

Gender Access to Productive Asset of Farm Land among Crop Farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Unequal access to farm land between the genders which made the female gender disadvantaged and marginalized is a reoccurring issue and a clog in the wheel of agricultural productivity and food security in the developing countries. This is so because the women who are the major food producers are the ones denied the major productive resource which is land, thereby crippling the process of production. Therefore, the study assessed gender access to farm land as productive asset in Kwara State, Nigeria. The minor objectives were to identify the socio-economic characteristics, determine the pattern of farm land access among gender and examine crops grown by gender. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select a sample of 168 respondents for this study comprising of 50% of each gender. Data were collected from the respondents using a semi-structured interview scheduled. Percentages, frequencies, mean, standard deviation and regression were used for data analysis. As the result indicated, due to some cultural reasons male farmers' had better land access than female counterpart through lease and borrowing from communities, friends, and government. On farm land access, men (90.5%) had more access to farm land than women (54.8%) in terms of personal ownership. Also, men were found to be better off than women in terms of accessing farm land through purchase, inheritance, rentage and gift in the study area. The most popular crops planted among male respondents was yam (100%), groundnut (95.2%), Cassava (65.5%), maize (56.0%). While the women folk cultivated groundnut (85.7%), vegetables (81.0%), sorghum (56.0%), cassava (53.6%), maize (50.0%), cowpea (41.7%) and least was yam (39.3%). The result of hypotheses established that gender ($t=9.386$) was significant with the pattern of farm land access in the study area. This implies that gender is a major variable that determines farm land access in the study area. To ensure gender equity in farm access, traditional institutions and government need to sensitization and amendment of certain laws to balance the equation on farm land access.

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1. Introduction

One of the contemporary issues in rural livelihood activities is gender equality to productive asset in rural communities to be able to perform role and responsibilities effectively. Women who are the major food producers are the ones denied the major productive resource which is land, thereby crippling the process of agricultural production. According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2013) gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Meanwhile, the FAO (2002) defined gender as the relationship between men and women in both perceptual and material. In agricultural livelihood, gender access to farm land as a productive asset is paramount to food security, income and family wellbeing. FAO (1999) reported that despite the immeasurable importance of land to agriculture, policies in farm land access and tenure has been biased towards one gender considering sociological and cultural factors. In agricultural production, women are seriously contending with men

counterparts in food production, but, are still being deprived of owning farm land as a productive asset due to gender status. Women effort to gain access to farm land is often restricted by inheritance laws and customary rules that recognize only men whereas women have only cultivation rights. FAO (2011) noted that gender gap in farm land access and management practices hinders and weaken women contributions to the agricultural food production as closing the observed gap would produce significant results towards increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty, hunger and promoting economic gains.

It is believed that women traditionally are not the owners of the farm land but the owners of the crop, in other words, women are given land by men to grow crops for household consumption and income (FAO, 2002). Meanwhile, Pillar and Fenq-qin (2004) had opined that women contribute equally as men counterpart in agricultural production and in some cases dominate the agricultural activities; yet, they still have unequal access to farm land. Traditional gender-based subordination deprives almost all women

regardless of class across communities control over assets, making them extremely vulnerable (Anita, 1998). Northern (2004) revealed that women use farm land mostly for growing food crop for their families while men grow cash crops. Unequal access to farm land access has more adverse effect on woman than men. Gender inequality to farm land as a productive asset results in less food grown, less income being earned by women, and higher level of poverty and food insecurity.

Current Nigerian constitution prohibits discrimination on ground of gender, but, customary and religious laws continue to restrict women's right. But institutions with overlapping duties, responsibilities, inappropriate legal framework and political consideration have continued to undermine the effectiveness of the land use act (Fabiya, 2009). At Linyi, men controlled land on which cash crops were grown while woman had greater access and control of small plots. However, land in China is allocated to families or individuals officially designated as farmers. However, farm land access is a determinant factor of land management techniques that will be adopted and practiced on the land. Farm land management practices can be dramatically enhanced when equal opportunities on productive asset of farm land are been given to men and women farmers to boost agricultural production. Regardless of the significant role of women in agriculture, the fact still remains that gender inequalities exists in farm land access which is a severe challenge for women than the men counterparts. It is for this reasons that the study seek to examine gender farm land access for agricultural purpose in rural area.

The study provides answers to the following questions:

1. What are gender personal profiles?
2. What are the patterns of farm land access in the area?
3. What are the crops grown by the gender farmers?

The general objective of the study was to assess gender access to farm land as a productive asset among crop farmers in Kwara State.

Specific objectives were to:

1. identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
2. determine the pattern of land access among respondents in the study area;
3. Examine crops grown by men and women gender respondents

Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant relationship between selected socio – economic characteristics of the respondents and farm land access pattern.

2. There is a significant relationship between the socio economic characteristics of the respondents and farm land access pattern

Study area and Methodology

The study was carried out in Kwara State located in North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria and situated between latitude 6.5⁰ and 11.5⁰N of the equator and longitude 2.8⁰ and 7.8⁰E. It has a land area of about 32,500km² comprising of rainforest in the southern parts and woody savannah covering the larger part of the state. The State has sixteen council areas, bounded by five States and shares international boundary with the Republic of Benin (Bamiduro, 2002).

Sampling procedure, sample size and data analysis

Multistage sampling procedure was adopted for this research work. In the first stage, the 16 council areas was stratified into four agricultural zones along the Agricultural Development programmes (ADP) structure and two ADP zones (C &D) were randomly selected Kwara State (Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources, 2010). In the two selected zones, two council areas were randomly selected for the study. From zone C, Asa and Moro were selected whereas from zone D, Ekiti and Irepodun council areas were selected representing 25 percent of the 16 council areas in the State. From population of 179,634 registered contact farmers, active 2500 contact farmers with ADP extension agents in the past one month in selected eight communities were chosen as sample size. From the sample size of 2,500, random method was used to select 168 as respondents for the study. Selected respondents were stratified into men and women from whom 84 each were randomly selected.

Data were collected from the respondents using a well semi-structured interview scheduled which was face validated in seminar. Data were collected, sorted, coded and analysed using statistical tools which include descriptive and the inferential statistics. The descriptive tool used include frequencies, percentages, mean scores, means, standard deviation, while inferential tools applied in the study was Regression, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and T-test.

The independent variables were selected socio-economic characteristics such as age, marital status, household size, religion and years spent in school while the dependent variable was farm land access pattern.

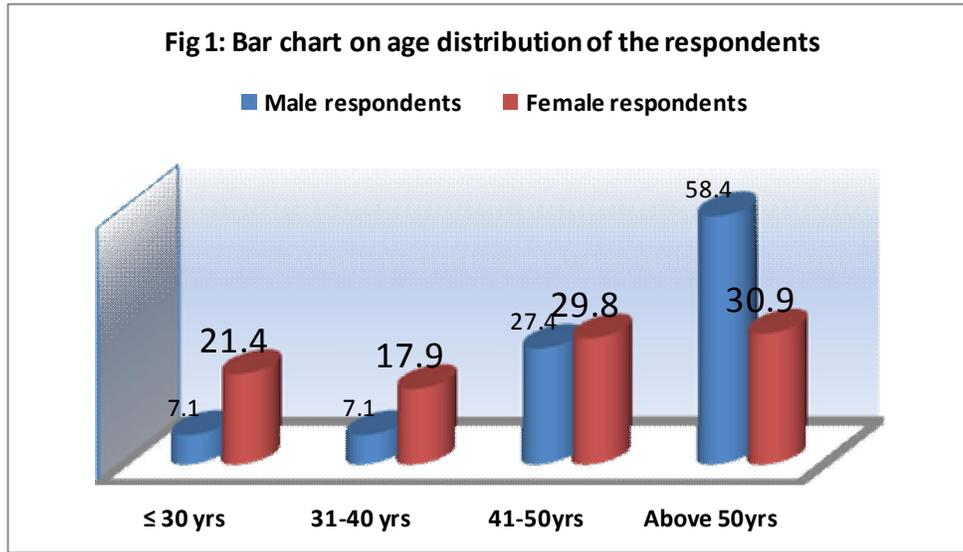
Results and Discussion

Socio-economic variables

The data in fig. 1 shows that 58.4 percent of the male respondents are above 50 years, 27.4 percent fall between the age range of 41-50 years, 7.1 percent fall in the category of 31-40 years while 7.1percent are equal to or less than 30 years. About 30.9 percent of

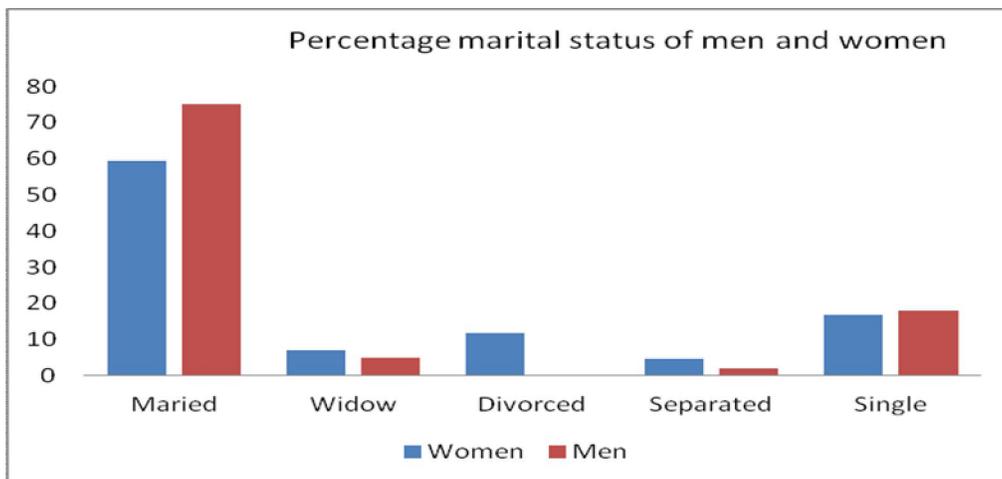
the female respondent are above 50 years of age, 29.8 percent falls between 41-50 years, 21.4 percent of the respondents are less or equal to 30 years of age while 17.9 percent are between 31-40 years. These findings show that 41.6 percent of the male respondents are less than 50 years while in the female category 69.1 percent are less than 50 years old. The mean age of the

respondents was 44.3% years. This result also indicates that majority of the female respondents were in their active and reproductive age. It is expected that these women will engage in farming activities as they are in their agile and active years and this would enhance their production rate in agriculture.



Data reported in figure 2 below indicates was on marital status which indicated that 75 percent of the men respondents were married against women (59.5%). Meanwhile women were found to be more widows (7%) and divorcees (11.9%) than men (0%) and (5%). High proportion of married couples is a reflection of maturity and majority of the men respondents that are married will shoulder lots of family responsibilities than the women counterpart. The result was an indication that half of the female

respondents are responsible and shoulder lots of responsibilities to their husband, children and communities. This finding agrees with the assertion of Aphume and Otoikhian (2008) that marital status is a factor which is likely to encourage sustainability of adoption decision. The result was an indication that 50 percent of the female respondents are responsible and shoulder lots of responsibilities to their husband, children and communities.



As indicated, majority (55.5% and 53.6%) were found to be women and men Christians respectively while Muslims were men (33.3%) and women (23.8%), and traditionalist 10.7% for women and 9% for men. It was obvious that all the religions were well represented in the study area and religious affinity provides opportunity for formation of social and economic cooperative associations to promote livelihood in land access and management practices.

Majority (82.1%) of the male respondents had between 1-6 years of formal schooling and 4.8 percent were illiterates due to no formal schooling. All the female respondents had formal education though at

varying levels. A larger proportion (85.7 percent) had between 1-6 years of schooling experience (primary education) and 14.3 percent have between 7-12 years of schooling. Oak (2010) stated that the fundamental purpose of education is to gain knowledge, serves as the means to bring change in society, to develop a generation of virtuous individual and thus contributes to the development of a good human being. Respondents' level of education is expected to aid understanding on land access and management practices while illiteracy might be a limiting factor to attain good land management practices.

Table 2: Selected personal profile of respondents

Personal profile	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage
Household size				
1-3	26	31.0	36	42.8
4-6	42	50.0	30	35.7
Above 7	16	19.0	18	21.4
Religion				
Islam	28	33.3	20	23.8
Christianity	45	53.6	55	65.5
Traditionalist	11	13.1	9	10.9
Years of Schooling				
0	4	4.8	0	0
1-6	69	82.1	72	85.7
Above 7	11	13.1	12	14.3
Primary occupation				
Farming	72	85.7	60	71.4
Civil servant	6	7.1	8	9.5
Driving	3	3.6	0	0
Artisan	3	3.6	9	10.7
Others	0	0	7	8.3
Secondary occupation				
Farming	21	25.1	36	42.9
Civil servant	14	16.7	24	28.6
Driving	28	33.3	0	0
Artisan	19	22.6	17	10.7
Others	1	1.2	15	17.9
Farming experience				
≤ 10	4	4.8	23	27.4
11-20	25	29.7	44	52.4
21-30	42	50.0	13	15.5
31-40	11	13.1	4	4.8
Above 40	2	2.4	0	0
Total	84	100	84	0

Source: Field survey, 2010

Majority (85.7%) of the men respondents engaged in farming activities as their major source of livelihood, about 7.1 percent were civil servants and 3.6 percent were drivers and artisans respectively. For the women folk, about 71.4 percent of the respondents

practice farming as their primary occupation, 10.7 percent were artisans, 9.5 percent were civil servants and 8.3 percent engaged in marketing of agricultural products i.e. gathering of firewood and other petty works. The finding in the study area disagreed with the

notion that women employed in agriculture higher than that of men in almost all developing countries as stated by Costa (2011). This result implies that high proportion of the respondent fully engaged in farming as a primary occupation hence the issue of land access and management should be given adequate consideration among the gender group.

Response on secondary occupation revealed that about 33.3 percent of the men were artisans, 25.1 percent were farmers, 22.6 percent engaged in driving, 16.7 percent were civil servants and 1.2 percent in agricultural products. Secondary livelihood of the women were farming (42.9%), civil servant (28.6%), 17.9 percent engaged in livestock rearing and 10.7 percent were artisans selling of snacks, tailoring, processing of agricultural products and marketing of agricultural products. Women secondary livelihood activities were more diverse than that of the men counterpart. This result implies that the respondents are involved in different secondary and primary occupations to boost their income level.

On farming experience, men had more experience than the women counterpart. Half (50%) of the men farmers have between 21-30 years of farming experience compared to 15.55 for women. While most women (52.9%) experiences were in the range of 11-20 years compared to few men (29.7%) and the remaining small proportion were at extreme ends. Finding indicates that men were identified with

farming as an occupation compared to women who combines house work with farming activities.

The data in Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents' pattern of land access examined which indicated that men had better land access than women through ownership, lease, borrow and government. Under government, women were found to be worst off and better in other three land access patterns. As revealed, more than half of the men (56%) had personal land access than few women (6%). The result implies that half of the men respondents had access to personal land ownership compared with few women which is a strong determinant of the type of crop that can be planted on the land. Other means of accessing land were lease from community: men (41.7%) and women (3.6%); lease land from friends, men (21.4%) and women (4.8%); lease land from government, men (10.7%) and women (0%). The various land accesses determine the nature of farming system that could be practiced by the farmers in the area such as cash crop and tree crops. This finding conforms to Cheryl *et al* (2009) statement that the channel through which people acquire land determines the type of land management being practice on such land. The fact few women have personal control over land as well as access land mostly through lease and borrow has serious consequences on land management practices in the area compared to men counterpart.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on pattern of land access and control

Farm land access patterns	MALE		FEMALE	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lease land from community	35	41.7	3	3.6
Lease land from friend	18	21.4	4	4.8
Government lease	9	10.7	0	0
Borrowed from friend	20	23.8	18	21.4
Borrowed from government.	18	21.4	15	17.9

Source: Multiple responses from field survey (2010)

The data in table 4 shows pattern of farm land access status of the respondents. Majority (90.5%) of the male respondents claimed to be owners of farmland, own land through gift from the community (83.3%), inherited farm land (77.4%), husband and wife (57.1%), purchased farm land (52.4%), gift (48.8%) and Other means such as does not belong to anyone or planting on lands near their houses (35.7%). For the women respondents, 54.8 percent got farm land through personal ownership and others farm land status goes thus: gift from community (41.7%), husband and wife (38.1%), gift from friends (33.3%), purchase (29.8%), inheritance (17.9%) while 9.5 percent got their lands through other means like land close to houses without taking appropriate permission.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on farm land access status

Though differences exist among gender on farm land access both women and men access farm land through similar methods. The fact that 90.5 percent of the male respondents claimed they own a personal land while 54.8 percent among the female folk owns personal lands is an indication that for some cultural reasons men have more access to land than female. Costa (2010) reported that in several countries legislation prevent women from owning and inheriting land which increases the vulnerability to poverty and exposes them to further discrimination. It indicates that cultural values are waning down on women farm land access in the study area. This result confirms that men were given more priority on farm land issues than women in the communities as family head.

Farm land access status	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
Personal ownership				
Yes	76	90.5	46	54.8
No	38	9.5	38	45.2
Access status				
Purchased	44	52.4	25	29.8
Husband/Wife	48	57.1	32	38.1
Inherited	65	77.4	15	17.9
Gift from friend	41	48.8	28	33.3
Community gift	70	83.3	35	41.7
Farming on unauthorized land	30	35.7	8	9.5

Source: Multiple responses from field survey (2010).

The data in Table 5 shows the distribution of crops cultivated among respondents which is diversified by both gender as a strategy against crop failure. The most popular crop planted among male respondents was yam (100%) unlike women that majority (92.9%) grew crops such as melon, sweet potatoes, cowpea and fruits. Next to yam for men was groundnut (95.2%), Cassava (65.5%), maize (56.0%) and other crops cultivated at small scale were melon, cowpea, sugar cane, sweet potatoes accounted for 42.9 percent and 31.0 percent. Least grown crops were vegetables and cowpeas by 26.2 percent while 25.0 percent cultivated sorghum crop. The dominance of yam, cassava and maize explained the fact that they

are the predominant staple food crops eaten in the study area. For the women folk, about 85.7 percent cultivated groundnut, 81.0 percent grew vegetables, 56.0 percent grew sorghum crop, 53.6 percent planted cassava, 50.0 percent cultivated maize, 41.7 percent grew cowpea while 39.3 percent cultivated yam. This result was in agreement with Deborah Northern (2004) finding that women use land mostly for growing food for their families while men grow cash crops. The patterns of crop grown follow the trend in land access, need, physical strength and financial capacity to meet labour requirements. Most women grew food crops with short duration to maturity which enables them to quickly use the land and quit.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by crops cultivated.

Crops cultivated	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yam	84	100	33	39.3
Cassava	55	65.5	45	53.6
Maize	47	56.0	42	50.0
Groundnut	80	95.2	72	85.7
Vegetable	26	31.0	68	81.0
Cowpea	22	26.2	35	41.7
Sorghum	21	25.0	47	56.0
Others. e.g. Melon, sweet potatoes, cowpea etc.	36	42.9	78	92.5

Source: Multiple responses from field survey (2010).

Test of hypothesis.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the selected socio- economic characteristics of the respondents and pattern of land access.

H_A : There is significant relationship between the socio- economic characteristics and the pattern of land access of the respondents.

Table 6 results below shows that out of all the selected socio-economic variables for the regression analysis, only gender was found to be significant with

Table 6: Result of regression analysis on pattern of farm land access with personal profiles

Socio-economic Variables	B	Std- Error	t-value	Result	Decision
Constant	2.706	.912	2.967		
Age	.000	.014	-.008	NS	Accepted H_0
Gender	3.535	.377	9.386	S	Rejected H_0

the pattern of land access with t-value of 9.386 in the study area. This implies that gender is a major variable that determines land access in the study area. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. According to the result, the value of adjusted R-square is 0.401 which implies that 40.1% variation in the pattern of land access is accounted for by the gender status of the respondents.

Marital status	-.018	.109	-.166	NS	Accepted Ho
Religion	-.358	.236	-1.518	NS	Accepted Ho
Primary education	-.095	.170	-.558	NS	Accepted Ho
Secondary education	-.035	.131	-.269	NS	Accepted Ho
Years of farming experience	-.003	.025	-.134	NS	Accepted Ho
Adjusted R square	0.401				

Source: computer generated from field data (2010)

Conclusion

The study concluded that the respondents acquire land through different pattern such as purchased, inherited, lease land, and rented land and these have effect on the crops they grow. Though differences exist among gender on farm land access both women and men access farm land through similar methods. The fact that 90.5 percent of the male respondents claimed they own a personal land while 54.8 percent among the female folk owns personal lands is an indication that for some cultural reasons men have more access to land than their female counterparts. It indicates that cultural values are waning down on women farm land access in the study area. This result confirms that men were given more priority on farm land issues than women in the communities as family head.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the findings, the following recommendations were made;

Land administration agencies should ensure that land administration enhances and protect the right of all stakeholders regardless of gender in order to avoid problems like double claimant, high price of land, frequent change in the condition of tenancy, inconsistency in the policies of government and the community among others.

Government, NGOs and private bodies should be involved in a gender awareness programme designed to persuade men and women of the importance of ensuring gender equality so as to tap from the hidden potentials of women.

Adequate training should be given to crop farmers on land management practices and its importance. This will reduce the rate of land degradation in many rural areas of African countries

Well designed development programmes and project on gender issues can help to close gender gap.

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