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26 GENDER ANALYSIS OF FARMING HOUSEHOLDS' ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD RESOURCES IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study analyzed rural farming households' access to livelihood resources along gender line in Bosso, Chanchaga and Wushishi Local Government Areas of Niger state, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: describe the socio-economic characteristics of the rural farming household along the gender line; examine their access to livelihood resources; determine the factors influencing access to livelihood resources along the gender line and examine the constraints associated with accessing livelihood resources. Three-stage sampling procedure was used to select 130 rural farming household heads (67 male and 63 female). Semi-structured questionnaire complemented with an interview schedule was used to obtain primary data which was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Probit regression model. The results revealed that majority (71.7%) of the male were between 41-50 years of age with a mean of 46 years, while 47.6% of the female were in the age range of 41-50 years with a mean of 44 years. More so, 71.6% and 63.5% of the male and female farming households respectively, had household size of 1-5 people with mean of 6 persons. Majority (82.1%) of the male farming households had access to farmlands, while most (68.7%) of the female had no access to farmlands. Also, more than half (56.7%) of the male had access to communication facilities while 55.6% of the female had no access. Probit regression analysis revealed age of the male (0.0466; P<0.05), cooperative membership (1.6684; P<0.01) and annual income (-2.83e-06; P<0.10) to be positive and significant. In the same vein, age of the female (0.1429; P<0.01), cooperative membership (1.8387; P<0.05) and annual income (5.55e-06; P<0.10) were positive and significant, while marital status (-0.4836; P<0.05) was negative and significant. Poor credit and unfavorable government policy were the most serious constraints faced by the rural farming households along gender line in the study area. The study recommended that government and other relevant stakeholders should provide the rural households with credit at subsidized rate to enable them enhance their livelihood. Also, favorable government policy should be put in place that can improve livelihood of the rural households in the study area.
Keywords: Gender, rural household, livelihood, resources, access

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in the provision of employment opportunities and income to most rural inhabitants in developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. However, many of the rural farming communities continue to produce at subsistence level using crude implements which result in low output, thus, making farming less productive, less profitable and unattractive endeavour. This might not be unconnected to their inability to access livelihood resources. Livelihood could be described as the way people combine and use their assets, capabilities and undertake activities to secure a means of living (Micheal *et al.*, 2021). The various activities undertaken by people in

order to earn income help to reduce Vulnerability and increase their overall living standard within the subsiding social, economic, political and environmental influence on livelihood strategies (Eneyew and Bekele, 2012).

Nwandu *et al.* (2016) averred that, the choice of livelihood activities depend largely on access to and control over five major livelihood assets/capitals which include; human, Physical, social, financial and natural capitals. However, poor households face livelihood problems such as exposure to risks, malnutrition, shorter life expectancy and inadequate access to social and economic services as well as limited opportunities for income. It is a fact that, both men and Women do not have the same access to livelihood resources, despite the equal roles they play in agricultural production activities. FAO (2009) posits that rural women do not have equal access and control over assets as men, particularly land and fund, reducing their socioeconomic well-being. Oyesola and Ademola (2012) stressed that rural women lack access to social assets such as networks and associations which mar their ability in political decision making. Furthermore, female face inequalities in accessing education, skill development and training opportunities, particularly in the northern part of the country attributable to religious and cultural beliefs and this impede their capabilities. These therefore call for strategies that can help in reducing gender inequalities in accessing livelihood resources as this will not only improve nutrition, health and education outcomes, but it will help in the realization of both immediate and long-time economic and social benefits for families, communities and the nation as a whole (Aliyu *et al.*, 2021). The study was therefore conceived, to extend the frontier of knowledge of farming households' access to livelihood resources along gender line as well as factors influencing their access to such resources in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Bosso, Chanchaga and Wushishi Local Government Areas of Niger State, Nigeria. Niger State lies between Latitude 8°20' and 11°30' North, and Longitude 3°30' and 7°40' East of the equator. The state covers an estimated land area of 74, 244 KM² with a human population of 3,954,772 people (NPC, 2006). However, the population was projected in 2019 using 3.2% growth rate of National Burenau of Statistics (NBS) to be 5,960,112 people. The state experiences two distinct seasons namely; wet and dry, with annual rainfall varying from 1100mm-1600mm. The temperature ranges from 23°C-37°C (Niger state Agricultural and Mechanization Authority (NAMDA, 2018). The major occupation of the people is farming (Crop and livestock). Three-stage sampling procedure was used. First stage involved purposive selection of three Local Government areas (LGAs) due to their predominant livelihood activities along gender line. Second stage was random selection of two villages from each of the selected LGAs which produced six villages. The third stage involved random selection of 130 respondents (67male and 63 female). Primary data were collected using semi-structured questionnaire complemented with interview schedule. Data were analyzed using descriptive (frequency counts, percentage and mean) and inferential (probit regression model) statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

The socioeconomic characteristics of the rural farming household, described along gender line are presented in Table 1. Majority (71.6%) of the male headed households were in age bracket of 41-50 years with a mean of 46 people while 47.6% were female headed who aged between 41-50 years with a mean of 44-years. This implies that most of the household heads in the study area

were in their active productive age, capable of undertaking livelihood activities. This finding disagree with that of Obi-Egbodi *et al.* (2021) who in their study area (Ogun State) found female household heads to be above their active productive age. This may have negative implication on their access to livelihood resources. Tables1 also shows most of the household heads to be married with household size of 6 persons on the average. More so, about 35.8% of the men and 47.6% of the women had no education. Although, a greater proportion of the male possess one form of education or the other. This was expected to be an advantage for the male over the female in accessing livelihood resources.

Gender Access to Livelihood Recourses

The results in Table 2 revealed that Majority (82.17%) of the male had access to farmland as against 31.3% of the female who had access to farmland. This implies that greater proportion of men had access to farmland in the study area. This finding substantiates that of Adebola *et al.* (2015) who noted that historically, in most cultures, female access to land involved right of use, but not ownership and that when common land is converted into state ownership and then to private land, women often lose their traditional right and are not always considered when new laws are enacted. Results further revealed that (Table 2) greater proportion of both male (64.2%) and female (57.1%) had no access to improved technology. This implies that rural farming households in the study area had poor access to improved technology and this was likely to impact negatively on their well-being. Also more than half (56.7%) of the male had access to communication facilities as against 44.4% of the female rural farming households. This may be attributed to better literacy attainment by the male. Literacy level assist individual to understand the benefit and how to use communication facilities. Group membership was high for both gender, about 79.1% of the male and 88.9 % of the female were members of social group. This implies that rural greater proportion of the rural farming households in the study area were members of one group or to order. This might be attributed to their understanding of benefit derivable in group membership, as most the government or international donor assistance to rural farming households are targeted at group rather than individuals.

Also, majority (62.7%) of the male were involved in decision making as against 49.2% of the female. This implies that, in decision making male have better opportunity to partake in decision making than female, this scenario can be attributed a typical aspect of gender inequality. This finding concurs with that of Adebola *et al.* (2015) who reported that, low participation in decision making by female to be a typical aspect of gender inequality. The result further indicated gender, (male 61.8% and female 57.1%) respectively had poor access to financial resources. Also in terms of government support fund like giants just a few of both gender (male 25.4% and female 30.2%) had access to such livelihood resources. This implies that majority of the rural farming households were poorly assisted and this was likely to impact negatively on their well-being. More so, more than half (53.7%) of the male had access to quality education as against 47.6% of the female, implying that greater proportion of the male had better access to quality education. Table 2 showed both gender (male 83. 6% and female 66. 7%) had access to rural labour as against just a few women (17.5%) that had access to labour. This implies that just a small proportion of the female can access rural labour, this may be due to their limited financial resources and marginalization by the male. Similarly, most(56.7%) of the male had access to skill acquisition while about 44.4% of the female had access, implying that the female rarely have equal opportunities with male in participating in skill acquisition which can enhance their livelihood activities.

Factors influencing Rural Household Access to Livelihood Resources

Table 3 revealed the result of probit model used in analyzing the factors influencing rural farming households' access to livelihood resources. Age is positive and significantly influence male access to livelihood resource (P<0.05), age of the female is positive (0.145299) and significant (p<0.01). This implies that as the respondents along gender line in the study area advances in age they were more likely to access livelihood resources. The marital status of the female is negative (-0. 4835588) and significantly influenced access to livelihood (p<0.01), implying female that were unmarried have less chances to access livelihood resources. Coop. membership of the male was positive (1.668409) and significantly influenced their access to livelihood resources (p<0.001) also female coop. membership had positive coefficient (1.838672) and significantly influenced their access to livelihood resources (p<0.10). This result revealed male that were members of coop. societies were more likely to access livelihood resources more than the female. This might be due to disparity in recognition female always experience in the society.

The result further indicated that, total annual income of male had positive coefficient (2.83E-06) and significantly influenced their access to livelihood resources (P<0.10). Also, the coefficient of total annual income of the female had positive coefficient (5.55-06) and significantly influenced their access to livelihood resources (P<0.05). This implies that, the more total annual income of the respondents, the more likelihood to access livelihood resources as it is believed that individuals with good Socio economic disposition were more likely to pay for whatever assistance they have received in form of loan. More so, number of cooperative membership had positive coefficient (0.538755) and significantly influenced female access to livelihood resources (P<0.10). This implies that, the number cooperate societies female belong the more likely to access livelihood resources.

Constraints faced by Rural farming households in Accessing Livelihood Resources

Table 4 revealed some major constraints faced lay the male to include poor credit facilities (ẋ=2.30), unfavorable government policy (ẋ=2.26), lack of basic infrastructure (ẋ=2.24), poor transportation and inadequate farmland (ẋ=2.22), and high level of illiteracy. Similarly, some of the constraints considered by the females as very serious are; poor credit (ẋ=2.95), unfavorable government policy (ẋ=2.56), lack of basic infrastructure (ẋ=2.52), poor transportation (ẋ=2.38) and poor storage facilities (ẋ=2.22).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that most of the rural farming households along the gender line in the study area faced problem of poor access to credit facilities as well as unfavorable government policies on livelihood resources. It was therefore recommended that, government and well to do individuals should assist rural farming households in the study area with subsidized credit facilities to enable them increase production. Also government should always formulate policies that favour rural farming households in their bid to access livelihood resources.

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Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Male (n = 63)		Female (n = 63)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)				
30 - 40	10	14.91	28	28.6
41 - 50	48	71.63	04	7.6
51 - 60	4	6.01	42	22.2
Above 60	5	7.51	1	1.6
Mean	46		44	
Marital status				
Married	48	71.64	06	3.5
Divorce	6	9.07	1	1.1
Widow	9	13.41	01	5.9
Single	4	6.06	9	5
Household size (No)				
1 - 5	26	27.4	57	14.8
6 - 10	28	26.91	52	38.8
Above 10	7	10.43	4	
Mean	6			
Level of education				
Non formal	24	35.83	04	7.6

primary	2	029.92		
Secondary	1	420.98	133.47	
Tertiary	9	13.44	16.73	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2: Rural households' access to various resources

Livelihood	Male (n = 63) Frequency	Male (n = 63) Percentage (%)	Female (n = 63) Frequency	Female (n = 63) Percentage (%)
Physical resources -bold				
Access to farmland	5	582.12	031.3	
Access to important technology	2	435.82	742.9	
Access to communication faculties	3	856.72	844.4	
Group membership	5	379.15	688.9	
Participation in decision making	2	562.73	149.2	
Financial resources-sold				
Access to credit facilities	2	638.82	742.9	
Access to government support fumd (grants)	1	725.41	930.2	
Human resources-bold				
Access to quality education	3	653.73	047.6	
Access to good health service	5	683.64	266.7	
Access to rural labour	4	871.65	217.5	
Access to skills acquisition	3	856.73	544.4	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3: Factors influencing rural household's access to livelihood resources

Variables	Male (n = 63) Coefficient	t-value	Female (n = 63) Coefficient	t-value
Age	0.0465909	1.91**	0.145299	2.45***
Marital status	0.0766397	1.29	-0.4835588	-3.14***
Household size	-0.0246522	-0.27	0.0116074	0.04
Education level	1.867527	1.56	1.096088	0.39
Occupation	-0.4770486	-1.14	0.6114843	-0.73
Extension contact	-0.4770486	-0.04	0.4257184	0.73
Cooperative membership	1.668409	3.53***	1.838672	1.66*
Access to credit	-0.6108885	-1.27	-0.3582717	-0.78
Annual income	2.83E-06	1.79*	5.55E-66	2.40**
Income savings	0.090145	0.21	0.2878936	0.65
Number of cooperatives	-0.0483143	0.54	0.538755	1.81*
Constant	-4.929692	-2.84***	-6.439628	-1.69*
Chi-Squared		24.26		32.27
Pro>chi^2		0.0143***		0.00134***
Psendo R^2		0.2612		0.3778

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Note: ***, ** and * implies significant at 1%, 5% and 10% level of probability

Table 4: Constraints faced by rural household access to livelihood resources

Constraints	VS (%)	S (%)	NS (%)	WM (ẋ)	Decision
Male					
Poor credit facilities	27 (40.3)	33(49.3)	7(10.4)	2.30	Serious
Unfavorable Government policy	26 (38.8)	32(47.8)	99(13.4)	2.25	Serious
Lack of infrastructure	24 (35.8)	35(52.2)	8(11.9)	2.25	Serious
Poor transportation system	29 (43.3)	32(35.8)	14(20.9)	2.22	Serious
Inadequate farm land	25 (37)	32(47.8)	10(14.9)	2.22	Serious
Community culture, value and norms	16 (23.9)	33(46.3)	18(26)	1.97	Not Serious
High level of illiteracy	22 (32.8)	31(46.3)	14(20.9)	2.12	Serious
Poor storage facilities	6 (9.0)	25(37.3)	36(53.7)	1.55	Not Serious
Female					
Poor credit facilities	30 (47.6)	23(36.5)	10(15.9)	2.95	Serious
Unfavorable Government policy	41 (65.1)	16(25.4)	6(9.5)	2.56	Serious
Lack of infrastructure	37 (58.7)	22(34.9)	4(6.4)	2.52	Serious
Poor transportation system	31 (49.2)	25(39.7)	7(19)	2.38	Serious
Inadequate farm land	23 (36.5)	20(31.7)	13(20.6)	2.16	Serious
Community culture, value and norms	19 (30.2)	20(31.7)	24(38.1)	1.92	Not Serious
High level of illiteracy	10 (15.9)	35(55.6)	18(28.6)	1.87	Not Serious
Poor storage facilities	21 (33.3)	35(55.6)	7(11.1)	2.22	Serious

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Note: VS = Very Serious, S = Serious, NS = Not Serious and WM = Weighted Mean