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“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
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A Reference to Rural Livelihood in Cameroon: A Case Study from South West-Cameroon

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Abstract

Rural livelihood and development have become a very important topic of discussion in today's social sciences and economic development. In Cameroon the government has elaborated a whole paper for rural development and poverty alleviation baptised under the umbrella name Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper proposed by the World Bank and IMF. Also the restructuring of the former Ministry of Agriculture to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development shows how the Cameroon government is committed in improving rural livelihood.

My thesis research is to make a reference of rural livelihood in Cameroon; as diversified as the African continent itself has a lot of differences as you move round the various geo-political regions of the country. That is to say, differences exist in local dialect, traditional beliefs, farming practices, natural resource endowment, topography and climate which will later be elaborated in the thesis proceedings. The South West province will be my case study because of its richness' in natural resources and also good soil and climatic conditions suitable for agriculture. It is here that most of the main plantations are located and also where the country's lone oil refinery is found. It is quiet amazing that most of the rural people in this province just like in other parts of the country are malnourished or go to bed with an empty stomach; lack basic education infrastructures; lack health facilities; good farm to market roads and other social facilities for people to live a comfortable life.

This research will bring out the different methods in which rural people survive in Cameroon. It's not only on poverty and farming but rather looking at rural livelihood as a whole. Though agricultural is the backbone of development as was the case with the developed countries; it's also important to state that off-farm employment and specialisation will stimulate rural development.

Keywords: Agricultural development, diversification and rural development, livelihood, poverty alleviation