



**ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY ACTION IN
IMPROVING FARMER- SAVED SEED YAM (CAY-Seed) PROJECT,
ABUJA, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess the participation of women in seed yam production under the community action in improving farmer-saved seed yam project, Abuja Nigeria. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and focus group discussion and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that outside the control of marketing seed yam in Kwali Area Council where 86% of female respondents had control, other activities in seed yam production were controlled less by women. Women were not much involved in decision making except for the decision on marketing where 72% of female respondents were involved. Inadequate finance, poor soil fertility, poor road network and scarcity of clean seed yam were some of the major constraints hindering women from having high productivity in seed yam production. The study concluded that limited control over production resources and involvement in decision making processes minimized the capacity of women in seed yam production. It is therefore recommended that the public should be sensitized more on the benefits of giving women equal chance to make decisions in seed yam production. Supporting women with basic inputs like chemicals, fertilizers, credits and land which will invariably enhance their control over production resources should be championed by government, non-government organizations and rich private individuals.

Keywords: Decision making, Participation, Resource control, Seed yam, Women.

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing demands for yam, it has therefore assumed great importance in Nigeria. Nigeria is estimated to produce about 26.587 million metric tons of yams annually (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2006). More recently, Nahanga and Vera (2015) revealed that Nigeria produces about 38 million metric tonnes of yam annually and accounts for 65% of world's yam production. Despite the high cultivation of yam in Nigeria, there is still need for increased production and supply of yam to satisfy domestic and export demands. Increased production of yam in Nigeria is reported to be constrained mostly by high cost of seed yam (National Root Crops Research Institute [NRCRI], 2004). The high cost of seed yam accounts for between 40% and 70% of the total yam production cost (Asumugha *et al.*, 2008; and Musa *et al.*, 2011).

Seed yam is a critical input required in yam production. Increase in yam production cannot be easily achieved without propagation technologies to address challenges of inadequate seed yam. The benefit of technologies that address this challenge will result to increased



productivity that will translate to improved income for producers who intend to commercialize seed yam production. One of such projects, initiated to help in multiplication of seed yams, is the Community Action in Improving Farmer-saved Seed Yam (CAY-Seed) Project. The CAY-Seed Project was launched on 23 February 2015 in Kumasi, Ghana. The Project has intensively helped to address the high cost of seed yams by introducing the Yam Minisett Technique. According to Ijoyah (2010), 800-1000g of seed yams can be produced from cut minisett of about 25g-30g.

Women are farmers, workers and entrepreneurs, but almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in accessing productive resources, markets and services. This “gender gap” hinders their productivity and reduces their contributions to the agriculture sector and to the achievement of broader economic and social development goals (Basavaraj and Babus, 2018). Women comprise, on an average, 43% of the agricultural work force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, women have less access than men to agriculture related assets, inputs and services. Had they enjoyed the same access to productive resources as men, women could boost yield by 20-30%; raising the overall agricultural output in developing countries from 2.5% to 4%. This gain in production could lessen the number of hungry people in the world by 12%-17%, besides increasing women’s income (FAO, 2011).

Women make up some 60-80 percent of agricultural labour force in Nigeria, their relevance in agriculture cannot be trivialized and depending on the region, they produce two thirds of the food crops (Tologbonse *et al.*, 2013). Yet, in spite of these, women farmers in the country are marginalized and remain voiceless; especially with regards to influencing agricultural policies.

Despite the collaborative efforts played by men and women in agricultural production, women’s substantial contributions continue to be under-valued in agricultural economic analyses and policies, while men’s contribution remains central and are given more attention. It is against this background that the research sought to assess women’s participation in seed yam production in the CAY-Seed Project communities in Nigeria. The objectives of the study therefore were to:

- i. examine the level of women’s control over production inputs and facilities in seed yam production;
- ii. assess women’s role in decision making in seed yam production; and
- iii. identify the constraints of women in seed yam production.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was carried out at the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. Geographically, it is located at latitude $9^{\circ} 41' 20.1504''$ N and longitude $7^{\circ} 29' 28.6874''$ E. (Olugbenga, *et al.*, 2016). It is bounded in the North by Kaduna state, in the West by Niger State, in the East by Nasarawa State and in the South by Kogi State; and is made up of six (6) Area Councils namely; Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali, Bwari and Abuja Municipal. The Area Councils are known for high intensity of farming activities. The study area experiences two weather conditions annually; which are the rainy and dry seasons. The rainy season begins from April and ends in October and the dry season from November and ends in March. Farming is the major occupation of the people in the area and the major crops grown are yam, sorghum, millet, sesame, cowpea, soybean, maize, rice and livestock reared include poultry, goats, sheep and cattle (Abdulmalik *et al.*, 2013).



Sampling Technique and Size

Multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents for this study. In the first stage, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja in Nigeria was purposively selected because of the large population of yam farmers who participated in an earlier project on yam called Yam Improvement for Income and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA). In the second stage, Kwali Area Council, out of the six (6) Area Councils was purposively selected. This is because of the presence of large number of farmers who participated in YIIFSWA Project in the Area Council. In the third stage, a total of four villages were purposively selected. These villages were selected because they had more yam farmers who participated in the YIIFSWA Project. In the fourth stage, random sampling was employed in selecting 80 respondents from each of these villages so as to avoid being bias, making a total of 320 respondents for the study (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution

Area council	Villages	Sample frame	Sample size
Kwali	Kilankwa I	157	80
	Kilankwa II	123	80
	Ijah Pada	111	80
	Kwali Town	148	80
Total	4	539	320

Source: Field survey, 2018

Method of Data Collection

The study used primary data which were collected with structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to farmers individually and in groups via Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Administering questionnaire individually to respondents prevented their responses from being influenced by colleagues and the FGD gave qualitative responses to their quantitative answers as this further served as a mean of probing the respondents to ascertain their sincerity.

Method of Data Analyses

Descriptive Statistics which involves the use of mean, percentages, frequency distribution tables was used to achieve objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Women's Control over Production Inputs and Facilities in Seed Yam Production

Table 2 reveals that about 35% females in Kwali Area Council had control over land, about 23% had control over income and 53% had control over credit. Also, the table further shows that 16% of the females had control over fertilizer and about 23% had control over seed yam. These findings corroborate the work of Adereti (2005) who reported that women do not have absolute control over most of the productive resources, thus, could greatly compromise women's overall output of seed yam production. Also, the result of this study was in line with the findings of Koyenikan and Ikharea (2014) which showed that women farmers have low level of control over all the resources in crop production.

Outside control over market where females in Kwali Area Council had about 86% control, women had limited control over the resources for yam production which has limited the extent to which they can productively engage in ware and seed yam production. The females in Kwali Area Council had 53% control over credit which is more than average. This is due to the fact that women in Kwali were members of cooperative societies such as Yegborolo Nupe



women wing cooperative society, Yema multipurpose women cooperative society, Yala market women cooperative society and Evangelical church of West Africa women cooperative would have easy access to credit.

Table 2: Women’s Level of Resource Control in Seed Yam Production

Control	Frequency	Percentage
Control of land	110	34.50
Control over household income	74	23.20
Control over credit	170	53.00
Control over fertilizer	51	16.00
Control over seed yam	69	21.50
Control over herbicide	60	18.70
Control over family labor	54	16.91
Control over hired labor	58	18.00
Control over communal or exchange labor	66	20.51
Control over market	274	85.6

Source: Field survey, 2018

Women’s Role in Decision Making in Seed Yam Production

Table 3 is on decision making in seed yam production. The results show about 8% of females in Kwali Area Council were involved in decision making on the choice of land for farming, about 43% of the females contribute to decision making in getting loans and about 72% of them contributed to decision making on marketing. Furthermore, females in Kwali Area Council contributing to decision making in the use of income were about 25% of the respondents. The finding of this work agrees with Oluwafemi (2015) who reported in his work that women are marginalized in decision making as touching agricultural activities in the household. Yemisi and Aisha (2009) also reported that women have either no or minimal part in the decision-making process regarding agricultural development.

Table 3: Women’s Role in Decision Making in Seed Yam Production

Decision Making	Frequency	Percentage
Choice of land	27	8.39
Getting of loan	139	43.39
Hiring of labor	47	14.64
Marketing	231	72.21
Purchase of inputs	47	14.64
Quantity of yam for sale, family use and production	82	25.71
Use of income	82	25.71

Source: Field survey, 2018

The findings of Table 3 implied that most decision making in yam production is majorly done by males except for decision on marketing where more females were allowed to make contributions. The reason why females dominated decision making on marketing is due to the fact that the culture of the people allows females to engage in retailing of the yams harvested to consumers, therefore, women tend to have a better bargaining power and understanding of market prices of yam more than the males.

Categorizing the Constraints of Women in Seed Yam Production

Figure 1 revealed that females were faced with several constraints in seed yam production. All (100%) the female respondents in Kwali Area Council were of the opinion that pest and diseases, inadequate finance, poor soil fertility, poor road network, scarcity of clean seed yam, scarcity of other inputs and poor infrastructure were major constraints facing them. The work of Ojo *et al.* (2013) which reported that pest and diseases, transportation and inadequate credit facility as the major constraints facing women in yam production corroborated the findings of this work. Adams (2017) also noted that inadequate finance and agro-inputs were major constraints facing women in yam production.

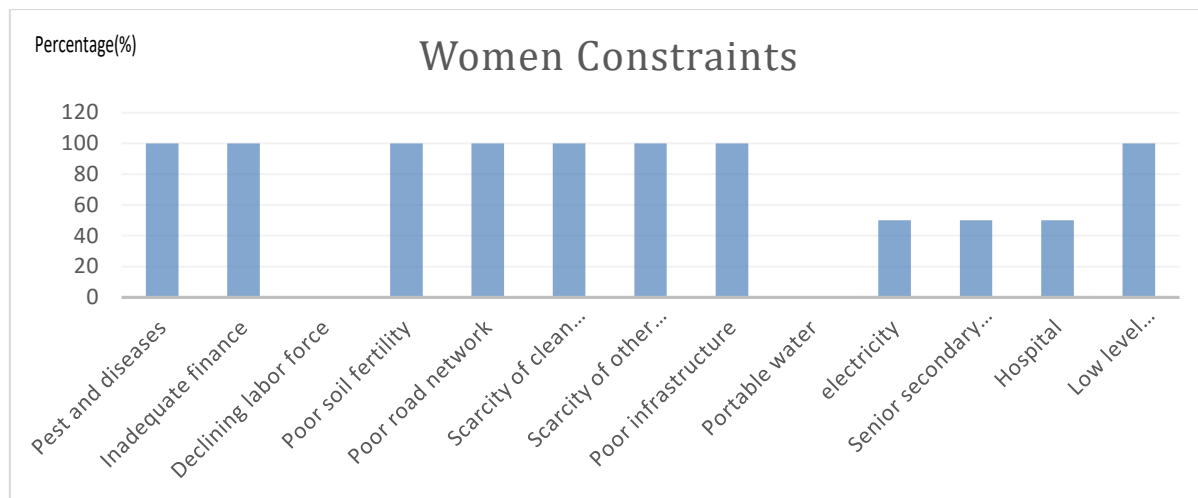


Figure 1: Constraints of women in seed yam production
 Source: Field survey, 2018

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women had limited control over resources in yam production. This makes their capacity in yam production not optimally utilized. If women are being continually marginalized with respect to their control over productive resources in yam production, there will be a drastic decline in the total production of yam over the years. This will further make it difficult for the demands of the geometrically growing population to be met. Decision making with respect to how resources are handled in yam production were majorly done by men. The deprivation of women equal opportunities in decision making has largely limited the quality of these decisions and has directly affected the overall output in yam production. Poor soil fertility and poor road network were two major constraints reported by all the respondents. If these constraints are not addressed, yam production will continue to decline in the study area. It was recommended that:

1. More governmental and non-governmental, should support women so they can have easy access to credit facilities, land, agro-chemicals, fertilizers and other farm inputs required in yam production.
2. Awareness creation and sensitization on the importance of giving women equal opportunities in decision making should be intensified.

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