



GENDER PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN MKPATE ENIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated gender participation in Agricultural activities in Mkpate Enin local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State. Three research Questions was used to guide the study. The design of the study is descriptive survey design. A sample of 200 women was drawn from the population using simple random sampling technique. An instrument titled "Gender participation in Agricultural Activities inventory" (GPAAI) was used for collection of data, which was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The result revealed that women play major role in agricultural activities and their role's have a great influence in agricultural Activities. However, a lot of factors affects women participation in agricultural activities. Based on the findings recommendations were made.

Keywords: Agriculture, Gender Participation, and role of government

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the art and science of managing the growth of plant and animals for human use. In a broad sense agriculture includes activation of soil, growing and harvesting of crops, breeding and raising livestock, dairying and forestry. The responsibility placed on the shoulders of women in the rural areas to meet the daily food need of most families cannot be over emphasized. More often than not, they make significant contribution in processing of agricultural product. Women contribute between 40 and 65% of all hours spent in agricultural production and processing, and also undertake 60 to 90% of the rural agricultural product marketing, thus providing more than two-third of the workforce in agriculture (FAO, cited in Sabo, 2006).

Technical centre for Agriculture and rural cooperation 2003 reported that, women in Africa make up more than one- third of work-force. They account for 70% of agricultural workers, 80% of food producers, 100% of those who process basic food stuffs and they under take 60% to 90% of the marketing (Olawoye, 2009 and Modupe, 2009).

Most farmers in Nigeria operate at the subsistence, smallholder level in an extensive agricultural system, hence in their hands lies the country's food security and Agricultural activities. Rural women farmers' deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contribution to agriculture and rural development as well as food security



Enere, Nweke and Tollens (2004) noted that women are mainly involved in the production, processing and trading of such food crops as maize, rice, cassava, yam and palm oil. They are rarely connected with agricultural export crops such as coco, cotton and groundnuts.

Falayan, Daramola and Oguntade (2006) explained that, as women contribute significantly to the development of agriculture sector in terms of what is consumed in the country, the Nigerian government should make Nigerian incentive Based Risk sharing system for Agriculture lending programme (NIBRSALP) accessible and also raise the access bar of women to agricultural land and inputs etc. The fact that, women play important role in agricultural production and trade has been widely Ignored by development planners. Women have been excluded from most training programmes on modern methods of crop cultivation, food production, labour-saving technologies, livestock and poultry management and small scale industries, marketing and service. Membership in cooperative through which agricultural loans are generally channeled is restricted to head of households (Dulyapach, 2005). This study tends to find-out the role of women in Agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State

Statement of Problem

Women are major players in the agricultural sector of most developing countries of the world. However, despite this key role, farm decision making, even in areas where women are the largest providers of farm labour. This most time make's their role unidentifiable. Previous effort in estimating women's role in agriculture has tended to concentrate on evaluating their labour contributions. The problem of this study therefore, is to determine the role of women in agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin local Government area of Akwa-Ibom State

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the role of women in agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin local government area of Akwa-Ibom State.

Research Question

The following research questions were used as a guide to study.

- 1) What are the roles of women in Agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?
- 2) To what extent does women's role influence agriculture activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?
- 3) What are the factor that affects women's role in agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?

Methodology

The design of this study is descriptive survey. The population of the study consists of 9,420 women in the area (2006, census figure). A sample 200 women were drawn from the population through simple random sampling technique. An instrument titled

"Gender Participation in Agricultural Activities inventory" (GPAAI) in a 15 items structured questionnaire with four point modified liker rating scale was used for data collection. Three experts in Agricultural science determined the face, construct and content validity of the instrument using test-retest method with a sample of 20 women and Pearson product moment correlation, the reliability coefficient obtained from the instrument (GPAAI) was 0.79. The research personality administered the instrument with the assistance of youth leader in each of the communities who were trained and instructed on what to do. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions with criterion mean of 2.5. All the scores that fell within and above the criterion mean of 2.5 were accepted, while those that fell below the criterion mean of 2.5 were rejected.



RESULTS

Analysis of data in this study was done in line with the research questions in the tables below.

Research Question 1: what are the roles of women in Agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State?

Table1: mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) scores on role of women in agriculture activities.

S/No	Items	N	(\bar{x})	SD	Remarks
1.	Women are provided with equal access to production and processing of Agricultural product	200	3.1	1.2	accepted
2.	Women always engage in subsistence farming	200	3.3	1.3	Accepted
3.	Women involves in cultivation of soil, growing and harvesting of crops	200	3.4	1.6	Accepted
4.	Women involve in marketing of Agricultural product	200	3.2	1.4	accepted
4.	Women help's in providing land for agricultural activities	200	3.1	1.2	accepted

Table 1 above shows that the mean score of all the items are above the criterion mean of 2.5. This means that they are accepted indicating that women play various role in agricultural activities.

Research Question II: To what extent does women's role influence agriculture activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom state.

S/No	Items	N	(\bar{x})	SD	Remarks
1.	They influence increase out-puts of Agricultural products	200	3.1	1.3	Accepted
2.	Does women decreases agricultural task on their male counterpart.	200	2.7	1.0	Accepted
3.	They influence the expansion of the quality and quantity of agricultural land for farming	200	3.1	1.3	Accepted
4.	Women make's agricultural activities look more competitive	200	2.9	1.1	Accepted
5.	Women contribute in agricultural decision	200	2.7	1.0	Accepted

Table II above indicates that the mean scores of all the items are above the criterion mean of 2.5. This means that they are accepted, showing that women influence to a great extent agricultural activities.

Research Question III: What are the factors that affects women's role in agricultural activities in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?

Table III: mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) scores on factors that affects women's role in agricultural activities.

S/No	Items	N	(\bar{x})	SD	Remarks
1.	Poor provision of modern equipment for agricultural activities by government and other Agencies	200	3.1	1.8	Accepted
2.	Lock of Agricultural loan for women	200	4.1	1.9	Accepted
3.	Government and other agencies does not provide improved varieties and agrochemicals for woman	200	3.1	1.8	Accepted
4.	Poor services of extension workers to assist women in the agricultural knowledge.	200	2.7	1.3	Accepted
5.	Lack of seminars and workshop for women on modern agricultural techniques	200	2.7	1.3	Accepted

Research Article

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Table III above shows that the mean scores of all the items are above the criterion mean of 2.5. This means that they are accepted, indicating that the above factors affects women's role in agricultural activities.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

The finding of research question one shows that women play different role in agricultural activities. This finding is in line with that of FAO cited in Sabo (2006) who explained that woman contribute between 40 and 65% of all hours spent in agricultural production and processing and also undertake 60 to 90% of the rural agricultural product marketing, thus providing more than two-third of the workforce in agriculture.

The result in research question II shows that women influence to a large extent agricultural activities. This also entails that the activities of women in agriculture can not be over emphasized in the day to day life. Folayan, Daramola and Oguntade (2006) has previously explained that women contribute significantly to the development of agricultural sector in terms of what is consumed in the country.

The finding of research question three revealed a lot of factors affecting women's despite their participation, leading to a decline in full actualization of this aim in agricultural production. Dulyapach (2005) explained that women play important role in agricultural production and trade, but this has been widely ignored by development planners. Women have been excluded from most training programmes on modern methods of crop cultivation, food production, labour-saving technologies, livestock and poultry management, small scale industries etc.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Many agricultural development programmes and planners should adequately address the needs of small farmers, particularly those of women.
- 2) The services of extension workers should be extended to rural areas and made available to women especially. This will help to improve the knowledge of women in agricultural activities
- 3) Women should be given access to agricultural loan. This will inturn encourage their participation in agricultural activities

Educational Implication

The following are the educational implications of the study

- 1) Agricultural science teachers should make teaching and learning of agricultural science more interesting by using instructional materials. This will help to encourage all students including women in agricultural practice.
- 2) Agricultural science should be made a compulsory subject in the school curriculum considering the importance of food Service to mankind

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