTILISATION DES SERVICES DE SANTE**

### **Les consultations**

En pratique, le malade paie une somme de 600 Frs en guise de frais de consultation, puis des frais d'examen de laboratoire si cela s'avère nécessaire, et enfin des médicaments. Comparés aux services correspondants du secteur privé, les prix sont relativement bas. Le malade n'est orienté vers ce secteur que lorsque son cas nécessite des examens ou des médicaments qui ne sont pas disponibles. Dans les structures plus modestes telles que les dispensaires, le malade paie uniquement les médicaments. Rappelons que seuls les médicaments dits essentiels sont vendus dans les formations sanitaires publiques. Un traitement spécial est accordé aux plus pauvres. Sur présentation d'une carte d'indigence, ils bénéficient de la gratuité des soins.

Au cours de l'année 1992, 2.582.260 patients se sont présentés pour consultation à travers le pays. Avec l'aggravation des difficultés économiques, d'une part, et la généralisation de la politique de recouvrement des coûts, d'autre part, nous nous demandons comment pourrait évoluer ce chiffre. Pour le savoir, la réalisation d'une enquête nous permettra de mesurer l'évolution de la fréquentation de l'hôpital central de Yaoundé. Cependant la consultation n'est qu'un maillon de la chaîne sanitaire, l'acquisition des médicaments en étant un autre. Tous les deux doivent être étudiés pour faire un tout.

### **L'achat des médicaments**

La disponibilité des médicaments est le symbole le plus tangible de la qualité des soins aux yeux du malade. L'approvisionnement régulier à un prix modique est indispensable pour que cette

disponibilité soit effective. Conscients de ces préalables, les pouvoirs publics ont fait de l'Initiative de Bamako leur cheval de bataille.

Avec la hausse des prix consécutive à la dévaluation du franc CFA, les malades ont du mal à payer les frais de médicaments fournis par le secteur privé. Selon une enquête réalisée par *Carinne de SALVE* de BRUNETON cette année même, le montant de l'ordonnance moyenne est de 1000 CFA dans le secteur public; 2/5 des patients ainsi orientés vers le secteur privé n'arrivent pas à acheter les médicaments; 2/5 achètent des produits de substitution, et 1/5 achète la totalité des médicaments. La mesure du taux d'ordonnance non servie à l'HCY sera pour nous l'un des indicateurs de l'accessibilité aux soins dans cette formation.

### Les maladies

Le Cameroun, comme d'autres pays dans la même situation géographique, est le foyer d'un certain nombre de vecteurs de graves maladies. La transmission de celles-ci est facilitée par le climat tropical, chaud et humide. Les principaux motifs de consultation sont les maladies infectieuses et parasitaires. Les affections les plus importantes, en nombre de cas décelés, sont récapitulées dans le tableau 2.

Quelque soit la tranche d'âge, le paludisme est l'affection la plus fréquente. Chez les nouveaux nés (0-11 mois) les rhumes, la broncho-pneumonie et les diarrhées graves sont également des motifs d'inquiétude. De 1 à 14 ans, comme de 15 à 45 ans, on note en plus le paludisme, les vers intestinaux, les maladies de la peau, et les MST dans le second groupe. Les personnes les plus âgées souffrent fréquemment de rhumatismes et de maladies dues à l'hypertension. De façon saisonnière les épidémies de méningite et de choléra frappent la partie septentrionale du pays, faisant de nombreuses victimes.

La dévaluation du franc CFA a eu des effets multiples sur le pouvoir d'achat des camerounais, sur leurs dépenses de santé et par ricochet sur leur santé. Au mois de Septembre 1994, l'indice général des prix à la consommation des ménages à Yaoundé se chiffre à 145,7, soit un taux d'inflation de 45,7% par rapport à Décembre 1993. L'analyse par poste de consommation montre une envolée du prix des produits alimentaires (+64%) et de ceux d'hygiène et de santé (+60%). Si nous ajoutons à cette hausse des prix, la baisse des revenus survenue peu avant la dévaluation, nous comprenons que le seul ajustement, en vue d'établir un nouvel état d'équilibre, est celui résultant de la compression drastique du panier de consommation. Dès lors l'individu se nourrit moins bien, pour ne pas dire mal et devient plus prédisposé aux maladies. Lorsqu'il tombe malade il n'a que très peu d'argent pour accéder aux soins devenus relativement plus chers. Ces difficultés, quasiment insolubles, sont source d'angoisse permanente et de stress, et deviennent la cause de certaines maladies.

L'observation attentive de différents cas de patients à l'HCY nous permettra de mesurer l'impact de la baisse du pouvoir d'achat des ménages sur la prévalence de ces maladies.

## **III - LA DEMANDE DES MENAGES**

### Propension à payer et capacité contributive des ménages.

Théoriquement la propension à payer est représentée par la part budgétaire effectivement allouée par les ménages au maintien de leur santé. Elle varie selon les régions du pays, selon la catégorie du ménage, et aussi, avec la conjoncture.

Selon les résultats de l'enquête budget-consommation E.B.C 83/84 (MINPAT), 4% du budget des ménages est consacré aux dépenses de santé dans la région forestière, 6% dans les hauts plateaux et régions côtières et 2% dans la savane. La moyenne nationale est de 5%. Entre 1983 et 1994, en supposant une valeur constante du franc CFA, la propension à payer les dépenses de santé

et les soins personnels est passée de 7% à 5,6%, soit une baisse relative de 20%. L'aptitude à payer peut aussi varier en fonction du membre du ménage touché et de la gravité de la maladie.

La capacité contributive, quant à elle, est mesurée par une appréciation objective de la part des budgets potentiellement mobilisables pour les dépenses de santé. Autrement dit elle exprime le pouvoir d'achat de santé. En raison de son importance pour le ménage, le financement de la santé peut imposer de grignoter sur des postes plus flexibles tels que les loisirs, l'habillement ou l'équipement de la maison.

#### IV - MESURE DE LA PAUVRETE A YAOUNDE

##### Définition du concept

Selon le petit Robert, la pauvreté est l'état d'une personne qui manque du nécessaire ou n'a que le strict nécessaire; qui n'a pas suffisamment d'argent, de moyens, pour subvenir à ses besoins.

Le strict nécessaire, tout comme les besoins essentiels varient selon le pays ou la culture, et comporte une part de relativité. Nous ne pouvons, par conséquent, définir la pauvreté dans une région que par rapport à elle-même. Autrement dit, la pauvreté se définit par rapport à un "niveau de vie" donné.

##### Méthode de mesure de la pauvreté

L'analyse de la pauvreté nécessite la fixation d'un seuil de pauvreté. L'idéal serait de définir le panier de biens et de services qu'un individu doit pouvoir se procurer pour être considéré comme non-pauvre. Les articles d'un tel panier varierait comme nous l'avons dit, selon le pays, la culture, l'époque et la conjoncture économique. Toutefois, il est assez difficile de définir avec précision les qualités et les quantités d'aliments, de vêtements, de logement que devrait consommer un individu pour être considéré comme non pauvre. Il en est de même pour les services tels que l'éducation et la santé.

Pour des raisons opérationnelles, nous définirons le seuil de pauvreté suivant le niveau de dépenses de consommation réelle par tête. A cet effet, nous utiliserons une fraction donnée de la dépense moyenne par tête pour constituer le seuil de pauvreté. Nous en retiendrons deux : l'un à la moitié (1/2) et l'autre au tiers (1/3) de la dépense moyenne. Le premier délimitera les pauvres, et le second les extrêmement pauvres.

Pour rendre compte de la gravité de la pauvreté, nous emprunterons la mesure proposée en 1984 par FOSTER, GREER et THORBECKE et dénommée FGT.

Si les dépenses ou les revenus réels sont classes comme suit:

$$y_1 \leq y_2 \leq y_3 \leq \dots \leq y_q < z < y_{q+1} \leq \dots \leq y_n$$

z étant le seuil de pauvreté, n la population et q le nombre de pauvres, la mesure FGT est égale à :

$$P = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q ((z-y_i)/z)^\alpha; \quad \alpha \geq 0$$

$(z-y_i)/z$  est le manque relatif de revenu, vis à vis du seuil de pauvreté, pour l'individu (i)

La puissance ( $\alpha$ ) tient compte de la préoccupation à l'égard de la gravité de la pauvreté.

Pour  $\alpha = 0$ ,  $P_0 = q/n = H$

et exprime la proportion de pauvres dans la population.

Pour  $\alpha = 1$ ,  $P_1 = q/n ((z - y^s)/z)$

avec  $y^s$  le revenu moyen des pauvres.

$I = (z - y^s)/z$  est appelé "ratio du déficit de revenu".

Remarquons que  $nzP_1$  exprime le montant de ressources qui serait nécessaire pour éliminer la pauvreté, c'est à dire remonter tous les pauvres au niveau du seuil de pauvreté, si le ciblage était parfait.



Plus un individu (i) est pauvre, plus son déficit proportionnel de revenu  $(z - y_i)/z$  est grand. A mesure que  $\alpha$  s'élève, la contribution des plus pauvres à  $P_\alpha$  s'accroît. Ainsi, un franc gagné par les très pauvres n'a pas le même effet sur la pauvreté qu'un franc gagné par les modérément pauvres.

#### **. Méthodologie de collecte des données**

Les données qui nous servent de base d'analyse sont celles de l'enquête sur la consommation des ménages à Yaoundé, dénommée ECM93. Elle s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large de l'enquête 1.2.3 (emploi - secteur informel - consommation) qui procède par la méthode des enquêtes dites en plusieurs phases. Pour les besoins de la phase 3 relative à la consommation, on a constitué un échantillon représentatif de 400 ménages, tirés parmi les 2000 de la phase 1 relative à l'emploi. On a d'abord construit 20 strates, en croisant deux critères: le revenu par tête (5 tranches) et le statut du chef de ménage (4 catégories : chef inactif, chef chômeur, chef exerçant un seul emploi, chef exerçant plusieurs emplois). Puis on a procédé à un tirage systématique au 1/5 au sein de chaque strate.

Dans un second temps, l'échantillon de 400 ménages a été subdivisé en deux : un premier de 300 ménages pour l'enquête sur le lieu d'achat (ELA), et un second de 100 ménages pour l'ECM. Compte tenu du fait que l'ECM vise principalement à estimer les structures moyennes de consommation permettant de pondérer l'ELA, une procédure à deux étapes a été retenue pour sélectionner l'échantillon de l'ECM :

- Tirage d'un ménage sur deux parmi les 400,
- Sélection d'un ménage sur deux au sein de ce sous-échantillon, correspondant à ceux dont le revenu par tête est compris entre le second et le troisième quartile pour chaque strate.

Cette procédure a conduit à retenir 94 ménages pour l'ECM. Les opérations de collecte ont eu lieu sur le terrain entre Juin et Juillet 1993. En définitive, le fichier exploitable de l'ECM comprend 92 ménages.

Notons que l'échantillon initial de 2000 ménages a été constitué suivant un plan de sondage à deux degrés : Le premier consistant à tirer un échantillon stratifié de 333 îlots dans la conurbation de Yaoundé, tandis que l'échantillon des ménages est tiré au second degré par tirage aléatoire systématique. Le tirage des îlots utilise la télédétection spatiale (image satellite et mosaïque de photo aériennes), suivant une méthode mise au point par l'ORSTOM.

#### **. Mesure monétaire de la pauvreté à Yaoundé**

Le choix d'un seuil de pauvreté est purement arbitraire. Ceux que nous avons retenus, au 1/3 et 1/2 de la moyenne de consommation par habitant et par an, s'établissent respectivement à 70.330 Frs et 105.500 Frs; la moyenne étant de 211.000 Frs. Il convient de souligner que ces seuils ne sont que des propositions, et de ce fait, susceptibles de subir des modifications au vu des critiques.

**Tableau 4:** Répartition des individus suivant les dépenses du ménage par habitant.

Quartile	Moyenne des dépenses de consommation (en milliers de Frs) (*)
1	66
2	140
3	253
4	596
ensemble	211

Source: Enquête 123, phase 3

(\*) Consommation à l'exclusion de l'autoconsommation et des loyers imputés.

### **i) Analyse de l'extrême pauvreté**

Dans le tableau 4, nous constatons que 25% des ménages ont une moyenne de consommation annuelle par tête inférieure à 66.000 Frs. Cette moyenne est de 140.000 Frs pour le second quartile. En supposant que les ménages sont uniformément répartis entre le premier et le second quartile, nous trouvons, par interpolation linéaire que 26,45% des ménages se situent en dessous du seuil de l'extrême pauvreté. En effet  $P_0 = 0,2645$ , c'est à dire que 26%, soit plus du quart, des "yaoundéens" de l'échantillon vivent dans des ménages dont la consommation par tête est inférieure au tiers de la moyenne générale.

En conservant l'hypothèse précédente, on peut calculer la moyenne des dépenses comprises entre 66.000 et le seuil de 70.330 Frs, soit 68.165 Frs. Par conséquent, la moyenne pour les extrêmement pauvres est  $y^s = 66.119$  Frs. L'indice  $P_1$  est alors de 0,0158. Si un ciblage parfait était possible, il faudrait en moyenne 1110 Frs par individu et par an pour combler cette insuffisance de consommation, et éliminer l'extrême pauvreté. Pour une population estimée à 955.330 personnes en 1993, un montant de 1 milliard 61 millions de francs est nécessaire pour combler ce déficit total de consommation.

### **ii) Analyse de la pauvreté**

Au seuil de 105.500 Frs CFA par habitant et par an,  $P_0$  est égal à 0,3834. Ceci veut dire que 38,34% des individus, soit plus du tiers, appartiennent à des ménages dont la consommation annuelle par personne est inférieure à la moitié de la moyenne générale.

La moyenne de consommation des pauvres se chiffre à 72.842 Frs. L'indice  $P_1$  s'établit à 0,1187. L'écart de pauvreté individuelle est donc de 12.520 Frs, soit 5,9% des dépenses moyennes. Il faut ainsi un minimum de 11 milliards 96 millions de Frs par an pour éliminer la pauvreté de la ville.

En dépit des qualités de  $P_1$ , reconnaissons que cette mesure ne tient pas compte de la redistribution parmi les pauvres, puisqu'elle dépend uniquement de la valeur moyenne. Le calcul de l'indice  $P_2$  aurait pu combler ce défaut. Mais nous ne pouvons malheureusement pas l'évaluer, faute des données par ménage.

Au terme de cette analyse, nous devons admettre que la pauvreté, voire l'extrême pauvreté règne dans la ville. La suite de notre analyse sera donc consacrée à l'examen des effets de ce dénuement sur la santé des populations.

## **V - LIGNES DE PAUVRETE ET DEMANDE DES PLUS PAUVRES**

### **Lignes de pauvreté**

La classification des ménages par quartile montre la situation alarmante des plus pauvres. Malgré le fort coefficient budgétaire affecté à la santé par les plus démunis (9,7%), leur consommation de santé annuelle par tête (6.400 Frs) ne représente que le huitième de celle du quartile le plus riche (50.660 Frs), et le tiers de la moyenne (18.340 Frs). Ceci s'explique en partie par le fait que ce qui constitue une maladie pour le riche ne l'est pas forcément pour le pauvre. Ce dernier ne se considère malade que lorsqu'il est dos au mur. Il fait un peu trop confiance à ses anticorps. Le riche, quant à lui, recourt à des modes de soins plus sophistiqués et plus coûteux. Ces écarts sont inquiétants lorsqu'on sait que les plus démunis s'alimentent mal. N'oublions pas que la qualité de l'alimentation va de pair avec celle de la santé. Or pour se nourrir le premier quartile dispose annuellement de 24.000 Frs par tête, soit exactement 2000 Frs par mois, contre 160.000 Frs pour le quatrième quartile. Le rapport est de 1 à 7.

### La demande des plus pauvres

Les plus pauvres utilisent presque entièrement leur revenu pour la consommation. L'épargne est très faible sinon inexistante. Leur demande est donc fonction de leur seul revenu. En cas de force majeure, à défaut de puiser dans leur épargne, ils compriment le budget de certains postes plus flexibles.

Pour saisir la demande des plus pauvres, nous comparerons, pour les maladies les plus fréquentes, le coût des soins dans le secteur public, à la part du budget mensuelle réellement allouée à la santé. Les écarts ainsi obtenus constitueront un autre indicateur de l'accessibilité aux soins hospitaliers. Ensuite ce coût sera comparé au coût virtuel que propose le secteur informel. Cette seconde comparaison nous permettra de voir si le recours au secteur informel peut toujours se justifier par le niveau des prix, et cela malgré les agitations du marché, consécutives à la dévaluation du franc CFA.

Soulignons que selon l'enquête 1-2-3 sur les lieux d'achat, 58% des achats d'articles de santé et de soins personnels dans l'informel s'expliquent par le niveau des prix, contre 16% seulement dans le secteur formel.

On peut donc se demander si les populations sont suffisamment informées sur les services qu'offrent les centres de santé avec la nouvelle orientation sanitaire.

## CONCLUSION

Le système de santé camerounais a longtemps souffert de plusieurs lacunes. Certes l'insuffisance des financements y est pour quelque chose, mais il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que des choix pas toujours équitables ont été effectués.

A l'issue de l'étude que nous nous proposons d'entreprendre, il nous sera possible d'apprécier l'influence de la baisse du pouvoir d'achat des populations sur l'accessibilité aux soins de santé; cela à travers l'évolution de certains indicateurs tels que la fréquence des consultations, et le taux d'ordonnance non servie. La mesure de la prévalence de certaines maladies liées au stress ou à l'inquiétude des lendemains incertains, indiquera les effets secondaires de la paupérisation actuelle sur la santé des populations.

L'appréciation de l'accessibilité individuelle aux soins de santé se fera en comparant le coûts des soins, pour les maladies les plus fréquentes, au pouvoir d'achat de service de santé. La construction de la courbe de consommation de santé permettra d'établir le lien entre le revenu relatif d'un individu et le type de soins de santé auquel il aspire.

Si le résultat de cette étude pouvait sensibiliser les décideurs, et informer la population sur l'offre de services de santé mise à sa disposition, nous aurions atteint notre objectif.

## ANNEXE

Tableau 1 : Carte sanitaire du Cameroun en 1992

Province	Population en millier	Etablissements hospitaliers	Etablissements sanitaire	Oficines de pharmacie	Laboratoires d'analyse médical	Ratios pour 10.000 habitants			
						Etablissement hospitalier	Médecins	Lits	Pharmaciens
Ext-Nord	2198	30	141	8	0	13,65	0,21	13,25	0
Centre	1969	78	328	58	13	39,61	1,55	20,88	0,09
Littoral	1627	67	270	75	15	41,18	0,87	28,48	0,04
Ouest	1583	36	215	28	1	22,74	0,39	39,46	0
Nord-ouest	1451	21	96	7	1	14,47	0,28	21,48	0,01
Sud-ouest	944	34	153	13	0	36,02	0,45	28,06	0,06
Nord	1029	11	119	6	1	10,69	0,28	7,38	...
Est	578	18	128	5	1	31,14	0,62	20,12	0,1
Adamaoua	587	16	86	5	1	27,26	0,43	15,53	0,03
Sud	438	19	141	7	0	43,38	0,82	49,55	0,04
<b>Total du pays</b>	<b>12494</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>1677</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26,41</b>	<b>0,62</b>	<b>23,43</b>	<b>0,03</b>

source: ministère de la santé

Tableau 2 : Les dix maladies les plus importantes en nombre de cas décelés

Maladies	Incidence (nouveaux cas)	Taux d'incidence (%)
Paludisme	900 284	74
Vers intestinaux	263 302	22
Maladies de la peau	280 193	23
Rhumes - angines	194 283	16
Diarrhées	140 413	12
Rhumatismes	83 636	7
Infections gonococcies	184 017	15
Broncho-pneumonie	159 596	13
Dysenteries	120 704	10
Anémie	84 020	7

Source : Rapports statistiques d'activités des services du Ministère de la Santé Publique en 1992

**Tableau 3 : Evolution de la consommation par tête (1983 - 1993) au Cameroun**

Poste budgétaire	consommation annuelle par tête 1000 F cfa			coefficient budgétaire		
	93 (Fcfa 93)	83 (Fcfa 83)	93 (Fcfa 83)	83 (Fcf.: 83)	93 (Fcfa 83)	variation %
1 - Alimentation	97	152	106	33,5	39,2	+ 17
2 - Habillement	19	44	7	9,7	2,6	- 73
3 - Logement	63	81	72	17,9	26,7	+ 49
4 - Equipement et entretien de maison	26	32	16	7,0	5,9	- 16
5 - Santé et soins personnels	21	32	15	7,0	5,6	- 20
6 - Transport et communication	45	50	22	11,0	8,1	- 26
7 - Education et loisirs	34	63	32	13,9	11,9	- 14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>...</b>

**source :** ' Cameroun le profil de pauvreté ' et nos propres calculs

**Tableau 5 : Coefficients budgétaires et consommation annuelle par tête à Yaoundé en 1993**

Poste budgétaire	TYPES DE MENAGES				TOTAL
	1er quartile	2èm quartile	3èm quartile	4èm quartile	
1 - Alimentation	41,9	40,7	33,3	25,3	32,4
2 - Habillement	7,2	11,1	6,9	5,2	7,1
3 - Logement	13,6	10,9	14,6	13,8	13,5
4 - Equipement et entretien de maison	7,1	8	10,2	10,6	9,6
5 - Santé et soins personnels	9,7	9,1	7,2	8,5	8,3
6 - Transport et communication	9,9	10,1	15,6	22,8	16,8
7 - Education et loisirs	10,6	10,1	12,2	13,8	12,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Consommation totale	66.000	140.000	253.000	596.000	211.000
Consommation de santé	6.402	12.740	18.216	50.660	18.343
Consommation alimentaire	24.000	51.000	80.000	160.000	69.000

**Source :** Enquête 123 (ECM 93) et nos propres calculs

Il s'agit de la consommation à l'exclusion de l'auto consommation et des loyers imputés.

**ENSEMBLE DE DISPOSITIONS PRISES DANS LE  
 SECTEUR PHARMACEUTIQUE DEPUIS LA  
 DEVALUATION**

Après la dévaluation du franc CFA,

Le Ministre de la Santé Publique décide d'une augmentation des prix de l'ordre de 35% dans le secteur public et 64% dans le secteur privé pharmaceutique.

Face à ces augmentations de prix et aux dernières baisses de salaire dans notre pays, les camerounais se trouvent dans l'impossibilité de payer le médicament. Les grossistes, les responsables de projet, la CIAME (Centrale intérimaire d'Achat en Médicaments Essentiels) se trouvent incapables de financer leur dette vis à vis des fournisseurs extérieurs.

Plusieurs idées sont proposées et des actions sont menées dans le but de baisser le prix du médicament. Des aides des coopérations bilatérales et internationales sont mises en place afin d'aider certains notamment les grossistes importateurs de médicament du secteur public à éponger leur dette et à reconstituer leurs stocks.

Les actions menées en vue d'une baisse des prix pourraient être ainsi classées :

1°/ - Au niveau des fournisseurs extérieurs :

La profession pharmaceutique camerounaise a pu obtenir des fournisseurs français de ramener le grossiste hors taxe (PGHT) au prix grossiste France (PG France).

Il a été aussi proposé à ces fournisseurs qu'ils changent leurs gammes de médicaments ce qui a été déjà fait pour certains médicaments tel : l'AZANTAC (ranitidine) de GLAXO qui a été proposé à la place de ZANTAC.

La création d'usine localement a été encouragée. A ce sujet un texte relatif à la Préférence Nationale est en discussion entre les administrations concernées (Santé, Economie, Finance) et la profession pharmaceutique (Ordre, Syndicat, Industriels, Grossistes).

2°/ - Les pharmaciens ont obtenu l'exonération des 5% des taxes douanières sur le médicament jusqu'au 30 Juin 1994. Après cette date, le nouveau code fiscal a prévu la suppression de ces taxes.

3°/ - L'idée de conscientiser les prescripteurs sur les coûts de leurs ordonnances a été émise. Idée non concrétisée à ce jour.

4°/ - La vente des génériques dans les officines.

L'idée d'adopter le principe des marges incitatives est restée non concrétisée à nos jours.

La recherche de nouvelles sources d'approvisionnement. Actuellement de nombreux laboratoires de pays autres que la France font homologuer de plus en plus leurs médicaments au Cameroun. Seulement le problème de la parité du franc CFA et du franc français ne permet pas d'importer à des prix raisonnables.

5°/ - Le déconditionnement : les avis sont partagés face à cette idée. Nous pensons pour notre part que les génériques en gros conditionnement devraient être présentés bisters ou autre conditionnement approprié afin de permettre une dispensation saine au public (surtout à l'officine). Ceci améliorant d'ailleurs l'image de marque du pharmacien d'officine par rapport aux vendeurs de médicaments qui pilulent dans nos rues.

A ce sujet, il a été émis et encouragé l'idée d'un reconditionnement local. Nous attendons toujours qu'une telle structure voit le jour au Cameroun. / -

YAOUNDE, AVRIL 1994

## IMPACT OF AIDS: A CYCLE OF POVERTY.

by

*Martyn T. SAMA.*

**AIDS:** The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

In Cameroon, the recent statistic of the Ministry of Public Health reported 3,405 cumulative cases of AIDS as of July 1993. In a study carried out in 1992, HIV prevalence among pregnant women in 5 cities in Cameroon ranged from 2.3% - 5.4% (Luma et al 1993) the mean age of female AIDS patients in 29 years (Dale J.H. et al, 1992). About one third (14% - 52%) of infants born to HIV infected mothers become infected (Kapture, Zekent and Djoumessi 1991).

The objective of this to characterize the impact of AIDS in the family and Community:- orphans, widow, widowers, and the elderly in the affected households.

The relationship between HIV infection and mortality among adults is based mainly on studies from Western Countries. The mean time between HIV infection and development of full blown AIDS is about 10 years (Lemp et al 1990) 15 - 20 percent, will develop AIDS and within 5 years (Moss and Bucchetti, 1989). Whether these same parameters apply to Africa is uncertain ; it has been shown that the mean time among adults may be shorter (Kallewo et al 1990).

Assume, first, that the underlying mortality rate in sub-saharan Africa for adults in the age group 15-49 is roughly 5 per thousand, and second, that in a cohort of infected adults, about 5% will develop AIDS and die annually over 20 years.

AIDS will have both direct and indirect effects on the mortality of children under 5 years of age. About 30-40% of the children born to HIV - infected mothers will be infected. The time from infection to development of full-blown AIDS and death among infants is much shorter than among adults. The increase in infant and children mortality due to AIDS will likely offset recent successes in lowering childhood mortality. AIDS will raise child mortality indirectly by throwing into poverty the healthy orphaned children of parents who have died from AIDS

### **IMPACT OF AIDS AND THE CYCLE OF POVERTY**

The increase in mortality of adults in their prime productive years due to AIDS will leave increasing numbers of surviving household members with reduced means of support. Among these survivors will be orphaned children, widows or widowers and the elderly parents of adult victims.

In fact, the impact of AIDS on the community begins before the loss of a productive adult. With the onset of full-blown AIDS, the infected individual will become increasingly less able to perform his/her normal activities. Other household members, both adult and children, will be called upon to make up for the lost labour of the patient by working longer hours. There will be additional claims on their time for the care of the person with AIDS who, in his/her final months, may be completely bedridden. Household members will attempt to maintain their current income level by re-allocating their time, working hours and spending less time in school.

Large sums of money and time may be spent in the future search for an effective cure. Over et al (1988) have estimated these "direct costs" of medical care in Tanzania at between US\$104 - 631 per symptomatic HIV - positive person. In this environment, the remaining household members will be left with fewer resources for their consumption, including food, medical care and for investment in future productivity, including schooling and agriculture inputs. With the labour to land ratio altered, the household may have to live additional labour, sell-off land. They may have to liquidate their assets, deplete their savings or borrow. The health and nutrition status of the

remaining household members will be withdrawn from school for financial reasons and because their labour is needed at home.

With the death of the adults AIDS patient, the household permanently loses his/her labour and future income. The value of this "indirect cost" AIDS mortality in terms of foregone earnings of lost members has been estimated at 2425 - 5093 per HIV positive person in Sub-Saharan Africa (Over et al 1988). After the death, the remaining household members face the costs of mourning and funeral arrangements. They may lose entitlement to housing if the deceased was employed by the government; depending on inheritance practices, the widows of AIDS victims may have difficulty gaining access to their deceased spouse's land and property. The death of the bread winner may lead to the dissolution of the household, including the fostering out of children to relatives and the migration of widows, or the consolidation of household by remarriage.

Throughout the illness and after the death of an adult, the family reorganize its activities to minimize the impact of fatal illness and to optimize welfare under a new set of constraints imposed by AIDS. These efforts can be termed "Coping" behaviour and they entail dynamics costs not included in the direct and indirect costs quantified above (Miyinja et al, 1990). The "costs of coping" will be felt not only by households who lose a productive adult, but also the extended family and community, as they are asked to contribute to the funerals of neighbors and relatives, assist in the financing of health care, help in field work or the case of the sick and take in orphaned children. In the absence of outside support, families that agree to care for orphaned children are implicitly reducing the per capita consumption of their households and lowering the resources available for their children. Thus both orphaned children and their own children in a foster home are likely to experience a reduction in welfare.

The three types of costs discussed above - direct medical treatment costs, indirect costs in terms of foregone earnings and the costs of coping - are increased for all chronic, fatal diseases affecting productive adults. However, there are reasons to believe that the impact of AIDS illness and death on society may be greater than the impact of death from other causes, like traffic accidents or maternal mortality.

First, since it is an infectious disease affecting sexually active adults, AIDS is more likely than other causes of adult death to kill spouses in the same family, leaving no productive adults to care for remaining elderly and orphans.

Secondly, in the absence of external programs, households and communities have developed traditional "coping mechanisms" to deal with adult deaths, including remarriage for widows and widowers, fostering of children to relatives, contributions from neighbors, friends, communities for funerals and direct transfers. Many of these traditional coping mechanisms may not be available to survivors of AIDS because of fear that the survivors themselves are infected and may be contagious.

Thirdly, the clustering of AIDS in families and communities may completely exhaust any traditional coping mechanisms - hence the cycle of poverty perpetuates in our communities due to AIDS.

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### III - RURAL AND URBAN POVERTY

#### L'ACCES DES FEMMES DE L'EXTRÊME-NORD AUX RESSOURCES

par

*Severin Cecil ABEGA*

Ce travail s'inspire largement de l'étude sur la pauvreté réalisée par nos soins dans la province de l'Extrême-Nord pour le compte de la Banque Mondiale et CARE-Cameroun.<sup>1</sup> Les enquêtes ont été menées dans les départements du Diamaré, du Mayo-Tsanaga, du Mayo-Sava et du Mayo-Danay, respectivement dans les sites de Maroua, de Mokolo et de Mtskar, de Baka, de Maga, de Toukou. Les méthodes de collecte furent l'interview semi-dirigée, le focus group, l'observation directe et l'observation participante. L'analyse est qualitative et essaie de présenter une synthèse des données.

Cette étude montre les handicaps des femmes dans l'accès aux revenus de cette province. Celles-ci affrontent des obstacles plus importants que les hommes, et leur situation nous semble bien plus précaire que celle de leurs soeurs des autres régions camerounaises. Nous croyons donc avoir affaire ici aux plus pauvres des pauvres, à une couche nettement défavorisée. Les principales difficultés nous semblent localisées sur le plan de la santé, de l'éducation, de l'accès aux ressources, de la mobilité, de l'accès aux institutions de l'Etat et des conséquences des évolutions sociales provoquées par la récession économique.

#### **Femmes et santé**

Sur le plan de la santé, la situation des femmes apparaît comme plus préoccupante que celle des hommes. La fréquentation des hôpitaux a baissé, du fait de la rareté des revenus. L'on est retourné au guérisseur, au forgeron ou au marabout. Les vendeurs à la sauvette ont découvert un nouveau débouché en écoulant des produits pharmaceutiques de contrebande, souvent périmés et vendus sans aucune garantie, ces pharmaciens ambulants et souvent analphabètes faisant eux-mêmes les prescriptions. Les femmes sont les plus touchées par la désaffection des hôpitaux puisqu'elles sont responsables de la santé familiale. Selon le médecin de Mokolo, et l'observation directe il leur incombe d'amener les enfants à l'hôpital et très souvent de prendre en charge financièrement leur traitement. N'accouchant plus à l'hôpital, elles sont de plus en plus exposées à tous les risques, d'autant plus que les focus groups féminins (Maga le 16/04/1994, Baka le 08/04/1994) montrent systématiquement une ignorance des méthodes contraceptives et d'espacement des naissances.

On peut donc penser que la santé féminine est plus affectée par la non fréquentation des hôpitaux, et que cela a aussi un impact certain sur la santé infantile. A Maga par exemple, un focus group des femmes (16/04/1994) révèle que la plupart accouchent à la maison, et que n'importe quelle femme un peu expérimentée est habilitée à recevoir l'enfant, compte tenu de l'absence d'accoucheuses traditionnelles formées.

La rareté de l'eau dans cette province aride, la plus sahéenne des régions camerounaises avec une pluviosité de 700 à 1000 mm d'eau par an, pèse surtout sur les

femmes, car elles sont les principales responsables de la corvée d'eau. A Mtskar où nous avons passé une semaine, l'on se levait à 3 heures du matin en mars, l'un des mois les plus secs de l'année, pour aller puiser de l'eau au puits, et l'on mettait 3 heures et demi de temps en moyenne pour ramener vingt à trente litres d'eau destinés aux hommes et aux bêtes. Inutile d'ajouter que les mesures d'hygiène étaient de ce fait ramenées à leur niveau le plus élémentaire. Ce qui est vrai de l'eau l'est aussi de l'alimentation.

### **Femme et alimentation**

Les stratégies de nutrition mettent la femme au premier plan. Là où l'alimentation est quotidiennement achetée, c'est-à-dire dans les centres urbains comme à Maroua, la femme doit adopter des méthodes de gestion lui permettant de tirer le maximum pour le ménage. Surtout, il lui revient de suppléer aux défaillances pécuniaires de son conjoint. Il doit y avoir à manger, que celui-ci ait ramené de l'argent ou non. L'on peut considérer cette responsabilité comme fort lourde, mais les conséquences n'en sont pas toujours négatives, car, dans un focus group de Mokolo (24/04/1994), une femme déclare que la crise a ouvert la porte des sarés. La famine leur en a donné les clefs. "Quand on a attendu trois jours pour voir son mari ne ramener que ses dix doigts à la maison, on sort le quatrième pour essayer de se débrouiller aussi". Cette entrée en scène des femmes traduit une situation extrême, dans la mesure où l'on sait que les femmes sont capables de trouver des ressources là où les hommes ont failli. Dans la zone de notre enquête, elles ne peuvent intervenir librement que quand leurs époux ont épuisé toutes les voies de recours. L'on ne peut que s'interroger quand on se rend compte que cette responsabilité échoit alors à des analphabètes ou à des femmes très faiblement instruites.

### **L'éducation des filles**

L'Extrême-Nord appartient à une zone sous-scolarisée, et les taux de scolarisation féminines sont très faibles. Le taux de scolarisation est le plus bas du pays. Pour les enfants de 6 à 14 ans par exemple, selon les chiffres de l'Enquête Démographique et de Santé de 1991, il est de 44,31%, dont 71,91% en zone urbaine et 37,46% en zone rurale, alors que la moyenne nationale est de 73,1%, et que 7 des 10 provinces connaissent un taux supérieur à 76%. Nos propres enquêtes montrent d'ailleurs que les taux officiels pour l'Extrême-Nord sont largement surestimés. L'analphabétisme touche 74,36% d'hommes contre 81,02% de femmes. L'éducation des filles souffre de deux difficultés : les femmes ont un accès limité aux processus de prise de décision, et pour une fille, avoir ses premières menstrues chez son père peut apparaître comme un déshonneur pour la famille. Certains musulmans disent qu'il y a deux choses dont il faut se débarrasser au plus vite : un cadavre et une adolescente. En plus, beaucoup de parents considèrent que les filles sont de passage chez eux, étant destinées à se marier, donc à sortir de la maison. Il vaut donc mieux investir sur un garçon qui s'occupera d'eau dans leurs vieux jours.

S'agissant des femmes musulmanes, la culture des Foulbés, ethnie très influente dans la région, surtout dans les agglomérations urbaines et les zones de plaine, donne une plus grande importance à la dépendance et à la vie en retrait de la femme que chez les autres musulmans, selon Beauvilain (1989 : 468). La peuhle reste confinée au "saré" toute la journée et ne peut sortir que le soir, accompagnée d'une servante ou d'un enfant. Elle ne doit pas travailler, et selon un sermon, il vaut mieux posséder de la viande de porc qu'une femme qui laboure la terre. Avec la baisse des revenus, les femmes s'adonnent de plus en plus au petit commerce, écoulant surtout des produits alimentaires. Cependant, la plupart sont obligées de recourir à de jeunes enfants pour vendre ce qu'elles produisent, soit leur propre progéniture, soit de très jeunes

vendeurs ambulants ou fixes, d'où une masse importante de vendeurs en bas-âge. Cela a un impact négatif sur leur scolarité. Et conduit les petites filles à la prostitution. En effet, l'on exige souvent de ces dernières un certain rendement, qui n'est pas toujours atteint, les clients ne se bousculant pas toujours devant leur plateau. De peur d'être rabrouées ou punies, ces fillettes deviennent une proie facile pour certaines personnes peu scrupuleuses qui leur proposent un peu d'argent contre leurs services sexuels. Elles peuvent alors prétendre que l'argent ainsi gagné vient de leur petit commerce, et échapper aux pressions de la mère ou de la patronne.

Les effectifs des filles diminuent dans les établissements scolaires, mais plus grave encore, les taux fluctuent, avec une nette tendance à la baisse, plus marquée dans le Mayo Tsanaga. Cela s'explique par les mariages précoces bien sûr, et surtout du fait qu'elles constituent une main d'oeuvre pour les parents de plus en plus pressés par les difficultés économiques. Elles gardent les enfants, font la cuisine ou la vannerie, aident aux champs, assistent leurs mères comme vendeuses dans le petit commerce, alors que leurs frères jouent où vont à l'école, ainsi que l'a montré l'observation directe dans les sites enquêtés. Les problèmes économiques ne sont donc pas étrangers à la baisse des taux de scolarisation des filles.

Selon un focus group de Maga(16/04/1994), L'âge au mariage des filles était autrefois de 14 ans, de 15 ans à Baka. Il tend aujourd'hui à reculer avec la scolarisation. Cependant, il n'est pas encore rare de rencontrer des unions quasi pédophiles, entre un homme de 40 ans et une fille de treize ans. La virginité est très prisée. Une fille mariée dépuclée est un objet de honte pour ses parents, et est régulièrement en butte aux violences de son époux. C'est là l'une des causes des mariages précoces, dont la conséquence directe est la sous scolarisation des filles. A Baka, selon le focus group des femmes du 08/04/1994, les filles sont retirées de l'école à 12 ans pour éviter qu'elles n'y conçoivent.

Pourtant, la demande est pressante puisque dans un village comme Baka, les femmes nous ont exprimé leur souhait de voir créer une au moins une école sous l'arbre pour leurs petites filles. La faible prise en compte des femmes dans le processus des décisions collectives joue un rôle important dans cette augmentation de l'analphabétisme chez les filles, puisque nous avons là un cas où les femmes réclament en vain une structure scolaire pour leurs enfants de sexe féminin. Les filles sont aussi plus touchées par l'analphabétisme secondaire, puisque quittant l'école plus vite comme nous l'avons dit, ayant peu d'occasions de pratiquer ce qu'elles ont appris, restant souvent enfermées dans la concession du mari, et étant douées d'une mobilité très faible. Elles n'en seront que moins avantagées dans la conquête des revenus.

### **La division sexuelle des ressources**

Les sources de revenus les plus exploitées par les femmes ne sont pas toujours les plus rémunératrices. Les plus importantes dans la province sont l'élevage, l'agriculture et le transport. Les revenus les plus substantiels sont contrôlés par les hommes : transport, coton, riz. Le mil, principale culture vivrière donnant en plus lieu à un important commerce, appartient aux hommes. Le focus group de Baka(08/04/1994) montre que les femmes Mounyang peuvent avoir un peu d'argent en cultivant des légumes entre les tiges de mil du mari, ou en semant des arachides sur de petits champs. Les musulmanes de ce villages viennent de commencer à s'adonner à l'agriculture. C'est là, de leur propre aveu, une des conséquences de leur adhésion, toute nouvelle puisque ne datant pas de 1990, aux associations féminines, car elles avaient des obligations financières à y remplir, et le mari ne pouvait y souscrire à leur place. Les femmes mandara de Baka, musulmanes, cultivent très peu. Autour de la ville de Yagoua, les femmes n'ont accès qu'à la culture de légumes dans un petit jardin. S'agissant de l'élevage, les femmes ne peuvent posséder en propre que de la volaille. Le porc et les bêtes à cornes appartiennent toujours à l'homme, même si c'est la femme qui les élève et les entretient.

Par contre, les sources de revenus les plus aléatoires et les moins rémunératrices appartiennent aux femmes : arachides grillées, sésame, beignets, jus naturels.

Cet engagement accru de la femme dans les activités génératrices de revenus n'est pas sans poser de problèmes, puisque la femme musulmane sort peu de sa concession, et qu'on assiste en même temps à un renversement des tendances. L'homme qui possédait de la richesse de sa famille n'a plus rien, et celle qui attendait son bon vouloir pour avoir un pagne possède un peu d'argent. D'où la fréquence des conflits conjugaux, couronnés par des abandons de domicile, des répudiations, des divorces. Dans la région de Yagoua, les femmes, jusque là exclues de la compétition économique, se lancent dans des activités comme le petit commerce pour faire face aux difficultés croissantes, provoquant ainsi des conflits au sein de leur ménage où le mari se sent désormais menacé, son identité culturelle et sexuelle de père et époux nourricier étant ainsi remise en cause tant par les difficultés économiques que par le nouveau dynamisme des femmes.

Ce conflit semble de plus en plus émerger sur le plan des représentations, la femme étant devenue la sorcière qui divorce les doubles spirituels des autres grâce à des oiseaux qui logent dans son sexe. Ces mystérieux volatiles sévissent la nuit, et il leur suffit de frôler de leurs ailes la victime désignée pour perpétrer leur forfait. L'âme volée, ils vont à tire d'aile la remettre à leur patronne. Cette dernière dévore ces âmes par une espèce de cannibalisme occulte, et la victime meurt.

Sur 16 femmes incarcérées à Yagoua, 14 l'étaient sous le coup de cette accusation, et les magistrats avaient ordonné leur emprisonnement pour les protéger des violences de leur famille. A Toukou, un informateur a accusé sa femme devant nous d'être une sorcière. Celle-ci avait été mise en cause publiquement devant le village quelque temps avant notre arrivée. A Mokolo, une femme nous a affirmé qu'un infirmier avait découvert un tel oiseau chez une parturiente. Voulant le tuer, il apprit que la mort de l'oiseau entraînerait celle de la femme. Il suffit parfois d'un rêve ou du délire d'un malade pour déclencher les hostilités. Les inculpées risquent les voies de fait parfois la mort. Les femmes intériorisent de plus en plus ce fantasme, certaines enfilant trois ou quatre "slips" pour empêcher les oiseaux de sortir. La simultanéité de l'appauvrissement des hommes et de l'émergence des femmes, à défaut de leur enrichissement, crée donc chez les premiers un sentiment d'insécurité et les amène à culpabiliser les femmes. Les auteurs anglo-saxons ont bien étudié ce phénomène et l'attribuent à une réaction conservatrice de la société. Il est bien résumé chez Lallemand(1981:61) dans les termes suivants: "un équilibre interne régirait les bonheurs et malheurs des co-résidents de telle sorte que les pertes des uns correspondraient aux gains des autres. Relativement vérifiable le jour, une telle arithmétique rendrait aussi compte des agissements nocturnes, lorsque pertes et profits s'avèrent moins ostensibles".

Pourtant, les femmes n'ont qu'un accès limité aux sources de revenus. Les musulmanes ne doivent ni acheter, ni vendre, ni même aller au marché, selon notre focus group de Maga (16/04/1994) Elles ne peuvent avoir la terre ni le gros bétail. Selon le même focus, seules quelques veuves et célibataires peuvent louer des parcelles rizicoles auprès de la SEMRY<sup>1</sup>. La faible mobilité des femmes les exclut du grand commerce. Leur analphabétisme ne favorise pas leur intégration dans le salariat. Les métiers du métal, dont le transport par auto ou par moto,

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<sup>1</sup> - SEMRY : Secteur Expérimental de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua, organisme né en 1950 à Pouss, et transféré 3 ans plus tard à Yagoua. Le sigle veut dire aujourd'hui Société d'expansion et de modernisation de la riziculture de Yagoua.

et du bois sont réservés aux hommes. Elles ne peuvent donc qu'être petites commerçantes, vendre des légumes, des beignets, des arachides grillées, des jus naturels, des nattes confectionnées de leurs mains, du poisson, du bois, de la volaille ou un peu de tabac. Que peuvent-elles épargner dans ce cas?

L'épargne financière dans les structures formelle est minime. L'argent emprunte des canaux informels. Nous avons réalisé une enquête portant sur 309 ménages pour découvrir que 2 hommes seulement de notre échantillon adhéraient aux structures formelles d'épargne, soit 0,64%. Aucune femme de notre échantillon n'avait de compte en banque ou à la caisse d'épargne postale.

L'élevage, pour les populations rurales, fonctionne comme une épargne. On achète les animaux quand on a de l'argent, et on les revend pour faire face aux divers besoins. Cependant, cette forme d'épargne est très aléatoire, et les épizooties provoquent des pertes cruelles. Depuis la dévaluation du CFA, la demande est très élevée et les prix ont tellement grimpé qu'ils ont provoqué des remous sociaux en Janvier et Février 1994: grogne des consommateurs, grève des bouchers. Nous avons dit cependant que les femmes ne possèdent en propre que de la volaille.

Les femmes s'impliquent donc de plus pour gagner de l'argent. Ceci peut être considéré comme un indice d'appauvrissement. Ceci veut dire qu'elles sortent plus. Cette nouvelle situation a des répercussions sur les mécanismes mentaux d'identification sexuelle et culturelle. En effet, c'est l'homme qui apporte de l'argent à la maison, et qui prend en charge les principales dépenses. Privé de cette fierté, il commence à trouver la femme qui le nourrit arrogante et indisciplinée. La conséquence en est la multiplication des problèmes conjugaux signalée par tous les services départementaux des affaires sociales des quatre départements visités, et les abandons de foyers tant par les hommes que par les femmes. Ces conflits de représentations s'enracinent d'ailleurs dans une structure excluant la femme de la possession des moyens de production, à l'instar de la terre.

### **La femme et les moyens de production**

Les femmes n'ont aucun accès à la propriété foncière. La terre appartient à l'homme et son épouse n'a qu'un droit d'usage qu'elle perd à la rupture du mariage. Seules les musulmanes peuvent prétendre à l'héritage foncier de leur conjoint, mais les règles traditionnelles priment toujours sur celles de la religion dans ce cas. A Maga, zone rizicole, les femmes, devant l'insolvabilité des hommes se sont lancées dans la riziculture et ont pu obtenir des parcelles rizicoles. Les hommes ont alors organisé des pressions sur la SEMRY sous le prétexte que ces femmes n'obéissaient plus à leurs maris, devenaient arrogantes, etc. et ont récupéré ces terres. Ils justifient leur action en disant que les noms des femmes avaient été utilisés par des maris qui voyaient leur accès à la riziculture barrée par leur insolvabilité, et que leur intervention avait visé à rendre à ces hommes leurs droits. Les femmes quant à elles disent que ces terres leur avaient été attribuées en propre.

Les femmes ne possèdent en propre que la volaille, les poules principalement, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, dans les sociétés pastorales comme les Bororo, le boeuf est gardé et entretenu par les hommes. Ceux-ci en gèrent la viande, tandis- que le lait est vendu ou transformé par les femmes. Ailleurs, le petit bétail est entretenu par les femmes, mais revient toujours aux hommes. Cependant, en s'organisant en groupe, elles peuvent réussir à échapper à ce système. Nous avons vu comment, grâce à leurs associations, elles amélioraient leur accès aux ressources agricoles. Les bailleurs de fond et les ONG, en finançant ces groupes, favorisent une certaine émergence. Cependant, les pouvoirs traditionnels voient dans ces associations une concurrence à leur autorité, et nous pouvons mentionner ici le cas d'un chef

traditionnel qui a refusé l'ouverture d'un marché hebdomadaire dans sa circonscription par des femmes qui voulaient écouler les produits de leur toute nouvelle activité agricole pour cette raison. Nous reviendrons plus loin sur les associations.

Les femmes n'ont pas d'accès aux intrants agricoles. Maîtrisant mal les langues officielles, elles n'ont qu'un contact réduit avec les vulgarisateurs, lesquels sont rares et parlent surtout le français, car leurs salaires ne sont plus payés régulièrement, et leurs moyens de transport ont été réduits. Ces vulgarisateurs appartiennent pour la plupart aux grandes sociétés d'Etat qui exploitent les produits de rente. Quant aux engrais, leur utilisation est liée aussi aux cultures de rente. Les femmes ne sont présentes que dans l'agriculture vivrière, secteur. S'agissant des crédits, les femmes sont marginalisées dans les circuits financiers, n'ayant pas d'épargne ni un accès suffisant aux ressources.

"Je ne peux pas prendre de crédit puisque je n'ai pas d'argent. C'est l'homme qui a l'argent", nous dit une femme mafa de Koza. Et l'homme a aussi l'argent parce qu'il a la faculté de sortir pour aller en chercher, ce qui n'est pas le cas de la femme.

### **La mobilité des femmes**

Les femmes sont en effet douées d'une très faible mobilité. Henri Tourneux (1994: 71) rapporte ces mots d'un modibo : "*Une fille musulmane n'a droit qu'à trois sorties : elle sort du ventre de sa mère et grandit auprès de ses parents; à l'âge de se marier, elle sort de chez son père pour rester chez son mari; quand elle meurt, elle sort de l'enclos de son mari pour être enterrée*". Chez les musulmans, le mari fait le marché, et la femme se livre rarement à des activités génératrices de revenus. En pays mafa, c'est-à-dire dans le Mayo-Tsanaga, seuls les hommes sont sujets aux migrations oscillatoires comme temporaires agricoles. Prenant les décisions pour la famille et entreprenant les démarches pour elle, ils sortent plus. L'analphabétisme des femmes ne favorise pas leur mobilité. Nous avons aussi constaté que beaucoup dans les villages ne parlaient pas le ffuldé, langue véhiculaire de la province.

S'agissant du transport, étant exclues des métiers du métal, les femmes ne peuvent s'y impliquer. On pourrait penser que les animaux de trait et de bât tel que le boeuf, l'âne et le cheval les aident dans leurs nombreuses tâches de transport. Il n'en est rien. Nulle part, on ne voit de femme sur un âne, ni en tirant un par le licol. Par respect pour les hommes qui se sentiraient offensés de voir une femme dans une telle position, nous précise une animatrice de CARE. N'oublions pas aussi que la femme ne peut posséder du gros bétail. La femme doit donc porter les charges les plus lourdes sur sa tête ou sur son épaule. Le spectacle est commun, d'un homme revenant du champ sur son âne en somnolant, tandis que sa femme suit à pied, lourdement chargée.

### **Les associations de femmes**

La loi de 1990 sur la liberté d'association au Cameroun a favorisé une véritable explosion des associations dans une région où elles étaient rares, par rapport au Sud Cameroun. Les associations des femmes sont plus dynamiques que celles des hommes. Cela peut s'expliquer par le fait qu'elles ouvrent à celles-ci un nouvel espace de liberté et d'action. A Maga, cependant l'association des femmes se heurte aux restrictions religieuses sur les sorties des femmes, mais les hommes ne s'y opposent pas formellement. Cette structure organise les circuits de réciprocité entre les femmes. A Mokolo, l'association des femmes "Fait Tout" vient d'ouvrir un restaurant avec l'aide d'une ONG. Elle avait déjà fonctionné pendant deux ans en s'impliquant dans des activités génératrices de revenus, mais avec des gains minuscules, de l'ordre de 250 CFA par personne et par an.

Les associations féminines reflètent les forces et les faiblesse des femmes. A Mtskar par exemple, les brasseuses de bil-bil (bière de mil ) se sont regroupées et aident d'une manière rotative chaque membre à puiser l'eau nécessaire à son industrie. Cela peut paraître dérisoire à une femme du Sud habituée à brasser de l'argent, parfois par millions dans les associations de ce type. Ceci indique pourtant quelle place occupe cette activité dans les structures féminines de l'économie, et combien le port de l'eau est pénible dans ce site. L'eau est un facteur extrêmement contraignant dans la brasserie traditionnelle des septentrionales. Pour elles, il s'agit donc d'un problème crucial et de toute première importance.

### **L'accès aux institutions.**

S'agissant de papiers, l'établissement d'une carte d'identité pose un problème énorme. Les procédures pour un adulte ne sont pas très complexes lorsqu'on possède un acte de naissance. Or, la plupart n'en ont pas. Il faut donc commencer par là. Pour cela, il faut avoir un certificat d'âge apparent délivré par un médecin. Ensuite, avec ce document, passer devant un tribunal qui rendra un jugement supplétif après écoute de la partie intéressée et de ses témoins. Sur la base de cet acte juridique, un officier d'état civil établira un acte de naissance que l'on amènera au commissaire de police, lequel signera alors la carte d'identité. On comprend que cette longue démarche auprès de fonctionnaires peu assidus, ne comprenant pas votre langue et monnayant chacun de leurs services en découragement plus d'un. Pourtant, la possession de la carte d'identité est obligatoire pour tout citoyen.

Pour obtenir un acte de naissance pour un enfant, sans passer par toutes ces procédures, il faut présenter à l'officier d'état civil une déclaration de naissance délivrée par un médecin et datant de moins de deux mois. Or, les hôpitaux se vident, faute d'argent, les femmes préférant accoucher chez des matrones.

L'accès à l'état civil devient donc compliqué dans ce cas. Le Lamido de Mokolo, qui garde un oeil attentif sur ces problèmes et établit avec soin des documents là-dessus, estime que dans son seul canton, on compte une déperdition de 50% sur les listes électorales par rapport aux présidentielles, la carte d'électeur n'étant délivrée que sur présentation d'une carte d'identité, et les mesures d'assouplissement consenties par le Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale lors des précédents votes ayant été supprimées. Le Sous-Préfet de Mokolo a confirmé ces informations pour l'ensemble de son arrondissement.

Le problème est bien plus complexe avec les femmes. En effet, pour mieux les contrôler, les époux empêchent sciemment les femmes d'obtenir des cartes d'identité. Sans ce document obligatoire, elles ne peuvent pas voyager, risquant à tout moment de se faire arrêter par un contrôle de police ou de gendarmerie. D'autre part, elles n'ont pas d'existence juridique : elles ne peuvent mener aucune véritable activité économique, avoir un compte en banque, prendre un emprunt, signer un papier, délivrer un reçu, se présenter devant un tribunal, étant incapables de se faire identifier. Précisons que c'est le meilleur moyen de leur enlever le droit de vote qui leur est par ailleurs reconnu par la loi, car sans carte d'identité, on ne peut pas se faire établir une carte d'électeur. On comprend aussi la difficulté qu'il y a à braver l'autorité de l'époux dans ce cas.

En plus, il leur revient, d'après notre focus group féminin de Mokolo (24/04/1994), de financer l'acte de naissance de leur enfant. Si elles n'ont pas d'argent, celui-ci restera comme cela, et ne pourra donc se présenter à l'examen officiel, l'établissement tardif de cette pièce officielle devant suivre le processus décrit ci-haut.

L'accès des femmes aux institutions est donc lourdement handicapé par le fait qu'elles sont privées de cartes d'identité. Les femmes ne peuvent alors ni voter, ni dresser un acte juridique, ni voyager au loin. Ayant une faible emprise sur les processus de prise de décision à l'échelle de la famille, ne parlant pas les langues de l'administration et des administrateurs, la femme a donc peu de chance de faire prévaloir son point de vue. Ainsi, celles qui peuvent voter, selon le focus group de Maga (16/O4/1994), se font représenter en réalité par leur mari ou leurs enfants majeurs. Leurs voix ne représentent pas la moitié des électeurs à cause du problème des cartes d'identité. Cette situation va empirer avec la baisse des taux de scolarisation. Notre équipe leur a fourni une explication sur l'importance de l'acte de voter, et les a encouragées à voter désormais elles-mêmes.

Au total, la situation de la femme se dégrade davantage que celle de l'homme. Cependant, elle se sent plus responsable. Une femme de notre focus group féminin de Mokolo nous dit que "tout est tombé sur la femme maintenant. Il faut donc savoir comment essayer de s'organiser pour mieux s'en sortir, car si elle laisse le poteau qu'elle soutient, la société va tomber et ce sera la fin de tout".

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**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS FACED BY NWEH WOMEN  
IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CAMEROON.**

by

*Rebecca AMIN*

- The Proposal is divided into 9 sections.

- (1) The Introduction and Background
- (2) The Research Problem
- (3) Hypothesis
- (4) Research Objectives
- (5) Methodology
- (6) Tentative Timetable
- (7) Budget
- (8) References

## **1 INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND**

Women constitute a great proportion of the poor in every society. This is more so in the rural areas. In Cameroon for example more than half of the people living in rural areas are women (national census 1989). This can present a clear indication of the numbers of poor women in the country if we take into consideration the fact that Cameroon is largely rural, and rural people are poor. Poverty is very difficult to define and definitions vary from person to person. The most commonly used are income and social indicators. Income is easy to use because it can be measured and compared. In the social aspect, well-being can not be measured, but indicators such as life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, literacy levels, access to safe drinking water, nutrition, access to health and education facilities, housing, amount of arable land and the land tenure system, population density and so forth can be used to define poverty (stern, 1994 and Lufumpa, 1994).

Development has been slow in the rural areas and what little development there has ignored women and their problem in a large extent. Women especially those in the rural areas, assume most of their families responsibility. To women childbearing is their natural duty and producing food to feed them is mainly their responsibility. For them, food crop production is an activity that gives them a family status. They have freedom to decide what to produced, when and what quantities to produce. So women produce over half of the food produced in the developing world and even more in Africa, (Barbara Herz 1989). The World Bank aggregate rough data status that African women provide about 90% of the labour for processing food crops, 80% of the work in food storage and transport from farm to village, 90% of the work in hoeing and weeding and 60%, of the work in harvesting and marketing.

Given the key role women play in traditional agricultural production systems, women should have significant use rights to land. In some matrilineal societies they should also have management rights in land. According to custom in most patrilineal Sub-Saharan Societies, women could not inherit and marital property belonged to the husband (and to his family upon his death). In the Nweh area, most of the land is owned by the chiefs who give them out to women and receive some compensation. Some commoners men also own land which is farmed by their family members. Women can also inherit land from their parents and pass the land on to their children with little interference from their husbands. However this is not very common.

This lack of access to land ownership makes it difficult for women to carry out good investment projects. This is because investment needs money, which can not easily be generated in the rural areas without some form of credit. Credits can be given mostly when the borrower has some assets that can be used as collateral. Women therefore can not afford the collateral so can not be given credit from formal financial institutions. So in many developing countries many informal financial institutions are being formed from where women can receive credit. In the Nweh area for example, women have grouped themselves to form savings and lending groups so as to solve some of their problems of credit.

Women play a little role in decision making process in their families and communities as a whole. There are very few women as heads of households or in the council of elders, or as chiefs. Women were never allowed to hold prestigious positions or do prestigious activities in a society for example war, hunting and fishing. And when they did, they were stripped of their normal functions (full sexuality) such as bearing children or remaining chaste. (Balandier, 1974). Traditional African societies and cultures, showed the subordinate position of women in the social and political realms. She was pictured as representing evil and a cause of disorder and threat to social order. (Middleton, 1969). So most of the decision on problems concerning them and their children are decided by men who some times put their interest ahead of those of the women, In certain social systems however, methods have been devised to take care of women's interest. The women are also capable of organizing to protect themselves such as in economic activities and in secret societies. This is also the common practice in the Nweh area where women are trying to improve on their social and economic status by forming cooperatives and some social groups.

Women all over Africa, have been trying to improve themselves economically by working out of their homes in order to increase their family's income. However, an estimated 32% of the measured labour force in developing countries and the majority are in microenterprise activities (USAID Evaluation News, 1991). Millions of women operate microenterprises in small -scale manufacturing and trading activities. They represent over half of the entrepreneurs in the formal sector of most countries. Most women however are unable to participate effectively in economic activities because of long hours spent on household chores. In East Africa, women work up to 16 hours per day doing household chores preparing food, and growing 60-80% of the family's food, in addition to caring for their children (USAID 1991). (has pushed women to distant farm areas, which increases their burden of moving to the farms, and transporting the crops from or to the market.

The Nweh people are found in the Lebialem Division of the South West Province. The division is divided into 3 sub divisions, 2 of them having the Nweh people. - Fontem sub division and Alloh sub division. The names Nweh or Nwah and Bangwa are sometimes used interchangeably. The name Bangwa however describes all the inhabitants of the Nine Chiefdoms, and Nweh often refer to the dialect spoken by these people. The Nweh area has a population of approximately 49,473 with about 20% of this population living in the urban areas and 80% in the rural areas (National Census 1987). The whole Lebialem division which has a population of about 97,484, occupy a surface area of approximately 598km<sup>2</sup>, with a density of about 163 persons per square kilometer (National census 1987 and Njuzy, 1979). It is bounded to the West by Manyu Division, to the South-West by the Bambutus Mountains and Dschang highlands, to the South by Nguti subdivision in Meme Division, to the East by Menoua and Bambutus Division and to the North by Momo and Mezam divisions.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Nweh people. As in most parts of Cameroon, the farming practice there is shifting cultivation. Farmers also practice mix cropping - a system whereby many different crops are planted on one plot at a time. This practice is common since most of this crop production is at the subsistence level.

The Nweh women are constantly struggling to live a decent life since they cannot generate much income. The cash crops in these area are the men's prerogative and very few women own coffee or cocoa farms which is produced in the area. The men occupy lands closer to their homes

for this and women have to go distant farms to produce food crops. In recent years with the increase in cocoa production, men in some villages are also moving to distant farms.

Women are responsible for the feeding, clothing and sometimes education of their children in the Nweh community. This is more so in the polygamous families which are very common there. they produce almost all the food consumed in the family since in this area men do not do the same type of farm work as women. "A man who helps his wife is ridiculed by both men and women in the community". (Ndongko, 1976). This altitude has not lessen women's burden especially since they live now in a world where one has to do more to herself and children beside just feeding them.

## The Research Problem

Women constitute most of the World's poorest people, given their role and duties in every society, they face many problems. It is true that there is general poverty in the Country but it has been said by many writers, poor men have even poorer wives and children. This is also true of the Nweh women. Most of their problems can be classified into two categories, the social and the economic.

The social being the role the society plays on the well-being of women and the economic being the role the economic activities in their community play on their well-being. The Socio-economic constraints are numerous and differ from one village to another. Some of these constraints are:

- Gender related problems, constitute one of the most important hindrance to rural development. Gender as a concept, is a cultural and mental interpretation of sex differences and male-female relations. It also refers to the division of labour considered appropriate for men and women. In short, women are discriminated upon just because of their sex. There are those issues such as education.

- The Nweh man mostly believe that the education of girls is not necessary not because they think a girl can not perform as well as a boy, but because they feel a girl will get married and be taken care of by the husband. The parents also feel they will be wasting their money on somebody whose income will be controlled by their husbands and they will not benefit from it since men take decisions in the family. So it is better for them to educate their sons.

- There is also the problem of the work load the Nweh woman has. They do most of the agricultural work such as : Work in their husbands cash crop farms, feeding the domestic animals, taking care of food crops in the distant farms and also running their homes. Because of this workload they have, they are unable to participate effectively on other income generating activities.

- The traditional farming practices also makes it difficult for women to earn much and thus save. The Nweh area is hilly and stony. This couple to their slash and burn method causes land shortages. The hilly nature of the land leads to scattered farming plots and thus makes mechanization difficult. There is also the problem of transportation and storage of their produce.

- The traditional practices also makes crop diversification difficult. It is difficult to change their eating habits and other habits. For example, the Nweh peoples' staple food crop is cocoyams used in making fufu. Agricultural experts have advised that in order to improve soil fertility in the area, there should be a change from the production of tuber crops to that of cereals for some period of time. But this is not easy to accept. So their crop output is declining, making it difficult for them to buy other food items they need such as smoked fish, groundnut for their sauce and palm oil. these being what they do not produce much of in the area.

-the Nweh area is far from the big areas and in addition to workload, they are more involved in "Short distance" businesses which are profitable. Sometimes it is just moving to the next village to buy something to sell in their own village.

-Some women could think of going to the urban areas but they lack the money. There are no formal financial institutions in the area so there is the problem of getting loans. So generally investment is low.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Women constitute a greater proportion of the Nweh population. They play a very important role in their families and society at large, so if their life style and problems are well catered for, it will help improve that of their families and society at large. This will mean :

-Elimination of the de jure and de facto discrimination against women- it will enable people have a clearer picture of the problems of women and the role of women in the family and society at large.

-Improvement in women's education - women need some level of education in order to carry out some daily task and as the saying goes, "If you educate a woman, you educate the Nation".

-Improvement in their time saving devices - this will give more time to do other social and economic activities which will improve the family as a whole.

-Improvement in their farming and agricultural methods - this will lead to more production and thus more income to improve their well being.

-Improvement in the rural credit and investment facilities - this will also increase income and thus improve their well being.

## **Research Objectives**

Very little has been written on the Nweh area. The little there has treated mostly the Historical and Anthropological aspect of the people.

As a General Objective, this study intends to provide detail analysis of the social and economic problems encountered by the Nweh women in their rural development efforts.

Its specific objectives will be

- to analyse the decision making process in the family.
- to describe the traditional farming practices and ways in which they can be improved.
- to examine how women spend their time and what time saving devices can be used.
- to examine ways of diversifying farm product so as to improve nutrition and income.
- to evaluate the different markets in the area and how women use these markets
- to assess women's income generating activities and also their savings and credit association.

## **5. Research Methodology**

### **5.1 Study Type**

This will be descriptive and Analytical it will describe and analyse;

- The role of women in the different villages in the area. It will describe the relationship between husbands and wives and men and women in their various family settings such as monogamous and polygamous homes.

-The activities of women at home and out of their homes to bring out how they spend their time and how they earn money.

-The various economic activities carried out in the area how they raise their funds for investment and their various types of investment carried out.

-The social activities in the area and the relationship between these activities and the way women live and work.

With the knowledge got from all the above aspects of the Nweh area the research will analyse the social and economic constraints faced by women in development in the area.

## 5.2 Variable

This study will take into consideration certain variable which characterized women in rural areas and women in the nweh area in particular. These variable are factors that will affect or influence different women or different group of women's differently. Some of these variables are:

-The village area ; This is an important factor because the different villages in the Nweh area, have slight differences in the climatic conditions and nature of the soil so they produce mainly different crops Also some areas are more favorable in their proximity to an urban market and areas with thicker population. This will affect their economic activities differently from the other villages or quarters. Some villages are also noted for some peculiar way they women are treated.

-Matrimonial Status: It will also be important to know women's marital status, whether a woman is married divorced widowed or single. And if married, it will be necessary to know whether it is a monogamous or polygamous marriage, and whether to a chief or a commoner. All these aspects are important because it brings out the relationship between husband and wife the amount of family responsibility assumed and their level of decision taking in the family.

-The age: The age of women plays a part in many aspects of their activities. Some women gain more social and economic powers with age because of various reason. This could be because they have passed the age of child bearing so have more time and energy to carry on business activities. It could also be because they are divorced or widowed and so are taking control of husbands property or have the freedom to decide what to do and when. Age could also determine level of education.

-The Education: Education plays an important part in the live of women and their families. It plays a part in the nutrition and income level of the women and the family as a whole. We have read the important of training to women in farming techniques, family planning income generating activities and so on. In many cases there will be better understanding, of these things if women have some level of basic education.

- The infrastructures; The infrastructure available in the area will determine how far one can go in investment ventures. It will be difficult and impracticable to begin some business activities without such faults such as electricity and water.

-The business Activities: The business activities available will help as a guide as to what type of business can succeed in the area. The introduction of a strange type of business might not be profitable if it does not fit the life style of the people.

- The number of children: The number of children each women has will affect her economic power in different ways. If the family is too large she might have problems of feeding them and now with the new demands of school she will not have enough resources to send them to school. It will be necessary to know number of children women care more comfortable with in the area and whether they can educate that number of children.

### 5.3 Data - Collection Techniques

We shall use primary and secondary data sources. In order to carry out this research properly the following data collection techniques will be used.

- Observation: This study will use both the purposeful observation and the participant observation techniques. It will observe women at home and out of their homes. It will observe their daily activities their farming practices and the relationship between women and men. It will also observe women in their economic marketing activities and also their economic activities. This will give us a clearer idea of what goes on in these different areas.

- Existing data: This study will examine the relevant data already existing on rural development in general women in rural areas and women in the Nweh area in particular. It will require data from various official sources such as the Cameroon Central Statistics Department, the World Bank and other government and non-governmental organizations: It will require data and information from other sources such as school libraries. This will help as a guide to what can be expected or studied in the area, taking examples from other areas.

-Focus Group Discussion: It will be necessary in this study to have focus group discussions in the different parts of this area. This will help us get some information we cannot get from the interviews or questionnaires. The people who will be involve in the group discussion will be a selection of both men and women of different status in the village and involve in different social and economic activities in the area. It will also act as a forum for some debate on some issues that are not very clear such as ways of diversifying farm products.

-Questionnaires; Questionnaires will be used in order to collect some statistic on various aspects of the study. Questionnaires will be given out to be completed by women who might be able to complete themselves or will require somebody to help complete them. The question in the questionnaires will cover all sections in the research subject. It will consist of both closed and open ended questions to get people express themselves more.

-Interviews: Taking into consideration the fact that majority of the rural women (cannot write or read, the use of interviews will be indispensable. An interview guide will be used by the researcher or the research team to gather more information from the people. The interviews will also cover mainly parts of the study where questions will need more explanation. Some people of authority in the communities will also be interviewed and these interviews may require different sets of questions administered in different communities.

### 5.4 Sampling

This research will be based on the nine chiefdoms in the Nweh area. Observation will focus on the general way of life and activities of the people in the different chiefdoms. However, the research will lay emphasis on three of the chiefdoms. choosing two from the Alloh subdivision and one from the Fontem subdivision. Lebang will be chosen from the Fontem subdivision because it is the seat of the divisional head quarters and the most thickly populated chiefdom. In the Alloh subdivision, Nwebataw will be chosen because it is the headquarters of the subdivision and also because of its population. Lewoh will also be studied closely because of its population and also because of some development activities there which have been initiated by women. Given the above mentioned reasons, I will draw my sample population from these three chiefdoms.

This research, will use a combination of different sampling methods. It will use the disproportionate stratified sampling. The population will first be classified according to the chiefdom. The chiefdoms do not have equal population so the sample population will be taken as a proportions of the population in the area. The research is also going to consider the different characteristics of the population. An example of this is considering the marital status. In the chiefdoms there is a high rate of polygamy so the sample has to take this into consideration because



this can affect the outcome of the research one way or another. The research will also use the quota sampling method so as to take into consideration all the sub populations existing. This will also reduce the error in the results given at the end of the research.

Knowing the different sample methods to be used, the size of the sample will be determined. The research will carry out preliminary findings on the approximate population of the different chiefdoms. It will also approximate the population which could be linked to the different research variables. When all these has been gotten, it will use the procedure for determining sample size to determine the sample population of the research.

## 5.6 Plan for data collection

In any agricultural area, the months are marked with different activities performed by the people. There is a clearing season, planting season and harvesting season. During these different season, the activities performed are different and the time spent on different activities change from one season to another. Also, people are busier in some seasons than in others. All these have to be taken into consideration when the plan for the field work is been made.

Each data collection techniques, will be better used during particular periods of the year. The women will be observed during the clearing and planting seasons in the fields so as to understand their farming practiced. They will also be observed during the harvesting season in the fields as they harvest transport and store their produce both in the fields and at home. And they will be also observed in the different marketing area. The period between the planting season and the harvesting season, will be the most suitable time to use other data collection techniques such as the group discussion, administering questionnaire and conducting interviews because people are less busy and so will have more time and energy to participate in the research.

The search for existing data or secondary data shall take place before the field work is started and after each stage of the field work. During the field work, very little data may be collected because the area being a rural area does not have much information documented. During the period on the field, information already got will be treated. Some information got will be treated on a computer while out of the field. While treating the information it might be realized that some information is lacking which might mean a return to the field if absolutely necessary. However, the primary and secondary data shall be complementary.

## Timetable

The research will be carried out within 24 months and in 3 stages

### Stage I Four Months

- Secondary data collection
- Preparation of Questionnaires, interview
- Guides and other data collect tools
- Pretesting the data collection tools
- Adjusting the data collection tools

### Stage II 10 months

- Field work - Primary data Information Collection
- Observation
- Organizing group discussions
- Administering questionnaires
- Conducting interviews

### Stage III 10 months

- Organization of primary data
- Organization of secondary data
- Treatment of secondary data

- Writing and Typing of project
- Correction and production of final copy

Some months of the research have already been covered. I now have about a year to complete the work.

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## THE USE OF COMPOST MANURE.

by

*George ATABONG*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

About 80% of the Cameroonian population live in the rural areas and their principal means of survival is peasant farming - which in most cases does not allow them to live above subsistence level. As a consequence of this the rural population have certain economic and social disabilities such as low literacy rate, poor health, poor housing and poor social security.

It is a well-know fact that about 2/3 of the Cameroonian economy rely on agriculture and that the peasant farmers are hardworking. Yet they remain the poorest stratum of the Cameroonian society. The drastic fall in the prices of agricultural products in the world market has made things even worst. why do these peasant farmers remain poor? What can be done to improve their agricultural output so that they can have enough to eat and some to sell for cash? These are some of the questions that will be addressed by this study.

The study is focused on Lebialem Division which is 99% rural. The research aims at explaining the phenomenon of poverty among this rural population.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Agriculture in this division is difficult for many reasons. First of all the hilly nature of the land results in several disadvantages to the farmers. There is a lot of erosion that carries away the rich top soil leaving the land poor. the rate of leaching is high. It is impossible to think of mechanised agriculture in this area. for many years to come agriculture will remain peasant. So the formers must finds ways of improving their productivity and production.

The abundant rainfall for about seven months of the year means that there is constant washing away of the top soil. And also means compost manure could be easily made.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is very little that has been on rural agriculture in Lebialem Division. Brain (1972) talking about Ngweh (Bangwa) economy in general stressed that the women form the backbone of economic activities. Subsistence farming is mainly done by women who plant such crops as cocoyam, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, groundnuts, melons. Plantains are planted by men. he asserts that animal breeding is exclusively the domain of men and that the internal trade is done mostly by women. The National research Council (1993) discusses the usefulness of the vetiver grass in checking erosion. This experience is becoming worldwide. MCIntire (1992) deals with the pattern of soil fertility maintenance. This is of great importance to our research he discusses specific and ling-term effects of manure. Njuzy (1979) discusses in general the economy of the Lebialem. Only a small section of the work deals with farming and there is nothing about fertilizing the soil. It is interesting to note some NGOs especially in Yaounde have starting producing compost manure in commercial quantities This would help our study.

#### 4. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The rural population produces about 80% of the Cameroonian food needs. Yet the operators of this sector remain mainly poor. The problem raised here is to know why the peasant farmers in Lebialem Division who play an important role in the economic life of the Division remain at subsistence level. What is the cause of poverty among these peasants farmers. We think it is poor yield. It so how can their yield be improved upon. So far no study has been done in this area.

#### 5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research therefore aims at looking at ways of increasing the agricultural output with less expensive and local made inputs through the use of compost manure. Compost manure is manure made from a mixture of vegetable matter - kitchen refuse, animal droppings, lime, etc. used for fertilizing the land. This kind of manure can easily be made by the farmers themselves. The research will examine whether by teaching the farmers the making and the use of compost manure to enrich the soil, their yield can improve. Another objective the destruction of the beneficial bacteria. The methods of preventing erosion and leaching will also be examined. we will study whether the use of compost manure can limit the extent of shifting cultivation which is widely practised in this Division. The present study intends to provide a detail analysis of farming practices with the aim to helping the farmers improve their crop yield.

##### 5.1 Hypothesis

The peasant farmers in Lebialem Division are hardworking, yet they live at subsistence level. The use of compost manure can help increase the farmers' yield and consequently their financial situation.

#### 6. METHODOLOGY

The study will use both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Whereas the latter will use descriptive and inferential statistics, the farmer will deal with categories. The study will take into accounts the variables such as age, sex, level of formal education, marriage patterns, land tenure, etc, and see how each of these influences agricultural production.

##### 6.1 Data Collection

The study will use mainly primary data with some secondary information on rural agriculture in general and compost manure in particular.

The observation will be participatory.

- Group discussions of different methods of farming practised by the farmers; the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

- The questionnaires will be filled in by the researcher during the "interviews" because most of the farmers cannot write.

- Interviews will be carried throughout Lebialem Division.

- The sampling will cover the entire division as follows:

3 areas in the savannah lands, e in the middle belt and 3 in the forest zones. The discussion will be on different varieties of crops that can grow in the different zones.

Secondary data would be fathered from previous studies, books, statistical department and National agricultural surveys.

## 7. TIME NEEDED

The research will be carried out for a period of fourteen months divided into the following phrases:

Phase I: 4 months collecting secondary data:

- Preparation of questionnaires if need be interviews;
- Guides and other data collection tools;
- Pretesting of data collection tools;
- Adjusting data collection tools.

Phase II: 7 months: Fieldwork - collection of data:

- Observation;
- Organisation and group discussions;
- Administering questionnaires if need be;
- Conducting interviews;
- Methods of making compost manure.

Phase III: 3 months: Organization of primary data:

- Organisation of secondary data;
- Writing of research findings;
- Typing of project.

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# AN INQUIRY INTO URBAN POVERTY IN CAMEROON THE SURVIVABILITY OF WOMEN IN YAOUNDE.

by

*Regina TAWAH.*

## INTRODUCTION

The urban population of Cameroon has grown from about 20.3% in 1970 to about 42.2% of the total population in 1991 (Eurostat, 1992: P.37). The adverse effects of urbanisation are glaring. Overcrowding, poor housing, increasing numbers with no access to clean drinking water, no electricity and poor sanitary conditions, among others are household problems. All these being indicators of poverty (as will be discussed later), it can be said off-hand that the incidence of urban poverty has been on the increase in Cameroon.

The plight of this lot of people is aggravated in the prevailing state of affairs in Cameroon whereby,

- there is an absolute decline in per capita income,
- there are persistent reductions in real wages,
- prices of consumer goods are rising,
- already high unemployment levels are rising further,
- welfare services are declining, etc.

This crisis situation has tended to increase the gap between the rich and the poor. Yet more and more a Cameroonian is struggling to survive by partly enlarging the range of economic activities that are undertaken. The informal sector has so far presented the ground for many to try their hands at earning (more) income. Women make up a considerable portion of this group.

### A Definition of Problem

More than half of the Cameroonian population is female. The role of the female in socio-economic development of the country should not be underestimated. If just one aspect of their production which is usually taken for granted, namely, home production, were evaluated as evidence suggests in the case of Cameroon, the female contribution to household income could fall somewhere between 40 and 60% of household income (World Bank). Yet women are increasingly seeking to earn incomes from out of home activities.

In this regard, they are limited by a number of factors, such as

- little or no education,
- lack of skills
- lack of training
- lack of time due to the more or less compulsory roles they play in the home, among

others. These factors tend to serve as barriers to entry to the formal sector and hence many with the ambition are limited to the informal sector. In fact, women are said to be more prominent in the informal sector especially of urban areas than men. They are engaged in a wide range of activities.

Their confinement to the informal sector as one author suggests, however, is not only due to the existence of barriers to entry into the formal sector but also to the women's efforts to balance their involvement in income-generation with domestic labour and child care. (Peil, 1975 in Brydon/Chant, 1989).

It suffices to note that no matter the amount they make as income they use it primarily to meet the needs of the family as much as possible, e.g. to cover medical bills, pay for the children's education, clothing, upkeep of husband/relations, etc. Unfortunately, they usually never get to meeting these needs satisfactorily largely because the incomes generated mostly are meagre. It should be worth the while improving the productive capacity of these women, since a non-poor woman in economic terms could go a long way to improve the situation of many. These when done by women heads of households are even more imposing. So how can women's productivity be improved in order that their income generation capacity be increased?

## **A Conceptual Framework**

### *Poverty*

Poverty is a multidisciplinary concept and cannot be defined offhandedly. Attempts have been made to define the concept beyond economic terms looking at its political, cultural, ethical and social contexts. We shall be reviewing these to some extent but our analysis will be weighted more on economic terms.

### *Informal Sector*

The concept of the informal sector has been widely discussed. Informal production units are characterised by ease of entry, dependence on local raw materials, individual ownership, labor-intensiveness, adapted technology, among others (ILO, 1972). Among these others, we would like to mention that there are no paid holidays, no maternity leave, no pension not to talk of other social security benefits (Brydon/Chant, 1989). This concept will also be more closely examined. It shall be interesting to examine in particular to what extent taxation of production units as attempted by the government today affects the conception of the so-called informal sector.

### **Objectives**

The main aim of the study is to obtain more up to date information on the operations of women in the urban informal sector of Yaounde. Focus shall be more on trying to identify specific problems which they face with the view of designing solutions to them.

These bear on the premise that helping women improve their productivity goes to reduce poverty not only for the women directly touched but to the whole lot that are their concern and/or are under their care.

### **Methodology**

The analysis will be descriptive as well as analytic. It shall be based partly on secondary and partly on primary data. The secondary data hopefully shall be got from libraries, some institutions that treat a lot with women and some ministries especially that of social and women's affairs. The primary data will be got on the basis of oral discussions, observations and questionnaires.

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Estimated length of Study Period : 15months.



## IV

# EDUCATION AND POVERTY

### DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME IN CAMEROON THROUGH EDUCATION: A SIMPLE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

by

*Aloysius Ajab AMIN.*

#### 1) Introduction:

That there is great inequality in the distribution of income in Cameroon is a reality which should have been causing greater concern than it now does. A small fraction of the population does not only earn a disproportionate portion of the total national income but this tiny fraction seems to be concentrated in one particular sector of the economy - the non-agricultural sector. The educational system seems to aggravate and perpetuate the inequality in income. In other words, the educational system has distributive effects since there seems to be strong positive relationship between education and income. And education seems to have greater impact on other sectors of the economy. Thus, in this short paper I will briefly describe the educational system and the economy. Then I will formally develop a model with policy implications of income distribution.

#### 2) Economy:

For the purpose of the paper, the Cameroonian economy could be divided into two main sectors: the non-agricultural sector, which is made up of the public and private business sector (in the urban areas), and the agricultural sector which is made up of persons in the rural areas. The non-agricultural sector has highly skilled and educated personnels, while the agricultural sector has a greater proportion of persons who can neither read nor write. Their earnings from agricultural products are very low as compared to the other sector of the economy, whose earnings are quite high. In fact, to a great extent, their earnings are determined by governmental and socio-political factors which have a strong educational bias.

In Cameroon, those who have attained a high level of education are paid much more highly than those who have attained a lower level. (I have not seen any compiled data but casual observation would give a rough estimate of a graduate earning about ten times more than a primary school graduate or an average farmer).<sup>2</sup> With a strong positive relationship between income and education, the educational system has gone a long way to worsen inequality in income distribution.

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<sup>2</sup> However, the gap is smaller especially after the 1992 labour code.

### 3) Educational System:

There are three main levels of education: primary school, secondary school and post-secondary school, which includes university and professional schools. Admission into those schools requires at least five years of secondary school. Those who attend primary and secondary schools pay the cost of school fees or tuition plus other school incidentals. But there are government secondary schools<sup>3</sup> mainly in large cities which are tuition free. Admission into these schools is based on academic performance. The rest of the secondary schools are owned and operated by institutions or private individuals. Students who go through these schools incur heavy expenditures or their parents bear the high school costs.

However, at the post-secondary level, the government bears the full cost of schooling plus living expenses. And it seems that most, if not all, of those who go through the government secondary schools have greater chances of entering or obtaining a university education. All this has changed particularly after the 1993 University reform. However through all the levels, going to school is a private decision. Since education has not been made compulsory at any level.

In general, expenditure on education in Cameroon is carried by the government (public) and families, including members of the extended families on behalf of the students who could be regarded to be rational and also students as far as their opportunity cost is concerned more particular to those for poor families.

### 4) Model<sup>4</sup>

If a rational individual (or whoever on his behalf) buys a certain amount of education, he would incur certain costs in anticipation of a stream of earnings after the schooling. He regards buying education as a form of investment which would bring a return. So that the return (R) multiplied by the quantity (Q) of school bought would equal his total earnings. In equation form, his total earnings (TE) can be written as

$$TE = Q + \Sigma QR, \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

where Q is earning without formal schooling.

This could be depicted as in figure 1; where the horizontal axis represents the amount of education (Q) and the vertical axis represents the cost (C) and return (R) from that schooling. Or we can say marginal cost (c) and marginal return (R) because each extra cost incurred in buying additional education brings additional returns. In other words, the demand curve represents the benefits while the supply curve represents the costs. We regard e a point where marginal benefits equal marginal costs. The demand curve is downward sloping because the individual has a limited life span, limited capacity to learn and as he/she acquires more schooling, his time becomes more valuable so that further schooling may imply low rate of return. On the other hand, the supply curve slopes upward because the higher in the educational ladder, the more expensive the education becomes.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, these schools were even better equipped in terms of well-qualified teachers and such things as sports facilities and other facilities.

<sup>4</sup> This model is based on G. Becker and B. Chiswick's model: "Education and the Distribution of Earnings," AER paper and Proceedings, May 1966, pp. 358-369; and A. AMIN's "Education and Human Capital". M.A. Report University of New Brunswick Canada 1976.

The area ( $r_2eq_0$ ) under the demand curve gives the gross earnings after buying ( $0q_1$ ) amount of schooling which could be regarded as the total earnings in his whole working life; the area under the supply curve ( $r_1eq_0$ ) is the total cost and ( $r_1er_2$ ) is the net earnings. So the analysis can be extended to point out that the differences in earnings are due to the supply and demand conditions of the investors. Costs for schooling are direct and indirect cost. Direct cost are out of pocket expenses and the indirect cost are his or her opportunity cost - what he/she would have been earning had he/she not been in school, part of this cost could be defrayed like give bursary or scholarship.

As depicted in figure 2, the higher demand curve  $D_r$  and the lower supply curve  $S_r$  refer to persons in the non-agricultural sector or the rich group; while the low demand curve  $D_p$  and high supply  $S_p$  refer to persons in the agricultural sector or the poor group. The rich group have favourable demand and supply curves.

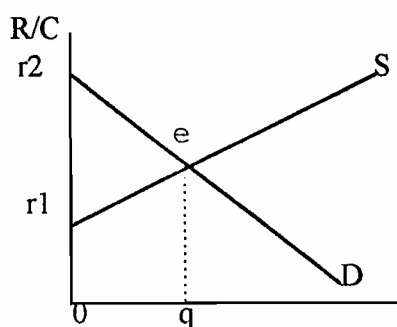


Figure (1)

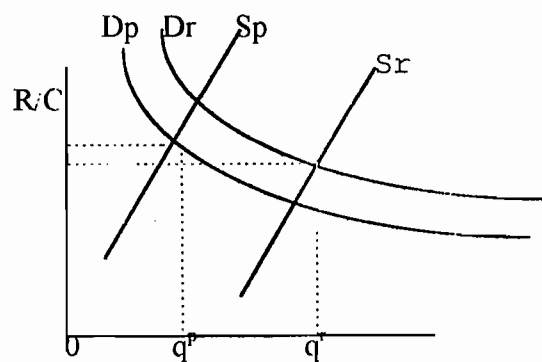


Figure (2)

Their low marginal cost relative to marginal benefits gives them incentives to buy more education and consequently derive benefits. In fact the opportunity cost of a rich child going to school is quite low. If he or she does not go to school, he or she has little or nothing to do at home. But the child would still have all the basic needs. A poor child cannot afford to remain idle. He or she either goes to school or helps the parents with the farm work or non-academic activities. To some extent, the parents or relatives would prefer the children to help in doing farm work or house work. So in general poor children would have high supply curve because of their limited ability to buy more education in order to reap high returns.

The three levels of education are illustrated in figures 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

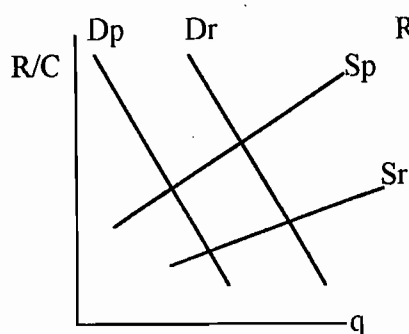


figure (3)

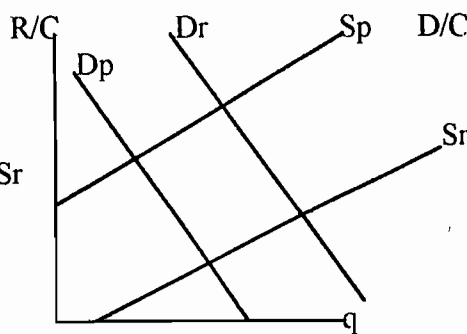


figure (4)

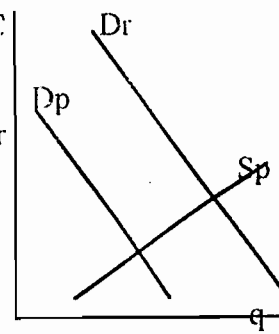


figure (5)

In figure 5, the direct and indirect costs (opportunity cost) may be covered for rich children by both the government and their parents. Relatively, the indirect cost may not be fully covered for poor children because they may prefer to go out and work instead.

The area (earnings) under the demand and supply curves would depend on the shape and position of the demand and supply curves. If the elasticity of the curves is greater, the earnings would be greater. Also the size (earnings) under the curves would depend on the correlation between the supply and demand curves. For instance, rich children may be assumed to be more intelligent and consequently obtain more benefits from schooling. This may be by doing well in school and completing early from school. Thus spending a longer time reaping the benefits of education. This could be understandable. At home, rich children have a more conducive atmosphere for studying. They have better facilities like good housing, better food and in most cases private tutors. The parents, too, in trying to maintain the social status may exert psychic pressure on the children to do well in school (e.g you can easily hear such questioning. How come you have only 15/20 you must do those problems before you go out to play). On the other hand, children from poor families have no such advantages. At home, they help their parents in doing both farm and house work. Sometimes they sleep late; they walk a long way to school. At school they may be tired and inattentive and even sleep off. And therefore unable to learn well. This may mean dropping out of school which may be more preferable for the parents. So in general, children from rich families would tend to have both favorable supply and demand curves, consequently higher earnings, while children from poor families would have both unfavorable demand and supply curves and consequently lower earnings.

### 5) Econometric Model

The above model could be estimated by regressing the individuals earnings on the explanatory variables - such variables as ability, parental variables, school variables etc. which could be written as

$$y = a_0 + \sum_{i=1}^n a_i X_i \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

where  $y$  is earnings and  $X_i$  are the explanatory variables. Equation (2) is similar to equation (1) above.

The different explanatory variables would help in indicating the contribution of schooling to the distribution of income; and the significance of the different variables including schooling per se. Among other things, there are conceptual and practical problems which are always encountered in any comprehensive study of the simultaneous effects of many variables on earnings, such as this.

### 6) Policy implications;

The implication of this analysis is that the amount spent in education for poor and rich children, and also earnings can be drastically changed through changes in both demand and supply curves of education.

Since we are interested in "equal distribution" of income the aim would be to make the supply and demand curves or at least to narrow the gap between  $r$  &  $p$  for both rich and poor children thus hopefully 'equalize normal earnings'.

To start with, primary and secondary schools could be made free. That is, the government bears all the direct costs in terms of fees, books etc. and, if possible, the indirect costs in terms of opportunity cost. This would mean shifting all the supply curves in figures 3 and 4 to coincide with the horizontal axis, thereby making education at these levels costless for all those who buy education and possibly increase the net earnings of the poor group. At the post-secondary educational level, the government was bearing all the direct costs and part of the indirect costs by the system of giving living expenses (allowance) to student at that level. Since the rich children benefitted more, the allowance could be given in a discriminatory manner. Instead of cutting off

completely for all, that is, the allowance could now be directed only to children from poor families.. This would relatively decrease the total benefits of rich children and increase those of poor children. Thus, the gap between rich and poor children would be narrowed.

Or at the post-secondary level, more allowance could be given to children from poor families, making everybody better off and nobody worse.

Alternatively, students at the post secondary school level could be given loans to finance their education. They can then pay back on obtaining employment after completion of their education. This would mean giving cost (supply curve) to those who buy education at that level. But this would spread the cost of schooling over future returns. This policy may put less burden on the government. However, the policy may encourage poor children to enter the labour force rather than going to higher education. So poor children may not benefit much from this policy. But the aim is to increase the net earnings of poor children and to hold the earnings of rich children constant or at most their earnings to have small increase. In this respect the former policies may be more appealing.

On the other hand, while the educational policies per se could be directed towards making supply curves equal, there are still disparities in the demand curves. One can postulate (or based on previous discussion) that the differences in the demand curves are due to different socio-economic background of the families or the children. For instance, how the children are brought up, the amount of informal education the children acquire at home both before and during schooling, all this may depend heavily on related factors like family income, environment, education and occupation. In fact we can assume for convenience that income is the main determinant of the other factors. Income has a great impact on the earning ability of children. Income can buy services and facilities at home and convert school services and facilities into future benefits. So attempts could be directed towards improving productivity and consequently increase the income of those in the agricultural sector.

This would require much more government expenditures in agricultural, research projects, increases in prices the farmer's get for their products, extension services and good infrastructure in terms of good transportation system linking the rural and urban areas. In certain cases poor or lack of these facilities has inhibited agricultural production even for home consumption. Increase in output could be enhanced also by raising the literacy levels of those in the agricultural sector:

All these policies towards the agricultural sector per se would require more skilled and qualified manpower. In turn, this would necessitate a broad base educational system for all. Above all the educational system has to reflect our realities - the mainstay of our economy-agriculture. These agricultural policies would (through increase in income) hopefully shift the demand curve of the poor to the right. This would increase the area under the demand curve and consequently the earnings. In effect, the gap between the earnings the poor and the rich would be narrowed.

In conclusion, the government could be more effective for the good of all by making the educational system more egalitarian and helping in increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector. So equality in income distribution could be achieved by designing policies in the educational system (which seems to have greater impact on other sectors) and in the agricultural sectors.

## INCOME INEQUALITY FROM EDUCATION AS AN ASPECT OF POVERTY IN CAMEROON

by

*EDOKAT TAFAH*

### **ABSTRACT**

Income distribution has been a topic of debate among economists and policy makers for long. Different theories have been propounded to explain inequality among individuals, races, regions and even countries, yet there is no agreement as to which of these best explains income inequality. While most of these theories have usually attributed inequality to differences in the quantity and quality of the traditional factors of production, little attention has been paid to the distributional impact of education which, to a large extent, determines the quality of labour. Although the educational sectors of most LDCs have expanded in terms of public allocation of resources, little or no studies have been made to show how such resource allocations could be a potent cause of poverty through income inequality.

This study thus deviates from the traditional approach by attempting to examine the effects of education on income inequality. This stems from the fact that income inequality is an important aspect of poverty and education could transfer poverty from one generation to another if care is not taken in the pattern of educational expenditures in a country. The rapid expansion of educational expenditures in most countries of the third world has been based on the human capital prediction which holds that educational investment yields substantial private and social benefits. This prediction is based on the inherent presumption that educational attainments provide avenues for good jobs and better remuneration that enhance the living standards of its beneficiaries. This study shows that schooling has served to exacerbate rather than reduce income inequality in Cameroon. This is attributed to government investment pattern and policy in education. The study, therefore, suggests a number of policies to be adopted to reverse the current pattern of educational expenditures in order to avoid an apparent intergenerational transfer of poverty in Cameroon.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Formal education has become an important consideration in the investment decision choice of most people in developing countries (LDCs). To most people and government, educational investment is profitable. This explains why the educational Sector has expanded greatly in most of these countries. This phenomenal expansion is based on the predictions of human capital theory that educational investments yields both private and social benefits that are substantial. The inherent presumption in this prediction is that educational attainments provide avenues for good jobs and better remunerations that enhance the living standards of the beneficiaries of education. The consequence of this line of reasoning is the ever increasing public and private expenditures in education and the expansion of the educational sector in most LDCs. However, the expansion in schooling raises one fundamental question, namely: how can education be used as an instrument for effecting equality within the society? In other words, can education really alleviate the problems of poverty amongst the educated vis-a-vis the uneducated in a country such as Cameroon?

Income distributional problems have been a subject of debate among economists, sociologists and policy makers for long. This stems from the fact that inequality breeds poverty and vice-versa. Income inequality thus becomes an important aspect of poverty or vice-versa. Theories have been propounded to resolve this debate but there has been no general agreement as to which theory best explains the inequality in incomes. While most of the theories of income inequality are beyond the scope of this study, our concern is with the human capital approach to income distribution because as Mincer (1976) stresses "the traditional studies of income distribution tend to stress differences in opportunity, ability and chance as conditions largely unaffected by human choices."

The objective of this study is, therefore, an attempt to investigate how education affects earnings differentials in Cameroon given the importance government and the general public attach to education. This, we hope, will shed some light on the effects of education on income distribution in other LDCs at a similar stage of development. This is very important as income inequality breeds poverty and is easily transferred from generation to generation if a certain pattern of educational expenditure is maintained over time. This study postulates that education has tended to increase rather than reduce income inequality in Cameroon. This is a consequence of the pattern of educational expenditures in Cameroon, especially public aspects of educational investments.

The study is divided into four sections. Section I deals with the theoretical explanations of income distribution, especially in the realm of human capital theory. Section II provides the data sources and some methodological issues used in the study. The statistical results are presented in Section III and Section IV concludes the study with some policy recommendations.

## **DATA SOURCES**

We shall employ mostly primary data generated from a questionnaire to be administered on employees of the public sector. This is because employment in the public sector is mostly based on the level of education and the salary structure is equally tied to the level of education completed. Such a salary structure is equally uniform as opposed to the distorted salary structure existing in the private sector. This source will be complemented with other secondary sources of published and unpublished government texts.

We shall then employ the ordinary Least Squares (OLS) approach to this cross sectional data to generate the kinds of results we require.

## THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

by

*George FONKENG EPAH*

### INTRODUCTION

Cameroon is a bilingual nation with French and English as official languages, besides having over 250 ethnic groups and vernaculars. Schooling as far as basic education is concerned is optional and starts with nursery education at the age of 4 years. This is followed by primary education at the age of 6 years. Secondary education is at the age of 11 years through a Common Entrance Examination into secondary school. The anglophone area follows the British system while the Francophone area follows the French system. Teaching is much too abstract being servilely copied from either French or British manuals. The two systems are not at all unified, which presents a problem particularly when there was only one university in the country. In both of these systems, students must pass a series of examinations in order to advance; hence the curricula are largely geared towards covering set syllabi. All forms of education are co-ordinated by the Minister of Education in Yaounde.

This education, inherited from colonialism has basically remained stagnant in its classical form with the existence of very few and poorly understood technical schools. Along side with its bookish emphasis, totally detached from nature, it has developed in individuals an antipathy towards manual labour or agricultural activities. Designed and structured to supply office workers for the public service, it is seen today as having outlived its usefulness and begging for reforms. Cameroonians are gradually realizing, whether they like it or not, that the government can no longer employ them and the public service is virtually redundant.

That notwithstanding, one is tempted to think that, the country has an 'impressive' literacy rate of over 60%. However, recent economic, social, political and cultural realities are challenging these achievements. Poverty has always been a companion of the average African but when today, as it is the case in Cameroon, ignorance (lack of education) threatens to be part of that relationship, it is dangerous. This is with reference to the fact that poverty (the lack of money) is menacing both the state and individuals in their veritable search for knowledge (education)

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Any reference to the problem of education invariably leads one to think of the poor in the society and the youths who make demands on the educational facilities. In the last census (1987) it was revealed that the country has a growth rate of 2.9%, and 56.3% of the population is less than 20 years - extremely young population. Between the ages of 11 years and more, 4 out of 10 are not literate (cannot read or write). This is even higher amongst women (5 out of 10) and 3 out of 10 as far as men are concerned.

Those who have never been to school or having had only nursery or Koranic education represent 46.4% from the age of 3. On this level, women are greatly disfavoured. At the primary level one registers 44.9% of men against 37.3% of women. The range is wider at the secondary level.

All these imply that a significant number of the population has no access to basic education particularly in rural areas. The government cannot provide schools in every corner of the nation and few people have the money these days to pay for education. In some areas like the Far-North



province, cultural believers tend to favour the education of boys rather than girls but in actual fact this may have more to do with poverty as far as that attitude is concerned. Furthermore, the high growth rate has meant pressure on existing structures (few) leading to large classes and large schools and their attendant disadvantages.

We have witnessed the closure of Teacher Training colleges particularly those meant for the training of basic education teachers, at a time when they are badly needed. There are many adventures in the private education sector with its stock of unqualified, incompetent and inadequately equipped teachers. In fact this sector is flourishing to the detriment of poor parents who are fortunate to find a place for their children in relatively free state-owned schools. There are also problems of dropouts.

Teachers, all over the nation are faced with poor salaries and little incentive and motivation. Poor school administration is frequent with principals and headmasters falling prey to corrupt practices of illegally selling admission into primary and secondary schools.

Finally, too few technical or vocational colleges exist and this implies the training of cripples as far as their ten fingers are concerned. Yet very little has been done to document all this in order to find solutions. In short, education has to be allied with productive work; this in effect calls for some relevance in the content of education.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

Taking into account the complete nature and ramification of poverty on individuals, state policies and consequently on education, the objectives of this study are obvious. Firstly, to establish an inventory of the needs and resources available for the elaboration of viable strategies for giving wide access to basic education especially where girls are marginalized. In this connection, such an exercise should define the roles of various authorities in the provision of schools since wider access will require multi-sectional and inter-institutional collaboration.

Secondly to take stock of the existing educational structures and the specificity of their programmes. This would enable the competent authorities to elaborate strategies for maintenance, reform and uplifting standard in our schools.

Thirdly, the study should be able to project from existing data the future trend as far as poverty and education are concerned. This should permit authority to design policies for the granting of access to a significant number to basic education especially the additional number of units to cater for future demand. This should further enhance the transformation of certain private schools into acceptable and viable agents of education.

The ultimate objective is to come up with feasible strategies which blend with conceptions and values and draw on "the untrapped energies of the poor". The anticipation is that they may find education useful and consequently improve their lifestyle through effective participation and so hopefully, invest incrementally in education. This will look in particular at enabling policies that associate the poor to the educational process. The objective here is to avoid the arrogance of the privileged as Father Wresinski points out, "the most profound humiliation of the poorest families is the presumptuousness of those who assume that they can ignore the experience and thinking of those who are excluded."

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

From the fore-going, it is easy to perceived that the study seeks to reach out to the people, assess their inaccessibility to education as a result of poverty. The essence is to come up with strategies and recommendations that are tailored to the aspiration of the beneficiaries and within the confines of affordability. The study also seeks to avoid transporting foreign models and standard while at the same time strive to improve standards which must bear relevance to local realities.

The resultant strategies, if adopted, should seek to mobilize a positive relationship between policy conception and implementation. Finally the study should be able to add its own bit to the current debate about appropriate ways of eradicating or reducing poverty.

## HYPOTHESES

Although inaccessibility to and inadequacy of schools is not solely as a result of socio-economic and demographic spin-offs, it could be argued that government policies and institutional structures encourage the exclusion of certain less privileged groups. Hence this study hypothesizes that "the inaccessibility of the less privileged to schools is an off-shoot of other state policy option which centralize and concentrate administrative, educational and economic activities in the main urban centres without a correspondingly, adequate infrastructural framework to cater for those from the central administration".

The resultant demand for schools has given rise to a problem with various socio-economic and cultural dimension based on the inability of the authorities concerned to adequately provide schools. It had already been mentioned that poverty on the part of the state is causing large classes and schools. This situation causes headmaster/principals to get involved in corrupt practices such as the sale of admission into schools. From this perspective it is hypothesized that:

"The available educational structure serve a privileged minority - those who can afford to buy places for their children - leading to further exclusion of the less privileged".

Furthermore, it is evident that the growth of private schools in the country is an expression of the demand for education against an inadequacy on the part of the state. Thus we hypothesize that

"There is a direct relationship between the creation of private schools and the less privileged in society".

We also observe that the many private schools which exists in the country, if properly organized and supported will increase and improve the present provision of schools. It is therefore hypothesised that

"The increase demand for schools, and the inability to meet the growing need to admit and grant basic education to poor children is a result of failure to take complete control of a fundamental requirement namely - the provision of secure and stable and to private education which can provide education at remote location, at affordable prices and on equitable terms.

There is an on - going debate on the relevance of education to their realization of society. The economic crisis and devaluation of the Franc CFA have proved this. The specificity of local realities is a function of culture and environment. It is important to note that the inter action between culture and education will give more sustenance to schooling and more realization to disillusioned parents. It is consequently hypothesized that:

"The revival of traditional social school models which have relevance to the society can give more meaning to education by rendering it more functional and dynamic and may be extract more skeptics."

It is realized that characteristics of rationality and mutual support found in traditional society have been widely identified as constituting an important contribution to the coping with financial demands such as fees. Can the immense energies and financial muscles contained in such traditional social organizations not be harnessed in the quest for viable strategies to resolve the problem of inaccessibility to education? In this light we see that Njangi's and other contributions are essential to providing the necessary fees for children in rural areas. From this we can also hypothesize that "the more organized rural groups are with reference to weekly and/or monthly savings towards school fees, the more families will find schools easily accessible even for girls."

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A study that aims at elaborating strategies or providing viable recommendation for a national education policy will of necessity cover the entire territory of Cameroon. This is because the schooling problem linked to poverty earlier, is not only a rural one. However, due to the inadequacy of funds these days and the difficulty of covering the entire territory, one is constrained to survey a sample fraction of the nation namely:- the North West, Far North, East and West provinces. These are indeed parts where poverty continue to deprive significant numbers of schools. We can also conveniently examine in these provinces some of those abuses linked to inadequate structures and poor government policy.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study will use existing books on third world education and poverty, particularly, those which reflect the thinking the what is educationally appropriate should be locally available personally affordable, and culturally rooted within the society. The whole educational process should be internally, locally and individually determined. Therefore, the three basic consideration that should influence any future education policy should be availability , affordability and relevancy.

## AVAILABILITY AFFORDABILITY RELEVANCY

Preliminary readings like Jaspa Basic needs Mission (1981); First thing First and Royce L., Carol A.O.L & Stephen R (1987); Encouraging Private Initiative) examine the plight of the poor in society with special emphasis on the availability of basic needs. Rene Dumont (1966) false start in Africa discusses the deprivation of girls in some African societies with such quotations as 'If your sister goes to school, you won't have anything to eat'; he also makes references to the misdirected concept of African education, distances from school and the inadequacy of the present school system. MINEDUC (1994); (Preparation for the National Forum on Education, looks at the short-comings of the present system and policy implementation with a lot of recommendations for reform. Cameroun Tribune (1991) Notre Population la verité des chiffres, exposes the overwhelming statistical realities that the educational authorities have to come to terms with.

From the above, it is perceived that existing literature present divergent views. One school of thought (Hegel W.F. 1770 - 1831) believes that the state should assume the role of a provider (proprietor) as it was the case of the old Soviet Union. This view has plans as it presumes that the state knows and has the resources of meeting the educational needs of all its citizens. In Cameroon, the inadaptability of the educational system to the present demands go society is evidence of some of the short-comings of this policy, Moreover, some areas lack schools and others are left at the mercy of adventurers while reiterate again the limitation of state resources. Indeed, the state cannot in these difficult days provide the kind of survey to embrace such a project, though nevertheless, it is capable of doing a lot for those deprived.

From this perspective, it is more realistic for the state to encourage or adopt "enabling policies". Enabling policies are support - based initiatives that encourage individuals and communities to open their own schools while the state provide guidelines, basic infrastructure and personnel. We are witnesses of some wonderful initiatives of the P.T.A in Cameroon.

## METHODOLOGY

With this background knowledge, the study intends to be both descriptive and analytical. The descriptive section will make up secondary data collected from MINEDUC, MINREST and other research bodies which deal with the above.

On the analytical section, the study will use questionnaires taking into consideration the main dependent and independent variables. In addition to questionnaires, structured and unstructured, interviews shall be conducted in each divisional head quarter, households and some private agents in the education business. This differentiation emanates from the fact that the problem is not the same all over the country.

For data analysis, we shall make use of a computer programme such as is written in Basic to permit easy adaptation to almost any micro computer system meeting the modest storage requirements. This computer programme is meant to provide the statistics and relationships required.

### **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

Accurate interpretation of the project outcome will depend on how precisely concepts have been defined. These definitions are necessary also for reasons of consistency. In the first place, what readily comes to mind is poverty and basic education.

Poverty will be defined from the point of view as lack of money to provide or participate in education. This will be inspired by the concept of poverty linked to the absence of basic needs such as potable drinking water, good sanitation, basic medical services, schools, transportation and recreational services which have implications on epidemics, shorter life expectancies, mental and emotional stress etc.

Basic education will make emphasis on free education for all at least at the primary level of education as far as the three Rs are concerned.

### **ANTICIPATED RECOMMENDATIONS - OUTPUT**

- 1- Improve salary and the possibility to introduce free education for all at the primary level - mainly government initiative though private initiative must be encouraged and should be gratuitous and should involve councils, individuals and confessional bodies.
- 2- Rural dwelling must be made to see the importance of education and encouraged to organize saving schemes for educational problems.
- 3 - The role of the P.T.A. should be defined to encourage interest.
- 4 - More technical/Vocational courses with training for specific professions
- 5 - Improve and encourage adult education mainly from functional perspectives, in order to help parents see the importance of education.
- 6 - The training of primary school teachers including special teachers for the retarded, physically and mentally handicapped and adult education cases.
- 7 - Girls should be given a special place with some concessions if necessary.

The whole study shall be of interest to the following ministries

- MINEDUC
- MINDUP
- MINREST
- MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY AND FINANCE

Workshop grouping an audience with interest in the subject might be organized for dissemination purpose as soon as the draft is ready. Based on the result of seminar a final text shall then be developed for implementation or otherwise.

## **CONCLUSION**

The anticipated result is that providing education at this level and to all the special groups mentioned will mean recuperating and providing for a significant number that would otherwise have been left out. The ultimate hope will be an understanding of society, improvement of peoples sight and full participation in decision - making. Eventually, can be a useful member in the society and development and democracy can be slightly focused.

## **DURATION OF PROJECT**

This project shall have the following time table and designed to be carried out in three phases

PHASE I - (Three Months) Identifying relevant literature and writing first drafts of documentary research and construction of instrument for imperial research.

PHASE II (Three Months) Field work and writing of second draft of documentary research.

PHASE III (Six Months) Data processing and analysis, writing up, and submission of final draft.

## V - ENVIRONMENT AND POVERTY

### CONTROLLING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION TO IMPROVE ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN URBAN AREAS IN CAMEROON.

by

*Gabriel N. FOLEFOC*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The polluting potential of industrial development under various economic, social & political systems is enormous. Indeed, many segments of society contribute to the increasing environmental insults. The following examples succinctly explain the above assertion :

- mining and timber operations ravage the landscape.
- municipalities dump raw or partially treated sewage and solid wastes into water ways, and use the air as a sink for wastes.
- the products and by-products of agriculture and manufacturing industries are found dispersed everywhere.
- peasants irrationally exploit the forests, soils and rivers.

Moreover, oil spills, chemical toxins, etc, all add to the environmental burden.

These various degradations are not perceived by individuals or governments as being all of a similar nature. It is therefore helpful to group them into categories;

- a) Pollution : which is the deterioration of the quality of the environment by the introduction of undesirable impurities. For example, smoke and industrial ash pollute the air; sewage pollutes rivers and lakes; junk cars and solid wastes pollute the land.
- b) Depletion of resources : which results from the use of oil to operate electric power plants ; use of fuel in cars and engines; burning of wood for heating and cooking - all of these representing an environmental loss.
- c) Disturbance of natural condition : the construction of dams for electricity generation plants or for irrigation purposes as well as the practice of shifting cultivation often lead to massive destruction of fertile land.

The greatest environmental disruption which is often perceived by inhabitants in most countries is pollution. Its effects on the life and property of inhabitants are much more drastic than those of the other environmental degradations. Examples of harmful effects of pollution include damage to animal and human health resulting from diseases, and damage to vegetation and buildings by smoke and industrial dusts. Public awareness of environmental damage in Cameroon is easily perceived through pollution of atmosphere, water and land.

#### 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

It is widely known that the industry is indispensable for the rapid economic and social growth and development of any country, especially in developing countries. Therefore, as a national industrialisation policy, most countries tend to encourage and promote small and medium-sized enterprises, agro-industries and heavy industries which create jobs, provide manufactured products

that help to improve on the standard of living of their peoples. In fact, the importance of industrialization to the population of a country can hardly be overemphasized.

However, besides improving upon the standard of living of inhabitants, rapid industrialisation tends to produce other effects which appear to be negative, namely environmental pollution.

Cameroon is no exception to this situation. Most industries in Cameroon appear to be located within the vicinity of urban areas; moreover, the majority of consumers of products manufactured in these and foreign industries are found in urban centres. All of these have culminated in a consistent pollution of the atmosphere, water and land in these areas. Furthermore, the rapid population growth and urbanization which are observed in some of the towns in Cameroon (ex. Yaounde & Douala) have contributed enormously to this environmental insult. Surely, this has steadily affected the standard of living (and hence quality of life) of the inhabitants in these areas.

A number of studies on the environment in Cameroon have been carried out (DGRST, 1983). However, very little has been reported on the effects of environmental pollution on the standard of living, and hence quality of life of inhabitants in Cameroonian urban centres or regions.

As a general objective, this study intends to examine the effects of environmental pollution on the quality of life of the inhabitants living within the Cameroonian urban centres and to suggest possible control measures to lessen the rate of deterioration and/or improve upon the environment.

The specific objectives will be

- to examine the various types of pollution which take place and the sources of pollutants in urban regions,
- to discuss the effects of pollution on the standard of living of the inhabitants in these regions and,
- to propose possible measures to control environmental pollution.

#### i) Types /Nature of pollution and sources of pollutants in urban areas.

We would examine the types of pollution on the basis of the medium which receives the impurities. Here three (3) major types can be identified, namely

- pollution of the atmosphere (or air)
- pollution of water
- pollution of the land.

Atmospheric pollution involves the introduction of harmful or undesirable impurities into the gaseous envelope that surrounds the earth and consists of air. Such impurities include :-

- aerosols, smoke, fumes, all of which may be solid or liquid.
- dust made up of solid particles and
- mists which are liquid droplets

There are two main sources of atmospheric pollutants:

- by natural processes which include bush fires, garbage incineration and other combustion sources (ex. mobile engines),
- manufacturing industries.

Pollution of water is the addition of undesirable foreign matter that deteriorates the quality of water. The foreign matter may be in various forms:

- Suspended particles (dusts, sand, bacteria and other organisms)
- colloidal particles (soil particles, clays, etc).
- dissolved ions and gas molecules.

The sources of water pollutants are varied and include

- atmosphere
- mineral soil and rocks
- living organisms and their decomposition products and
- industrial wastes

Pollution of land is related to the accumulation mainly of solid wastes; liquid wastes also pollute the land to some extent. These wastes or refuse are generally made of products from agriculture and/or manufacturing industries. Examples of junk cars, metal pieces, plastics, wood debris, etc are quite familiar in most towns in Cameroon including Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam, Kumba, Bamenda, etc.

## ii) Effects of pollution

Here, we intend to look at the effects in relation to the type of pollution in question.

The first noticeable effects of atmospheric pollution are odour and visible smoke/dust. In fact, the effects of this type of pollution can be grouped in six categories :

- modification of climate
- harm to human health
- injury to animals
- damage to vegetation
- deterioration of materials
- aesthetic insults

The effects of water pollution are similar to those of atmospheric pollution. In general water pollutants cause harm to human health, animals and aquatic flora and fauna. In the discussion, the case of waste waters containing organic and inorganic matters from industrial installations will be of particular concern. Similarly, the harmful effects of waters from wells located near pit latrines in areas where there is no access to safe drinking water from the water corporation (SNEC) will also be considered.

The effects of land pollution in urban areas will be given a special consideration given the kind of damages which result from solid and liquid waste accumulation. We will be looking at the effects resulting from damages to human health, animals, vegetation, materials and building, etc, and the effects on the general well-being of the inhabitants.

All of these effects are believed to have a more or less direct and indirect relationship with the quality of life of the inhabitants in urban areas.

## iii) Measures of Pollution Control

Prior to proposing measures, it will be interesting to examine the economic impact of pollution control. Some factors involved in pollution abatement tend to make goods from manufacturing industries more expensive. However, when we consider the economic costs of environmental degradation, pollution control is cheaper than pollution.

Measures of pollution control may vary from altruistic approaches through legislative dispositions to economic incentives. The altruistic approach is one in which an individual, firm or government helps to preserve the environment voluntarily. The legislative measures are based on the establishment of various texts regulating pollution by industries. Economic incentives such as subsidy for cleaning and tax on pollutants are sometimes useful in controlling pollution. The discussion will try to bring out the advantages that can be obtained from each type of measure.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study will be descriptive and analytical.

- a) It will use existing data collected from;
- Ministry of Mines, Water Resources and Energy
  - Ministry of Industrial and Commercial Development
  - Ministry of Public Health



- Ministry of Forests and Environment
- Ministry of Housing and Town Planning
- Town councils of urban areas being studied.

b) It will also involve visiting some of the manufacturing industries and waste disposal sites within urban towns including Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam, Kumba, Limbe, etc. These are typical areas where most of the manufacturing industries are located and/or where there is a very high consumption of manufactured products.

Work will be carried out in two stages:

Stage 1 : (6 months)

- Collection of data from various Ministries and government bodies
- visit to some industrial and waste disposal sites.

Stage 2: (3 months)

- organization of data
- writing and typing of project
- correction and production of final copy.

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## FARMER GRAZER PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON.

by

*Simon NGENGE TATA.*

The North West Province is on the Western Highlands of Cameroon. It is a region of the Guinea Savannah, characterised by abundant rainfall and moderate temperatures. This gives room for luxuriant savannah vegetation which among the other things is suitable for cattle grazing.

The people of the North West Province of Cameroon are mostly farmers engaged mainly in arable farming, while the smaller group is occupied with pastoral farming.

The arable farmers predominantly carry shifting cultivation. This traditional land management system which allows for the rotation of cultivation periods of crops, fully regenerates soil fertility so as to increase crop productivity. Land which is left to follow most of the time, attracts pastoral farmers, who themselves do not have a permanent area for grazing. The Fulani and the Akoh nomads, have been attracted to this area as far back as in 1916. They came to this region from the Adamawa plateau.

### RESEARCH ISSUE.

Thus there has been competition for land use in the area among the arable farmers and the pastoral farmers. This competition has led to various conflicts between them. This partly emanated from the fact that, the grazers occupied the land left to follow as if it was waste land.

Their occupation of the indigenous lands ran at regnant with the native traditional land management system of crop rotation. They need large pastoral areas for their live stock breeding. Native farmers seemed have lost most of their farmland and their corps are constantly destroyed. This might have led the pastoralist to relative economic prosperity while the bulk of the native farmers remaining poor. These native farmers who have suffered most are women who are basically produce food for their family. Principal crops cultivated in this region include; Maize, Potatoes, beans, cocoyams, yams, millet and vegetables. The conflict has disturbed the growing of these crops. The women who have found themselves in this situation have turned to the administration often, but in vain.

This was the case with the Bikom women who as far back as in the 1950s staged a protest match to Bamenda. Another protest matches of recent was that of the Babanki women who match to Bamenda, the Provincial head-quarters to express their grievances, to the authorities. Other areas of conflict other than land use include; the traditional set up. In most cases, the fulanisare resistant due to their Islamic cultural back-ground. Another area of conflict is that of the central authority whereby the natives hold that the chief is the supreme authority but the Fulani believe to the Ardo. This fight for supremacy is because of duality in the traditional legal systems. The Fulanis would not respect the verdicts of the customary court in most cases and invariably the indigenes would not respect the verdicts of an Alkali Court. The last dimension is that the administration appears to be a participant in the conflict. In most cases they have been accusation of himbory involving the administrators.

In normal practice, grazing land is demarcated by the administration in collaboration with the traditional authorities. It happens that all times the traditional which represent the

native are excluded. All grazers by law are expected to possess enclosures, but in practice this is not the case. The absence of enclosures facilitates the cattle destruction of crops. It is also alleged that cattle owners at times intentionally allow their cows to destroy crop of the arable farmers.

A culmination of these factors have led to instances where there exist a more or less war situation between the natives and the Fulanis. The cohabitation of the grazers and the indigenous farmers therefore seemed to become optimally a crucial socio-economic and political problem in this region. In spite of the fact that the agricultural sector employs over eighty percent of the people of this region, the farmer-grazer conflict has remained a perennial problem. If the conflict were resolved, agricultural productivity will thus be improved.

After noting above issues one may raise the following questions :

- why is it that the Fulani cannot control their cattle so as to co-habit harmoniously with the indigenous people?
- why is it that the colonial and post colonial administrations could not solve the problem?
- why is it that the local administrative agents and native authority on spot cannot be arbiters to promote peaceful co-existence?
- why is it that the various land tenure reforms have only help to exacerbate the conflict?

### **Objectives.**

The objectives of this study are therefore

1. To unmasked the underground forces that created the conflict between the Fulani grazers and the indigenous people.
2. To examine the relationship between the farmers and the state authority.
3. To examine approaches of the various groups to the problem.
4. To examine whether with the advert of cattle rearing in the region, the natives have lost ownership of land tenancy.
5. To examine the impact of other factors such as population pressure, introduction of coffee and cash crops on the conflict.
6. To examine the effect of cattle grazing on the environment.

### **METHODOLOGY**

We shall use both the primary sources and the secondary sources of information.

### **RESEARCH PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

The collection of data and information would take the researcher to seven Divisions of the province (Mezam, Momo, Boyo, Menchum, Ngoketun-ja, Bui and Douga-Mantung). It would also be necessary to visit the Buea archives. The entire project should take ten months with time schedule as follows : Collection of formation discussion, analysing the information.

**THE CHANGING ECONOMIC SITUATION AND  
THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES IN NORTH CAMEROON**

by

*FONDO SIKOD*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Far North Cameroon is located in the fragile Sudano-Sahelian transition zone of Sub-Saharan Africa, and has a very hostile climate. The area covers seven percent (34260sq. km<sup>2</sup>) of the country's land area and has over 17 percent (2.2 million) of the total population. The population density is nearly 64 inhabitants per square kilometer, a little over 2.5 times the national density. Nearly 90 percent of the population are in the rural areas.

Temperature vary from 16°C (January) to 41°C (March-April), with an average of 26°C. Rainfall averages 600 to 900 mm annually, and is concentrated between the months of June and September. This short rainy season is irregular and pose problems to farmers. Three sub regions make up this zone; the Mandara Mountains, the plains around Maroua and the flood plains of the Logone River. The Mandara Mountains and its foothills is an area of very high population density (>100/km<sup>2</sup>), with a large ethnic diversity, and a traditional agriculture based on terraces made of local materials for the protection of the soil and conservation of water.

The plains around Maroua has a population density of 50/km<sup>2</sup>, and is characterized by a chain os seasonal rivers locally called Mayor. Many villages are located near these Mayos. The soil here is hard and clayey, but provides pasture for sedentary and migratory (transhuman) grazers.

The flood pains of the Logone River are relatively fertile with most of the agricultural activities taking place here. The vegetation here is good pasture for thousands of livestock and also the animals in the Waza-National Park, especially during the dry season.

the quality of health in the zone is very poor. The region has been plagued with recurrent annual epidemics of cholera and meningitis, caused by contaminated water, malnutrition and inadequate health care delivery services. Over 90 percent of the water consumed in the region, come from wells. Mortality and mobility is quite high in the area. Infant mortality is 103/1000 as against the national rate 95/1000. Protein deficiency is the number one cause if malnutrition.

The literacy rate is very low. A Save The Children (1992) literacy investigation showed that 52 percent of the population were illiterate. Twenty-eight percent had some primary school education, 17 percent had coranic education, and only three percent had any education beyond the primary school.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to determine how the deteriorating economic situation is affecting the sustainable use of natural resources in the Far North Province of Cameroon. Although there are many resources, the study is limited to land use for agriculture and forestry exploitation.

The specific objectives are to:

- identify and show the changes in the economic activities in the area
- identify and discuss the soil types and the farming system in the area
- analyse the impact of the changing economic situation on the farming systems and crop production
- analyse and discuss the impact of the changing economic situation on forest management
- determine whether under these changing economic situations, the resources are being used sustainably.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Data Collection.**

Data used for the analyses was collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data as through discussions with some of the peasants and observations in the commercial areas. Secondary data was through document search in various offices in the region.

#### **3.2 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is mostly descriptive, and through the use of two way tables. In some cases, ratios are calculated, and in other cases, the statistics are in percentages.

### **4.0 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

The economic activities of the Far North Cameroon may be divided into three broad categories; agriculture, livestock breeding and trade, especially border trade.

#### **4.1 Agriculture:**

Although subsistence agriculture dominates, agricultural production may be grouped into:

##### **4.1.1 Food Crops.**

i) Crops produced exclusively for subsistence. These include sorghum, millet and moukwari (dry season sorghum). Although the surplus of these crops are sold, the objective of the producers is to maximize survival. For this reason, prices do not play any role in production decisions.

ii) Crops produced for local consumption and also for the market. These include maize, groundnut and niebe. Prices are important in the production and sales of these crops.

##### **4.1.2 Cash Crops**

Cotton is the number one cash crop. It is produced exclusively for sales, and only the parastatal cotton company, SODECOTON. Onions is another cash crop. Although the returns to onions are quite high, the demands in production do limit the quantities produced. It is an irrigation-fed crop.

#### **4.2 Other Activities**

##### **4.2.1 Fishing**

Inland fishing is very important in Cameroon. About 55 percent of the fish caught in Cameroon come from the inland waterways. Far North accounts for 34 percent of this quantity. Almost all fish caught, are sold.

##### **4.2.2 Wood Harvesting**

Wood is harvested for food, energy, medicines and construction. Wood is the only source of energy, especially for cooking, to over 90 percent of the population. Although wood harvested for food, energy and medicine is for household consumption, a small portion of it is sold, especially to meet the demands of people in the urban areas.

**Table I. Production Under Varying Cultivation Conditions and Percentage Sold, 1991/92.**

Techniques of Cultivation								
Crop and Percentage Sold	Maual <sup>a</sup>		Animal Traction I <sup>b</sup>		Animal Traction II <sup>c</sup>		Irrigation	
Cotton (kg Percentage Sold)	565	99	1250	100	1800	100	1125	100
Onions Percentage Sold	-	-	-	-	-	-	11390	80
Groundnut	130	47	250	37	115	25	50	-
Niebe Percentage Sold	200	28	200	32	520	54	304	15
Sorghum Percentage Sold	830	13	1570	6	2000	11	1400	14
Millet Percentage Sold	350	15	300	19	720	19	120	33
Mouskwari Percentage Sold	120	2	200	3	160	3	-	-

Source: Madi Ali. p. 93

a-Production using only traditional equipments

b-Production using one or two animals

c-Production using more than two animals and/or some modern farm equipment.

#### 4.3 Livestock

This zone has over 35 percent of the total livestock in the nation. Keeping animals is an integral part of the farm family. These families keep two to ten cattle, goats and sheep, which feed around the residential area. There are also, the transhumans, who migrate over long distances with large herds of cattle, in search of good pasture. These are nomads. Livestock, especially cattle, is considered as a store of wealth.

#### 4.4 Trade, Especially Border Trade with Nigeria.

Cameroon and Nigeria have a boarder which is 1500 kilometers long, and porous, especially in the north where people of the same tribe are found in both countries. Beside the tribal link, the economic policies of the two countries have tended to promote the trade. The Nigerian naira is a weak and not a freely convertible currency, whereas the CFA franc, until early this year has been fairly freely convertible because of the fixed parity with the French franc. Exports to Nigeria from the zone include onions, groundnut, niebe, animals and fish products and a small quantity of cereals; some of the rice and wheat flour imported to Cameroon are re-exported to Nigeria. Imports to the region from Nigeria include construction materials, cement, iron rods, roofing materials and some hardware supplies; foods, vegetables oils, sugar, preservatives, various beverages and liquors; Textiles; audio-visual and electronics equipment, vehicles, engines, and household furnishing s; and farm inputs as fertilizers, insecticides and some light farm implements. Before the devaluation, border trade with Nigeria constituted an important economic activity.

## **5.0 ECONOMIC REFORMS DIRECTLY AFFECTING THE FAR NORTH.**

The main objective of the Structural Adjustment Programme has been to liberalize the economy and make it more efficient by removing various distortions. Some reform activities have had direct impact on the region: the fertilizer Sub-Sector Reform Programme, the restructuring of SODECOTON, the devaluation of the francs CFA and the salary cuts of civil servants along with the irregular payments of the salaries.

### **5.1 Economic Reforms and Environmental Use.**

The Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP, was introduced as a result of the collapsing Cameroonian economy, which has continued to deteriorate inspite of these measures. It may sometimes be difficult to isolate the specific effects of SAP from those of the deteriorating economy. For example, the population pressure, limited land availability and lack of alternative employment opportunities are pushing farmers to intensify land use by reducing fallow periods, and by also cultivating marginal lands. Also elephants from Waza National Park have been ravaging farms and causing havoc in the areas around the park, because of the decreasing forage area for the animals as human activities encroach on their habitat. This example can be ascribed to both deteriorating economic situation and SAP measures.

## **6.0 PRODUCTION**

### **6.1 Changes in Land Use**

Although a variety of crops are cultivated in this region, sorghum, cotton, groundnut and maize are the most common as they are cultivated by most farmers. The system of production is relatively simple and depends on the interplay of the climate and topography, together with the soil type availability of land, labour, tools and agrochemicals. Except for the dry season sorghum, mouskwari, which is dewfed and onions which is irrigation fed, all the crops are rain fed, and have to be grown during the short rainy season which lasts from June to September.

The soils, which are mostly poor and low agricultural quality, vary in texture and characteristics, with a lot of what is locally known as "hardé", that is, degraded, very compact and concentrated infertile soils. Soil erosion by surface flow is quite common because precipitation far exceeds infiltration and through flow. The dark top soils or vertisols do crack badly when dry. In 1987, the amount of land available per person was 1.85 hectares, 42 percent of the national average. In 1993, it had dropped to 1.5 hectares and 41 percent respectively. This change has very serious implications for land use in a region which is predominantly rural (80 percent as against 60 percent for the nation). Because of the fragile nature of the soils, land preparation does not require any heavy equipment. Most of the tools used are traditional, with animal traction which is being introduced in the region by the parastatal cotton corporation, SODECOTON, being the only relatively modern soil preparation equipment in use. It is used mostly for cotton cultivation and as yet, only by relatively few farmers.

Agrochemicals are used for mostly cotton cultivation. This is because SODECOTON has made clear to cotton farmers that they must use agrochemicals. SODECOTON supplies farmers with the agrochemicals and extension services.

Apart from the parastatal corporation SODECOTON, most crops are grown by small holders on small parcels of land. The basic production unit is the family. Depending on their means, some of these farm families do hire some labour. These small holders may be grouped into three categories; the traditional farmer who uses only traditional tools, the farmer who uses some purchased inputs, including animal traction and hired labour, and the irrigation or onion farmer who farms on irrigated land and uses some fertilizer and pesticides (see Table 1). Using this classification, Madi Ali (p.96) has shown that the productivity of the irrigated farming system is the highest, and

that of the traditional farmer is the lowest. Irrigation farming is, however, limited by the water supply and the technology used for irrigation. For this reason, irrigated farms are small and few. Besides, water for human consumption is the number one priority in many villages (Ngono, p.55).

Table 2 and figure 1 show the evolution of the area under cultivation for the four major crops. Crop rotation is practiced here.

**Table 2** : Changes in Area Under Production, Selected Crops. 1985-1992 (000 ha)

Subsector/Crop	1985/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92
Cotton	94.5	94.7	111.6	89.0	93.8	89.0	95.0
Groundnut	43.4	42.6	35.6	42.8	49.0	44.2	53.3
Sorghum	236.3	240.9	212.2	243.6	272.4	232.2	271.8
Maize	22.5	24.0	12.8	30.9	46.4	44.7	60.3

SOURCE: SODECOTON, quoted in Madi Ali, pp 44-47,  
"Bilan Diagnostique Du Secteur Agricole, 1980-1990"

Includes the dry season sorghum popularly known in the region by the local name, Moukwari.

The total area under cultivation for these four crops increased from 1985/86 to 1991/92 by 21.7 percent. The increase in area under cultivation came mostly from sorghum and maize, the main staple crops of the region.

**COTTON:** Cotton is the most important cash-crop in this region, and it is cultivated solely for sale. Most farmers have cotton at the basis of their crop rotation. The production of this crop requires particular attention because it is very sensitive to diseases and bad weather. SODECOTON provided extension services on how best to cultivate cotton. All cotton produced must be sold to SODECOTON. Cotton is cultivated on a different field every year, because SODECOTON forbids farmers to grow cotton two years running on the same field. This is to prevent any cotton disease. Before planting cotton for the first time, fields must be cleared of all trees because roots impede ploughing. SODECOTON has been introducing use of animal traction to small holder parcels of land greater than one quarter hectare. Sowing is done perpendicular to predominant wind direction so as to improve the effectiveness and safety of pesticide spraying. After harvesting, all plant residues are removed and burnt (SODECOTON orders), again to prevent diseases. Fertilizer is always applied to cotton fields, following strong recommendations from SODECOTON. When farmers sell their cotton to SODECOTON, the cost of the inputs are subtracted and what remains is then given to the farmers.

**GROUNDNUT:** This is the next crop to cotton, which is widely cultivated as a cash crop. Some of it is used for home consumption. Unlike cotton, little care is taken in the cultivation of groundnut. The use of agrochemicals is very limited. Cultivation of groundnut is dominated by the traditional farming system.

**SORGHUM:** Sorghum is consumed by almost all families in the region. Every farmer cultivates sorghum, and mostly for home consumption. Quite often, sorghum is cultivated on fields which the previous year were under cotton cultivation. The logic of this practice is to allow the crop to benefit from any fertilizer residue that may be left in the soil. Before the devaluation, some farmers applied area bought from Nigeria to their sorghum crop. Some farmers use dung to fertilize their fields. Because of the importance of sorghum in the composition of the diet of the people, this is considered to be the most important crop.



**MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS:** These are grown on relatively small parcels of land, indicating their relative (un) importance to the product mix of the farmers-maize, which is the same family with sorghum, is growing in importance. However, like groundnut, it is cultivated with very little use of any agrochemicals.

The role SODECOTON has played in giving the farmer the know how in cotton production is very important, as the farmer can now be expected to transfer this know-how to the production of other crops.

## 6.2 Cause of Observed Trends in Land Use

The average gross income per farm in the Far North before devaluation was 53,000 FCFA (Sikod, p.179), which was only 29 percent of the national average. This is very low, especially as nearly 90 percent of the population is in agriculture. This also shows why small holders cannot easily capitalise their agricultural production. Although because of population pressure and the deteriorating economic situation some farmers are expanding into marginal lands, most small holders do not have this opportunity to expand into marginal lands. For these farmers, they are having to reconsider their product mix. The crops farmers mix are sorghum, groundnut, niebe and maize. They grow cotton in rotation with these crops. So far, decisions that have influenced production have been subsistence requirements, much more than revenue maximization (Tables 3 and 4)

**Table 3:** Returns to Selected Crops, 1991/92

Variables	Crops			
	Cotton	Sorghum	Maize	Onions
Yield (kg/ha)	1,333	1198	2215	284338
Price (FCFA/kg)	90	40	45	30
Total Revenue /Ha(FCFA)	119,970	47,920	99,675	853,110
Costs:				
Fertilizer (kg/ha)	124	76	110	778
Fertilizer (FCFA/ha)	15004	4560	6600	46680
Herbicides (Litres/ha)	2.78	-	-	-
Herbicides (FCFA/ha)	5004	-	-	-
Labour (Hired) (FCFA/ha)	6600	3200	2450	155000
Seed (kg/ha)	na	na	na	11.5
Seed (FCFA/ha)	na	na	na	139,500
Engine Pump (water)FCFA	na	na	na	77,000
Total Costs (CFA)	26,608	7,760	9,050	278,680
Net Revenue FCFA	93,362	40,160	90,625	574,460

Source : Calculated by author from Madi Ali, Fertilizer used for cotton is from SODECOTON at 120 frs/kg and for the other crops are from Nigeria at 60 frs/kg

**Table 4 : Price/kg, Selected Crops: 1980-1992**

Year	Cotton	Maize	Groundnut (Shelled)	Sorghum
1980	80	60	140	
1981	90	75	201	
1982	205	80	205	
1983	117	80	163	
1984	130	130	209	130
1985	140	120	272	120
1986	140	90	219	70
1987	140	60	230	35
1988	140	65	233	55
1989	95	90	235	50
1990	95	60	235	50
1991	95	60	240	60
1992	85	65	235	55

**Source:** Rapport annuel de la section départementale des statistiques agricoles MINAGRI, Maroua, Madi Ali, Bilan Diagnostique.

The returns to sorghum and maize, and the prices of these two crops have been relatively low, and yet the area brought under production for these crops have gone up. This is because as people have lost their jobs and their incomes have gone down, they have sought to protect themselves against hunger by increasing cultivation of the basic staple foods, and ensuring food-self sufficiency. A positive side to the economic squeeze is that small private traders are entering the agricultural market, and farmers are beginning to sell their excess sorghum and maize.

Cotton production is the main source of revenue for the peasants in this zone, even if because of the fall in cotton prices since 1989, and the constant increases in the cost of inputs, farmers are trying to diversify their sources of income. The liberalization of the fertilizer sub-sector has led to an increase in the price of fertilizer and pesticides. SODECOTON has, however, attributed the notable increase in cotton production which rose from 84000 tons in 1980 to 165000 tons in 1988 (Table 5), to the introduction of improved varieties which pushed the yield from 1295 kilograms/hectare in 1980 to 1480 kg/ha in 1988. Since 1990, SODECOTON has been experimenting a glandless variety which has grains rich in proteins that peasants can consume. The idea is to make cotton production to be more competitive with foodcrops.

-A more efficient and effective farmer training programme by SODECOTON.

-an increase in the number of farmers from 120.000 in 1981/1982 to over 170.000 in 1991/1992.

an increase in the area treated from 56800 ha in 1981/82 to over 90,000 ha in 1991/92.

Mastery of the farming system being introduced by SODECOTON by the farmers. The use of animal traction increased from 36800 ha in 1981/82 to 70000 ha in 1991/92.

Substantial increase in producer prices from 90frs/kg in 1981 to 140frs/kg in 1985/86 and then a fall to 95frs/kg in 1989/90 (Table 5). In terms of FOB prices, producer prices climbed from about 20 percent of FOB prices before 1985 to nearly 36 percent in 1985. In 1989, it dropped to 18 percent of FOB price, as a result of SAP measures. Actually, producer prices have never been indexed world prices. Following the January 1994 devaluation, prices to producers should double. It is, however, too early to determine the response of small holder farmers. As far as liberalizing the cotton subsector is concerned, it cannot be like Arabica coffee subsector which is completely liberalized in terms of input purchases and sales of coffee. SODECOTON, which is 30 percent owned by the Compagnie FranCaise d'Exploitation des Fibres Textiles, CFDT, supplies cotton farmers inputs on credit, and is the monosonist buyer. Cotton farmers therefore have no flexibility.

**Table 5: cotton: area cultivated, production, yield/ha fob price, producer price and pp/fobbp. 1980-1992**

YEAR	AREA CULTIVATED (HA)	FOB PRODUCTION (TONS)	FOB PRODUCER			PP/
			YIELD/ KG/HA	PRICE FCFA	PRICE FCFA	
1980	65340	84453	1295	480	80	0,17
1981	63340	79819	1260	510	90	0,18
1982	54629	72361	1325	690	105	0,1
1983	71092	94580	1330	755	117	0,15
1984	73316	97412	1329	580	130	0,22
1985	89232	115544	1295	390	140	0,36
1986	94461	122773	1300	400	140	0,35
1987	94744	113699	1200	465	140	0,30
1988	111604	165431	1482	440	140	0,32
1989	89004	103877	1167	515	95	0,18
1990	93814	113258	1207	465	95	0,20
1991	89848	114362	1273	385	95	0,25
1992	90000	11500		85		

**Source:** Ministry of Agriculture: Bilan Diagnostique Du Secteur Agricole 1980-1990 PP/FOBP calculated by Author.

## 7.0 THE MANAGEMENT OF WOOD

Wood plays a very important role in the economic, social and cultural lives of the people. It is used for construction, as a source of energy, food and medicine. Traditionally, the forest is a collective property and is open to every member of the community for exploitation. Although because of the fragility of the environment, people have sensitive to harvesting wood they do not need, the changing economic environment is leading people to change their attitude toward this property of the commons.

The disappearance of certain tree species and the appearance of colonizing tree species occur more or less in concentric circles around big towns and settlement areas. It also occurs along road networks. Under the influence of bush fires, grazing and shifting cultivation the disappearance of these tree species occur in a more diffuse manner. There is sure evidence of losses of forest species and of the forest cover.

There is not map of the study area that specifically displays the area of deforestation but the major forms of floristic degradation reported included:-

Reduced canopy coverage that increases ground temperatures, increases soil water evaporation and opens up the soil surface to raindrops and wind erosion.

- The change of Plant species from perennials to annuals
- The reduction of the forest biomass from the lowered water tables or over exploitation
- The loss of root volume increases soil erosion
- The loss of species diversity by harvesting of the most appreciated plants.

### 7.1 Causes of deforestation

Deforestation or the loss of the woody Vegetation of the Sudano-Sahelian zone is caused by several factors, most of which are due to human related activities. The natural causes generally climatic changes take a long time to affect the vegetation whereas human action which is more recent is usually brutal and fast in effecting a radical change of the vegetation.

**Some of these factors include:-**

#### (a) Population Pressure:

The growth in urban and rural population increases the pressure of the population on both land and forest resources. This involves the increase in agricultural land, in the exploitation of forest for fuel and construction timber and the increase use of pasture for livestock grazing. Deforestation due to this factor becomes serious in places of high population density such as Mandara highlands and the Diamare plains.

#### (b) Shifting Cultivation:

The traditional system of farming require that the land is cleared and the vegetation burnt in order to release the nutritive elements contained in the vegetation to be taken up by the crops. After cropping the area for 2 or 3 successive years, it is left to fallow for about 6 - 8 years, so that pioneer trees and grasses grow to furnish fertilizing elements and restore the fertility of the land. The pioneer vegetation is a modified form of the original vegetation with usually a simplified floristic composition. If because of population pressure or any reason, the fallow periods are reduced, then the floristic composition is further simplified and what was a tree savanna or woodland becomes a grass savanna or steppe land. This has been the case in the Mandara highlands, the Diamare and Mayo Danay divisions where population density ranges from 25 to 100 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. (Population Census 1987).

#### (c) Bush Fires:

- Every dry season, bush fires are set in the Northern part of the country for several reasons:-
- to eliminate ticks and other pests
  - to destroy dry grass and give way to fresh grazing grasses
  - to chase and hunt wild animals.

#### (d) Over Harvesting Firewood and Construction Wood:

Trees are harvested in the study area in order to obtain poles, posts and wood for house building, but mostly to obtain fuel wood for either personal use or for sale, and industrial fish drying.

The demand for wood is dominated by fuel wood, which accounts for over 95 percent of all the wood exploited and consumed in the region. Table 6 shows the demand and supply for fuel wood.

**Table 6:** The Demand (Consumption) and Supply (Production) of Fuel Wood, 1987 - 2000 (000) metres stere)

Year	Population	Consumption	Production	Production/ Consumption
1987	1855695	3944	2809	71.2
1990	20218660	4248	3001	70.2
1992	2138390	4460	3100	69.7
2000	2690950	5108	3280	64.2

**Sources:** Adapted by author from BONFICA reports.

The last column in Table 6 show the degree to which local production meets the demand. The deficit between the demand and the supply is increasing over time.

A 1981 forestry law regulating forestry, wildlife and fisheries, requires that nationals pay and obtain tree permits before exploiting fuelwood, poles and the manufacture of charcoal, whereas they are allowed to collect free, dead trees, even from forest reserves for their personal use. Table 7 shows the number of tree permits issued, 1985/86 to 1991/92, and Table 7 shows which villages interviewed, thought had the authority to decide on who exploits the village forest.

**Table 7:** Number of Tree Permits Issued, 1985/86 to 1991/92.

Year	1985/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92
Permits	85	114	73	12	12	10	14

**Source:** BONFICA, 1990, and Forestry Delegation, Maroua, 1994.

**Table 8:** Authority to Decide on who Exploits Village Forests.

Authority	Number	Percent
Village Head (Chief)	66	21.1
Forestry Officer (Administration)	100	32.1
Individual Proprietors	65	20.8
Nobody	81	26.0

**Source:** IRA, Maroua, 1992.

From table 7, it can be deduced that the majority of those who deal in fuel wood do so without permits. Table 8 shows the uncertainty in the villagers minds of who manages the forests. In 1983, the roadside price for fuel wood was 150-200 francs CFA per log, or about 1500-2000 francs CFA per metre stere (Fultang, 1991). In 1991, this price had climbed to 300 to 350 francs/log or 3000 to 3500 francs/metre stere (Biesbrouck and Guijt, 1991).

Also, those who collect fuelwood are having to travel longer distances to get the wood. Although allowing for inflation it is possible to say the prices have not gone up in real terms, the nominal change has an impact on the perception of the peasants, especially at a time people are experiencing decreases in their nominal incomes. All of these factors show the growing difficulties producers have in meeting fuel wood demands. The increase in the prices of fuel wood is likely to serve as a motivation for some people to take up sales of fuel wood as a means of generating income.

As the economic situation continues to deteriorate, the institution for the collective management of the forests is collapsing. Gradually, people are encroaching on the forests more than they should, a situation bound to have a negative impact on the environment.

**Table 9:** Distance from Residence to where Wood is Chopped.

distance (km)	No of Respondents		Percent	
	1989	1991	1989	1991
Less than one	70		25	
1 - 5	105		37	
5 - 10	78		28	
Greater than 10	30		11	

**Source:** I. R. A. Maroua, 1991.

the per capita energy consumption rate for the region has been found to be 1.17 to 2 metre steres per annum. Other alternative sources of energy include stalks of sorghum and millet and cow dung. The charge for the use of kerosene and gas is of limited potential because most households cannot afford the cost. Wood fuel is therefore very important.

The cost of fuel wood before devaluation represented about 1/5 of the total cost of a meal for a family of 8 individuals in the province.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN LAND USE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The natural environments of Far North Cameroon are extremely fragile and greatly threatened. The persistence of poverty, due to the deteriorating economic situation, the imperatives of survival and limited or no options mean that the peasants of the region are both contributors to and victims of environmental degradation.

The deteriorating economic situation has led to more intensity in land use, and deforestation, which is accentuating the process of decertification, soil erosion, and the loss of biodiversity. The economic situation is made worse by population pressure, survival needs, inadequate policies and management.

Cotton production, for instance, requires that the land be left bare, before planting, thus exposing the land to wind erosion. Also, the obligatory use of agrochemicals is not necessarily good for the environment, but survival needs oblige the peasants to consider these factors.

A major effect of the devaluation has been the reduction in the volume of border trade with Nigeria. While the devaluation has the positive effect of reducing imports, it has had the negative effect of reducing the smallholder's ability to capitalise their agricultural activities. The cost of producing inputs has become too high for an economy that is basically a subsistence economy.

As cotton production expands into the fertile lands now under other crop production, cultivation of these crops will move into marginal lands. As shown above, the institution for managing the forests has collapsed, and there is more and more encroachment on the forests to satisfy the increasing demand for forestry products.

The above discussions show that the exploitation of the natural resources discussed above is not sustainable, a situation that is very precarious and may result in conflicts.

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