

Introductory analysis of social vulnerability in rural Africa

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Abstract

Because of multiplicity of meaning, the vulnerability theory has not been recognized useful in practical analysis. However, it is widely acknowledged that the term vulnerability will have fertile possibility in the areas of interdisciplinary research for poverty issue and agricultural sustainability in Africa. .

I reviewed some of works on vulnerability to turn up relevant definition of vulnerability in the context of African rural society. Then I tried to interpret the cause and process of increased vulnerability of some farmers seen in the field study in three African countries, Nigeria, Burkina-Faso and Zambia. The findings show that vulnerability of individuals, households and communities is intricately interrelated and interacted. Labor migration from Burkina-Faso to the southern countries, for example, that has helped to mitigate vulnerability of households in drought prone area was abruptly stopped by the expulsion of foreigners from Ivory Coast in 2000 by political reason. This has compelled expelled migrants more vulnerable and also their home society in Burkina-Faso.

To understand these complicated vulnerability, it is necessary to scrutinize the different reasons and processes of increased vulnerability by each actor; individual, household, and community. And then, we have to examine their complicated inter-relationship.

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