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The Benin International Journal of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services (BIJAEES) is the official refereed publication of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin, Benin City. BIJAEES provides a new forum for the dissemination of our research outputs in the department and it also provides a fresh publication outlet for other experts in the field of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Technology, Management Sciences and other food related disciplines.

BIJAEES is a peer reviewed journal that welcomes articles for publication all-year-round. However, publication will be quarterly.

I appreciate the commitment of the current Head of Department, The Editorial Board and all staff of the department who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the publication.

I am grateful to Prof. G.O. Oshodin, the incumbent Vice Chancellor of University of Benin for providing enabling environment that facilitate the quick release of the maiden edition of the journal.

Finally, I commit the future benefit of this journal to the glory and honour of God who is the author of wisdom and knowledge.

Prof. P. O. Erhabor
Editor-in-Chief

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WOMEN FARMERS' ASSESSMENT OF FADAMA II PROGRAMME IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated women farmers' assessment of fadama II programme in Kwara State. A random sampling technique was employed to select 150 respondents and 5 participating LGAs were purposively sampled for the study. Frequency counts, percentages and chi-square analysis were used to analyse the data. Findings indicated that most (80%) of the respondents were females, married and 40% were between 41 and 50 years of age. About 37.3% had primary education with 26.7% having post primary education. Respondents benefitted from improved seeds, fertilizers and had their least benefit in infrastructure such as borehole during fadama II programme. The results also indicated that the majority (76%) of respondents had 11-15 years of farming experience with farm size of 1-2 hectares. Significant percentage (70%) of respondents practiced mixed cropping but were constrained to register some of their fadama resource user groups (FRUGs), paid beneficiary contributions due to lack of fund. Chi-Square analysis showed a significant relationship between age, farming experience of respondents and the constraints to their participation in fadama II programme (x^2 = 7.24, x^2= 6.48) at 5% level of significance. It was recommended that the cost sharing approach in fadama programme should be reviewed by the government and donor agency should provide a waiver for beneficiary contributions and group registration so that women farmers will be able to access full benefits of the project.

Keywords: Women Farmers, Assessment, Fadama II, Programme.

INTRODUCTION

Women farmers are the main food producers in developing countries and yet they are one of the most vulnerable groups, their economic empowerment to produce more and to participate in policy formulation is critical to addressing poverty and food insecurity, (Karki, 2009). According to Akpabio (2005) women constitute half of the World's population and about 565 million of them reside in rural areas in developing countries where they perform increasingly indispensable roles in agricultural and national development. Kabeer (1994) opines that women are the backbone of the agricultural sector, accounting for 70% of agricultural labour and being responsible for 60% of agricultural production and 80% of food production.

In many countries women have the primary responsibilities for small animal, fetching water, processing food, childcare and other domestic chores. Kisseka (1981) reported that in Nigeria 60-80% of the agricultural workers are women. Worldwide, women produce more than 50% of the food grown. In most developing countries, this contribution is even higher in sub-saharan Africa. However, women contribute 60-80% of the labour in food production besides being involved in weeding, transplanting and post harvest activities.

Small holder agriculture which is mainly rain fed and characterized by low land and labour productivities is the dominant occupation of rural women. Yet Nigeria has a potential advantage in the production of a variety of fresh crops especially vegetables during the dry season (mainly cultivated by women), livestock product (meat and milk) and fisheries products throughout the year. This is because the country is endowed with underground and surface water reserves, rich pastures and favourable agro-ecological conditions in the country's low lying plains with alluvial deposit called fadama. Fadama is a low lying area that is water logged during rainy seasons but retain moisture during the dry season. Fadama natural resources and their users can be classified into crop produ cers, pastoralists, hunters, fisher folks, gatherers, processors, marketers as well as other economic interest groups (PCU, NFDO, 2005).

The National Fadama Development project was designed as a major instrument for achieving the government's poverty reduction objective in the rural areas of Nigeria (ADF, 2004). Its beneficiaries are the private economic agents who achieve their livelihood directly or indirectly from the exploitation of the natural resources in a given fadama area. The beneficiaries are group of

people with same economic interest and must be in the minimum of 10 membership. The mandate given by the National Fadama Development Project is that they must be registered with Ministry of Commerce and Cooperatives as Fadama Resource User Groups and maximum of 7-10 Fadama resource user groups can form Fadama Community Association within a particular community. It is therefore, necessary that beneficiaries hold regular meetings, keep record of activities and pay beneficiary contributions before they could access the available grant.

The first National Fadama Development Project (Fadama I) was initiated in the early 1990s to promote simple and low cost improved irrigation technology under the World Bank Financing. The widespread adoption of irrigation technology enables farmers to realize income increases from various crops of up to 65% for vegetables (from N29,956 to N49,510), 34% for wheat (from N7,456 to N32,375), and 49% for paddy rice (from N7,906 to N47,200), (PCU-NFDO, 2005). The evaluation of fadama I, which covered Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Sokoto and Zamfara States, revealed that the full realization of project benefits was hampered by some specific shortcomings in project design and implementation. For instance, the project was limited to crops produced mainly by men farmers; ignoring downstream value addition activities of marketing and processing, which majorly involves women farmers. To achieve its aim, the government expanded Fadama I project in scope and size, which brings about Fadama II programme. Fadama II project focus on Community Driven Development (CDD) approach with maximum participation of stakeholders at every stage of the project cycle (PCU-NFDO, 2005). This is in line with Nigeria government and African Development Fund policies and development strategies for Nigeria which emphasizes poverty reduction, private sector leadership and client participation towards the development of rural communities. The second National Fadama Development Project (Fadama II) covers Borno, Kogi, Katsina, kwara, Plateau and Jigawa States with attention on small-scale irrigation systems, feeder roads, as well as downstream activities such as marketing, agro-processing and infrastructural development, and large-scale capital intensive agro-industrial investment.

In kwara state, laudable achievement was recorded particularly in the areas of advisory services and capacity building, infrastructure investment, input support, pilot assets acquisition, and Global Environment Facility

supported Critical-Ecosystem Management Project (GEF-CEMP). (Kwara State Fadama II Bulletin, 2009). This is the reason why the study examined women farmers assessment of Fadama II Programme in Kwara State, Nigeria. The general objective of the study was to investigate women farmers' assessment of Fadama II programme in Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: examine the socio-economic characteristics of respondents; assess the perceived benefits of Fadama II programme by the respondents; and identify the constraints to women farmers participation in Fadama II programme.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the constraints to women farmers participation in Fadama II programme.

METHODOLOGY

The population for the study was all women farmers who participated in Fadama II programme in kwara state. Only 10 out of 16 local government areas were involved in Fadama II project and these were:- Asa, Baruten, Edu, Ekiti, IlorinEast, Irepodun, Isin, Patigi, Moro and Oyun. Considering the area where female farmers were many, 5 local government areas such as Asa, Moro, IlorinEast, Irepodun and Ekiti were purposively selected for the study and 30 women farmers were randomly selected from each of the 5 local government areas giving a total number of 150 respondents used for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages were used to describe the data collected while chi-square statistics was also employed to test the hypothesis of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1 showed that, women farmers were within the age range of 41-50 years and majority (80%) of them were married. Most (86.7%) of the respondents have farmland of 1-2 hectares, 70% engaged in mixed cropping system with 11-15 years of farming experience.

Table 1:- Socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

Variable	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage
Age (years)		
21-30	20	13.5
31-40	45	30.0
41-50	60	40.0
50-above	25	16.7
Marital Status		
Single	6	4.0
Married	120	80.0
Widowed	20	13.3
Separated	4	2.7
Educational Level		
No formal Education	20	13.3
Arabic Education	30	20.0
Primary Education	56	37.3
Secondary Education	40	26.7
Post-Secondary Education.	4	2.7
Farming Experience		
6-10	32	21.3
11-15	114	76.0
>15	4	2.7
Farm Size		
< 1 Hectare	6	4.0
1-2 Hectares	130	86.7
> 2 hectares	14	9.3
Household size		
1-4	50	33.3
5-8	90	60.0
> 8	10	6.7
Farming System		
Mono Cropping	30	20.0
Mixed Cropping	105	70.0
Crop Rotation	15	10.0

Source: Field Survey Data , 2011

Respondents' perceived benefits of Fadama II programme

Table 2 reveals that 30% of the respondents benefitted from fertilizers, 26.7% benefited from improved seeds, while only 16.7% of respondents undergone training on record keeping and pest/disease management.

Table 2:- Respondents' perceived benefits of Fadama II programme

Perceived Benefits	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage
Boreholes	5	3.3
Improved Seeds	40	26.7
Agrochemicals	20	13.3
Fertilizers	45	30.0
Sprayers	15	10.0
Training on record keeping and pest disease management.	25	16.7

Source: Field Survey Data, 2011

Constraints to women farmers participation in Fadama II

Table 3 indicates that the respondents were constrained by having no fund to register some of their Fadama user groups and pay beneficiary contributions allotted to various groups in the study areas. The finding also showed that the women farmers find it very difficult to form enough fadama resource user groups among themselves.

Table 3:- Constraints to women farmers participation in Fadama II programme.

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of fund to register some of our groups	50	33.3
Low level of awareness campaign	4	2.7
Inadequate community sensitization	11	7.3
Inadequate training for participants	5	3.3
Difficult to form Fadama user groups	30	20.0
No interest to hold regular group meetings	10	6.7
No fund to pay beneficiary contribution	40	26.7

Source: Field Survey Data, 2011

Relationship between respondent's age, farming experience and the constraints to women farmers participation in Fadama II programme.

Table 4 shows a significant association or relationship between respondents age, farming experience and the constraints to their participation in Fadama II program, with chi-square value of 7.24 and 6.48 respectively. The null hypothesis (Ho1) earlier stated is hereby rejected and the significant relationship was recorded at 5% level.

Table 4: Relationship between Respondents Socioeconomic Characteristics and Constraint to Women Farmers Participation in Fadama II Programme

Characteristics	x^2 value	Probability	Decision
Age	7.24	0.000	Significant
Farming experience	6.48	0.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey Data, 2011 Significant level = 0.005

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicate that majority of the women farmers are within the age range of 41-50 years. The age range which Williams (1991) referred to as the age of high activities and desires in the lives of rural people. Majority of respondents (86.7%) owned farmland of 1-2 hectares with 11-15 years of farming experience. Most of the respondents were constrained by lack of fund to register some of their Fadama resource user groups and to pay their beneficiary contributions. A significant relationship ($p<0.005$) was established between respondents' age, farming experience and the constraints to their participation in the fadama II programme. The study however, recommended that the cost sharing approach (payment of certain percentages on each of the project components such as 30% down payment for all productive assets) in the Fadama II programme should be reviewed by the State governments and World Bank through a waiver for beneficiary contributions and certificate of registration so that the women farmers could have full benefits of the Fadama project throughout the country.

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