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Gender Differentials in the Accessibility of Agricultural Production Resources Among Yam Farmers in Saki Agricultural Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria

Oladosu IO[1*], Afolabi JO[1] and Buhari AK[2]

[1]*Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria*

[2]*Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria*

[*]**Corresponding author:** Oladosu IO, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria, Tel: +2348067624977; E-mail: iooladosu@lautech.edu.ng

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Abstract

The study analyzed gender differentials in yam farmers access to agricultural production resources in Saki agricultural zone of Oyo State. The study specifically examined the socio economic- characteristics of male and female yam farmers in the study area, identified agricultural production resources that are available to yam farmers, ascertained specific agricultural production resources by male and female yam farmers. Multi stage sampling techniques was employed for the selection of the farmers for this study. Semi structured interview schedule was employed to elicit primary data from 180 respondents. The primary data obtained from the farmers were based on the objectives of the study; and were analyzed using both descriptive (frequency counts, percentages and weighted mean score) and Kendall's coefficient of concordance test as inferential statistical tool for ranking level of access to yam production resources. The findings revealed that most of the respondents engaged primarily in farming activities, with an average of 9.2 hectares of land under cultivation; land (wm-2.92) was therefore the most widely accessible agricultural production resource among male and female yam farmers. It was also found that personal land (79.7%) was the main type of access to land as a production resource while inadequate support from government (97.8%), poor labor availability (97.2%), poor roads network (95.0%), political marginalization (87.2%), exorbitant charges on loans (84.4%), technical know-how (83.3%), removal of subsidy (78.3%)were the widely identified problems associated with access to agricultural production resources. It was discovered that men had better access to credit than women in the study area due to the collateral requirements which was a limiting factor for most women.

Keywords: Gender imbalance; Yam farmers; Agricultural production resources; Food security

Introduction

The prevailing condition in Africa and indeed the under-developed regions of the Word tends to be generally characterized with gender insensitivity in the formulation and implementation of most development policies and strategies. Thus, the female gender is not given due consideration in planning for agricultural and rural development. The policy making machinery has therefore failed to capture and appreciate the concrete reality of different though symbiotic roles both women and men must play in any meaningful and sustainable activity for human development [1-4]. It must however be noted that even though men and women have different roles, needs and constraints in strategies for development, they are nonetheless complementary in their relationships. The decision making, and planning organs have equally failed to address the prevalent socially structured subordination of women by men in its entirety.

There exists gender imbalance in division of labor, access to resources and even markets in some instances and other numerous abuses, which predisposes women to marginalization and subordination. Even though gender-neutrality is never a reality in any human design of social, economic, and political change, particularly in the new world where the phenomenon of gender consciousness and gender awareness has become a volatile political issue as well as the political vocabulary; never the less the recognition of women's contribution to agricultural and rural development is necessary. As men and women have different responsibilities, needs and interests, they however differ in the roles they play in agricultural activity. These differences are dynamic and have continued to change over time and space through dynamic internal changes or external influences [1-7].

Researchers have established that farmers adequate access to financial and other production resources are panacea to successful agricultural and rural development programmes [8,9]. Policy-makers have long understood that rural producers who cannot meet their needs for capital must settle for suboptimal production strategies. Furthermore, without adequate access to loans or insurance, producers who face negative shocks, such as droughts, illness or a significant drop in the prices they receive, can lose some of the few assets they do have [10]. Conversely, producers who have access to well-designed credits, savings and insurance services can avail themselves of capital to finance the inputs, labors and equipment they need to generate income; can afford to invest in riskier but more profitable enterprises and asset portfolios; can reach markets more effectively; and can adopt more efficient strategies to stabilize their production [11].

There is a plethora of evidences that women play quite dominant and prominent roles in meeting the challenges of agricultural production and development. Their relevance and significance, therefore, cannot be over emphasized [5,6]. Findings have revealed that

women make up some 60-80 percent of agricultural labor force in Nigeria [12]. Depending on the region, they produce two thirds of the food crops. Such policies which are aimed at increasing food securing and food production tend to either under estimate or totally ignore women's roles in both production and the general decision- making process within the household and the community. It has been observed that there is wide gap in the access to a wide range of agricultural resource such as land, livestock, labor, education, credits facility and extension services between men and women.

Statement of research problem

Women farmers typically achieve lower yield than men not because they are less skilled but because they operate smaller farms and use fewer inputs like fertilizer, seeds, and other resources. It has been observed that men have more access to extension training and agricultural productive resources such as land, due to some factors dominated by political, social and cultural factors [13,14]. For example, in Nigeria it is traditionally believed that a male child would live to lift the name of the family while the female ones would have to get married someday and become somebody else wife. This makes them believe in giving a male child more access to their land and properties [15].

Gender differentials in terms of accessing agricultural production resources have been a very serious issue in many developing countries around the world. This development has serious effect on the national economy of most countries as the potentials of female's sex are unaccounted for, untapped or even un–utilized. Women seem to play basic roles in agricultural production resources especially in the areas of marketing and processing and value addition to farm products. Their impact in the agricultural development process is crucial to ensuring sustainable food security. Based on these facts, this research work was conducted to analyze gender differentials in accessing agricultural production resources among yam farmers in Saki agricultural Zone of Oyo state with the aim of providing a platform through recommendations for gender neutrality towards access to production resources in the area.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

- Identify agricultural production resources that are available to yam farmers in the study area.
- Ascertain agricultural production resources that are accessible to male and female yam farmers.
- Examine types of access to agricultural production resources by male and female yam farmers in the study area.
- Examine problems faced by yam farmers in accessing agricultural production resources.

Methodology

Study area

The study was carried out in Saki Agricultural Zone of Oyo State. It comprised of eight (8) Local Government Areas which include Saki east, Saki west, Atisbo, Irepo, Olurunsogo, Kajola, Iwajowa and Oorelope. The area is a mix of derived Savannah vegetation zone and low land rainforest area. It is characterized by high uniform temperature, moderate to heavy seasonal rainfall and high relative humidity. The area exhibits a mean annual temperature of 26°C, the lowest temperature is experienced in August (raining season) with a temperature of 24.3°C and highest in March (dry season) with a mean temperature of 28.7°C. Farming is the major occupation of the people in the area. Most of the people there are Yoruba language speaking people with some migrant farmers and farm workers from the northern part of Nigeria and neighboring Benin republic.

Sampling procedure

Multi-stage sampling techniques were employed for the selection of the yam farmers for this study. The first stage involved purposive selection of Saki west, Saki East, and Atisbo local government areas out of eight (8) local government areas of Saki Agricultural zone in Oyo state. These were selected because yam production is popular there. The next stage involved random selection of forty (40%) of the number of blocks in each of the selected local government area. That is, five (5) blocks were selected from each of Saki west and Saki east with eleven (11) blocks; while four (4) blocks were selected from Atisbo with ten (10) blocks. A total of fourteen blocks were considered for this study. Thereafter, one village was randomly selected from each of the wards and this gave fourteen villages for the study. The final stage involved proportionate sampling from the list of the registered yam farmers from the selected villages to make a total of one –hundred and eighty respondents (180) for this study. Copies of a well-structured interview schedule were used to collect primary data from respondents, based on the objectives of the study. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analytical tools; namely frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean scores.

Results and Discussion

Agricultural resources available in the study area

Findings in Table 1 indicate the available agricultural production resources as claimed by the yam farmers in the study area. They include land (100.0%), credit facility (82.8%), labor (95.0%), yam setts (88.3%), agrochemicals (46.7%), tractors (53.9%), farm machineries (8.3%) and extension services (63.3%). The result of the findings indicated that land was the most commonly available agricultural resources in the study area. Since the rural areas are usually characterized by large expanse of fertile land which avails most potential farmers more opportunities to use it especially for agricultural purposes.

Resources available	Frequency*	Percentage
Land	180	100
Credit facility	149	82.8
Labor	171	95
Yam sets	177	98.3
Agro chemical	84	46.7
Tractor	97	53.9
Fertilizer	70	38.9
Farm machineries	15	8.3

Extension service	114	63.3

Table 1: Distribution of yam farmers by agricultural production resources available in the study area. Source: Field survey, 2016; *multiple response table.

Type of production resources accessed by yam farmers

Results presented in Table 2 indicate types of agricultural production resource accessed by yam farmers. The result revealed that personal land (76.7%) was the most accessible production resource in the study area. Moreover, personal saving (98.3%) was the major credit fertility accessible in the study area while hired labor (92.8%) and family labor (53.3%), were the labor types accessible by yam farmers in the study area.

Production resources	Male (%)*	Female (%)*	Pooled (%)*
Land types			
Personal land	81(75.0)	57(97.2)	138(76.7)
Borrowed land	36(33.3)	13(18.1)	49(27.20
Lease land	25(23.1)	10(13.9)	35(19.4)
Communal land	9(8.3)	3(4.2)	12(6.7)
Family land	80(74.1)	57(79.2)	137(76.1)
Government land	9(8.3)	2(2.8)	11(6.1)
Credit facilities			
Personal saving	106(98.1	71(98.6)	177(98.3)
Borrowed	31(28.7)	6(8.3)	37(20.6)
Loan from bank	86(79.6)	64(88.9)	150(83.3)
Contribution	65(60.2)	17(23.6)	82(45.6)
Labor types			
Family labor	47(43.5)	48(66.7)	96(53.3)
Hired labor	56(51.9)	40(55.6)	167(92.8)

Table 2: Distribution of yam farmers by types of access to production resources. Source: Field survey, 2016; *multiple response table.

Ranking of yam farmers access to agricultural production resources

A further ranking, using Kendal's concordance analysis was carried out on yam farmers perceived access to agricultural production resources. The result of the findings (Table 3) indicate that land (wm=2.92), labour (wm=2.44), yam setts (wms=2.33) and credit facility (wms=2.29), were ranked in the same order by both genders involved in yam production. The result of the findings therefore revealed the most widely acclaimed essential agricultural production resources. This finding may be interpreted to mean that male yam farmers ranked higher in terms of access to land, labor, yam setts, and credits facilities than the female's yam farmers. On the other hand, female yam farmers ranked access to tractors, fertilizers, extension services and farm machineries relatively higher than the male yam farmers. It must be mentioned that farm machineries were the least accessible agricultural production resources in the study areas.

Resources	Male (wms)	Rank	Female (wms)	Rank	Pooled (wms)	Rank
Land	2.94	1st	2.88	1st	2.92	1st
Credit facility	2.4	4th	2.14	4th	2.29	4th
Labor	2.46	2nd	2.24	2nd	2.44	2nd
Yam sets	2.42	3rd	2.21	3rd	2.33	3rd
Agrochemical	1.46	5th	1.26	7th	1.51	6th
Tractor	1.16	7th	1.51	6th	1.3	7th
Fertilizer	1.1	8th	1.24	8th	1.16	8th
Farm machineries	0.55	9th	0.57	9th	0.56	9th
Extension services	1.41	6th	1.58	5th	1.48	5th

Table 3: Distribution of yam farmers by access to agricultural production resources.

Problems associated with access to agricultural resources

Result presented in Table 4 indicates problems associated with yam farmers' access to agricultural production resources. The problems identified include inadequate support from government (97.8%), poor labor availability (97.2%), poor roads network (95.0%), political marginalization (87.2%), exorbitant charges on loans (84.4%), poor/lack of technical know-how (83.3%), removal of subsidy from agricultural inputs by government (78.3%), poor quality of resources (61.7%), problems of land tenure system (56.1%), gender biasness by the male folks (55.0%), difficult terms and conditions of obtaining loan (52.2%), and restrictive cultural belief (35.6%), it was therefore revealed that inadequate government support was the most widely identified problems associated with access to agricultural production resources.

Problems	Frequency*	Percentage
Removal of subsidy	141	78.3
Political marginalization	157	97.2
Problems of land tenure system	101	56.1
Gender biasness	99	55
Exorbitant changes on loan	152	84.4
Cultural beliefs	64	35.6
Term and conditions of obtaining loan	94	52.2
Poor quality of resources	111	61.7
Inadequate of support from government	176	97.8
Poor labor availability	175	97.2
Corruption	174	96.2
Poor road network	171	95

Technical know –how	150	83.3

Table 4: Distribution of yam farmers by problems associated access to agricultural production resources. Source: Field survey, 2016; *multiple response table.

Discussion

The study established the fact that differences exist in the access of male and female yam farmers to production resources in the study area. Previous findings have also established that women contribute significantly to agricultural production [1,2]. Allocation of resources for such should also consider women's needs. There should be serious and deliberate policies that will address this aspect of women's special needs. Even though some cultural and social restraining factors exists; actionable strategies may be formulated and communicated through campaigns and educational approaches for the indigenous communities to accept and implement [4-6].

Access to credit facilities is a serious limiting factor to agricultural production; farmers that had access to timely disbursement of such were able to adopt more practices and cultivated larger land areas; leading to higher yields and incomes for a better standard of living [8,9]. Women should be provided credit facilities with fewer demands for collateral requirements. It has been established that women on the average have been adjudged to be more prudent in the use of resources, especially financial.

Certain factors were found to limit the production capacities of the yam farmers in the study area. The factors include political marginalization, poor labor availability, exorbitant charges on agricultural loans/credits, poor quality and adulteration of production inputs and technical know- how (skill development). To reduce these constraints, the government should not be biased in the allocation of production resources to farmers since the market place is neutral to any political inclination. Subsidies on agricultural production inputs; the bulk of which goes to sales agents, should be properly monitored for the farmers to exclusively enjoy them. This may be executed through farmers' cooperative groups, which is likely to be more accessible to most farmers. In addition, labor saving strategies using modern machineries, implements and inputs like herbicides should be supported by agro-service providers and made available to farmers on pay-as you- use bases and credit facilities may be offered to farmers while they pay in instalments or at the end of the season.

In sum, implementable, culturally and socially feasible intervention strategies based on interaction with the people should be adopted in evolving strategies for addressing better access of women and the generality of farmers to production resources for agricultural development.

Conclusion

Women farmers also make significant contributions to yam production and other agricultural practices in the study area. The study found that the access to most production resources favored the male yam farmers to the disadvantage of the female farmers. The constraints facing the yam farmers also vary on gender lines, with the women facing more constraints. It is recommended that relevant action plans should be put in place to reduce or out rightly remove the marginalization of women in terms of access to production resources for agriculture to perform optimally toward contributing to family food security and the national gross domestic production.

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