

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF GUSAU, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this paper is to investigate the role of women in agricultural extension services in Gusau Local Government Area, Zamfara State, Nigeria. The paper identified the extent of women participation in agricultural extension work and analyses the impact of extension services in the study area. Various problems were identified that was responsible to non involvement of women in agricultural activities in the study are. A total sample of ninety (90) respondents was selected out of the three (03) wards representing half of the Local Government Area. The major conclusions drawn from this paper were the inputs and transportation facilities. Apart from extension services, women undertake other agricultural activities such as crop production, livestock production, processing and storage of agricultural products. The major constraints to rural women non participation in agricultural extension service was lack of the government support, language barrier, religious bias and illiteracy. Therefore, in view of the above Null Hypothesis H_0 accepted and alternate Hypothesis H_a is rejected. It is recommended that local leadership should encourage women to register for adult literacy programme so as to uplift the literacy level in the study area. Extension workers should regularly visit women farmers so as to teach them extension message coming from Research Institutes. Monitoring, evaluation and supervision of extension staff is necessary to improve extension services for rural farmers.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of women in agricultural extension services has been documented extensively by numerous authorities. Boserup, 1970 had made Africa as an area of women farming per excellence.

The World Bank, 2010 had confirmed the important contributions women had made in African agriculture. Findings indicated that at least 70 percent of staple foods being produced in Africa Nigerian women are known to contribute the greater percentage of farm labour. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) 2009 estimated that 86% of rural women are engaged in crop farming, 50% in Livestock production and 4% in fishing.

An agricultural extension service can adopt a number of strategies to improve its support for farm women among others in developing suitable research production recommendations for activities largely performed by men, with some Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) concentrate on women activities and employing women in all positions in the extension services for which they are all qualified.

Without extension staff visiting women farmers regularly the extension programme will not achieve the desired goal. Government effort at integrating women in agriculture development was through the establishment of Women in Agriculture (WIA) Units in all Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and the Federal Agricultural Coordinating Units (FACU). The major aim of these programmes was to increase agricultural productive capacity of women through integrating them into the ADPs system.

In this way, they will have the same access to improve extension services among women like their male counterparts. The noble contribution made by women like their male counterparts can be seen in all facets of international agencies like UNDP, ILO and IFAD programmes.

Experience has shown that women in developing countries like Nigeria are left behind in the normal process of development due to

inadequate provision of agricultural extension services. To be truly effective, an agricultural extension work must deal with activities handled by women. This is not often done due to some social problems. This paper investigate why women are left behind in agricultural extension work and what is their contributions towards the success of agricultural development programmes in Gusau Local Government Area of Zamfara State of Nigeria.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Women play a dual role in agricultural extension. They are involved in direct production like their male counterparts. They embark upon cultivation of variety of crops, raise livestock like sheep, goats, poultry and maintain vegetable gardens. Their significant role has not been recognized in a male dominant society. Illiteracy of women farmers, lack of financial support from the government, discriminatory policies giving to women farmers has contributed to major problems confronting women. This paper shall examine the role of women in agricultural extension work. Identify the factors responsible for the ineffectiveness of extension programme among women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

Overall objectives

This paper shall investigate the role of women in agricultural extension work in Gusau Local Government Area, Zamfara State of Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

- Identify the extent of their involvement and participation in agricultural extension work.
- Analyze the effectiveness and impact of the extension service in the study area

- Assess skill of training and knowledge acquisition for rural women.
- Identify the problems regarding ineffectiveness of extension programme among women and recommend measures for improvement.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis were proposed

- H₀ Lack of Government motivation has affected women participation in agricultural extension work.
- H_A Government motivation had encouraged women participation in agricultural extension work.
- H₀ Most of the rural women are not aware of the importance of agricultural extension work.
- H_A Most of the rural women are aware of the importance of agricultural extension work.
- H₀ Religious and cultural factors has affect women involvement in agricultural extension work.
- H_A Religious and cultural factors did not affect women involvement in agricultural extension work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature relavent to the above study is presented as follows.

In Nigeria much emphasis is being placed on training needs of changed extension agents to ensure that farmers reap the fruits of sciences and new farming technologies Osoji (1983). Extension advice is important for inputs utilisation since little can be achieved by the farmers who do not know how to use inputs efficiently and effectively.

On the relationship between extension staff and input procurement and distribution Benos and Bexer, 1984 explained that extension have an important role to play in advising agencies of the input supply situation in the field and anticipated demand. According to Osoji (1983) who have shown that farmers exposure to communication has a very high correlation with their readiness to accept improved farm practices, women play a vital role in agricultural extension in Nigeria. They are involved in direct production like their male counterparts. They embark upon cultivation of variety of crops, raise livestock like sheep goats and poultry, and maintain vegetable gardens. In addition women are also very much involved in increasing food production, food handling processing and marketing of agricultural products.

Olayiwola, 1984 stated that another role in which most women in Nigeria are involved in is utilisation of finished product of agricultural produce for human consumption. Women could improve upon utilisation of scarce resources available to farm families both on the farm and in the house. This could lead to increase farm income and consequently growth in national product, health and improved living standard.

National Concord, 1990 stated that lack of organized day care is a hurdle to the development of rural women in agricultural extension and agricultural sector in general. Funke, 1995 stated that organizing agricultural shows for women will help in increasing the knowledge of women to improve on farming activities.

Yazidu, 1983 said there are three sources of information which will help rural women to form cooperative society. Crowder 1997 concluded that although women play a major role in food production in many countries of the world. Agricultural information is not reaching them effectively.

Chale, 2001 identified problems of women farmers in Nigeria participating in agricultural programmes. These were lack of demonstration equipment and teaching aids.

Kaske, 2007 stated that inspite of immense contribution to agricultural extension, rural women often face difficulties than men in gaining access to agricultural information.

Rajalahti, 2009 stated that promoting innovations in agriculture requires coordination and education, partnership and linkages among women farmers.

Roseboon, 2004 recommends that its members should promote the adoption of agricultural innovation perspectives in their policy analysis. This will help in identifying all the problems and try to address them accordingly.

METHODOLOGY

The study area is located in Gusau Local Government Area in Zamfara State of Nigeria. The study covers three (03) wards that constitute half of the Local Government. The target population of the study was farmers, peasants and some civil servants working for the Local Government Council.

Table 3.2: Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Name of Ward	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mayana Ward	30	33.3
Magami Ward	30	33.3
Rawaiyya Ward	30	33.3
Total	90	100%

A sample of three (3) wards out of ten (10) were selected. Ninety respondents were selected out of the selected three wards to represent the entire Local Government Area. A total of 30 respondents were selected in each ward. The questionnaire was formulated by the researcher based on the hypothesis and objectives.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected from field survey via questionnaire were analyzed using quantitative method. The variables in the questionnaire coded on a code sheet and code book respectively. Information was analyzed using various statistical tools like frequencies percentages and direct response. This was used to show variation between a variable. The data analyzed was presented in the results and discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Section A: Field Staff Questionnaire

This section describes how the data was analyzed using various statistical techniques. The results were interpreted as follows:-

Table -4.1: Age of Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30 Years	22	22.4
31-40 Years	30	33.3
41-50 Years	25	27.7
51-60 Years	13	14.4
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Survey results presented in Table 4.1 shows that 25 (31%) of the respondents are in the age range of 20-30 years, while 30 (33.3%) are in the age range of 31-40years. Similarly, 25 (27.7%) are in the age range of 41-50years. The elderly respondents 13 (14.4%) are in the age range of 51-60years.

Table 4.2: When did Extension work started in your area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1998	18	20
2000	12	13.3
2006	43	47.7
2009	17	18.8
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Perception of respondents regarding when did extension work started in their area revealed that 18 (20%) of respondents reported extension work started in 1998. About 12 (13.3%) also reported it started in 2000. Similarly, 43 (47.7%) and 17 (18.8%) agreed that the programme started in 2006 and 2009 respectively.

Table 4.3: Group of People being Taught

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmers and their families	13	14.4
Women in Organisation	50	55.5
School Children	-	-
Young Farmers	27	30
Other specify	-	-
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Table 4.3 indicates that (14.4%) farmers and their families were taught extension principles. About 50 (55.5%) women organisation benefited from training on extension principles to help them improve their agricultural practices. No responses recorded in respect of school children. This shows that majority of the women farmers have

benefited from the above training. This implies that the goals of extension have been achieved in the study area.

Table 4.4: Extension Method Used

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Film Shows	18	20
Posters	23	25.5
Use of Electronic Media	11	12.2
Demonstration	38	42.2
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Opinion regarding extension method used in is presented in Table 4.4, the results revealed that 18 (20%) of the respondents have used film show to convey extension methods. While about 23 (25.5%) used posters. About 11 (12.2%) used electronic media. Majority of the respondents in the study area used demonstration to convey extension methods, this is considered the simplest and easiest method that is understand by women farmers.

Table 4.5 Problems encountered by Extension Staff

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Religious Bias	10	11.1
Language Barrier	2	2.2
Poor Attitude to work	21	23.3
Lack of Transport facilities	35	38.8
All of the above	22	24.4
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Perception of respondents regarding problems encountered by Extension Agents is presented in Table 4.5. The results have shown that 10 (11.1%) of respondents reported religious bias in society. While 2 (2.2%) facing language barriers. About 21 (23.3%) reported poor attitude to work. Majority of the respondents 35 (35.8%) reported inadequate transport facilities and finally 22 (24.4%) believe that all of the above constitute the major problems they in the delivery of extension message to women farmers.

Table 4.6: General Perception of Women on Agricultural Extension Services in the Area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Women should be educated	19	21.1
Provision of equipments	11	12.2
Employment of more extension staff	33	36.6
Provision of transport facility	20	22.2
No responses	7	7.7
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Data presented in Table 4.6 shows the general opinion of women regarding the status of agricultural extension services in the area. The results have shown that 19 (21.1%) of the respondents would like women to be educated and enlightened. While 11 (12.2%) would want provision of equipments. Majority 33 (36.6%) would like the authorities to employ more Extension Staff. Similarly, 20 (22.2%) would like provision of transport facility in the area. A small number of respondents 7 (7.7%) have no opinion regarding extension services in the study area.

Section B: Rural Women Responses

This section gave analysis of women responses regarding the role of women in agricultural extension services, the analysis is presented as follows:

Table 4.7: Distribution of respondents according to their Wards

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mayana Ward	30	33.3
Magami Ward	30	33.3
Rawaiyya Ward	30	33.3
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Table 4.7 presents the distribution of respondents according to their respective wards. The table shows that each of the three wards proposed has 30 respondents.

Table 4.8: Women Involvement in Agricultural Extension

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	58	64.4
No	32	35.5

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Table 4.8 shows the majority 58 (64.4%) of the respondents agreed women involvement in agricultural extension. While only 32 (35.5%) reported no participation of women in agricultural extension in the study area. The above data agrees with Baba, 1994 where he maintained that speculation of women is only practiced in urban areas where rural women actively participated.

Table 4.9: Frequency of Contact with Extension Staff

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Once a week	5	5.5
Fortnightly	40	44.4
Monthly	23	25.5
Seasonally	22	24.4
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Opinion regarding frequency of contact with extension staff is presented in Table 4.9. The results revealed that 5 (5.5%) of the respondents indicates once a week. About 40 (44.4%) fortnightly, similarly, 23 (25.5%) and 22 (24.4%) indicates their frequencies with extension staff monthly and seasonally respectively.

Table 4.10: Factors Responsible to lack of Women Participation in Agricultural Activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Government Support	30	33.3
Illiteracy	41	45.5
Lack of Facilities to work in field	3	3.3
Inadequate Extension Staff	16	17.7
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Perception of respondents regarding factors responsible to lack of women participation in agricultural activities in the study area revealed that 30 (33.3%) of the respondents reported lack of government support. While majority 41 (45.5%) reported illiteracy. About 3 (3.3%) opined that lack of facilities to work in the field is responsible. Similarly, 16 (17.7%) reported inadequate extension staff as a factor. The above findings coincide with National Concord 1990

who reported that lack of funds and facilities in the field contributed to many problems.

Table 4.11: Contributions of Women to Enhance the Success of Agricultural Extension

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Storage	2	2.2
Livestock Production	39	43.3
Poultry Keeping	4	4.4
Harvesting	16	17.7
Crop Production	26	28.8
Processing	3	3.3
Total	90	100%

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Survey result presented in Table 4.11 shows that 2 (2.2%) of the respondents contributes in storage of agricultural commodities. While majority 39 (43.3) are engaged in livestock production. While only 4 (4.4%) and 3 (3.3%) are engaged in poultry keeping and processing respectively. Similarly, 16 (17.7%) contributes to crop production. The above findings agrees with Olayiwola 1984 who stated that the major role in which women in Nigeria are engaged mostly is crop production and utilization of finished products of agricultural produce for human consumption.

Table 4.12: Women Satisfaction in the Entire Programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	58	64.4
No	32	35.5

Source: Survey Results, 2011

Data presented in Table 4.12 summarizes opinion regarding satisfaction of women in the entire programme. The results show that 58 (64.4%) reported they are satisfied, while 32 (35.5%) of the respondents are not satisfied with the programme. This shows that the extension services has helped in revolutionizing their pattern of production and also open a lot of opportunities for them to be self reliant forever.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The major objective of this paper is to investigate the role of women in agricultural extension services: A case study of Gusau Local Government, Zamfara State of Nigeria. The paper identified the extent of women participation in agricultural extension work and analyze the impact of extension services in the study area. Various problems were identified that is responsible to women involvement in agricultural activities in the study area. A total sample of ninety (90) respondents was selected out of three wards representing half of the Local Government Area. Data was analyzed using various statistical tools.

CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions drawn from this paper were: -

- Results of the study regarding group of people being taught indicates that 13 (14.4%) farmers and their families were taught extension principle. About 50 (55.5%) women organizations benefited from training on extension principles to help them improve on their agricultural practices.
- Opinion regarding extension method used shows that 18 (20%) of the respondents have used film show to convey extension methods, while about 23 (25.5%) used posters, about 11 (12.2%)

used electronic media. Majority of the respondents in the study area used demonstration to convey extension methods.

- Perception of respondents regarding problems encountered by extension agents revealed that 10 (11.1%) of the respondents reported religious bias in the society. While 2 (2.2%) are facing language barriers, about 21 (23.3%) reported poor attitude to work. Majority of the respondents reported inadequate transport facilities and finally 22 (24.4%) believe that all the above constitute the major problem they face in the delivery of extension message to women farmers.
- Survey results regarding women involvement in agricultural extension work shows that majority 58 (64.4%) of the respondents agreed women are involved in agricultural extension work while 32 (35.5%) reported non-participation of women in agricultural extension work in the study area.
- Opinion regarding frequency of contact with extension staff revealed that 5 (5.5%) of the respondents indicates once a week. About 40 (44.4%) fortnightly. Similarly, 23 (25.5%) and 22 (24.4%) indicates their frequency with extension staff monthly and seasonally respectively.
- Data regarding contribution of women to enhance the success of agricultural extension shows that 2 (2.2%) of the respondents contributes in storage of agricultural commodities, while majority 39 (43.3%) are engaged in livestock production, while only 4 (4.4%) and 3 (3.3%) are engaged in poultry keeping and processing respectively.
- Opinion regarding women satisfaction in the entire programme revealed that 58 (64.4%) reported they are satisfied, while 32 (35.5%) of the respondents are not satisfied.

In view of the above conclusion, therefore Null Hypothesis H₀ is accepted and Alternate Hypothesis H_A is rejected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:-

- i. Local leadership should encourage women to register for adult literacy programme so that the literacy level of women is increased.
- ii. Women should be encouraged to register as members of women organisation like National Council of Women Societies, Federation of Muslim Women Organisation, Association of Professional Business Women so that they can benefit from many programmes being offered by these organisations.
- iii. Microfinance Banks, Small and Medium Enterprises, Agency, commercial banks should provide soft loan to women farmers to enhance effective participation of women in agricultural business.
- iv. Extension workers should continue to visit women farmers and their organisations constantly so as to teach them latest extension message coming from Research Institutes.
- v. Zamfara State government should repair all rural feeder roads so that women farmers can transport their goods easily. Overhead projectors, generators and other facilities should be provided to Gusau Local Government Agricultural Department to enhance effective performance of extension staff.
- vi. Adequate number of extension staff should be employed to undertake some basic extension services.
- vii. Monitoring, evaluation and supervision of extension staff is important for better and improved extension services for rural farmers.
- viii. Local and International NGOs should provide training facilities for effective delivery of extension programmes to rural farmers.

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