

SUB-THEME: Livestock Economics, Extension and Marketing

GENDER-BASED CONSTRAINTS IN MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN NDOKWA EAST AND WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined gender-based constraints in marketing of agricultural products in Ndokwa East and West LGAs of Delta State. A random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents for this study because they are marketers of the four selected agricultural produce in the study area. The first stage involved random selection of five (5) communities from each of the Local Government areas that have marketers of selected agricultural products. The second stage involved random sampling technique to select a total number of two hundred (200) respondents that are sellers of cassava tubers, plantain, garri and yam tuber sellers from the selected communities. Primary data were collected for the study using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire seeks information in accordance to the specific objectives of the study. Data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. Gender analysis also showed differences in the severity of the constraints as experienced by men and women in marketing of four selected agricultural products. Product quantity are a constraining factor for men as a result of the upcoming but still relatively small in marketing of agricultural products. Poor market infrastructure and middle men exploitation were constraints significantly more mentioned by women in general. Men identified limited processing facilities/equipment as the most important constraint affecting the demand of cassava products, while women in both locations were more constrained by the shortage of basic amenities and trainings that hindered their processing. It was recommended that government and private organizations should encourage these young male and females who are already into agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) marketing through the provision of improved marketing system in the study area and government at both state and local levels should also encourage engagement in marketing of agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) through provision of credit facilities.

Keywords: Gender, Based, Constraints, Marketing, Agricultural Products

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, gender disparity in agriculture have undergone several transitions overtime. Undoubtedly, women's contribution to food and agricultural production in most developing countries is significant. Women represent a substantial share of the agricultural labour force, as independent small farmers or as agricultural workers. In spite of the invaluable disparity of women in the value chain of agricultural marketing, there is a strong gender imbalance that is fostered by agricultural market conduct, structures and concentration of production and resources, as most women farmers tend to hold small-scale and family farms while men, more likely to own medium-sized or large scale commercial farms, are in a better position to capitalize on the expansion of agricultural tradable goods (Holzner, 2003).

In the opinion of Warren (2012), another pressing issue relates to the socio-economic functioning of female gender disparity, particularly as it relates to marketing of agricultural products and in the society as a whole. Women are generally associated with non-economic and unpaid work, most of which takes place within the so-called reproductive economy. The reproductive economy supplies labour and social capital to the economy at large and transmits social and cultural values. Although that contribution is not registered in the system of national accounts since no market value is given to the labour involved, the increased demand for female labour in agricultural marketing activities has huge implications for women's burden in the reproductive sphere. That is to say, the reproductive economy of women at the home front interferes with their rightful place in the marketing economy.

Certain factors determine gender disparity in marketing of agricultural products. One of them is modernization or technological advancement. Modernization of agriculture through technological advancement has come to favour the male counterpart. Men were privileged to be educated, had access to technological equipment, technical assistance, and have benefited from legislations that granted them access to resources, especially land. Women, on the other hand, have been further entrenched into the mainstream of agriculture with crude methods of cultivation, harvesting, production and marketing (FAO, 2013). On account of these, women have not been fully entrenched to the utilization of modern technologies in agricultural production and marketing. The asymmetries or disparity of gender disparity in marketing of agricultural products could also be due to lesser education and enlightenment of the female gender. Manda and Mvumi (2010) discovered that men rather than women participated in markets and managed household finance from bulk sales making them have less access to finance. This was what Akanle *et al* (2019) described as feminization of poverty among rural women of developing countries especially in Africa. Moreover, most agricultural policies do not favour the female gender as they are tilted to cash crops cultivation and marketing. Obviously, women have been excluded from the agricultural policy reforms and programmes in recent times with the assertion that men are the main agricultural drivers and decision-makers (Ozoya, 2016). Some of these policies include; Forest Policy (1937), Forest Policy (1945), Agricultural Policy (1946), Policy for the Marketing of Oils, Oil Seeds and Cotton (1948), Forest Policy for Western Region (1952), and Agricultural Policy (1952) (Ozoya, 2016). Instead of marketing agricultural product to generate income for the house, the task of household food production - the basic right of household members to the food they need –behooves on the women and thus enormous on them, especially for those in the rural settlements (United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) 2013)

Gender analysis gives an insight into how socially constructed disparity and responsibilities shape the numerous decisions about marketing in agriculture (Akanle, *et al.*, 2019). Elson, Evers & Gideon (2015), a gendered analysis of the functioning of agricultural marketing is rooted in the understanding of globalization as a process of transnationalization of capital and expansion of the market economy. Assessing the impact gender disparity has on agricultural marketing, and how these gender asymmetries manifest in Ndokwa East and Ndokwa West Local Government Areas, gives rise to intricate issues.

It is therefore against these backdrops the researcher seeks to examine gender-based constraints in marketing of agricultural products in Ndokwa East and West LGAs of Delta State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of the study comprises the marketers of agricultural products in Ndokwa East and West Local Government Areas of Delta State. A random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents for this study because they are marketers of the four selected agricultural produce in the study area. The first stage involved random selection of five (5) communities from each of the Local Government areas that have marketers of selected agricultural products. The second stage involved random sampling technique to select a total number of two hundred (200) respondents that are sellers of cassava tubers, plantain, garri and yam tuber sellers from the selected communities. Primary data were collected for the study using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire seeks information in accordance to the specific objectives of the study.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using the following analytical tools:

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation were used to achieve objective which is the gender-based constraints in marketing of agricultural products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender based constraints in marketing of agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) in Ndokwa East and West LGA

Agricultural marketing has not received the type of attention accorded agricultural production (Olukosi *et al.*, 2012). Although there have been attempts in the past for organized marketing institutions like the defunct Marketing Boards: to intervene; the farmer has continued to face problems in the marketing of his products. Table 1 showed the mean scores of constraints (on a scale of 1–5) experienced by men and women in selected agricultural products marketing level in Ndokwa East/West LGA, Delta States, Nigeria. Constraints in each category are listed from high (more severe/important) to low (less severe/important) based on the average scores for the two sexes. For the disaggregation into states only

the constraints that show significant differences between men and women are shown. Gender analysis also showed differences in the severity of the constraints as experienced by men and women in marketing of four selected agricultural products. Product quantity are a constraining factor for men as a result of the upcoming but still relatively small in marketing of agricultural products. Poor market infrastructure and middle men exploitation were constraints significantly more mentioned by women in general. Men identified limited processing facilities/equipment as the most important constraint affecting the demand of cassava products, while women in both locations were more constrained by the shortage of basic amenities and trainings that hindered their processing. Access is a critical dimension of marketing of agricultural products. Unless the appropriate physical, economic, and information infrastructure is in place, men and women marketers of agriculture products may be unable to sustain their productivity and marketing their products. Women's gains at marketing level may be limited in many contexts mostly associated with limited improved/modern processing equipment and infrastructure like good motorable roads that link processing centers and markets. Gender-responsiveness needs to go beyond increasing yield through agronomic practices as its major upscaling objective to meet specific important needs associated to men and women activities along the value chain like giving recognition/rewards, encouraging men and women's active disparity in agricultural and product diversification trainings and workshop.

Table 1: Gender Based Constraints to Marketing of Agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) in Ndokwa West LGA

| Gender based Constraints | Mean scores | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-------|
| | Average Men & Woman | Men | Women |
| Marketing constraints | | | |
| Agricultural products (cassava) | | | |
| Poor market infrastructure | 2.70 | 2.19 | 3.20 |
| Low product price | 2.68 | 2.10 | 3.26 |
| Middle men exploitation | 2.32 | 1.52 | 3.12 |
| Unavailability of profitable market | 2.09 | 2.06 | 2.11 |
| Difficulty in setting prices | 1.40 | 1.31 | 1.49 |
| Low product quality | 1.30 | 1.19 | 1.40 |
| Access to market information | 3.02 | 2.72 | 3.32 |
| Agricultural products (Maize) | | | |
| Poor market infrastructure | 2.91 | 2.50 | 3.31 |
| Low product price | 2.75 | 2.43 | 3.06 |
| Middle men exploitation | 2.60 | 1.93 | 3.26 |
| Price variation | 3.07 | 2.63 | 3.50 |
| Marketing constraints | | | |
| Agricultural products (Plantain) | | | |
| High cost of labour | 2.98 | 1.82 | 4.14 |
| Low product price | 2.71 | 1.99 | 3.43 |
| Unavailability of profitable market | 2.57 | 2.07 | 3.07 |
| Marketing constraints | | | |
| Agricultural products (Yam) | | | |
| High cost of weeding | 2.48 | 1.96 | 3.00 |
| High cost of input | 2.20 | 1.40 | 3.00 |
| High cost of processing equipment | 2.16 | 1.52 | 2.79 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| High cost of transportation | 2.06 | 1.40 | 2.71 |
| Unavailability of hired labour | 1.87 | 1.10 | 2.64 |
| Middle men exploitation | 1.83 | 1.16 | 2.50 |

Sources: Author's Computation 2021.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded the existence of gender disparity in the marketing of agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) in the study area. This disparity was occasioned by socio-economic factors of the marketers as well as gender-based constraints. Policy measures aimed at mitigating the most serious gender-based problems will minimize gender disparity and improve the structure and conduct of the markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will help to reduce the constraints faced by both male and female disparity in marketing of agricultural products:

- i. Government and private organizations should encourage these young male and females who are already into agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) marketing through the provision of improved marketing system in the study area.
- ii. Government at both state and local levels should encourage engagement in marketing of agricultural products (cassava, yam, maize and plantain) through provision of credit facilities.

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