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# Gender Issues in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development in Nigeria

Stella O. Odebode  
*Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development,  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan  
Nigeria*

## 1. Introduction

Agricultural development has been a major concern to most developing countries within the last two decades. It represents a cluster of six related but separate concepts; agricultural expansion; increased production per acre of cropped land or per head of livestock; agricultural growth; a situation characterized with agricultural products per agricultural worker, rising income per person employed and agricultural transformation.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, employing about 70-80 percent of the population with the GDP contribution of N34, 950 . 00 million between 1980-1985 (World Bank, 2003). This increased from N40,500. 00 million in 1986 to 59,389. 00 million in 1996 (FOS,2000). The aggregate agricultural production declined till 1980 (oil boom era) This led to a sharp decline in per capital real GDP in agriculture. By 1985, the index per capital real GDP of agriculture was 35 percent. Arokoyo (2003)

In Nigeria, the rural areas are the food and fibre producing centers. They are also the seed bed of national population which serve to replenish the human resources of the urban centers. During the period of national emergencies and crises, the rural areas constitute a reservoir of national patriotism and manpower (Ekong, 1988). Hence household security relies heavily on rural food production. According to Ekong (1988), the rapid increase in global food prices over the past years has raised a lot of issues in the developing countries. Development will therefore not be achieved without rapid agricultural growth.

Rural development is the bedrock of agricultural development in developing countries (including Nigeria) where most farmers are involved in subsistence agricultural practice. A review of current response to food crisis across the world has shown that these measures are being used with varying degrees of successes and failures, depending on the nature of the crisis per country. Various strategies are being used to protect the poor from the increase in price shocks. It is therefore necessary to invest in agricultural sector for rural development to increase agricultural output. Women's role is also very crucial to the overall success of efforts directed towards rural development for increased agricultural productivity. They are more involved in agricultural activities than men especially in sub-Saharan Africa and provide most labour for a number of agricultural activities. They constitute about 90 percent of the workforce involved in direct arable crop production (Ogunlela and Aisha, 2009). The

role of women in agricultural and rural development can therefore not be over-emphasized when considering rural and national development of Nigeria.

Rural Development will therefore take place when attention is paid to various relevant institutions such as the cooperative societies, land tenure system, bank and credits, development of viable local government areas, educational institutions, medical institutions, and agricultural marketing outlets.

### **Nigerian women in agricultural activities**

Rural development is the mainstay of agriculture and agricultural development in developing countries (including Nigeria) therefore all efforts geared towards agricultural development will be fruitless without it. Women in Africa (including Nigeria) generally play an important role in small-scale traditional agricultural production (Afolabi, 2008). Rural women have taken over the production and processing of arable crops and are responsible for as much as 80% of the staple food items. Estimates of women's contribution to the production of food crops range from 30% in the Sudan to 80% in the Congo contributing substantially to national agricultural production and food security (OECD, 1992). Most farmers in Nigeria operate on the subsistence and smallholder level in an extensive agricultural system; therefore, in the country's food security lie in their hands. Women farmers are the principal labour force on small holder farms and perform the largest share in land preparation, weeding, transporting, processing and marketing of agricultural products. Women therefore contribute greatly to agricultural production in Nigeria as take the lead in most agricultural activities. They make up to 60-80 percent of the labour force. Therefore the significant role they play in meeting the challenges of agricultural production and development are quite dominant and prominent. (OECD, 1992). The importance and relevance of women in agricultural development can therefore not be overemphasized. This is because they are known to be more involved in agricultural activities than men in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries including Nigeria.

## **2. Current extension delivery – Management and major actors in Nigeria**

The Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs) nationwide is the agency responsible for public extension service delivery at the grassroots. Recently there is a new democratic dispensation involving the local governments in extension delivery, in collaboration with the ADPs. The quality of staff and the resources of the Local Governments are such that they have been able to make minimal impact (Arokoyo, 2003).

### **2.1 Women in rural development programmes in Nigeria**

Over the years, Nigeria has been involved in several agricultural programmes which include Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, River basin development authority, Back-to-land programme e. t. c. Most of these programmes have not had a lasting impact and therefore vanished without achieving most of their objectives. Women -in-agriculture unit was created from the existing ADPs in 1989 in order to extend extensionists' services to women farmers. Since the World Bank stopped funding the programme, different states have tried to implement the programme under varying policies and adopting varieties of strategies to sustain the programme. The Women -In -agriculture unit of the ADPs was created in recognition of women's contribution to agriculture. This was as a result of a

research sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1987, which revealed that agricultural extension services had not targeted women as important clientele, in spite of the indispensable role played by women in agriculture. The research also revealed that most of the messages from the extension agents emphasized their domestic role with topics on child care and family nutrition. . The widespread assumption that men and not women make key farm management decision is a misconception and the idea that women in the northern parts of the country were not involved in active agriculture was finally laid to rest (Nnoyelu, 1996)

The Women-In- Agriculture programme therefore aims at identifying the key constraints and provides solutions towards increasing women farmers' agricultural productivity source and develop through research. WIA also helps to form women groups and cooperatives. This programme compliments greatly the efforts of other women agencies such as the women commission, women in health of all state Ministry of Agriculture and of course, the family support programme (FSP)

### **2.1.1 Women-in-Agriculture (WIA) development programme in Nigeria**

Women in Agriculture (WIA) was operative as one of the components of the UNDP major project NIR/87/014, tagged 'Strengthening agricultural extension services in Nigeria' between November 1988 to March 1991 with the aim of assisting the Federal government of Nigeria in meeting its declared objective of self-sufficiency in food production and increased agricultural export by helping to increase the rate of adoption of appropriate innovations by the rural farming communities. The Federal government of Nigeria (FGN) therefore requested for FAO/UNDP assistance.

The Integrated Agricultural Development Programme (IADP) led to the establishment of Agricultural Development Project (ADP) which is now present in each of the thirty-six states, and the Federal Capital Territory of the country. Idachaba (1988) reported that the ADPs constitute the single largest agency charged with the responsibilities for agricultural extension services in Nigeria. The ADPs started nearly a decade before the WIA (Women-In-Agriculture) was introduced in different places. The recognition of the dominant role of Nigerian women in farm production, and the need to modify extension system to address it was initiated by the Federal government of Nigeria after a series of World Bank study missions to a number of loan-assisted projects in various parts of Nigeria. These studies confirmed high contribution of women (60% of farmers) while they received little or no information from the extension agents Mijindadi (1985). The recognized involvement of women in agriculture and especially food production made it possible for the government to establish a WIA unit in April 1989. The activities of the WIA as a component within the extension department had focused on rendering of agricultural extension services through female extension staff to female farmers as individuals and groups in areas of crops and livestock production, handling and marketing techniques, processing, storage, and utilization.

The ADPs started nearly a decade before the WIA (Women-In-Agriculture) was introduced in different parts of Nigeria. The agricultural programme for women farmers aimed at harnessing the total on-farm and off-farm agricultural capabilities of farm women in order to build better lives for themselves, families and communities.

### 2.1.2 Objectives of the WIA unit of the ADP, Nigeria

The main objective of the WIA unit of the ADP is to improve the living standard of rural women farmers. The specific objectives of the WIA unit of the ADP include:

- identification of the constraints faced by women farmers;
- sourcing and collaborating with research institutions to develop suitable technologies to meet identified constraints and needs;
- Ensuring timely extension support to women farmers in the area of agricultural production, processing, utilization (with greater emphasis on production)
- Improving extension services through increase in number of female extension agents;
- Introducing improved and appropriate technologies which are labour saving and can remove drudgery, and are yet affordable by the women farmers.
- Organizing women groups and encouraging groups to register as viable cooperative groups so as to have access to credit facilities;
- Introducing newly recommended farm technologies by conducting SPATS and establishing women groups.
- Updating and up-grading the skills of WIA agents in agricultural/food production, preservation, storage, processing, utilization and nutrition.
- Training women farmers to increase their agricultural food production income and to improve their nutritional status;
- Developing local recipes from farm produce;
- Providing assistance to women in post harvest technologies; and
- Initiating technologies that will reduce the drudgery associated with day-to-day activities of women. (Odebode,2008)

## 3. Rural development

### 3.1 Concept of rural development

Development is a continuous process involving allocating and generating resources (Idachaba, 2000). This is mainly done to satisfy social and economic needs. Development in the rural area is also very important and endowed with abundant human and natural resources. Rural development involves a process by which a set of technical, social, cultural and institutional measures are implemented with and for the inhabitants of rural areas with the aim of improving their socio-economic conditions, to achieve harmony and balance at the state, national and the regional levels (Ekong,2003). Since there is no universal definition of rural development, different scholars view it from different perspectives. Obinne (1997) defined rural development as a process of creating and widening opportunities for individuals to realize full potential through education and share in decisions and action which affect their lives. Idachaba (2000) defined rural development as a means of providing basic amenities, infrastructure, improved agricultural productivity, extension services and employment generation for the rural dwellers. Olayide (1980) defined rural development as a process whereby concerted efforts are made to facilitate significant increase in rural resources and productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and creating employment opportunities in rural communities for rural dwellers. Hence, it is an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional infrastructures with an ultimate



goal of bringing about good healthcare delivery system, affordable and quality education, improved and sustainable agriculture etc. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) defined rural development as the far-reaching transformation of the social and economic structures, institutions, relationships and processes in the rural area. They viewed goals as agricultural and economic growth as well as social and economic development with equitable distribution and creation of benefits. UNECA (1974) defined rural development as a process by which a set of technical, social, cultural and institutional measures are implemented to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural dwellers. Ladele (1990) defined rural development as a cyclic process involving analysis of the current situation, policy, modeling and implementation of the measures to be used. He further opined that the programming of rural development is very essential for any agrarian economy. According to him, the greatest empowerment that could benefit rural folks is education and information. Extension education therefore will serve as an essential tool for the attainment of sustainable rural development.

In summary, it is imperative to view the development programme in Nigeria beyond the growth of a particular sector. Development must be viewed with a holistic perspective. This is because rural development in Nigeria has been going on under various means by various organizations, communities, states and local government areas for a long time.

Rural development in Nigeria was viewed as the same with agricultural development. It therefore goes beyond this and covers issues relating to social, institutional and physical infrastructure.

In Nigeria, the local government, state and federal governments contribute to rural development. These efforts are being complemented by the activities of non-governmental organizations, international funding agencies and community initiatives.

An integrated rural development recognizes rural-urban continuum and the implication that the rural area cannot be considered in isolation but in relation to the urban counterparts. Furthermore, different policies were put in place by the government on rural development in order to improve the living condition in the rural areas and discourage rural-urban migration.

Despite the number of rural development policies introduced at different times, by different successive government with a huge of material and financial resources, each policy usually dies with the initiating government. All efforts made by the government to put money into agricultural development have not yielded good result. Other efforts include provision of modern infrastructure, primary health care, food and shelter, employment opportunities, recreational facilities, primary and secondary education, loan and further incentives.

### **3.1.1 Characteristics of the rural areas**

Ekong (1988) identified the characteristics of the rural areas as follows:

Rural areas involve people with lower level of living, ineffective or institutional structures, poor social and physical infrastructures, low per capital income, poor technical efficiency of agriculture as a result of poor production methods, small cultivable land, endemically low productivity and High level of poverty.

Several development projects in Nigeria since 1960 include the farm settlement scheme established in 1960s, the National Accelerated Food Production Programmes (NAFPP) established in 1972, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) (1972), the Nigerian Agricultural & Cooperative Bank (NACB) (1973), the Rural Banking scheme (1973), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (1976), the River Basin Development Authority (1976), Agricultural Credit Guaranteed Scheme (ACGS) (1978), Directorate of food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) (1986), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (1987), Directorate of social mobilization (MAMSER) (1987), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) (1988), Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLP) (1986) and Food security and Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) (1999). These different rural development projects were put in place to improve the livelihood of the rural people by different governments at different times.

### 3.1.2 Objectives of rural development projects in Nigeria

The major objectives of rural development programmes are as stated below:

- Maximum mobilization of domestic human and material resources for self reliance
- Provision of social amenities and infrastructures to narrow the gap between the rural and the urban areas
- Integrating the goals of development efforts into a comprehensive system.
- Bridging the gap between the rural and urban areas by providing social amenities and infrastructures. Chambers (1983).

### 3.1.3 Problems of rural development programme in Nigeria

Rural development programme in Nigeria is faced with constraints. These constraints serve as impediments to successful agricultural development programmes. Problems limiting rural development programmes include:

- Lack of rural infrastructural development
- Improper interpretation of local situation.
- Effect of conflicts and even threat of potential conflicts.
- Environmental Degradation
- High level of corruption and crime
- Lack of proper coordinated implementation of programmes.
- Lack of community empowerment
- Lack of Control over productive resources by the women.
- Lack of Social or Economic Power by women as against their male counterparts and poor health of women

These problems hinder rural development especially among women in the rural areas in Nigeria. It is therefore important to look at the development planning holistically because development planning often runs the risk of tackling one problem without consideration of other issues that are closely related and may affect the success or failure of interventions. It is important to see the holistic picture of opportunities and constraints, activities and values, personal characteristics of age, education, status e. t. c. to plan a strategy that will truly be beneficial for the society at large and the individuals at the grassroots. Attempts to increase

women's incomes or agricultural productivity will succeed if other constraints facing women, such as limited access to credit, labour shortages and lack of seed and other input are also addressed (Olawoye, 2010). Rural development efforts should aim at assisting all members of the community including women. This is because, in some communities, certain groups or individuals are marginalized. These individuals include the poor, women, especially widows, or persons from poor households, ethnic minorities, pastoralists, physically challenged and other sick people.

### 3.2 Rural women in food production

Over the past two decades, issues relating to the recognition of women's role in economic and social development and of equality between men and women have fostered increasing interest among policy makers and development practitioners. Despite a noticeable improvement in gender awareness worldwide, data on women's work and economic contribution have remained far from comprehensive (Odebode 2008). Their economic roles have been undervalued, underestimated and seldom acknowledged for proper articulation in development plans and policy information.

However, with the rapid socio-economic growth, now being experienced all over the world, women are found to be playing significant roles wherever they are found. Within the last two decades, the role of women in the development process has become a major focus of research analysis and policy decision. The situation analysis of sexual inequalities and socio-cultural dynamics has revealed gender disparities in income, health, education, literacy, share of income from labour, economic participation and political voice (Sarr, 1999). Women are thereby often relegated to the status of second-class citizens, depending on the rights of their husbands and other male relatives. They often have limited access to and control of productive resources such as land, technology or financial services (FAO, 2006). According to Olawoye (1988), rural women constitute the "economically active population" but they were largely not considered productive because they usually worked as unpaid family labour. A large majority of the farmers operate at the subsistence, smallholder level, with intensive agriculture being uncommon.

In Nigeria, as in many parts of Africa, it is estimated that women contribute about 70 percent of the labour in food processing and preservation (Olawoye, 1988). However, division of labour in food production in the rural areas of Africa is usually both task and crop specific. While men do the land clearing, grow perennial crops, provide meat and raise large animals, women do the hoeing, planting, thinning, weeding and care for small domestic animals.

Each organization has its own gender culture (i. e. relationship between male and female). Mainstreaming gender into agriculture is therefore a necessity to bring gender perspective to all aspects of agricultural policies, and activities by building gender capacity and accountability.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that men and women benefit equally. Gender issue therefore



involves basic gender relationship which has become a major determinant for different situations.

Nigeria is a very big country with different socio-cultural, geopolitical and agro-ecological zones. Furthermore, there are more than 350 different ethnic groups with large proportions of Muslims, Christians and traditional believers (Olawoye, 2005). These diversities have resulted into various dimensions to gender relationships, cutting across different groups. Gender-based differences have therefore become important at household, community and national levels.

In Nigeria, the gender-related responsibilities at the household and community levels are clearly delineated. 'Gender' has become a common development concern in the last two decades (Olawoye et al, 2002). Gender is therefore not just the differentiation between male and female but involves socially constructed roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities for people (Olawoye et al, 2002). In addition, gender does not refer to women alone because the activities of women can only be understood fully in relation to the gender division of responsibilities in the household, community or nation.

In any society, gender roles are developed and transmitted through the process of socialization with the family members and other significant groups and individuals taking up the major role of agents of socialization at various developmental stages. In Nigeria, there is the tendency of encouraging gender stereotyping with boys and girls brought up to believe that aggressive behavior and certain occupations are suitable for males and that girls should be restricted to gentle behavior and less technical careers.

### **3.2.1 Gender issues in agriculture**

There has been a growing recognition of the importance of gender to some specific development sectors in recent times. It has also become a cross-cutting issue in agriculture, health and, infrastructural development. This is because, there has been significant gender related changes. In the past decades, women have been known to play an important role in agricultural activities in the rural areas. Despite their roles in agricultural activities, their contributions were not recognized and so, they were left out in development programs. This has led to decrease in agricultural productivity (Odebode, 2008).

Women do most of the work in the subsistence agricultural sector in most localities in Nigeria. Women are responsible for fetching water, gathering firewood, transporting harvested produce to the homestead and market and carrying crops to the mill for processing. In Nigeria, the introduction of Sharia laws prohibiting males and females traveling together has put additional strain on women in the affected states. Women therefore spend more time moving from place to place within the village vicinity.

Gender as a concept is used in social sciences to define the roles and activities of men and women. These roles are socially defined by the traditions and beliefs of a particular culture. Gender is therefore not synonymous with sexual differences which are based on only on biological characteristics. The gender constructions are culture specific and assign different identities and roles to men and women (Olawoye, 2002)

Gender analysis is a tool for understanding and learning more about the activities of male and female in the society, the opportunities and problems they face in performing their

activities. Olawoye, et al (1994) defined Gender as a social construct that identifies the socially expected rights, responsibilities, privileges and obligations of males and females. According to her, each society or group decides which tasks, as well as which opportunities should be assigned to males and females, young and old. Olawoye et al (1994) further explained that Gender analysis involves the study of both male and female responsibilities and how these responsibilities and activities are interrelated.

Gender division of labour is best understood in learning about socio-cultural differences. Gender analysis therefore is not necessarily about developing programs for women, which is the common assumption of the people in the society. It is focused on the relations of both men and women to the social and economic structure of the society.

In many societies, men have certain roles and responsibilities while women have other roles and responsibilities and often, the biological differences between men and women are used to explain these different roles. In Ghana, for example, men have traditionally been involved in cloth weaving. In India, women are laborers in the construction company. So biological differences do not necessarily determine what men and women (Olawoye,2005) can or should do. The roles are often socially defined by the traditions and beliefs of a particular culture. In conclusion, there are many potential effects of gender imbalance to responsibilities usually heavier for women.

### **3.2.2 Importance of gender analysis in extension work**

Gender analysis is important in development programmes for many reasons. It helps to do a systematic assessment of males and females often different needs, preferences, activities, and preferences as well as different access and control over resources by males and females, sexual division of labour, and income-generating activities and participation of men and women in development opportunities. (Olawoye,1985) The importance of gender analysis is summarized below:

1. It provides information recognizing gender and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability and other statuses.
2. It helps in planning issues relating to livelihood. This will assist in achieving viable and sustainable livelihood strategies.
3. This can be used in raising awareness of gender issues. This helps to inform policy makers and provide gender training materials. All these will assist in monitoring different impact of policy, project and budget commitment on both male and female.
4. Gender analysis helps to identify the needs of male and female.
5. It helps to identify different problems facing the participation of both male and female.
6. Gender analysis helps to identify various ways in which male and female do or do not benefit from livelihood interventions.
7. It provides reasons for the current division of responsibilities and benefits and their effect on the distribution of rewards and incentives.
8. It helps to provide insights on how gender equality can be prioritized within efforts of sustainable development to ensure maximum efficiency in pursuing development goals.
9. Gender analysis helps to identify the roles and responsibilities of male and female (e. g. productive roles, reproductive roles); seasonal patterns (community participation,

community politics), Assets (e. g. human assets, natural assets, social assets, physical assets and financial assets) power and decision making, needs and priorities (e. g. women's and men's needs and priorities).

### 3.2.3 Reasons for gender analysis in agricultural extension work

Agriculture is the main source of foreign exchange earnings in Nigeria. It supplies both food and cash crops that help her foreign exchange earnings.

Agricultural Extension is an out of school, voluntary, educational process aimed at improving the welfare of the rural populace (Odebode, 2005).

A common assumption is that gender analysis focuses only on the status of women in the society. It is focused on the relationship of both men and women to the social and economic structure of a society.

Some gender analysis theorists observed that, the focus for gender analysis is on men and women's productive roles and that activities that men and women carry out in the agricultural process come under this group; various researches have showed a better picture of gender roles in agriculture. Men and women may work on the same crop, on the same field but perform different tasks. For example, land preparation is usually the task of men while weeding is identified with women. Various members of households perform various tasks assigned to different members of the household. It is important to note that both women and men play significant roles in agricultural production. Mook (1986)

Despite the importance of the productive activities of the Nigerian farmers, little was known about the important roles played by women. In agricultural development, both men and women farmers do not carry their agricultural activities alone but what is significant in the daily needs of farming families e. g. farmers need to wash their fabrics, cook, pay their children's fees, attend churches/ mosques, and perform various social activities. Gender analysis takes into consideration, other roles that pertain to the lives of farmers in their communities. In farming communities, women and men alike have different commitments in their community roles. (Odebode and Akinsorotan, 2002) During the colonial period, efforts to improve agric productivity focused on increasing cash crop production by the male farmers. Women's role became more prominent after the independence.

### 3.2.4 Importance of gender analysis in agricultural extension work

Gender analysis helps the extension agent to:

- find ways of providing information to men and women in the performance of shared tasks.
- provide information to both men and women as to what relates to their specific tasks
- provide technical information to farmers
- provision of information in understanding gender roles as it relates to crops and tasks
- provide alternative ways of communicating information to farmers
- facilitate the formation of women farmers groups.
- present new technologies in ways that are easily understood by both men and women farmers and can be implemented one step at a time, bearing in mind literacy and language issues faced by women in particular.

### 3.2.5 Gender terms

**Gender:** This is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men and the relationship between them. i. e. it is the socially constructed relationships between men and women. (Toolkit for Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Africa,2006)

**Sex:** This refers to biological differences between men and women. An individual is a male or female regardless of race, class or age. However, the social meaning attached to that person's sex may be different.

**Gender Equity:** This is the process of being fair to women and men. Usually, equity leads to equality. Gender equity therefore denotes the equivalence in life outcome for women and men recognizing their different needs and interest (. University of Ibadan Draft Gender policy (2011)

**Gender Equality:** This refers to the allocation of resources opportunities, support and encouragement without any discrimination on the basis of biology, between men and women. i. e. it means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit from the results. Gender equality therefore means women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. For example, if men and women are given the same opportunities, equality will be greatly achieved i. e. equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences between women and men and the varying roles they play.

**Gender roles:** These are clusters of socially or culturally defined and learned expectations about how people will behave in specific situations.

**Gender mainstreaming:** This is an organization strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities through building gender capacity and accountability.

**Gender Needs:** Shared and prioritized needs identified by women that arise from their common experiences.

**Gender Planning:** This involves the technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender -sensitive policy.

**Gender Relations:** This involve hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to discourage women.

**Gender Violence:** This involves an act or threat by men or male-dominated institutions, that inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender. This occurs in situations where women and men struggle for resources, influence and exercise power in everyday living. There is a systematic exclusive of women from exclusion authority, unfairness in allocation of resources.

**Gender Training:** A process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues, to bring about personal or organizational change for gender equality.

**Gender Discrimination:** This is the systematic treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.

**Women Empowerment:** This is a bottom-up process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it. It is about men and women taking control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building up self-confidence, solving problems and developing self reliance.

**Gender division of labour:** This is the organization of labour on the assumption that men perform specific roles and that women provide domestic labour such as house wives.

**Gender awareness:** This is a situation whereby all players in an organization and institution recognize the importance of gender and its effects on their objectives, plans and programs

**Gender sensitivity:** This is the translation of awareness into practices, which result in changes in the perceptions, plans and activities of institutions and organizations.

**Gender blindness:** This is the conscious development of objectives, plans and programs in an organization with no effort to recognize or incorporate gender issues that might influence the functioning of that organization, the production of plans, the implementation of programs and the outcomes of the programs. It reinforced or practiced by people who do not or refuse to consider gender as a factor in institutional settings. Odejide (2011)

**Gender Gap:** This is referred to as the difference in the scores between men and women on attitudes, interests, behaviors, knowledge and perspectives on particular issues such as policy preferences and voting preferences. Gender Gap may be attributable to women's difference or distance in perspective or independence from men in opinions, perceptions, economic interests and social and psychological autonomy. It varies according to class, race, age, marital status, religion and other factors. (Gender Equity policy (2011)

**Gender Audit:** This gender audit helps to understand what the situations of women are relative to those of men in a given organization. This may be on achievement of men and women, enrolment, and retention.

### **3.3 Gender issues in agriculture and rural development**

In Nigeria, the study of gender considerations in the conduct of research, programmes and government policy formulation have improved and gained prominence in all aspects of human endeavors in the last three decades. gender has been accepted as a cross-cutting issue in nearly every sector . The consideration of gender issues in Agriculture has therefore become imperative for a fuller understanding of social dynamics from the international to the household levels.

#### **3.3.1 Women and youth in agriculture**

Over the years, issues concerning women have taken on new dimensions and have also received varied treatments by the United Nations and other agencies.

With the rapid socio-economic growth, now being experienced, all over the world, women are found to be playing significant roles wherever they are found. Though it is an established fact that the majority of people in developing countries such as Nigeria live in rural areas and that



over 50 percent of the rural population are women. It is therefore important to examine the contributions of women to agricultural development if self-sustained rural development is to be achieved. Rural women have several roles such as farm management, home makers and agricultural labourer (Odebode,2007). Over the past decade, laborers, women's contribution to family income have been well documented (Adekanye, 1985) and official agencies are beginning to recognize women as producers of goods, not just consumers of services. There is a growing realization that development programmes have not only failed to benefit women, but also have hurt them (Adekanye, 1986). The U. N. Decade for women (1976-1985) which legitimized women's status has contributed immensely to the awareness of women's major contributions to their societies OECD (1990).

Different studies by researchers have revealed the true curriculum on rural women's lives and have made some impacts on development policies of governments and donor agencies. As a result, how best to integrate women into the development process has been consistently and systematically questioned by both researchers and practitioners.

Women's roles are vital to the sustenance of their families, communities and society at large. They work on the fields and farms to produce food crops for family consumption and or sale, rear animals, market farm produce in addition to bearing and rearing children and manage large households with little amenities such as basic necessity such as portable water and fuel Seiders (1996). Some work on their husband's farms carrying out varieties of operations while some women are traders of food crops, selling processed and unprocessed forms of agricultural products while few are commercial farm producers involved in cash crop production. In summary, rural women in Nigeria are extremely active in agricultural activities. i. e. food processing, food productive marketing and distribution of agricultural produce. They are also involved in child bearing, family health, nutrition, home management and other domestic chores (Odebode, 2008).

Therefore,

- agricultural extension services and other non-farm and non-agricultural extension work should be directed towards them to enhance their income and improve their standard of living.
- Agricultural extension programmes should target both men and women so as to improve their knowledge and skills and subsequently improve agricultural activities.
- Agricultural extension programmes should also be aware of women's roles and be able to involve women in extension activities.

### **3.3.2 Constraints to women's role in agriculture**

Agriculture represents a dominant sector of the economy of Nigeria. Agriculture also remained the main source of foreign exchange earnings until the discovery of petroleum. Nigerian women constitute more than half of the agricultural labour force. Though rural women in farms and household throughout Nigeria and Africa in general play significant roles in food production, processing and feeding families. According to Olawoye, (2002) there were specific breakthroughs in acknowledging the significant role played by rural women in agricultural production which resulted into a limited value as an input to gender sensitive policy formulation. This according to Olawoye led to numerous specific studies among different tribes.

The end of that decade therefore focused attention on the constraints faced by rural women in their productive activities.

Some of the constraints rural women face in Agriculture are stated below:

### **1. Lack of control over productive resources**

Rural women lack control over productive resources necessary for their livelihood activities. These include lack of control over Land, labour, capital, decision-making. All these are major limitations for the majority of the rural dwellers. There is the need to improve access of rural women to all these productive resources to enhance their productivity and expand the areas they use for production. Without adequate incentives, infrastructure, credit, etc. their productivity will remain low.

### **2. Lack of social or economic power**

Women are usually ascribed or given a lower status than men and they are not usually allowed a voice in development. Rural women need to be encouraged to take active roles in agricultural activities and women should be encouraged to form cooperatives, farm focus group discussions and traditional groups whereby they would be allowed to contribute and give their contributions to agricultural development.

### **3. Lack of education and training**

Education is very essential in the development process. It enhances participation and helps to build confidence in women. Inequality with men counterparts inhibits progress. Women's access to education and training influences their productivity (Adeyeye, 1991). Lack of education and training in basic skills contributes to the vicious cycle of under-development, low productivity and poor conditions of health and welfare of women (Odejide, 1988). Rural women usually rely on their service providers due to lack of education. These service providers include the transporters, marketers, input suppliers and loan providers.

### **4. Poor health of women**

Due to involvement in too many tasks by women, their health is usually affected. This results into low productivity.

### **5. Time**

Rural women do not have enough time for other economic activities due to their involvement in multiple tasks and this has limited expansion on their scale of activities. This also limits their ability to participate in other income generating activities. Odejide (1996). Jiggins (1989) identified the constraints of rural women in agriculture as fluctuation in the supply and demand with seasonal climatic changes, frequent product market venture, poor opportunities for diversification and multiple roles of women limiting their freedom to exploit commercial assets. More attention should be focused on designing programmes that will help to enhance the income and improve productivity of rural women.

## **4. Conclusion**

This paper has defined rural development as the process of improving the living standards of the masses of the low income population. wherever they may be residing and making

the process of their development self-sustaining. This is because rural economy still constitutes the cornerstone of the economy. Features of rural development highlighted include improving the living standards, required mobilization and allocation of scarce resources and drawing up priorities among competing needs. This is basically to attain a maximum balance between available productive services and welfare. Making the process of self-sustaining therefore will need involving, working with, and deciding with the rural inhabitants who are the beneficiaries of rural development.

Development planners should therefore believe in the ability of the rural people for leadership capability that could further be developed and harnessed. The beneficiaries (rural people) should also be willing to accept responsibilities or the control of the welfare of the people. (WCED,1978) Successive governments in Nigeria have been trying their best to work on the need for rural development. All these programmes have been put in place to improve the standard of living of the people. Rural development programmes must therefore be sustainable. This is because the greatest bane in Nigeria's development process is lack of sustainability from one government to another. The challenge of extension service in Nigeria is to assist in transforming the rural communities in a way as to ensure the well-being of the present and future generations regularly. Sustainable rural development does not involve a particular form of farming, nor the use of a particular piece of land. The sustainability of the capacity of the people, countries and the whole world to support the livelihood of the people is very important. Rural development in Nigeria will be sustainable when Nigerians have access to all basic and essential goods and services required to live a decent life. i. e. potable clean water, inside and outside their houses, well staffed and equipped hospitals and schools, markets, transportation facilities, electricity, communication, balanced nutrition, employment, recreational facilities, efficient sewage system, and all enduring democracy. Rural development will be sustainable when the needs and aspirations of the present are met without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. This involves the process in which the exploitation of resources, direction of investments, and the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance the current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspirations

Finally, gender inequalities should be given more attention as it is fundamental for enhancing women's position, roles, responsibilities and participation in rural development process. This will enable the participation of women to rural and agricultural development to assume a better perception. This will also enable the government to formulate gender-responsive policies. Such policies will be gender sensitive and will help in promoting food production and empower women to gain equal access to production and marketing. Such policies will also help to consider gender roles in rural development.

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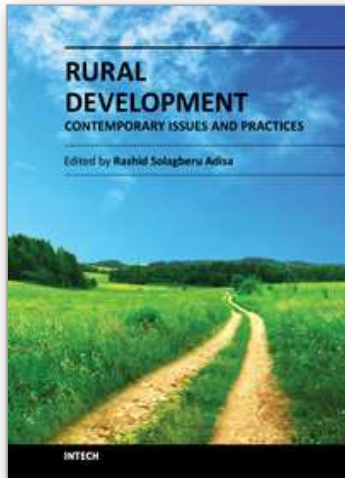


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## **Rural Development - Contemporary Issues and Practices**

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Development of rural areas has witnessed increasing attention globally, especially over the past three to four decades. The highpoint in the renewed global interest in the development of rural people and their environment was reached with the setting of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000. All of the set goals are basically rural development goals. With less than four years to the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs, it is almost certain that the goals are far from being achieved in, especially, most developing countries for whom the MDGs were essentially set. The struggle thus continues for rural development. As long as problems of poverty, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, poor infrastructure, environmental degradation and others persist (or increase) in rural communities, better and more result-oriented solutions to perennial and emerging problems of rural communities would be required. But rural development, in spite of the variations in thresholds of rurality among nations, is not exclusively a Third World or &ldquo;developing countries&rsquo; process, owing to its multi-dimensionality. It is a global phenomenon that obviously requires global strategies. This book not only looks at rural development from its multi-dimensional perspectives, it is also a product of the experiences and expertise of distinguished scholars across the continents. Aiming to provide a comprehensive single volume that addresses salient issues and practices in rural development, the book covers themes ranging from sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, strategic environmental assessment, renewable energy, rural financial resources, assessment of protected areas to statistics for rural development policy. Other subject matters covered by the book include social marginality, land use conflict, gender, cooperatives, animal health, rural marketing, information and communication technology, micro-business, and rural economic crisis. The book is thus an invaluable source of useful information on contemporary issues in rural development for researchers, policy makers, and students of rural development and other related fields.

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