



INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON LAND TENURE RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION AMONG RICE FARMERS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to analyse influence of gender on land tenure rights and participation among rice farmers in Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to identify various forms of land tenure rights existing among respondents, ascertain gender participation in rice production decision making process, determine influence of land tenure rights on level of participation, and assess strategies for enhancing access to and control over land tenure rights. Data for the study were collected through structured questionnaire from the three agricultural zones in the state using a multi-stage sampling procedure. A total of 383 respondents were selected for the study. Frequencies, percentages and regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The results indicated that most (60.6%) of the males had land through inheritance while majority (77.1%) of the females acquired through renting. The results also revealed that a sizeable proportion of the males (62%, 47.7% and 39%) were involved in decisions regarding: where to grow the crop, techniques to adopt and quantity to consume and sell respectively, while a smaller proportion of the females (38.4%, 30.2% and 15.6 %) were involved in decisions concerning: where to grow the crop, techniques to adopt and quantity of rice to consume and sell respectively. The results also showed that land tenure rights through inheritance and communal ownership had positive influence on the level of participation among rice farmers at 1% level of significance. The results also revealed that major strategies for enhancing land tenure rights were: abolition of certain cultures, equal participation, and promotion of adult education with percentage representation of 94.4%, 63.2% and 51.7% respectively. The study therefore recommended that women should be given equal opportunity as men to acquire land through inheritance so as to enhance their participation in rice production.

INTRODUCTION

Land is an important factor in the development of agriculture. This is because land according to Scown, Winkler, and Nicholas (2019) provides the largest share of food supplies and ensures an essential number of ecosystem services.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 1993) defined land as a delineable area of the earth's terrestrial surface, encompassing all attributes of the biosphere immediately above or below this surface including those of the near-surface climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology (including shallow lakes, rivers, marshes, and swamps), the

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near-surface sedimentary layers and associated groundwater reserve, the plant and animal populations, the human settlement patterns and physical results of past and present human activity (terracing, water storage or drainage structures, roads, buildings. Fisher (1987) viewed land as comprising all naturally occurring resources whose supply is inherently fixed.

As a natural resource, it is central to the lives of people, especially those living in countries like Nigeria and particularly Cross River State whose economic development and sustenance depend on it. This is why the right to land cannot be ignored. Land tenure right as opined by Kasimbasi (2017) refers to people's recognised ability to control and manage land - using it and disposing of its products as well as engaging in such transaction as the transferring or leasing of land. According to Duncan and Ping (2001), land tenure rights may be said to be complete when the right to land is legally and socially recognized, as well as enforceable by external authorities. This implies that a right to land that is legally recognizable but not socially recognized or enforceable is an incomplete land tenure right. The right to land as opined by Agwu, Amasiatu and Onuoha (2010) is different from other forms of rights because of the following characteristics: it is subject to customary and statutory regulations; it confers the holder with the power to use the land (the power to control it and make decisions on how the land should be used, what crops should be planted etc.); the power to transfer the rights through sales, mortgage, rent, donation etc.; and it is inheritable. Ekenta, Mohammed and Afolabi (2012) observed that the ownership and possession of land as an economic resource confers security on the owner and determines the level of involvement in agricultural projects especially in rice production which is a staple food in the country. However, in Nigeria Agwu, Amasiatu and Onuoha (2010) opined that the characteristics of land tenure rights are prone to discrimination in terms of gender, discrimination against aliens, delays occasioned by statutory provisions that require the consent of the state governor, political interference and continuous division by splitting. This situation most times, affects the production of staple foods such as rice, cassava, yams, plantain which require a large expanse of land for field cultivation. Okezie, Ahuchuogu and Jamalludin, (2012) also observed that land tenure right affects agricultural productivity by influencing the efficient use of inputs as well as adoption of modern technology.

The certainty of tenure rights provides incentives to use land in a sustainable manner or invest in resource conservation whether for the individual or group of individuals. Therefore, equal allocation of land to men and women involved in rice production could be a driving force to sustainable agricultural investment. It is against this background that this study sought to:

- 1) identify various forms of land tenure rights among rice farmers in the study area;
- 2) ascertain gender participation in the rice production decision making process
- 3) determine the influence of land tenure rights on level of participation.
- 4) identify strategies for enhancing access to and control over land tenure rights in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. The State is located within the south-south geopolitical zone with diverse vegetation belts from largest tropical rain forest in Nigeria, to mangrove swamps and savannahs (Odoemenem and Inakwu, 2011). It lies between latitude 4° 28' and 6° 55' North of the Equator and longitude 7° 50' and 9° 28' East of Greenwich meridian. It shares boundaries with the Republic of Cameroun in the East, Benue State in the North, Ebonyi and Abia States in the West, Akwa Ibom State and Atlantic Ocean in the South. It has a total land mass of about 23,000km² (Ohen and Abang, 2011; www.crossriverstate.gov.ng)

Sampling procedure

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. The first stage involved the purposive selection of one block from the Calabar agricultural zone and three blocks each from Ikom and Ogoja agricultural zones respectively. This is because rice is relatively produced in large quantities in these areas (Ohen and Abang, 2011). Thus, a total of seven blocks were selected for the study.

The second stage involved the purposive selection of three cells from each of the selected blocks because rice is relatively cultivated in large quantities in these cells (Ohen and Abang, 2011). Thus a total of twenty-one (21) cells out of fifty six (56) cells were selected for the study.

The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select 50 % of all registered rice farmers' association in each of the selected cells. This gave a total of 39 out of 79 registered rice farmers' associations used for the study.

The fourth stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select 50% of rice farmers in each selected group. Hence, a total of 383 rice farmers were selected for the study

the land they used for rice cultivation while only 28.9% of their male counterparts rented land for cultivation. This implies that inheritance was the most common means of acquiring land tenure rights among males while renting of land was common among the females. This result is closely related to that of a study carried out by Onuoha and Onumadu (2015) on effect of gender on access and ownership of farmlands for cassava production in Abia State which revealed that a larger proportion of the males (100.0%, 72.5%, 60.6%) acquired land through inheritance, purchase and lease respectively while majority of the females (75.5%, 62.4% and 45.9%) reported that the prevalent of land ownership systems were sharecropping, purchase and lease respectively

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of land tenure rights among rice farmers in the study area

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on type of land tenure right. The results revealed that the majority (60.6%) of the males had land through inheritance while only 18.8% of females had land tenure right through inheritance. However, the majority (77.1%) of the female respondents rented

Table 1: Forms of land tenure right acquisition

Variables	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Inheritance	174	60.6	18	18.8
Communal	22	7.7	-	-
Purchase	8	2.8	4	4.2
Sharecropping	-	-	-	-
Political	-	-	-	-
Government	2	0.7	-	-
Rent	81	28.2	74	77.1
Lease	-	-	-	-
Gift	-	-	-	-
Total	287	100	96	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

Gender participation in rice production decision making process

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender participation in rice production decision making process. The results revealed that all (100%) of the males against 56% of the females were involved in the decision of what variety of rice to plant. A sizeable proportion of the males (62%, 47.7% and 39%) were involved in the decision of: where to grow the crop, techniques to adopt and quantity to consume and sell respectively, while a smaller proportion of the females (38.4%, 30.2% and

15.6 %) were involved in the decision of : where to grow the crop, techniques to adopt and quantity of rice to consume and sell respectively. This implies that males in the study area are more involved in the rice production decision making process than females. This could be attributed to gender discrimination as well as the type of land tenure right prevalent in the study area . The results are similar to those of a study carried out by Ekenta, Mohammed and Afolabi (2012) which indicated that land tenure security determines the level of involvement in agricultural production.

Table2: Distribution of respondents based on gender participation in rice production decision making process

Variables		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Variety of rice to grow	Yes	287	100	56	58.3
	No	-	-	40	41.7
Where to grow the rice	Yes	178	62	37	38.4
	No	109	38	59	61.5
What techniques to use	Yes	137	47.7	29	30.2
	No	150	52.3	67	69.8
What to consume and sell	Yes	112	39	15	15.6
	No	175	61	81	84.4

Source: Field survey, 2020

Influence of land tenure rights on level of participation

The results presented on Table 3 show that land tenure rights through inheritance and communal ownership had a significant influence on the level of participation among rice farmers. The positive coefficient signs on inheritance and communal

ownership imply that increase in land tenure rights through inheritance and communal ownership will result to increase in level of participation at 1% level of significance. However, the coefficient sign on the purchase land tenure right was negative and significant at 5%, indicating that increase in land tenure right through purchase will result to decrease in level of participation.

Table 3 Maximum likelihood estimates of the influence of land tenure right on level of participation

Independent variables(land tenure rights)	Coefficient (Estimate)	Std Error	Z(Sig.)
Inheritance	1.568	0.285	0.000***
Communal ownership	1.177	0.534	0.000***
Purchase	-0.828	0.705	0.028**
Rent	0.319	1.088	0.769

Note: ***= 1% significant level and **=5% significant level

Source: Computed from field survey data, 2020

Strategies for enhancing access to and control over land tenure rights

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents based on strategies for enhancing access to and control over land tenure rights. The results revealed that 94.4%, 63.2% and 51.7% of the respondents indicated that abolition of certain cultures, equal participation and promotion of adult education respectively were strategies which can be used for enhancing land tenure rights. However, only 45.4 %

of the respondents indicated that enforcing of laws on land tenure can be used for enhancing land tenure rights. This result is in line with the research undertaken by Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu and Ezeano (2014) which showed that the abolition of certain cultures, promoting of adult education, and promoting equal participation in bodies responsible for interpreting customary laws were strategies geared towards ensuring equitable access to and control over land.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on strategies towards enhancing access to and control over land

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Abolition of certain culture	361	94.4
Yes		
No	22	5.7
Promoting adult education	198	51.7
Yes		
No	185	48.3
Equal participation	242	63.2
Yes		
No	141	36.8
Enforcing laws	174	45.4
Yes		
No	209	54.6
Total	383	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

It is therefore concluded that land tenure rights have significant influence on level of participation among rice farmers, as such issues relating to land tenure rights should not be ignored specially in countries like Nigeria and Cross River State in particular where all hereconomic development depends on it.

It is therefore recommended that males and females should be given equal opportunity in decision making process related to rice cultivation in order to promote participation and increase productivity.

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