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Rural Women's Access to Land and its Implications for Empowerment in Nigeria: The Case of Ilorin East Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There is a gender gap observed in access, ownership and control of land and other productive resources which is not in favor of women in Nigeria. While most studies on access to land resource have related it to food security, this study however examined its implications for the empowerment of women in the study area. Multistage sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 120 households from the population. Questionnaires were used to elicit information from the sample, and its administration was interactive. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between women's empowerment and access, control, and ownership of land resource. The regression analysis showed that land ownership, rights to land, and decision-making power over land had significant effects on the empowerment status. The study recommends that laws that will ensure and protect women's access and rights to land should be put in place and such laws should be properly monitored and evaluated.

Keywords: Access to Land, Women's Empowerment, Land Ownership, control of land

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1. INTRODUCTION

Land is the most important asset for many households in developing countries. The use and importance of land in agriculture cannot be over emphasized as it forms the basis of all agricultural activities (FAO 2011a). Women also are very important in the development of any economy; this is because women form the majority of the agricultural labor force. British Council Nigeria (2012), reports that an estimated 54million of Nigeria's 78million women are based in rural areas and make a living from the land. Women empowerment refers to women's real or perceived ability to control or change different aspects of their personal, social, political, and economic environment (Action aid International, 2013). Women empowerment seeks to ensure equal right to women and make them confident enough to claim their rights. Although there is growing recognition that gender inequality hinders sustainable development, it has still not translated to meaningful improvements for women. Women's access to land and other resources is particularly important because it's a basis for their sustainable livelihoods and a key factor in ensuring household food security (FAO SOFA, 2010-11).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling Design and Data Collection

Ilorin-east local government area of Kwara state was purposively selected for the study because it is a farming community with a large number of its population involved in agriculture. To obtain the sample size, a multistage random sampling technique was used. The Local Government Area has 9 wards and in the first stage of sampling, 4 out of the 9 wards were randomly selected using simple random sampling. In the second stage, 2 communities were selected from each ward and in the third stage, 15 farmers were selected from each of the two communities previously selected, also randomly. This gives a total sample size of 120 respondents.

Tools of Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) was used to compute the women's empowerment index.

The Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index Model

Before computing the index, the respondents are first divided into those that have achieved adequacy in each of the domains and those who have not. A respondent is considered adequate if able to make most decisions on agricultural activities, has access to and owns important productive capital (such as agricultural land, large consumer durables, means of transportation, large livestock, and mechanized farm equipment), has access to credit, and is also an active member of a group. Those who have achieved adequacy are empowered, while those who have not are disempowered. Based on this division, the following was obtained:

Five Domains of Empowerment

$$H_p = q/n$$

Where q is the number of those disempowered,
n is the total population.



$$A_p = \sum_{i=1}^n C_i(k)/q$$

Where

$C_i(k)$ is the sum of the scores of those that are empowered

M_o = Disempowerment Index

$M_o = H_p \times A_p$

Empowerment index (5 domains of empowerment), $5DE = 1 - M_o$

Gender Parity Index

$GPI = 1 - H_w(R_p)$

H_w = percentage of women without gender parity

R_p = the average empowerment gap between women compared to men in their household

Total WEAI formula

$WEAI = 0.9 (5DE) + 0.1 (GPI)$

Model Specification of Women Access to Land

The multiple regression model specified below was used to obtain the relationship between empowerment and access, ownership and control of land resource.

Empowerment (EM) = $f(X_1, \dots, X_n)$

$$EM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + U_i$$

Where,

EM is the dependent variable (Empowerment)

X_1, \dots, X_n are sets of independent variables

β_0 is the intercept or the constant term

β_1 to β_n are the coefficients of the variables that influence empowerment.

U_i is the error term.

Dependent Variable

Empowerment (sum of domains of empowerment)

Independent Variable

X_1 = Education (number of years spent in school)

X_2 = Income X_3 = Marital status

X_4 = Decision making with respect to land resource

X_5 = Rights to land

X_6 = Age

X_7 = Land entitlement

X_8 = Land ownership



3. RESULTS

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Majority of the respondents (65. 8%) fall between 26-55 years, they are in their agile and active years, they fall within the economically active age and thus they can engage in farming activities and be productive. This agrees with Chayal (2010) that there is a correlation between young-aged women and their participation in agriculture that they have physical abilities which enable them to perform more agricultural activities. Also, since majority of the respondents are married, this will make them have a sense of commitment to their spouse and family. Educational attainment of the respondents which is expected to help their understanding of access to land is low and this could also affect their adoption of good land management practices.

This is also in agreement with Asian Dev Bank (2013) which reported that women have limited access to land, capital, credit, and education. With respect to household size, the respondents have a considerable household size generally. Although the average household size (~8) is above the national average, this could be because of need for family labor on the farms. Agriculture is the main occupation of the respondents. This reflects the fact that the study area is a rural area as agriculture is the main source of income and employment for those who live in the rural areas (World Bank, 2010).

Access, Ownership and Control of Land Resource

From table 2, majority of the respondents do not own a personal land. This is in line with FAO (2012) that women traditionally have less to and control over land. From the total number of farmers that own a personal land, only 4. 2% had land greater than 3 hectares. This indicates small farm holdings of women in the study area which agrees with Fabiyi (2007) that majority of women farmers are small scale farmers having 0.1 - 3.0 hectares of land for cultivation of crops. Majority of the respondents have entitlement to land in their own name, and in few cases both spouses are entitled to land. Also, majority of the respondents acquire land through inheritance and some use community land for their agricultural production but to enjoy this, the farmer must be an indigene of the community.

It can also be seen that most of the respondents have limited rights to land as majority cannot use land as collateral because they do not own land personally and this in turn affects their access to credit. Most of the respondents have limited rights to land and reason for this includes the fact that land acquired by inheritance is not exactly a personal property neither is communal land. This correlates with British Council Nigeria (2012) which asserted that access to land may not be a problem, but control of such lands in terms of using it as collateral for loan or as liked. Although majority of the respondents are not able to make their own decisions alone as regards use of land, they however participate greatly in the decision-making process.



Computing of the Empowerment Index

For Women:

Number of those empowered = 43 Number of those disempowered (q) = 77

Sum of the scores of those that are empowered, Ci(k)= 43

$$H_p = q/n$$

$$H = 77/120 = 0.642$$

$$A_p = \sum_{i=1}^n C_i(k)/q$$

$$C_i(k) = 43 \quad q = 77 \quad C_i(k) = 43/77 = 0.558$$

Mo= Disempowerment Index

$$M_o = H_p \times A_p \quad 0.642 \times 0.558 = 0.358$$

Empowerment Index, 5DE=1- Mo

$$1 - 0.358 = 0.642$$

For men:

Number of those empowered= 13 Number of those disempowered (q) = 55

Total Population (n) = 68 Sum of the scores of those that are empowered, Ci(k)=13

$$H_p = q/n$$

$$H = 55/68 = 0.8088$$

$$A_p = \sum_{i=1}^n C_i(k)/q$$

$$C_i(k) = 13 \quad q = 55$$

$$13/55 = 0.236$$

Mo= Disempowerment Index

$$M_o = H_p \times A_p \quad 0.8088 \times 0.236 = 0.191$$

$$\text{Empowerment Index, 5DE} = 1 - M_o \quad 1 - 0.191 = 0.809$$

Challenges Faced in Access to Land Resource

Access to land is not really a problem in the study area, but ownership and control as majority of respondents have access to land resource. From the number of respondents with difficulty obtaining access to land, most reported it is as a result of financial constraint in terms of poverty and lack of asset to use as collateral to obtain loan. Studies have shown that one of the major problems faced by women worldwide, especially those residing in rural areas is poverty (Fasoranti, 2008).

Relationship between Empowerment and Access, Control, and Ownership of Land Resource

Educational attainment and land ownership status of the respondents are statistically significant at 10%, while rights to land and decision making with respect to land is statistically significant at 1%. The implication of this is that educational attainment, land ownership, rights to land and decision making with respect to land has an effect on empowerment. Educational status and land ownership does not increase the empowerment status, but surprisingly has a negative relationship with the empowerment status. This contradicts the a-priori expectations, and it could be as a result of the fact that land ownership might be a necessary but not sufficient condition for empowerment. However, rights to land and decision making with respect to land has a positive effect on empowerment. This finding is in line with that of Allendorf (2007), that women’s land rights promote empowerment, and Rathiranee (2013), who found that there is a strong relationship between decision making authority and women empowerment in the study area.



4. CONCLUSION

Women are indispensable in the development of any economy. Women empowerment is an important tool to achieve overall development because women empowerment will positively reflect on the family, community, and nation at large. Recommendation made based on results is that proper land rights should be granted to women, decision making with respect to land resource should be more gender balanced in order to improve women's empowerment, this can be achieved by educating both men and women.

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Tables

Table 1: socio-economic characteristics of Respondents

Items	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage
Age		
25	1	0.8
26-35	25	20.8
36-45	35	29.2
46-55	19	15.8
56-65	28	23.3
65	12	10.0
Mean	48.18	
Marital Status		
Single	3	2.5
Married	91	75.8
Divorced	2	1.7
Widowed	23	19.2
Separated	1	0.8
Education (number of years)		
0	31	25.8
1-6	26	21.7
7-12	54	45.0
13-18	9	7.5
Household Size		
1-5	27	22.5
6-10	76	63.3
11-15	15	12.5
16-20	2	1.7
Mean	7.77	
Primary Occupation		
Agriculture	86	71.7
Trading	16	13.3
Artisan	11	9.2
Civil Servant	6	5.0
Clergy	1	0.8
Income		
5000-25000	59	49.2
25001-45000	54	45.0
45001-65000	3	2.5
65001-85000	4	3.3



Table 2: Access, ownership and control of Land Resource

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Do you own a personal land?		
Yes	42.0	35.0
No	78.0	65.0
Farm size		
Oha	76.0	63.3
1. Oha	19.0	15.8
1-0-3. Oha	20	16.7
3. Oha	5.0	4.2
Land entitlement	77.0	
Own name	18.0	64.2
Husband's name	21.0	15.0
Both spouses	4.0	17.5
Leaser's name		3.3
Do you have the right to use land as collateral		
Yes	40.0	33.3
No	80.0	66.7
Do you have the rights to sell land?		
Yes	38.0	31.7
Yes	82.0	68.3
No		
Do you have the right to cultivate as many crops for unlimited time on the land?		
Yes	73.0	60.8
No	47.0	39.2

Table 3: Challenges Faced in Access to Land

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Do you have easy access to land?		
Yes	86.0	71.7
No	34.0	28.3
If no, what is the problem?		
Financial constraint	27.0	22.5
Community structure	4.0	3.3
Both	3.0	2.5
None	86.0	71.1



Table 4: Relationship between Empowerment and Access, Ownership, and Control of Land Resource.

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	1.440	0.655	2.198	0.030
Educational status	-0.064	0.025	-2.556	0.012**
Income	2.425E-006	0.000	.380	0.705
Marital Status	0.017	0.098	.177	0.860
Decision making	0.037	0.012	2.941	0.004*
Rights to land	0.133	0.045	2.935	0.004*
Age square	2.491E-005	0.000	0.223	0.824
Land Entitlement	0.154	0.122	1.268	0.207
Land ownership	-0.527	0.259	-2.036	0.044**
R	0.501			
R ²	0.251			
Adjusted R ²	0.197			