

Constraints of Women Participation in Agriculture in Rural Area

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Abstract

This study examined the barriers to women participation in agriculture in Oorelope Local Government Area of Oyo State. Data were collected from sixty respondents randomly selected from six women farmers associations that were registered with the Local Government. Collected data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The results of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 35 - 44 years, most prevailing religion among the respondents is Islam. The result of the study equally showed that larger proportion of the respondents is holders of secondary education, majority of the respondents have between 5 - 9 hectares of land. On agricultural activities engaged in, the result indicated that women in the study area are engaged in animal husbandry, crop husbandry, marketing of farm produce, harvesting, agro processing and labourer. The result also revealed that the respondents are always involved in crop husbandry, animal husbandry, agricultural labourer, harvesting, agro-processing and feed supplies. Barriers to women participation in agriculture, as indicated by the respondents are low technical and management skills, inadequate inputs and poor processing/storage facilities, inadequate extension services, poor transportation, inadequate capital and insufficient land, others are insufficient time inconsistent government policies, poor basic infrastructure, lack of market knowledge and unstable market price. The study recommended that adequate financial assistance should be provided for women to enhance their involvement in agricultural production, land use act of Nigeria should be reviewed to give women free access to land acquisition, agricultural inputs meant for women should be directed towards them instead of rich farmers and non-farmers that sell them at exorbitant price, there should be construction of feeder roads and rehabilitation of existing ones that facilitate transportation of produce from farmers farms to markets and their homes, more Extension Officers especially women should be recruited to attain gender balance in extension service delivery and to ensure that women farmers are adequately reached and trained to improve their technical and manpower skill as well as to provide market knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Control Strategies; Impact; Integrated Approach; Macrophytes; Nutrient Load

Introduction

Nigerian development interventions reveals that resources are not going to women who need them urgently and can make use of them. Social attitudes, biased government development interventions and discriminatory approaches as well as private agencies policies especially the financial institutions have been limiting women's access to resources. In analyzing the important considerations in enhancing women's capabilities in agriculture, Eshete (1992) stated that the solutions to gender discrimination in resource distribution entails the redesigning of services to make them more relevant and accessible to women.

Agriculture has been the major source of livelihood in Nigeria, primarily because the environment is favorable for Agricultural practice. On the basis of climate, topography and vegetation the country is divided into five agricultural zones, namely Dry sub humid, Sub-humid,

very humid and swamp/flood. In most cases, farming is a household business, involving men, women and children task allocation according to gender and age. The notion that "women are the weaker sex" is no longer tenable as women form the backbone of Agricultural labour and it is estimated that, they produce 40% of the gross domestic product (G.D.P) and 50% of the developing nations food (Africa farmers, 1994). Women constitute more or less half of any country population. In most countries however, they contribute much less than men towards the value or recorded production both quantitatively in labour force participation and quantitatively in educational achievement and skilled manpower (Lawanson 2008).

The Nigerian women have proved to be more than a mere "bench-warming" spectator, even in the midst of the male-dominated professional congregation. If given the opportunity, women can effectively participate in policy-making and governance.

Globally, women participation in community development has been generally less than encouraging despite their numerical strength. The situation has grown so worst that it has generated both national and international recognition. Women empowerment remains the focal point of international conference on women held in Beijing, China in 1995.

In Nigeria, various interventions and conferences such as the one held in 1989 was embarked upon to improve the status of women in the society. Nigeria is a signatory to many international instruments such as convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) signed on 13th June 1985. All these efforts by both Nigerian government and international communities point to the fact that participation in development has remained abysmally poor both in the developed and developing countries alike but the situation is worst in developing countries like Nigeria where women are regarded as inferior and second class citizen.

Lawanson (2008), pointed out that under-utilization of female in Agriculture has obvious implication for economic welfare and growth rate. Several factors, both economic and non-economic are responsible for this. Traditionally, women are regarded as home maker. Who oversee and coordinated the affairs and activities at home. In recognition of the importance of women in national building, the Nigerian government, more than ever before, is keen on rural poverty alleviation as a way of improving the economy. Focus is on planned and desirable change in the rural societies in the form of agricultural development. The success of these planned change programmes is hinged largely on the rational decision making process of the women.

According to 1991 Nigeria census, Nigeria women were reported to represent about 49.7% of the nation's population. The 2006 National population census reveals that women as revealed by the various censuses are underrepresented almost in all aspects of the nation's economy such as politics, educations, agriculture, business enterprises etc.

The sustainable production of food is the first pillar of food security. Millions of women work as farmers, farm workers and natural resource managers (Onyemobi 2000). In doing so, they contribute to national agricultural output maintenance of the environment and family food security [1]. In Nigeria the involvement of women in agriculture have attracts greater attention in recent years. The need cannot be overemphasized. This is in recognition that women play very significant role in Nigeria agricultural production and utilization (Nnaodzi and Ibe 2000).

The women constitute about 60 - 80% of the labour used for farming activities like planting, weeding, transplanting, processing, marketing and storage of products and they also account for two-third of food produced in the country. Yet they are not well recognized like their men counterpart and also, their farming activities are hindered by certain factors. Despite the fact that women play a great role in ensuring food availability and accessibility at households, they are faced with a number of significant barriers such as inequality in access to and control over inputs and resources such as land, labour, improved seeds, fertilizers, credit and the likes that could smooth their effort in agricultural production and processing.

Kabane [2] argues that constraints which are faced by women farmers differ from country to country and culture to culture. In Nigeria, women lack independent rights to land. Land rights are only allocated through men, either sons or husbands. The FAO [3] agrees with the sentiment that women be allowed to access land either directly or indirectly, as the majority have limited or no access to or control over land. Land is allocated to men, who are the heads of household. Men are the ones who have full ownership of property and any valuable goods in the household must belong to the head of the household rules of access and inheritance generally tends to favour men over

women [4]. In addition to limited access to land, women face problems of access to credit (capital/money). This is because many credit associations and cooperatives limit membership to household heads thereby excluding married and single women [5]. Berger and Buvinic [6] opined that lack of collateral security, illiteracy and mere gender discrimination can negatively influence women's access to credit. They concluded that, unless women are exposed to the relevant channels of credit distribution they will continue to be ignorant about many sources of loans and therefore they will continue to be at disadvantage when it comes to credit access [7-9].

Objective of the Study

The objective of the paper is to examine the socio-economic characteristics of women, agricultural activities involved in by women, the extent of women participation in improving agricultural productivities as well as the barriers to women participation in agriculture in the study area.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Oorelope Local Government Area of Oyo State. Oorelope Local Government is one of ten the Local Governments in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. It has an area of 917km² and population of one hundred and four thousand, four hundred and forty one (National Population Commission 2006). The Local Government is in savannah area. The inhabitants are mainly farmers and they also engage in other activities such as trading, artisan, civil services etc. Among the crops grown in the Local Government are cassava, yams, maize, guinea corn and beans, the soil of the area is black and dark grey in colour and has helped in producing their available food crops like cassava, yam, maize, guinea corn and beans.

There are six women farmers associations that are registered with Oorelope Local Government. Ten female farmers were randomly selected from each of the registered association to give a total of sixty respondents for the study. The instrument for this research was interview guide. The personal characteristics of respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The dependent variable was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A three point likert scale type of severe, mild and not a constraint was employed to obtain the responses of the respondents on the constraint to their involvement in agricultural activities. The mean of each item was obtained and ranked from highest to least. The three hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Result and Discussion

It is shown from the result of this study that, majority (31.7%) of the respondents falls between the ages of 35 - 44 years, followed by those between the ages of 45 - 54 with 28.3%, 21.7% are between the ages of 55 - 64 years. This indicates that young women are more involved in agriculture in the study area. Most (81.7%) of the respondents are married, while Islam (53.3%) is the most prevailing religion among the respondents followed by Christianity with 35% while 11.7% are traditional believers. 35% of the respondents have secondary education, 33.3% have post-secondary education, 25% of them have no formal education while only 6.7% of them are holders of primary education. Majority (53.3%) of the respondents have between 3 - 7 members in their family, 28.3% has 8 - 12 family members, 11.7% have 13 - 17 family members while 6.7% have 18 members and above in their family. This can be attributed to the fact that rural dwellers cherish having many children because they will be used as farm labour. The farm size of most of the respondents is 5 - 9 hectares with 36.7%, 23.3% have less than 5 hectares. It shown that majority (46.6%) of the respondents have 5 - 14 years of farming experience, 18.3% of them have less than 5 years and 15 - 19 years of farming experience respectively. The study also indicated that women in the study area are engaged in animal husbandry (90.0%), marketing of farm produce (88.3), crop husbandry (80.0%), harvesting (65.0%), agro processing (63.3%) and labourer (55.0%). 61.7% of women in the study area are always involved in crop husbandry, 51.7% in animal husbandry, 48.3% in agricultural labourer, 46.7% in harvesting. 40% of them are always involved in each of agro processing and feed supplies. Barriers to women participation in agriculture, are low technical and management skills, inadequate inputs and poor processing/storage facilities which are ranked first, second and third, followed by inadequate extension services, poor transportation, inadequate capital and insufficient land with ranks fourth, fifth, sixth and sixth respectively others are insufficient time ranked eight, inconsistent government policies ranked ninth, poor basic infrastructure ranked tenth, lack of market knowledge ranked eleventh and unstable market price ranked twelfth.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25 - 34	09	15.0
35 - 44	19	31.7
45 - 54	17	28.3
55 - 64	13	21.7
65 and above	02	03.3
Marital status		
Single	05	08.3
Married	49	81.7
Widow	03	05.0
Separated	02	03.3
Divorced	01	01.7
Educational qualification		
No formal education	15	25.0
Primary education	04	06.7
Secondary education	21	35.0
Tertiary education	20	33.3
Household size		
3 - 7	32	53.3
8 - 12	17	28.3
13 - 17	07	11.7
18 and above	04	06.7
Farm size (in hectares)		
Less than 5	14	23.3
5 - 9	22	36.7
10 - 14	13	21.7
15 - 19	08	13.3
20 and above	03	5.0
Farming experience (in years)		
Less than 5	11	18.3
5 - 9	14	23.3
10 - 14	14	23.3
15 - 19	11	18.3
20 and above	10	16.7

Table 1: Personal characteristics of respondents n = 60.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

From table 1 above, majority (31.7%) of the respondents falls between the ages of 35 - 44 years, followed by those between the ages of 45 - 54 with 28.3%, 21.7% are between the ages of 55 - 64 years, 15% falls between the ages of 25 - 34 while only 3.3% are between 65 years and above. On marital status, most (81.7%) are married, 8.3% of them are single, 5.0% of them are widow, 3.3% of them are divorced while only 1.7% of them are separated. 53.3% of the respondents are of Islamic faith, 35% of them are Christians while 11.7% are traditional believers. On educational qualification, 35% of the respondents have secondary education, 33.3% have post- secondary education, 25% of them have no formal education while only 6.7% of them are holders of primary education. Majority (53.3%) of the respondents have between 3 - 7 members in their family, 28.3% has 8 - 12 family members, 11.7% have 13 - 17 family members while 6.7% have 18 members and above in their family. On farm size, most (36.7%) of the respondents have 5 - 9 hectares of farm, 23.3% have less than 5 hectares, 21.7 have 10 - 14 hectares, 13.3% cultivate between 15 - 19 hectares while only 5% have 20 hectares and above. On farming experience, majority (46.6%) of the respondents have 5 - 14 years of farming experience, 18.3% of them have less than 5 years and 15 - 19 years of farming experience respectively while 16.7% have 20 years and more than 20 years of farming experience.

Activities	Yes Frequency	Percentage	No Frequency	Percentage
Animal husbandry	54	90.0	06	10.0
Crop husbandry	48	80.0	12	20.0
Sale of drug	10	16.7	50	83.3
Agro allied (sale of chemical and fertilizer)	16	26.7	44	73.3
Veterinary services	14	23.3	46	76.7
Labourer	33	55.0	27	45.0
Harvesting	39	65.0	21	35.0
Agro processing	38	63.3	22	36.7
Marketing	53	88.3	07	11.7
Feed supplies	26	43.3	34	56.7
Fish farming	16	26.7	44	73.3

Table 2: Agricultural activities involved in by women in the study area.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Table 2 above indicated that women in the study area are really engaged in animal husbandry (90.0%), marketing of farm produce (88.3), crop husbandry (80.0%), harvesting (65.0%), agro processing (63.3%) and labourer (55.0%). They are not involved much in sale of drug, veterinary services, agro allied services, fish farming and feed supplies. This may result from inadequate fund because some of these activities are capital intensive and huge amount of money is needed to start them.

Level of involvement	Always	Occasionally	Not at all	Mean	STD
Animal husbandry	31 (51.7)	23 (38.3)	06 (10.0)	2.42	0.6712
Crop husbandry	37 (61.7)	17 (28.3)	06 (10.0)	2.52	0.6763
Sale of drug	08 (13.3)	14 (23.3)	38 (63.3)	1.50	0.7248
Agro allied	02 (03.3)	14 (23.3)	44 (73.3)	1.30	0.5304
Veterinary services	14 (23.3)	07 (11.7)	39 (65.0)	1.58	0.8495
Labourer	29 (48.3)	13 (21.7)	18 (30.0)	2.18	0.8732
Harvesting	28 (46.7)	26 (43.3)	06 (10.0)	2.37	0.6629
Agro processing	24 (40.0)	28 (46.7)	08 (13.3)	2.27	0.6856
Marketing	12 (20.0)	26 (43.3)	22 (36.7)	1.83	0.7403
Feed supplies	24 (40.0)	06 (10.0)	30 (50.0)	1.90	0.9513
Fish farming	16 (26.7)	00 (0.0)	44 (73.3)	1.53	0.8919

Table 3: Level of women involvement in agricultural activities.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

From table 3 above, it is shown that 61.7% of women in the study area are always involved in crop husbandry, 51.7% in animal husbandry, 48.3% in agricultural labourer, 46.7% in harvesting. 40% of them are always involved in each of agro processing and feed supplies, 26.7% of them in fish farming and 23.3% of them in agro allied services. 46.7% of them are occasionally involved in agro-processing 43.3% in each of harvesting and marketing, 38.3% in animal husbandry, 28.3% in crop husbandry and 23.3% in each of agro allied and sale of drug while 21.7% of them are occasionally involved as labourers. The table also indicated that 73.3% of the women in the study area are not involved in fish farming, 73.3% are not also involved in agro allies, 65% of them are not involved in veterinary services, 63.3% are not involved in sale of drugs, 50% are not involved in feed supplies and 38.7% are not involved marketing of farm produce.

Constraints	Severe	Mild	Not a constraint	Mean	STD	Ranking
Inadequate capital	24 (40.0)	18 (30.0)	18 (30.0)	2.10	0.8376	6 th
Insufficient land	24 (40.0)	18 (30.0)	18 (30.0)	2.10	0.8376	6 th
Low technical and management skills	36 (60.0)	11 (18.3)	13 (21.7)	2.38	0.8252	1 st
Inadequate inputs	29 (48.3)	24 (40.0)	07 (11.7)	2.36	0.6880	2 nd
Poor basic infrastructure	23 (38.3)	14 (23.3)	23 (38.3)	2.00	0.8829	10 th
Inconsistent Government policies	15 (25.0)	34 (56.7)	11 (18.3)	2.06	0.6604	9 th
Lack of market knowledge	16 (26.7)	27 (45.0)	17 (28.3)	1.98	0.7476	11 th
Inadequate extension services	18 (30.0)	34 (56.7)	08 (13.3)	2.17	0.6422	4 th
Insufficient time	24 (40.0)	16 (26.7)	20 (33.3)	2.07	0.8609	8 th
Poor processing/storage facilities	35 (58.3)	11 (18.3)	14 (23.3)	2.35	0.8402	3 rd
Poor transportation	29 (48.3)	12 (20.0)	19 (31.7)	2.16	0.8862	5 th
Unstable market price	23 (38.3)	12 (20.0)	25 (41.7)	1.96	0.9014	12 th

Table 4: Constraints to women participation in agricultural activities?

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

From table 4 above, prominent among barriers to women participation in agriculture, are low technical and management skills, inadequate inputs and poor processing/storage facilities which are ranked first, second and third, followed by inadequate extension services, poor transportation, inadequate capital and insufficient land with ranks fourth, fifth, sixth and sixth respectively others are insufficient time ranked eight, inconsistent government policies ranked ninth, poor basic infrastructure ranked tenth, lack of market knowledge ranked eleventh and unstable market price ranked twelfth.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P-value	Decision
Characteristics	60	2.33	0.47	0.20	0.13	Reject
Agric. Activities	60	1.53	0.95			

Table 5: Correlation between characteristics of respondents and agricultural activities they engaged in.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

The data in table 5 above shows the result of correlation analysis between personal characteristics of the respondents and agricultural activities they engage in. The data shows p-value of 0.13 to be greater than alpha level of 0.05 with correlation co-efficient of 0.20. This shows that there is significant relationship personal characteristics of respondents and agricultural activities they are engaged in. The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between personal characteristics of respondents and agricultural activities they are engaged in is hereby rejected.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P-value	Decision
Characteristics	60	1.53	0.95	0.71	0.00	Accept
Agric. Activities	60	1.95	0.22			

Table 6: Correlation between agricultural activities that the respondents are engaged in and their level of involvement in the activities.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

The data in table 6 above shows the result of correlation analysis between agricultural activities the respondents engaged in and their level of involvement in these activities. The data shows p-value of 0.00 to be less than alpha level of 0.05 with correlation co-efficient of 0.71. This shows that there is no significant relationship between agricultural activities the respondents engaged in and their level of involvement in these activities. The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between agricultural activities the respondents engaged in and their level of involvement in these activities is hereby accepted.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P-value	Decision
Characteristics	60	1.95	0.22	0.14	0.29	Reject
Agric. Activities	60	2.14	0.33			

Table 7: Correlation between respondents' involvement in agricultural activities and barrier to their involvement in these activities.

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

The data in table 7 above shows the result of correlation analysis between respondents' involvement in agricultural activities and barrier to their involvement in these activities. The data shows p-value of 0.29 to be greater than alpha level of 0.05 with correlation co-efficient of 0.14. This shows that there is significant relationship respondents' involvement in agricultural activities and barrier to their involvement in these activities. The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between respondents' involvement in agricultural activities and barrier to their involvement in these activities is hereby rejected.

Conclusion

From the result of this study, it is revealed that most of the respondents are between the ages of 35 - 44 years, Islam is the most prevailing religion among the respondents. The result also showed that most of the respondents have secondary education while larger proportion of them has 3 - 7 household members. The farm size of majority of them is between 5 - 9 hectares. On their involvement in agricultural activities, the respondents are involved in animal husbandry, marketing of farm produce, crop husbandry, harvesting, agro processing and labourer. The result also revealed that the respondents are always involved in crop husbandry, animal husbandry, agricultural labourer, harvesting, agro-processing and feed supplies. Barriers to women participation in agriculture, as indicated by the respondents are low technical and management skills, inadequate inputs and poor processing/storage facilities, inadequate extension services, poor transportation, inadequate capital and insufficient land, others are insufficient time inconsistent government policies, poor basic infrastructure, lack of market knowledge and unstable market price.

Based on the result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Adequate financial assistance should be provided for women to enhance their involvement in agricultural production activities.
- Land use act of Nigeria should be reviewed to give women free access to land acquisition instead of relying on their husband and male relatives for land in order to improve their involvement agricultural activities.
- Agricultural inputs meant for women should be directed towards them instead of rich farmers and non-farmers who sell them at exorbitant price that many women farmers cannot afford.
- There should be construction of feeder roads and rehabilitation of existing ones so as to facilitate transportation of produce from farmers farms to markets and their homes.
- More Extension Officers especially women should be recruited to attain gender balance in extension service delivery and to ensure that women farmers are adequately reached.
- Adequate training should be given to women to improve their technical and manpower skill as well as to provide market knowledge and skills.
- Basic infrastructure facilities should be produced to increase the potential of women contribution to agricultural production.

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