

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AGENDA TO WOMEN -IN –AGRICULTURE IN ASA LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the contributions of Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) to Women-in Agriculture in four selected villages in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study area was purposively selected based on their known participation in agricultural transformation agenda. Eighty women farmers were selected for the study. Structured questionnaires were used to obtain information from the farmers. Frequency count and percentage were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that 45% of the respondents fall between 41 – 50 years age category, about 94.9% were married, about 96.25% had farming size between 1-5ha and 41.8% had secondary education. The improvement in farming activities due to ATA includes increase in quantity of farm produce (67.5%), increase in farm income (66.25%), reduction in production cost (70%) and easier access to farm inputs (80%). The constraints to participation of women in agricultural transformation agenda include inadequate financial capacity (72.5%), delay in delivery of inputs (60%), proximity of redemption centres (18.75%), inadequate extension contact (21.25%) and lack of equipment for processing (58.75%) respectively. It is recommended that government should provide more redemption centres, early delivery of farm inputs and more land should be provided for farmers that need them. Farmers are also encouraged to take farming as a business.

Keywords: Women, Agriculture, Agricultural Transformation Agenda

INTRODUCTION

The sustainable food production is the first pillar of food security. Millions of women work as farmers, farm workers and natural resource managers (Onyemobi 2000). Through their work, they contribute to national agricultural output, maintenance of the environment and family food security (Brown et al 2001). In Nigeria, the participation of women in agricultural activities has attracted greater attention in recent years. The Women in Agriculture (WIA) is a suitable extension service that is gender specific and tailored to women farmers. This is in recognition that women play very significant roles in Nigeria agricultural production, processing and utilization (Nnadozie and Ibe 2000), but are constrained under the Unified Extension System by socio-cultural barriers, and by the current approach that rely almost exclusively on a network

of contact farmers that are over 95% male farmers; little research on products - fruits, vegetables, small livestock which are mainly the responsibility of women farmers.

Therefore the integration of women in extension is essential for the achievement of some goals such as increased food production, food self-sufficiency and sustained reduction of poverty and malnutrition. In Nigeria, the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of the different States of the Federation had made important advances in incorporating gender in agricultural extension, by modifying the ADP system to provide for women farmers through the creation of Women-In-Agriculture (WIA) programmes in the department of Extension Services of the State ADPs with a gender focus (Oyebanji 1998; Onyibe 2001).

The WIA programme sought to improve agricultural extension services for women. Existing home economics agents were retrained in agriculture and extension methodologies, placing special emphasis on women's activities. WIA programme ensured that extension services in every state in Nigeria have female extension workers at every level of operation from state headquarters in the capital, down to the villages. The structure of the WIA programme itself is also decentralized and integrated into the extension service (Saito and Gadzame, 1996). Such that the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) as part of the government effort to revamp the agriculture sector to ensure food security, job creation, diversify the economy and enhance foreign exchange earnings. The Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) has a great potential in enhancing the role of agriculture as an engine of inclusive growth leading to rural employment, wealth creation, and diversification of the economy.

Statement of the Problem

Between the colonial times and more than half a century after independence, Nigeria is still grappling with the issue of implementation of national agricultural programmes. Numerous national agricultural programmes have come and gone and yet more are on the way but the enormous expected contribution of agriculture to Nigeria economy has remained largely untapped. The contributions of women in these programmes are limited compared to their male counterpart. Women are often side line in selection of beneficiary of programmes and regarded as insignificant to the agenda of transformation in agriculture.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess the contributions of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda to WIA in Asa local government area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the women involved in the Agricultural Transformation Agenda.
- ii. evaluate the women's perception of the relevance of the programme since the inception.
- iii. identify the contributions of ATA to WIA programmes.
- iv. identify the constraints in agricultural transformation agenda.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the socio-economic characteristics of the women farmers and their participation in Agricultural Transformation Agenda.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kwara State of Nigeria. Kwara State (8.9848° N, 4.5624° E) is in the north central part of Nigeria, its capital is Ilorin, and the primary ethnic group of Kwara State is Yoruba, with significant Nupe and Baruba minorities. Kwara State was created on 27 May, 1967, when the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon broke the four regions that then constituted the

Federation of Nigeria into 12 states. At its creation, the state was made up of the former Ilorin and Kabba provinces of the then Northern region and was initially named the West Central State but later changed to Kwara, a local name for River Niger. The state occupies a total land mass of 36,825km² (14,218sqm), and area ranking of 9th of 36 state with the population of 2,591,555 (2006 census). Kwara State shares boundaries with Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Niger and Kogi states.

The population for the Study consists of all women beneficiaries of Agricultural Transformation Agenda in the Local Government Area. Purposive sampling was used to select four villages based on the level of participation in Agricultural Transformation Agenda. These Villages are Afon, Aboto, Ogbodonroko and Alapa. The list of the Villages in the Local Government Area was gotten from Kwara State Agricultural Development Project Office. However, random sampling was used to select respondents in the selected villages. Twenty women (20) were randomly selected in the four selected Villages to make Hundred (80) respondents for the Study. The primary data for this study was collected with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire with both open and close ended questions; the questions were directed towards the objectives of the study. While the secondary data was obtained from journals, textbooks, articles from the internet and libraries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents. N= 80

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age(years)	<30	3	3.75
	31-40	14	17.5
	41-50	36	45
	51-60	19	23.75
	>60	8	10
Level of Education	No education	12	15.2
	Primary education	25	31.6
	Secondary education	33	41.8
	Tertiary education	9	11.4
Farming Experience	1-10	49	61.25
	11-20	23	28.75
	20-30	8	10
Farm Size (ha)	1-5	77	96.25
	6-10	2	2.5
	11-15	1	1.25
Household Size	1-5	46	57.5
	6-10	28	35
	11-15	6	7.5

Source: Field survey (2015)

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the Women farmers in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The table shows that 45% of the respondents fall within the 41 – 50 years age category, which is the highest age category. About

23.75% of the respondents fall within 51- 60 years age categories. The table shows that majority of the respondents are married which is 94.9% while 3.8% are widowed. About 41.8% of the respondents have secondary education, 31.6% have primary education,

15.2 have no formal education and 11.4% have tertiary education. About 96.25% have farm size of between 1 – 5 hectares. Also about 61.25% of the respondents have between 1-10 years of farming experience. 57.5% have a household size of 1-5, 35% of the respondents fall within 6-10 while 7.5 % have household size of 11-15.

No	6	7.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 2 shows that 92.5% of the respondents are beneficiaries of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda while 7.5% have not benefitted from the programme. This could be attributed to the presence of Extension Agents in the study area who promptly registered the respondents for Agricultural Transformation Agenda.

Table2: Response of Farmers to being Beneficiary of Agricultural Transformation Agenda

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	74	92.5

Table3: Contributions of Agricultural Transformation Agenda to WIA

Variables	Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Improved Seeds	28	35	48	60	1	1.25	2	2.25	1	1.25
Fertilizer	31	38.75	44	55	2	2.5	2	2.5	1	1.25
Fish Fingerlings	1	1.25	25	31.25	5	6.25	25	31.25	24	30
Improved Seedlings	9	11.25	20	25	2	2.5	24	30	25	31.25
Animal Feeds	2	2.5	21	26.25	2	2.5	28	37.5	27	33.75
Cassava Stems	5	6.25	19	23.75	4	5	27	33.75	25	31.25
Processing Centres	5	6.25	4	5	38	47.5	30	37.5	3	3.75

Source: Field survey (2015), F= Frequency, %=Percentage #

Table 3 shows 60% agree to be beneficiaries of improved seeds while 35% strongly agree. Fertilizer has 55% agree and strongly agree of 38.75%. The high percentage agreement of respondents about improved seeds and fertilizer is due to their introduction to the Agricultural transformation agenda before the other inputs were introduced in the subsequent years. Fish fingerlings have respondents of 31.25% agree and strongly disagree while 30%

also disagree. This shows that majority did not benefit from fish fingerling. Improved seedlings shows 30% strongly disagree and 31.25% disagree while 11.25% strongly agree; this shows that more people did not benefit from improved seedlings inputs. Animal feeds have 37.75% disagree and 35% strongly disagree while 26.25% agree. Cassava stems and processing centres have 33.75% and 37.5% strongly disagreed respectively.

Table4: IMPROVEMENT IN FARMING ACTIVITIES DUE TO ATA

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Strongly disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Increase in Quantity of Produce	22	27.5	54	67.5	1	1.25	2	2.5	1	1.25
Increase in Farm Income	21	26.25	53	66.25	3	3.75	2	2.5	1	1.25
Reduction in Production Cost	19	23.75	56	70	1	1.25	1	1.25	3	3.75
Provision of Processing Centres	5	6.25	4	5	38	47.5	30	37.5	3	3.75
Easier Access to Farm Inputs	8	10	64	80	3	3.75	2	2.5	3	3.75
Greater Access to land for farming	2	2.5	7	8.75	6	7.5	41	51.25	24	30

Source: Field Survey (2015), F=Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 4 Shows that 67.5% and 27.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree to an increase in the quantity of farm produce. Increase in farm income has 66.25% and 26.25% agreed and strongly agree. 70% and 23.75% of the respondent agree and strongly agreed to a reduction in the production cost.

Processing centres shows an indifferent response of 47.5% and 37.5% strongly disagree. 80% of the respondents agreed that there is an easier access to farm inputs. While 51.25% and 30% strongly disagree and disagree to Greater access to land for farming.

Table5: Women Perception of the Relevance of Agricultural Transformation Agenda

Variable	VSA		SA		A		SD		D	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Crop Production output has increased due to ATA	25	31.25	40	50	10	12.5	1	1.25	4	5
Production cost has reduced due to ATA	23	28.75	42	52.5	9	11.25	1	1.25	5	6.25
Farm inputs are easily accessible at subsidized cost	23	28.75	38	47.50	11	13.75	3	3.75	5	6.25
More Processing centres are available	2	2.5	4	5	5	6.25	44	55	25	31.25
Greater access to land for farming	3	3.75	7	8.75	3	3.75	33	41.25	34	42.5
Improved sales of farm produce due to import restriction	2	2.5	7	8.75	12	15	21	26.25	38	47.25
Improvement in knowledge and competence to afford, process and maintain good nutrition	6	7.5	6	7.5	10	12.5	18	22.5	40	50
The programme has improved economic activities in the area	15	18.7	39	48.75	12	15	1	1.25	13	16.2

Source, Field Survey (2015), F=Frequency, %=Percentage. VSA, SA, A, SD, D= Very Strongly Agree, Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree respectively.

Table 5 shows a 50% strongly agree, 31.25% very strongly agree and 12.5% agree response to crop production output increase due to ATA. Production cost has reduced has 52.5% strongly agree, 28.75% very strongly agree and 11.25% agree; this could be attributed to 50% subsidy farmers enjoy on certain farm inputs. 47.50% strongly agree, 28.75% very strongly agree and 13.75% agree to the response about the easier accessibility of farm inputs. More processing centres have 55% strongly disagree and 31.25% disagree. Greater accesses to land for farming has 41.25% strongly disagree and 42.5%

disagree, this is in agreement with (Okwum, 2008), that lack of land is a major constraint to women in agriculture. Strongly disagree of 26.25% and 47.25% of disagree to improved sales of farm produce while 15% agree. Improvement in knowledge and competence to afford, process and maintain good nutrition have 50% disagree, 22.5% strongly disagree and 12.5% agree responses by the respondents. The respondents have 48.75% strongly agree, 18.7% very strongly agree and a 16.25% disagree to improved economic activities in the study area.

Table6: Constraints to Participation of Women in Agricultural Transformation Agenda

Variable	Very severe		Severe		Not severe		Undecided		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Inadequate financial capacity	4	5	58	72.5	16	20	2	2.5	80	100
Poor information delivery system	9	11.25	22	27.5	47	58.75	2	2.5	80	100
Delay in delivery of inputs	26	32.5	48	60	5	6.25	1	1.25	80	100
Proximity of redemption centres	4	5	15	18.75	52	65	9	11.25	80	100
Inadequate Extension contact	6	7.5	17	21.25	56	70	1	1.25	80	100
Lack of equipment for processing	4	5	47	58.75	25	31.25	4	5	80	100

Source: Field survey (2015), F=Frequency, %=Percentage.

Table 6 shows 72.5% of the respondents claimed that inadequate financial capacity is severe to their participation in ATA while 20% said it is not severe. Poor information delivery system has 58.75% not severe, 27.5% severe and 11.25% very severe. 60% said that Delay in delivery of inputs is severe to their

participation and 32.5% very severe. Proximity of redemption centres has 65% not severe and 18.75% severe. 70% claimed inadequate extension contact is not severe to their participation and 21.25% severe. Lack of equipment for processing has 47% severe constraint and 25% claimed it is not severe, the

findings agreed with Obiora et al (2013) where respondents were found to have inadequate

equipment/facilities.

Table 7: Chi-square Analysis of Respondents' Socioeconomics Characteristics and Participation in Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA).

Variable	Chi square	Df.	P value	Decision
Age	25.400	30	.705	Significant
Marital status	136.975	2	.000	Significant
Level of Education	18.200	3	.000	Significant
Years of Experience in farming	66.775	18	.000	Significant
Farm Size	130.000	6	.000	Significant
Household size	104.500	11	.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey (2015)

There is no significant relationship between respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and Participation in Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA)(Table 7). The information in Table 7 shows that, Marital status ($X^2=136.975$, $p<0.000$), Level of education ($X^2=18.200$, $p<0.000$), Years of experience in farming ($X^2=66.775$, $p<0.000$), Farm size ($X^2=130.000$, $p<0.000$), house size ($X^2=104.500$, $p<0.000$) and Age ($X^2=25.400$, $p<0.705$) are significantly related with factors responsible for women participation in Agricultural Transformation Agenda. This implies that marital status, level of education; years in experience in farming, age and house size are important determinant of women participation in agricultural transformation agenda.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that crop production has increased due to ATA, while production cost has reduced due to ATA; and farm inputs are easily accessible at subsidized cost. The respondents also disagreed that processing centre, access to land and inputs like cassava stems, fish fingerlings and improved seedling has increased due to Agricultural Transformation Agenda.

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