



REVIEW ON GENDER DIFFERENTIALS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND POVERTY OF RICE FARMING HOUSEHOLD IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

***Lawal, A.T., Adebayo, C. O. and Oseghale, A.I.**

Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management,
Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

Corresponding author E-mail: lawalahmed242@gmail.com
Cell phone number: +2348164881149

Abstract

Rice is a food crop widely produced and consumed globally, it's a major contributor to world caloric intake and serves as staple food to more than half of the world's population. The world demand for rice is expected to rise to 555 million tons by 2035. This paper is aimed at analyzing the gender differentials of productivity and poverty of rice farming households in Niger state, Nigeria. The review revealed a wide gap exists in the productivity and poverty of men and women farmers. This results in men being more productive and poverty more prevalent among women farmers. The wide gap is a result of the inequality in access to production inputs. The inequality in access to production should be addressed in an attempt close the existing gap in productivity and poverty and also increasing production to meet world demand and alleviating poverty.

Keywords: Gender, Differentials, Gap, Input, Women, Productivity, Poverty, Rice

Introduction

Rice is a food crop widely produced and consumed globally, Rice alongside maize and wheat provide at least 42% of the world caloric intake, it can also be said that rice serves as staple food to more than 3.5 billion people which is more than half of the world's population (Lanessa, 2017). In Africa, over 130 million hectares in inland valleys are suitable for the production of rice, but only about 10 million are currently used, Africa can substantially boost its food production, especially for smallholder farmers, if agri-food systems are productive and resilient, providing balanced nutrition especially for women and children (Rodenburg *et al.*, 2014).

AFDB (2014) noted that 70 per cent of Africa's smallholder farmers are women, and are responsible for more than 90 per cent of Africa's agricultural production. This implies a high involvement of women in Agricultural activities. Unfortunately, the role of women in food production is grossly undermined and overshadowed by the contribution of the male.



According to a study conducted by Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, the world's demand for milled rice is expected to rise to 555 million tonnes by the 2035 (Udemezue, 2018). Although rice is an important crop for household food consumption and combating poverty, production has not kept pace with demand and not being gender sensitive in policy making is prevalent in Nigeria (Ajewole *et al.*, 2016).

The demand for rice has been increasing (10% per annum) in Nigeria more than in any other Africa country with an average Nigerian consuming about 24.8 kg of rice per year (Ajala and Gana, 2015; Apata *et al.*, 2018). This high demand for rice might be attributed to increasing population with changing consumer preferences due to rapid urbanization (Dauda and Dzivama, 2004; Aondoakaa, 2013). Only about 57% of the 6.7 million metric tons of rice consumed in Nigeria annually is locally produced, of which 73.5% of the total national output is produced in northern Nigeria (NAERLS and FDAE, 2014).

Nigeria is home to the largest number of extremely poor people, overtaking India in 2018. The increase in poverty rate observed in Nigeria is higher when compared with neighboring countries. The poverty rate increased from 35.0 to 38.8 percent of the total population from 2011 to 2016 (World Bank 2019). It is common knowledge that gender inequality is one of those issues encountered as it cut across different roles, norms, and values, govern the gender division of labour and gender distribution of resources, responsibilities, agency and power (Edeoghon, 2019). It is therefore of importance to have strategy to put men and women's concerns and experiences at the centre of research design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation so as to reduce poverty (Ayinde *et al.*, 2013).

Gender Differentials of Agricultural Productivity

The inequality in access to agricultural inputs from the gender point of view has led to a huge differential in productivity. Despite women's involvement in the Nigerian agriculture sector, they are faced with production constraints including access to resources such as land, inputs and extension services (Ojo, 2015). Results from research of Oseni *et al.*, (2013) examining gender differentials in agricultural productivity across two regions in Nigeria: North and South. The result of the O-B decomposition method to measure the gender gap and the factors driving differences in productivity between female and male plot managers, found a statistical significant gender gap of 27% on Northern region. In the southern region, the difference in productivity between male and female managers was also found to be statistically significant, and the gender gap was of 24%. Like many other countries in Africa, women in Nigeria have broadened and deepened their involvement in agricultural production in recent decades (Salau, 2009).

Although men dominate the sector in Nigeria, a large share of women also participates across the agriculture value chain; as they are involved in production, processing, and sales. Overall, 48% of female headed households participate in the agriculture sector and, in the rural areas; almost 70% of female headed households are involved in the sector. While there is debate in the general literature on gender and agricultural productivity as to the contribution of the differential use of inputs in explaining productivity gaps, it is certainly true across a range of countries that women tend to have lower levels of usage of various productive assets



(Croppenstedt *et al.*, 2013). This is also true in the case of Nigeria. Despite their significant role in agricultural production, women in Nigeria have relatively limited access to agriculture land and lower levels of inputs and use of extension services compared with men (Phillip *et al.*, 2009). In Nigeria, men are five times more likely than women to own land and this varies across regions, with lower ownership by women and higher gender gaps in land ownership in the North compared to the South (British Council Nigeria, 2012). In addition, women's lower levels of agency and decision-making power may negatively impact their ability to benefit from their activities in the agriculture sector, as well as in other areas of their lives.

Gender Differentials of Poverty

Gender differences in poverty are as result of culture and the economy based on gender characteristics, roles and responsibilities set by the society. In previous studies, there has been no clear link between gender and poverty. While several studies have claimed more women seem to be affected by poverty, the reverse is reported in other studies (Etim and Edet 2014; Oluwatayo, 2014) Ajewole *et al.*, (2016) researched on Gender analysis of poverty among rice farming household in Nigeria rice hub. The study revealed that male headed households were poorer 47.32% compared to female 37.14%. In another study conducted by Adetayo *et al.*, (2014) examined the poverty status of farm households in ogun state. Poverty incidence was found to be higher among male headed household (60%) and farming (63.9%) households. The likely hood of being poor were more with large households, non-educated farm households head and households without access to credit and other non-farm income.

In a similar study Edoumiekumo *et al.*, (2014) analyzed income poverty in the south-south geographical zone of Nigeria. Zonal level results showed 0.4924, 0.203 and 0.113 poverty incidence, gap and severity respectively. The study showed that male contributed more (91.56%) to poverty than female (8.44%) in the zone. The study recommended that poverty reduction efforts should aim at achieving gender parity.

Also, in the study of Oluwatayo (2014) on gender dimensions of poverty and the coping options among smallholder farmers in Eastern Nigeria. Results showed that more female respondents were poor (43.7%) compared to their male counterparts (33.3%). There is a believe income inequality and poverty differ among the female headed households in Africa.

Conclusion

Several studies have revealed a wide gap in productivity and poverty of the male and female, There is need for a gendered approach to the study of productivity and poverty, as this would show the disparity resulting from inequality and differential in access to production input, cultural barriers and other limitations. Areas of inequality in production would guide policy makers and decision makers in creating a balance in production by the genders.



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