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Contribution of Agro-Based Entrepreneurial Activities Towards Women Empowerment in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined the contribution of agro-based entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment in Jere local government area of Borno State, Nigeria. A total of 84 questionnaires were administered to respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the study. The data obtained were analyzed using frequency, percentage and inferential statistics (regression analysis). The result of the logit regression analysis indicated that education, membership of association, household size and access to credit of respondents has significantly ($p < 0.01$) affected respondents' participation in agro-business activities. Descriptive statistics shows that majority (52.4%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 31-40 years old. Some proportion (53.6%) of the respondents had secondary school education, most (85.7%) had agro-food processing as their main occupation. Majority (95.2%) indicate that agro-based entrepreneurial activities empower them through employment (employer of labor). This encourages them to become agro-based entrepreneurs. The study revealed that the most prevailing constraint to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities is lack of capital (mean score=4.7). Based on the findings, it was concluded that agro-based entrepreneurial activities are pivotal to the national poverty eradication and by providing the largest proportion of the job employment to women in rural areas. Therefore, it was recommended that agro-based entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme be put in place to build the capacity of women in the activities and credit be provided to them by government and other stakeholders to boost their capital base.

Keywords: Agro-based enterprises; Women Empowerment; Jere; Borno.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the engine of economic growth and wheel that pedal the vehicle of economic development and has been recognized for its importance in the area of job creation, revenue generation, poverty alleviation and wealth creation (Culkin and Smith 2000). Entrepreneurship plays an eminent function in creating an avenue for employability for rural communities, providing self-employment for those who have started a business of their own and enhancing the economic status of the rural sector as

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well. Entrepreneurship has transformed many entrepreneurs into successful business persons and generated income for rural communities. Entrepreneurs in rural areas have transformed viability into trading hubs, thus enabling them to become urbanized areas. Entrepreneurship is beneficial for economic growth and development (Naude, 2013).

The agricultural sector of Nigeria plays an important role as food producer, employer and foreign exchange earner. Women empowerment is to achieve control over resources and assets of all kinds and to increased access to factors of production, so as to reduced or alleviate their poverty level, once women are empowered, it increases their employment status and income.

Women account for more than fifty percent of Nigerian population, therefore their role in economic development is overwhelming and cannot be overemphasized. About thirty percent of rural households in the world are headed by women and women contribute about eighty percent of agricultural labor, produced almost sixty percent of the food that is consumed by rural households and generates more than one third of all household incomes mainly through small scale agro- industry, trading, craftwork and casual labor (United Nation Development Program, 2000; Ephraim, 2004).

Women participate actively in agro-based entrepreneurial activities such as On-farm production activities (arable crop planting, transplanting, weeding, clearing, poultry/fish farming, animal/livestock husbandry, beekeeping and vegetable production others are; Processing (harvesting, peeling, washing, winnowing/pounding grains, picking cottons, red chilies, onions garlic as well marketing of the farm produce.

Women are increasingly venturing into ownership of micro and small enterprise either on their own or in partnership with male entrepreneurs (Kjeldsen and Nielson, 2000) and they make a substantial contribution to national economies through their participation in successful entries (United Nation, 2006).

Most of women agro-based enterprise are not defined as economically active employer in the area of job creation, /wealth generation, and poverty alleviation. Agro-based related business are not yet fully explored in the study area, it was thought appropriate to analyze the contribution of agro-based entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment in Jere LGA.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the contribution of agro-based entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment in Jere Local Government area, Borno State. The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the socio-economic characteristic of the respondent;
- ii. identify the agro-based entrepreneurial activities in the study area;

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- iii. ascertain contributions of agro-based entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment;
- iv. identify constraints to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities; and
- v. determine the relationship between agro-based entrepreneurial activities and women empowerment

Methodology

Description of the Study Area

The study area is Jere Local Government Area (LGA), one of the twenty-seven LGAs in Borno State, it lies between latitude 11⁰40' and 12⁰05 N and longitude 13⁰ 50 and 12⁰20'E, occupies a total land mass of 160 square kilometers. The climate of the area is characterized by wet and hot dry season, minimum temperature ranges from 15⁰ – 20⁰C while maximum temperature ranges from 37⁰-45⁰C, the annual rainfall ranges from 500mm to 700mm per annum. Majority of its inhabitants are farmers, traders and civil servants.

Sampling Technique and Data Collection

Jere LGA comprises of seven wards (7), one village from each ward was selected at random making a total of seven (7) villages. Twelve (12) women were randomly selected from each of the village making a total of eighty-four (84) respondents as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling population and sample size

Wards	Population	Sample size
Galtimari	120	12
Gongolon	122	12
Khaddamari	124	12
Zabarmari	120	12
Tuba	120	12
Dusuman	123	12
Alau	121	12

Source: Authors Computation

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Primary and secondary sources of data collection were used. The primary data was sourced using a structured questionnaire. Secondary source of information used includes official publication, reports on agro-based entrepreneurial activities, journals, bulletins and the Internet.

Analytical Technique

Logit regression model was employed to determine the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities. Frequency and percentage were used to organize the data on socio-economic characteristics, types of agro-based enterprise, contribution of entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment and constraints.

Logit Regression Analysis

The Logit regression model is implicitly stated as:

$$Y=(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, e)$$

Where Y = involvement in agro-based entrepreneurial activities (Yes=1, No=0)

X₁ = Age (in years)

X₂ = Educational qualification (in years)

X₃ = Marital status

X₄ = Membership of association (Yes=1, No=0)

X₅ = Access to credit (Yes=1, No=0)

X₆ = Family size (number of household members)

X₇ = experience (in years)

e = Error term

Likert type scale type was employed to identify the constraints to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities

Five-point Likert type scale was used to identify constraints and graded as strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, Undecided = 3, strongly disagree = 2, disagree = 1. The mean score of the respondents based on the 5-point scale was $5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15/5 = 3.0$ which indicate the mean bench mark, any mean score below 3.0 was taken as “Not serious effect”, those equal to 3.05 were considered “Serious effect”, while mean score that is greater than 3.0 was considered “Very serious effect”.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

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Table 2 reveals the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Most (67.9%) of the respondents fell within the age category of 20-40 years, only 14.3% were above 50 years. This implies that the women were in their economically productive age who could actively participate in Agro-based entrepreneurial activities and can contribute tremendously to the economic needs of their families and the community at large. Their contributions may be higher than the older ones. The findings also reveal that more than half (59.52%) of the respondents were married while 40.48% were single. Marital status of the respondents encourages involvement in agro-based entrepreneurial activities. The married ones' involvement may be to support their husbands in sustaining their families while the single women either widow or separated could be due to the effect of the insurgency in the area that leads to death of their husbands, made them to become the sole provider of food, clothing, shelter and maintenance of the family. The study further reveals that 10.7% of the respondents had no formal education; majority (53.6%) had primary, 29.8% had secondary education and 6.0% had tertiary education. This implies that most of the women have not gone far on the pursuit of education. Limited level of education could limit their participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities. The higher the respondents educational level the more they may accept and participate in Agro-based entrepreneurial activities, except if they are able to improve their capacity through attending training programs to acquire skills needed for productive agro-based activities for improvement of their living standard and escape poverty. Non-participation in social/cooperative organization could have a negative implication on the respondent's advancement such that the benefits that is accruable from cooperative associations could not be fully exploited. The findings also reveal that 15.5%, 19.0% and 13.1% of the respondents were respectively into farming, trading and civil service, while majority (52.4%) were into agro processing. This implies that agro processing is the main activity of the respondents. A good percent (78.5%) of the respondents earn ₦10,000.00 - ₦20,000.00 as their monthly income, only 11.9% earn above ₦20,000.00, while 9.5% earn below ₦5,000. With the support of government, NGO's and other social organizations, the respondents would be able to have higher income. Onwurafor and Enwelu (2013) reported the estimated monthly income of the greater proportion of the respondents (₦12,000.00-₦17,999) with the national minimum wage of ₦18,000.00 as well as with the average household size of 11 persons one can practically perceive the gravity and enormity of the plight of average agro-food monthly income according to drift studies. The finding on household size showed that most (76.2%) of the respondents' family size fall between 6-15, while 19.0% fall between 1-5. According to Ezedinma (2001) household size play an important role in agro-based entrepreneurial activities. Very large family sizes have serious economic implications hence the compelling need to empower the family through agro food processing entrepreneurial venture. This implies that the respondents are not economically comfortable because their monthly income does not commensurate with their family size and hence poverty is dominant.

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Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Item	Percentage
Age	
20-30	15.5
31-40	52.4
41-50	17.9
Above 50	14.3
Educational qualification	
No education	10.7
Primary level	29.8
Secondary level	53.6
Tertiary education	6.0
Marital status	
Single	40.5
Married	59.5
Household size	
1-5	19.0
6-15	76.2
Above 15	4.8
Occupation	
Farming	15.5
Trading	19.0
Civil servant	13.1
Agro processing	52.4
Membership of social organization	
Member	52.4
Non- member	47.6
Monthly income (#)	
<5000	9.5
5001-10000	34.5
10001-15000	25.0
15001-20000	19.0
Above 20000	11.9

Source: Field Survey, 2016

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Distribution of Respondents Based on type of Agro-Based Entrepreneurial Activities

Table 3 shows that the respondents are engaged in a variety of agro-based entrepreneurial activities as a means of empowerment strategies. It reveals that, most of the women are engaged in more than one type of the empowerment activities. 85.7% of the respondents engaged in processing of agricultural produce, 40.5% are into animal/livestock production, 27.4%, 17.9% and 14.3% were engaged in arable crop production, marketing of agricultural produce and artisanship (basket/mat weaving) respectively. This implies that this agro-based entrepreneurial activities (processing and livestock production) contributes to the respondent empowerment in the study area. The majority of the response on processing is due to the fact that they are low income earners so it easier for them to start even with less capital.

Table 3: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on type of agro-based entrepreneurial activities

Agro-based entrepreneurial activities	Percentage
Marketing of agricultural produce	17.9
Processing of agricultural produce	85.7
Animal/livestock production	40.5
Arable crop production	27.4
Artisanship (baskets/mats weaving)	14.3
Orchard/plantations	4.8
Mixed farming	14.3

* Multiple responses

Source: Field survey, 2016

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The Contribution of Agro-based Entrepreneurial Activities to Women Empowerment

Table 4 shows that agro-based entrepreneurial activities empowered women with employment opportunities, it helps increase family income, food stuff, household assets, clothing (fabric) improved housing and reduced their poverty status. It has also increase Social variable such as linkage with other business men/women as indicated by the respondents. These activities serve as a tool for providing employment opportunities for women, thereby alleviating poverty and women unemployment. It is therefore, of paramount importance to encourage women involvement in agriculture (Gobeli, 2004).

Table 4: The contribution of agro-based entrepreneurial activities to women empowerment

Contribution of agro-based activities	Frequency	Percentage
Provision of employment opportunities	81	96.4
Food stuff	71	84.5
Increased family income	80	90.5
No. of household assets acquired	78	92.9
Clothing (fabric)	67	79.8
Improved housing	76	90.5
Poverty reduction	80	95.2
Social empowerment (e.g. linkage with other business men/women)	67	79.8

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Relationship between Socio-Economic Characteristics and Participation in Agro-Based Entrepreneurial Activities

The Table 5 reveals that (education, access to credit, membership of association, family size, entered in the logit regression model were found to be significant ($P < 0.01$). While marital status, age and experience are significant ($P < 0.05$). The relationship is positive; this implies that these variables has a good relationship with participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities. The more the experience, education, access to credit, family

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size and membership of social organization, the more likely the respondents are prone to be involved in agro-based activities, in order to be empowered and help their families.

Table 5: Relationship between socio-economic variables and participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z
Age	0.923	0.408	2.25**
Education	0.238	0.015	15.5***
Marital status	0.683	0.478	2.7**
Membership	0.062	0.014	4.35***
Access to credit	0.848	0.131	6.47***
Family Size	0.814	0.202	4.03***
Experience	0.469	0.210	2.24**
_Cons	63.893	22.117	2.89***
Log likelihood		-13.305936	
		23.11	

* P≤0.05.
LRchi²(6)

Constraints to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities

The Table 6. reveals that the respondents' encountered several constraints. Limited/inadequate capital with Mean score = 4.7, Poor state of the infrastructure (mean score = 4.6), are regarded as "very serious effects", Lack of access to credit facilities (mean score = 3.7) high cost of input (raw materials) (mean score = 3.5) are regarded as a "serious constraint" to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities in the study area. Low level of business idea and lack of skilled labour is regarded as "not serious effects". Provision of capital can solve most of the constraint identified by the respondents, this is because capital is required for procurement of processing equipment, storage facilities and for expansion of the business in order to reduce costs and enjoy economies of scale by these women. The availability of infrastructure in the study area is not enough but its maintenance is paramount. Improved access to all or some of these incentives (credit facilities, capital and equipment would tend to increase access and involvement in entrepreneurial activities (Arizona, 2009).

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Table 6: Constraints to effective operation of agro-based entrepreneurial activities

Constraints	Mean*
Limited capital	4.7*
Poor state of the country's infrastructure	4.6*
Lack of access to credit facilities	3.7*
High cost of inputs (raw materials)	3.5*
Lack of agro-based processing equipment	3.4*
Low level of business idea	2.9
Lack of skilled labour	2.6

Source: *Field Survey, 2016*

Conclusion and Recommendation

The agro-based entrepreneurial activities play a crucial role and has contributed significantly in the economic growth and development of women in the study area. It generated employment, created wealth, reduced poverty and improved the living standards of women and their family in the study area. Lack of employment, poverty, external pressures and socio-economic characteristics influenced participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities.

Government should endeavour to address the issues of lack of capital, credit facilities and raw materials, through the introduction/provision of credit institutions/facilities and raw materials with the view of increasing capital base to women in the agro-based entrepreneurial activities.

Educational level, which was identified as one of the significant determinants of participation in agro-based entrepreneurial activities should be given consideration by government to provide agro-based entrepreneurial skill acquisition centres to help build the capacity of women in the activities, for women to reach their full potentials in terms of sustainable wealth creation, income generation and economic growth.

Policy makers should provide proper policy coordination and strategic plan on gainfully engaging women on entrepreneurship education and training.

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