

## EFFECT OF TENURE SECURITY ON LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN FARMERS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Although customary system of tenure and land allocation continues to afford widespread access to land, there is evidence that landlessness and land inequality are growing among rural women. The study assessed the effect of tenure security on livelihood activities of women farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study area was Anaocha Local Government Area in Anambra State. The L.G.A is made up of the following communities Aguhizigbo, Agulu, Neri, Ichida, Adazkni, Adazi-anu, Adazi-nukwu, Akwaeze, Nri, Obeledy, Umuabu and Obe. The selection of the site was based on the traditional descent pattern affecting land transfers and tenure security; and also the presence of serious farming activities. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the selection of the sample size. In the first stage, all the twelve communities were purposively selected. For each community two villages were randomly selected and from each village, five female-headed farming households were selected bringing the total to 120 respondents. Data were generated through the use of Structured Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and Participatory Observation. Data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, means and ranking order. The result of the study shows that major source of acquiring land for cultivation 23% was through pledge, followed by inheritance/gift 22% and the least was 2% through allocation by state government. On livelihood activities the major occupation was farming 48%, followed by weaving /dying of materials 17% and the least was pot making 9%. Factors influencing tenure security of the women in the study area according to ranking shows that limited access to land rank first, while little control over the crop they grow rank second and the least was no guarantee of tenancy on a plot from one cropping season to the other was the least in the ranking order. On perceived effect of non-tenure security on livelihood activities, 17% percent of the respondents stated inability to use land for collateral, 25% complained about fragmentation of land, 23% complained about their inability of planting long duration crops, 20% complained about farming system being difficult to change, while 15% complained about large scale plantation system not been feasible. Based on this premise land tenure problems and tenure security remain unsolved and constrain the efforts of the women farmers in adopting new innovations and investment in agricultural productivity. Therefore, Nigerian government should take equitable land distribution and guarantee ownership rights for the poor and underprivileged, such rural women.*

Keywords: tenure security, livelihood activities and rural women

### INTRODUCTION

The term land also includes other natural resources such as water and trees. Land tenure is the system of rights and use of lands (Adams, 2001). Land assets, whether soils, home sites, crop, grazing and forests land are important everywhere. But in countries where agriculture is the major occupation and livelihood strategy, individual ownership of land is politically significant and directly associated with power (Nnadi *et al.*, 2012). The livelihoods of rural poor depends primary on agriculture., at least two-thirds of the total labour force is engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture related enterprise (ECA, 2004).

Tenure security is the perception of having secured rights to land and property on a continual basis, free from un-reasonable interference from outsiders, as well as the ability to reap the benefits of labour and capital invested either in use or rented to another, Quan (2006). Thus, the way in which access to land is regulated, property rights are defined, and ownership conflicts are resolved has broad implications beyond the sphere of agriculture production (Deinniger and Binswanger, 1999). Land ownership in Anambra State falls into three broad categories: Customary lands (about 78%) state land 20% and vested land 2% (Field Observation, 2013). Thus, most of the land is covered on a communal basis by the customary sector and tenure arrangements are usually driven by customary practices.

Customary ownership and practices occur where the right to use or dispose of land use rights rests neither on the exercise of brute force, nor on the evidence of rights guaranteed by government statuses, but on the fact they are recognized as legitimate by the community; the rules governing acquisition and transmission of these rights usually being explicitly and generally known but not normally recorded in writing. Concerns about woman's access to control over and ownership of land resources have been raised over the years at different but inter-related levels (Chikaire *et al.*, 2010).

Similarly, although customary system of tenure and land allocation continue to afford widespread access to land, there is evidence that landlessness and land inequality are growing among small scale holder farmers. There is evidence that land poorer households with less per capita, appear to be more income dependent on their land holdings than the better of (Larne, 2002, FAO, 2008). The concern as pointed out by Eren (2005) and Fulse (2001) has been on the traditional hold on land which has made it difficult for, land to be realized to prospective and enterprising farmers, though the land use decree of 1978, has not helped matters as the traditional hold to land still exists.

In most communities of southern part of Nigeria, the patriarchies social ordering of many communities makes access to resources tilted in favour of male members of society. In this regard, laws intended to grant equal access for men and women yield very different outcome upon application in a much gendered context (Mackennon, 2005). This study therefore examines the tenure security of the women farmers and its effect on their livelihood; with the following specific objectives to;

1. identify the land acquisition source available to be woman.
2. examine the land use rights of the women.
3. identify the perceived effect of tenure security on their livelihood.
4. ascertain the livelihood activities engaged by the women in the study area.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study area was Anaocha Local Government Area in Anambra State. The local government area was created on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1989, from Njikoka, L.G.A. The L.G.A is made up of the following communities Aguhizigbo, Agulu, Neri, Ichida, Adazkni, Adazi-anu, Adazi-nukwu, Akwaeze, Nri, Obeledy, Umuabu and Obe. The local government area has a population of 285,002 and a total area of 104km<sup>2</sup> with its headquarters at Neni. It is bounded on the north by Awka south, on the south by Idemili North and south L.G.A, on east by Aguta L.G.A and by west-Njikoka local government area. The selection of the site was based on the traditional descent pattern affecting land transfers and tenure security; and also the presence of serious farming activities.

The population of the study comprises all the women farmers in the study area. The sample frame constitutes all the female headed households in the study area while the sample unit constitutes these women between 30 and 35 years of age. Multi-stage sampling procedures was used in the selection of the sample size. In the first stage, all the twelve communities were purposively selected. For each community two villages were randomly

selected and from each village, five female-headed farming households were selected bringing the total to 120 respondents. Data were generated through the use of structured questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and participatory observation. Data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, means and ranking order.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Mode of land acquisition of the respondents in the study area**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Inheritance/gift	68	22
Patrilineal ties	31	10
Matrilineal	46	15
Extended family	24	8
Allocated by Obi's	18	7
Purchased	52	17
Allocated by states	6	2
Pledge	71	23

### *Multiple Response*

*Source: Field Data, 2013.*

Table 1 shows the various ways the women acquired land for their livelihood activities. The table indicated that about 22% of the respondents acquired land through inheritance or gift. Acquisition of land through inheritance according (Odemelam *et al.*, 2014) depend upon the age and marital status including type of marriage and the success of the marriage whether they had children, including the number and sex of these children and the sexual conduct of the women. The Table further reveals that about 10% of the respondents acquired land through patrilineal ties, 15% through matrilineal ties 8% other families, 17% purchased their own lands, which 23% of the respondents either rented on borrowed. Quan (2000) in his findings pointed out that financial consideration have proved to be a stronger factor for obtaining access to land and in the allocation of lands than were membership of a land owning community. As the competition for land is often won by migrates, for it becomes difficult increasing these women to sustain their livelihood. This methods of land acquisition encourages subsistence farming on small plots which is unproductive or results in a lower productivity (Aileen, 2001).

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their livelihood activities**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	57	47.5
Trading/farming	18	15.0
Pot making	10	9.2
Weaving/dying of traditional materials	20	16.7
Sowing/beneficiation	14	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Multiple Response*

*Source: Field Data, 2013*

Results on table 2, shows the livelihood activities engaged by the women in the study area. About 48% of the women were engaged in farming. According to FAO (1996), women produce 60 – 80% of food in most developing countries including Nigeria, but FAO (2011) posited that they face major challenges in accessing inputs like land, improved tools and financial services. As a result their productivity is minimized, a major challenge to increasing

yields. Coon (2005) asserted that unless women’s roles in small holder farming systems and rural food security are factored into the design of agricultural development projects.

We will gain fail to address the root causes of chronic food security and hunger.

The table further reveals that about % from farming, some other women were engaged in off-farm activities. About 17% of the women were engaged in weaving and dying of traditional materials, 15% were involved in farming/trading, 12% were involved in sewing/beneficiation while 9% of the women were engaged in pot making. Ekong (2003) stated that rural women in Nigeria play a triple roles in socio-economic activities in productive, reproductive and community services. However, it is important to understand gender contribution to agricultural production. This understanding will ensure efficient allocation of scarce resources among competing enterprise in the household (Onyemauwa *et al.*, 2008).

**Table 3: Factors influencing tenure security of women in the study area**

Variables	Strongly Agree N = 4	Agreed N = 3	Disagree N = 2	Strongly disagree N = 1	Total	Mean	Ranks
Customary tenure gives women limited access to land	66	36	18	-	408	3.4	1
Their ability to use land is restricted by the men	72	25	18	5	404	3.36	3
Usually given unproductive and scattered plots	59	46	14	1	403	3.35	4
Land allocation depends on industriousness of the women	54	42	16	8	382	3.18	5
No guarantee of tenancy on a plot from one cropping season to the next season	36	38	33	13	337	2.81	6
Have little control over the crops they grow on lands	72	28	13	7	405	3.37	2

**Multiple Response**

*Source: Field Data, 2013*

Table 3 shows factors influencing tenure security of the women in the study area. The six variables tested had a mean score above 2.5, which means they are all important factors influencing tenure security in the study area. Limited access had mean score of X = 3.4 and according to ranking order scored first.

The implication is that, even when they are giver land through any means, they cannot exchange it with others who may be able to make better use of it, thereby reducing poverty and possibly hindering emergency of a vibrant non-farm economy. Little control over the crops they grow rank second. The women complained that type of crop, date of planting are determined by the male members. And most of the time, unproductive plots are allocated to them, since agriculture is central to the livelihood of the women, it is imperative that development polices should look into that, in order to reduce poverty and provide food security. The statement is supported by (Ironkwe, 2005), who stated that there are gender differences in access and utilization of resources and also (Doss and Morris, 2001), cited that there are also gender differences in the production and use of particular crop. In concluding

IFDRI (2005) posits that equaling agree inputs between male and women results in significant gains in agricultural productivity.

Also, some of the women stated that their tenure security depends on the perceived industriousness which is the fifth in the ranking order among the male relatives. The table further revealed no guarantee of tenancy on a plot from one cropping season to another which is the sixth on the ranking order. A significant body of research has demonstrated that the impendence of secure property rights to land is a precondition for land related investment in many settings. Farmers who have only insecure or short time land rights are un likely to invest their full effort to make long term improvement related to land. All these factors create significant obstacles for women and their economic development.

**Table 4: Perceived effect of non-tenure security on livelihood activities of the respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Large scale plantation system are not feasible	72	15.3
Farming system are difficult to change	94	20.0
Restricts size of land holdings (fragmentation)	118	25.0
Planting of long duration crops are not feasible	106	23.0
Inability to use land for collateral	81	17.2

**Multiple Response**

*Source: Field Data, 2013*

Ellis (1999) termed the activities, assets and the access that jointly determine the living gained by the rural household as a livelihood. Results on table 3, shows the effect of non-tenure security on livelihood of the farmers in the communities. The result shows that 15% of the respondents cited that because of lack of tenure security, large scale farming systems are not feasible in our communities, because land holdings are very small, a situation exacerbated by the inheritance system.

A situation where they base only subsistence farming, they may not have surpluses for sale to buy farming inputs or other things they cannot produce. Also about 20% of the women stated that farming system are difficult to change in order to break the cycle of poverty and create wealth, even for land owing families. The women further stated that even if they have the capacity to develop larger holdings, communal land ownership strict the size of holdings that can be developed. The table further show that about 28% of the women opined that, because of tenure insecurity planting of long duration crops were not feasible, because of lack of tenure security, they find it difficult to use the planting plots as collateral to acquire a loan from bank. Secure land rights are needed for a favourable investment climate (Mgugu, 2003) and also Mann, 2000) stated that it enables access to credit markets and provides both revenue for government and secure safety mets.

**CONCLUSION**

Women involvement in farming activities was high in the study area. Land tenure problems and tenure security remain unsolved and constrain the efforts of the women farmers in adopting new innovations and investment in agricultural productivity thereby affecting the livelihoods of the women farmers in the study area.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Nigerian government should therefore take equitable land distribution and guarantee ownership rights for the poor and underprivileged such as rural women.

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