

Agricultural Value Chain Utilization amongst Women Farmers' in Nigeria: a Veritable Tool to Increase Productivity and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

This paper discusses briefly the concept Gender, Development Communication cum Agricultural Communication strategies. It identified challenges and prospects as classified therein to bring about sustainable development yearning in Nigeria. Taking into cognizance also the dwindle productivity in the agricultural sector as a setback to the economy. Against these backdrops, it is imperative to engage in study of this kind to expose the ills in agricultural initiatives and the disparity herein. Thus, this study explored the level of women's participation in agricultural value chain utilization. Assess the populace level of awareness, their knowledge on value chain utilization and gender equality in agriculture. And as well, articulate a way forward to achieve sustainable development through women's involvement in agribusiness in these study areas and by extension from rural communities to the nation at large. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies underpinned the study; with triangulations of research instruments for data generation and analysis. It focus on some selected women farmers' in Jigawa state and Niger state, and 420 respondents thus, {Q 100+ FGDs 300+KII 20 = 420} were involved in this study. In the cause of the study, it was revealed that women noninvolvement in agricultural value chain utilization in these study areas was low; majorly due to lack of awareness, lack of knowledge about the agricultural initiatives and were mostly marginalize. It was also discovered that women were keen to participate in any agricultural value chain initiatives and contribute to increase productivity if given equal opportunity. In this vein, as a matter of urgency there is the need to empower women against these impediments with more evidence based agricultural initiatives. Also, it is essential at this moment to open up wider networks for women as they are the central nerve of societal growth, if the sustainable development yearn is to be achieved.

Keywords: *Development, Gender, Marginalization, Participatory and Sustainable*

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Background to the Study

Over the decades it has been shown that without explicit attention to gender in policy, gender issues are not considered in implementation (Hafkin, 2002:3). Governments argue that they already have gender policies in place and this should obviate the explicit mentioning of gender in every project. To the contrary, evidence shows that, in the agricultural fields, “policy making ignores the needs, involvement, requirements and aspirations of women unless gender requirements are included”. Though women predominate in a number of economic sectors; women in African countries constitute about 70% to 75% of the agriculturalist and mostly small scale farmers', but they may not have land rights or been marginalized in the processes of the policy initiatives. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to increase productivity without taking into consideration some detail how family farming and increased productivity will help women. If increased productivity is harmful to women as some elements claimed and they are the central nerve of societal growth, then the reverse be the case.

A recent study shows that, the presence of gender issues extends to agricultural value chain utilization and initiatives like in the fields such as health, education, economics, and rural development. It is rare to find projects that fail to take into account gender issues, but mostly on paper they are partially or never implemented, yet the need to open to a more gender perspective. Although, some value chain programmes have attempted to improve agricultural utilization for increase productivity and sustainable development mostly among women farmers' by targeting agriculture value chains utilization. However, results have been mixed, and it is generally considered that much more could be accomplished. Based on an evaluation of Food for Peace Multi-Year Assistance Programs, Feed the Future, the U.S. government's global hunger and food security initiative, estimates that integrating a package of nutrition interventions into projects that are targeting agricultural value chains utilization, can increase produce and reduce chronic under nutrition by up to 57% or more. Also, a recent review of experiences in applying the agricultural value chain approach to addressing utilizations identified a serious lack of documented experience and case studies. A lot still remains to be learned. Understanding the causes of the setback is an important starting point that will allow practitioners to identify the most appropriate intervention strategies is what this paper posits.

Agricultural growth will not have a positive impact on utilization if it does not benefit the grower. Gender and family farming practices: Food production, preparation and marketing for income have an enormous impact on value chain utilization. Improving these practices participatory communication approaches require that everybody will have say and are responsible for these tasks. Why because women play a major role in processes in African cultures, it is increasingly recognized that policy need to target women with value chain utilization messaging given the role that women often play demands incorporating them in planning and decision-making. Utilization is often used interchangeably with nutrition, yet while utilization for purpose of this paper focuses on food production, storage, processing, marketing and consumption i.e. “from farm to end users” it also includes also nutrition; health and sanitation as they relate to nutrition. Though, food utilization is very vital to livelihoods. Malnutrition is a serious global challenge: almost a third of children in the developing world are with poor nutrition responsible for nearly 60% of child deaths worldwide. USAID defined food utilization as: “food is properly used; proper food processing and storage techniques are employed; adequate knowledge of nutrition and child care techniques exists and is applied; and adequate health and sanitation services exist.”

Thus, this paper posit the promotion of gender equality, particular the policy to incorporate women into agricultural initiatives and empowerment in Nigeria: socio-economic, through participatory communication approach and also taking accounts of the fact that women often have needs in society. With emphasis on the concept of gender, agricultural communication and development communication and as well taking into consideration the importance of family farming as a veritable tool for sustainable development. More so, underlying conceptual rationale and it critiques a number of different social policy approaches from the perspective of women noninvolvement in agricultural value chain utilization. Additionally, how women could contribute and increase productivity especially in agriculture and other viable areas, if empowered.

In the past, series of agricultural strategies were employed to raise adequate food supply in the country through the intensification of innovative agrarian programmes. Agriculture's end is to provide resources and food to sustain mankind irrespective of geography or social class. Nigeria has huge agricultural potential with an arable land potential of 98 million hectares, out of which 84 million hectares are cultivatable; Nigeria's agricultural potential remained untapped; only 34 million ha is cultivated or 48%, the available land for agriculture and optimal cultivation is from only 10% (Adesina, 2012).

Agriculture is a major industry in the world and understandably it attracts the attention of the United Nations in all its activities. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has the mandate to “raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy”. Mostly the developing countries relied on family farming for their sustainability. According to Hartmann (2011), agriculture is one of the world's most powerful tools in addressing its goals of creating more employment, better public health, and greater economic growth. As cited in CBN, Oji-Okoro, opine that agriculture resource has been an important sector in the Nigerian economy in the past decades, and is still a major sector despite the oil boom; basically it provides employment opportunities for the teeming population, eradicates poverty and contributes to the growth of the economy (Oji-Okoro, 2011). A strong and efficient agricultural sector would enable a country to feed its growing population, generate employment, earn foreign exchange and provide raw materials for industries. The agricultural sector has a multiplier effect on any nation's socio-economic and industrial fabric because of the multifunctional nature of agriculture (Ogen, 2007).

Notwithstanding, the enviable position of the agricultural sector in the Nigerian economy for over three decades is arguably the most important sector to revive the economy but jettison. Agriculture's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria has remained stable at between 35 and 48 percent, and employs less than 70 per cent, of the labour force in Nigeria. Similarly, Patachu, (2012), opined that, Agriculture has been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy for several years and is still contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country, but not until recently it was jettison due to increase in oil price in the world market.

Also, for more than three decades, Nigeria has been plunged into food crisis which has seriously affected the well-being of the large sections of its population, as well weakened the cohesiveness of the nation by increasing economic, social and political tensions. The

continued social challenges emanating from such economic crisis has always been tackled with 'reactive' policy initiatives aimed at ameliorating the crises rather than eradicating them. Nigeria has undergone numerous agricultural processes with profound implications for all sectors of the economy as the country attempts to set out plans for sustainable development. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), Agriculture contributes about 40 percent of the country's GDP. Agriculture has the potentials for employment generation, food security and poverty reduction in Nigeria. While, agricultural production in Nigeria is mainly carried out by small scale farmers in rural areas. Most of the farms are fragmented, have low input and low output. The usages of farm machines, fertilizer and improved seeds have been very low. Hence, a large percentage of the populace depends on imported foods for their family sustenance.

Among other challenges in all the failed agricultural development programmes in Nigeria since 1960 till date, has been the consistent changes and lack of sustainable policy, gender marginalization and the communication strategies used for the dissemination of such initiatives in the sector. This paper posits emphatically for better gender policy that would identify women's position in the cause particularly, through agricultural value chain utilization and other viable areas. Value chain programmes that aim to improve utilizations more among women farmers' in many cases, utilization can be most effectively addressed by targeting the foods the poor consume or produce. Women, if empowered would bring about increase productivity and sustainable development yearning in Nigeria and in turn the developing nations at large.

Objectives of the Study

In this vein, the study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the level of women participation in agricultural value chain utilization.
2. To assess the populace level of knowledge on agricultural value chain utilization.
3. To examine their level of awareness among the populace on the importance of gender equality in agricultural initiatives and
4. To articulate a way forward on how sustainable development can be achieve through women's participation in those selected states and by extension to empowering women 'from rural communities to the nation at large.

Literature Review

Understanding Gender

For the purpose of this study it imperative to understand the basic concept of the term gender, but cannot be overemphasize. The word gender refers to the social and cultural traits usually attributed to one sex or the other. Gender is dynamic. Gender is simply the polarity of appearance and behaviour. For better or worse, society has different expectations, rules, and standards for men and women due to cultural or social factors as the case may be in different societies today.

Although, Gender roles differ according to cultural-historical context, and while most cultures express two genders, some express more. Androgyny, for example, has been proposed as a third gender. Other societies have been claimed to have more than five genders, and some non-Western societies have three genders – man, woman and third gender. Gender expression refers to the external manifestation of one's gender identity, through masculine, feminine, or gender-variant or gender neutral behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, or body characteristics. There are differences of opinion as to which observed

differences in behaviour and personality between genders are entirely due to innate personality of the person and which are due to cultural or social factors, and are therefore the product of socialization, or to what extent gender differences are due to biological and physiological differences.

Since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the demand for policy attentions to women's needs in development has often been framed in terms of a project of access, or integration, to a range of development policy-making and project implementing institutions. Most important of these institutions has been the state, which, in contexts of scarcity and poverty, has been a central arena for the distribution of development resources and agricultural value chain initiatives. Although this is a role which has been seriously problematized over three decades in the processes of economic stabilization and structural adjustment, the state is still a critical arena for the promotion of women's interests. This is because of a growing understanding among gender policy advocates of the role of public authority in underwriting the asymmetrical distribution of resources and values between women and men and hence the importance of improving the quality of the accountability of public institutions to their female constituencies.

More so, there have been efforts to institutionalize women in various development initiatives, since the return to democratic system in Nigeria. In the cause Nigeria has also experience tremendous political, economic and social changes within both the national and international due to the adoption of new policy and diplomacy, due to the broad trends in international politics towards democratization, transparency and human rights observance. In particular the women affirmative policy in Nigeria; this situation offers opportunities to make women social preferences of state legitimacy.

Many military régimes and dictatorships have succumbed to popular pressure for democratization in the 1980s in Latin America and after 1989 in Africa. Moments of political systems change when it offers great opportunities to women. Also, the importance of gender equality, women's empowerment and the realization of women's rights in achieving self-desire as a panacea to sustainable development has been increasingly recognized in recent era. This recognition is evident in a number of international norms and agreements, including principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1 adopted in 1992, in its statement regarding the full participation of women being essential to achieving sustainable development. In the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2 adopted by Member States in 1995, governments were called upon to integrate gender concerns and perspectives into policies and programmes for sustainable development. The centrality of gender equality has also been articulated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", adopted in 2012, which included recognition of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment across the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, and resolve to promote gender equality and women's full participation in sustainable development policies, programmes and decision-making at all levels (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex).

Some reasons for Gender equality, Self-desire and Sustainable Development are:

- i. It is a moral and ethical imperative: achieving gender equality and realizing the human rights, dignity and capabilities of diverse groups of women is a central requirement of a just and sustainable world.
- ii. It is critical to redress the disproportionate impact of economic, social and environmental shocks and stresses on women and girls, which undermine the enjoyment of their human rights and their vital roles in sustaining their families and communities.
- iii. It is important to build up women's agency and capabilities to create better synergies between gender equality and sustainable development outcomes.

There is growing evidence of the synergies between gender equality, on the one hand, and economic, political, social and development sustainability, on the other. Women predominate in a number of economic sectors; women in African countries constitute about 70% to 80% of the agriculturalist, but they may not have land rights or been marginalize in the process of the policy initiatives. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to increase productivity without taking into consideration in some detail how family farming and increased productivity will help women. If increased productivity is harmful to women as some elements claimed and they are the central nerve of societal growth, then the revise be the case. For example, when women have greater voice and participation in public institution for policy planning, implementations, monitoring and evaluation of public resources are more likely to be allocated towards increase productivity and human self-desire and sustainable development. Ensuring women's access to and control over agricultural assets and productive resources is important for achieving food security and sustainable livelihoods (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2011). Women's knowledge of value chain utilization, family farming and collective action are central to finding and building self-sufficiency more economically, socially and sustainably for increase productivity and development; produce and access food; and secure food for sustainable purposes.

The Dynamism of Gender and Development: Situating the Issues in Nigeria

As a matter of fact, the 21st century, Nigeria has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as family farming, new family structures, education and several others. Societies can also change such that the gender roles rapidly change. These should not be a yardstick to deny women the right to participate in agricultural initiatives to achieve self-desire. In essence, emphatically, participatory communication is capable of facilitating people's involvement in decision-making about issues impacting their lives: - a process capable of addressing specific needs and priorities relevant to people and at the same time assists in their empowerment.

In the same vein, Narayan (2002: 14) conceived empowerment “as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affected their lives.” This definition is consistent with Freire (1997), according to him people's empowerment can be achieved through a process of awareness or “conscientization” that requires the poor to become aware of their conditions through a totality of reflection and action, this same scenario is needed in Nigeria. The key to achieve this kind of empowerment is communication through dialogue. For Freire, dialogue is an act of creation, and the act of naming the world is in

many ways equivalent to creating the world. He asserts: “to say the true word... is to transform the world, saying the word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone” (1997:70).

Gender and Development (GAD)

Some of the key propositions around which the conceptual framework of Gender and Development GAD was constructed are thus: that those women are incorporated into the development process in specific ways; that a focus on women alone was inadequate to understand the opportunities for women agency or change; that women are not a homogeneous category but are divided by class, colour and creed (Young, 1993, pp. 134). The GAD approach views women and men as active agents in and not passive recipients of development. From this perspective, the basic problem is not women's integration into development, but the structures and processes that gave rise to women's disadvantages which call for cultural, religious and the redirection of policy. The GAD approach “leads inevitably to fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions and ultimately to the loss of power of entrenched elites, which affects some women as well as men” (Young, 1993, pp.144). This perspective is much less acceptable to mainstream development because of its emphasis on gender as a relation of power.

Women in Development (WID)

According to Young (1993), the Women in Development (WID) approach accentuates the facts that women can do everything men do as well as men. It focuses on women and their experiences and places its major emphasis on individuals and their capacity for self-betterment. It therefore stresses the relevance of “role models” in the development process. One major weakness in the original WID perspective is its exclusive focus on women which suggests that women can become sole agents of their destiny without any corresponding change in men. This probably explains why a key WID strategy is getting women access to cash income. As Young explains, “this strategy derives both from the belief that women's economic dependence on men is the primary cause of their subordination and from confidence in the market itself” (pp.142).

The two approaches –WID and GAD – are considered relevant to the development process because both approaches emphasize the importance of women's involvement (participation as one the conceptual framework for measuring equality) in Planning, decision-making and access to available resources. Both approaches also accept that if only one gender takes decisions about development options, the choices and solutions arrived at will be quite different from when both genders are involved.

To this end, it is necessary to bear in mind the gender factor when designing messages for development purposes as gender role. Thus, gender roles arose from correspondent inference, meaning that general labour division was extended to gender roles. According to Wood and Eagly (2002), socially constructed gender roles are considered to be hierarchical and characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy by social constructionists. Gender roles are the social and behavioural norms that are generally considered appropriate for either a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship.

So far, the significant role that women played in the development process has been widely acknowledged at both research and project levels. In other perspectives, women are not only beneficiaries they are also participants in development, but less at policy formulation levels, communicating development issues and at the implementation levels. While some government institutions and non-governmental agencies have recognized women in communicating development as the central nerve for both intellectual and practical proliferation. In fact, we acknowledge that women through family farming have profound and pervasive effect on the well-being of the communities and are more knowledgeable about the environmental impact. But, government ministries and local authorities responsible for development process have tended to ignore this significance. Consequently decision making powers at both national and local levels in most countries through-out the world remain not only male dominated but also gender blind in orientation.

Since gender is dynamic, it is not just because it exists on a continuum, but because its meanings change over time within different cultural contexts. So also, development communication is dynamic in process; the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential. As gender is a development subset, the concept of gender communication is also seated in development communication. Therefore, the dynamics in which both terms perform is very relevant to this paper. In short, this has to do with understanding the gender, the needs of the society, informing the people and mobilizing them for effective participation in the agricultural value chain process to increase productivity and sustainable and development.

Development originally meant the process by which Third World societies could become more like Western developed societies as measured in terms of political system, economic growth, and educational levels (Inkeles and Smith, 1974). Development was synonymous with political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, high literacy rates, longer life expectancy, and the like. The implicit assumption was that there was one form of development as expressed in developed countries that underdeveloped societies needed to systematically replicate.

This applies to the various thematic areas of development workers; health, agriculture, governance, human rights and gender amongst others. Women communicating development intends to develop reflexes and elicit questions with a view to ensuring that communication for development in rural areas is more inclusive of men and women, while respecting their specificities, needs and capacities, all with the ultimate goal of promoting equality. Therefore, effective development communication should be people – oriented. Based on this, the writers believe the best way to communicate development is to promote gender equality, equity (egalitarianism), self-reliance, and self-desire. In essence, anyone involved in change is inevitably involved in a process of communication and for communication to be effective; it must be participatory in nature.

Development Communication cum Agricultural Communication: A Snippet

Although “agriculture remains the key component of Nigeria's economy the sector has however, significantly underperformed its potential” FGN, 2008. According to Arokoyo (2003), the manifestations of this are representatives in the very high food prices nationwide, food insecurity both at the household and national level and malnutrition

especially in children. It is unfortunate that Nigeria's National Agricultural Research and Extension System (NARES), the largest sub-Saharan Africa, has not been able to engineer a sustainable agricultural development that would ensure national cum household food security, family farming with improved rural livelihoods and indeed make Nigeria's agriculture competitive in the world agricultural market today.

A growing market for agricultural journalists and broadcasters led to the establishment of agricultural journalism and agricultural communication academic disciplines. The academic field originated from communication courses that taught communication experts in the agricultural sciences how to communicate. There are wide variety of agricultural newspapers and magazines TV, radio and ICT based throughout the world. Radio programmes are frequently used for agricultural communication and Farm Radio International is a leading organization in providing programming to developing countries on agriculture.

However, it has evolved into its own professional field. Agricultural communication also addresses all subject areas related to the complex enterprises of food, feed, fibre, renewable energy, natural resource management, rural development and others, locally to globally (Doerfert, 2011). Furthermore, it spans all participants, from scientists to consumers - and all stages of those enterprises, from agricultural research and production to processing, marketing, consumption, nutrition and health. Agricultural communication must be understood as a strategic communication that demands special training away from just extension (which is more or less adult education based system of communication to rural farmers). The understanding of agricultural communication beyond the regime of extension will help modern extension workers appreciate the blend of communication approaches available especially with the advent of the New Media for responsive development communication.

The term "Development Communication" was first coined in 1972 by Professor [Nora C. Quebral](#), who defines the field as *"the art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the larger unfolding of individual potential."* Development Communication is recognizing the power of communication as a catalyst for social development. It is the utilization of existent communication tools and applicable theories for result-driven strategies for the advancement of society. And the systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations mainly at the grassroots. Quebral (1973), also view development communication as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential. The relationship between the 'brighter' of development and the 'seeker' of development is at best skewed.

Development Communication can also be view as purposive communication intended to a specific target audience; that allows for the translation of information into action resulting in a higher quality of life and to attend sustainable development. It is greatly linked with the concepts of Sustainable Development (which can be defined as the improvement of a community using information and technology and the community's ability to maintain the created ideal state without compromising its environment and

resources). It also relies greatly on Community and People Participation, which is the voluntary involvement of a group of people in a development activity with full knowledge of its purpose that will allow them to grow individually and as a community (Quebral, 2001).

As agriculture is a development subset, likewise the concept Agricultural communication is also seated in development communication. Development communication as a field of study is an attempt to make the subject of development owned by the people in participatory way. With this, cultural identities, values, religious and ethnic identities are pronounced. It thus means that what works in one community may not work in another community. Development Communication has been alternatively defined as a type of marketing and public opinion research that is used specifically to develop effective communication or as the use of communication to promote social development. This describes an approach to communication which provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives, which aims at making public programmes and policies real, meaningful and sustainable (Manyozo, 2006).

Methodology and Materials

The triangulations methods were used by the researchers for the efficacy of the study. Quantitative and Qualitative methods underpinned the study to generate data for analysis. In this research total number of four hundred and twenty {420} respondents were involved, made up of selected women farmers' from the two selected states Jigawa state in north-west zone and Niger state in north-central zone respectively, and the study was conducted by the researchers thus: the total numbers of hundred (100) questionnaire was distributed to respondents in these states { $100 \div 2 = 50$ } i.e. fifty {50} per state { $50 \times 1 = 50$ } and the two (2) states { $50 \times 2 = 100$ } in total numbers of hundred {100} questionnaire distributed and collected. And for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), total numbers of twenty (20) numbers of FGDs was conducted in the two state { $20 \div 2 = 10$ } i.e. {10} per state { $10 \times 2 = 20$ } FGDs, total numbers of three hundred {300} women farmers' selected were involved as respondents, one hundred and fifty {150} respondents i.e. { $300 \div 2 = 150$ } per state. Furthermore, the process of the twenty (20) numbers of FGDs conducted in these two (2) states is as follows: { $20 \div 2 = 10$ } i.e. ten (10) FGDs in each state with total numbers of fifteen {15} respondents in each group respectively { $10 \times 15 = 150$ }, with total numbers of one hundred and fifty {150} respondents involved in total in the FGDs conducted in the two states { $150 \times 2 = 300$ }, that made the total numbers of respondents involved in the FGDs to be {300}.

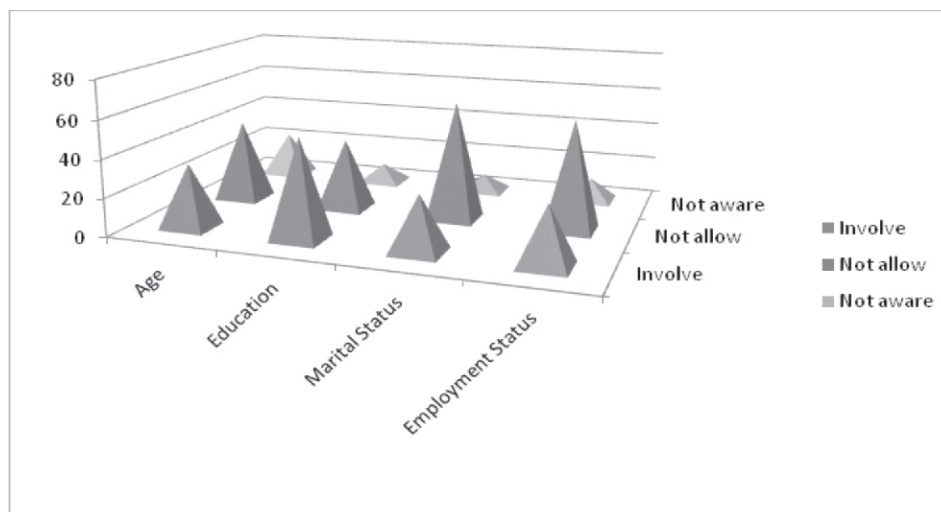
The Key Informant Interview method was also used for in-depth findings, thus: twenty (20) interviews were also conducted with each of the selected group leaders i.e. twenty {20} interviewees in total from the FGDs conducted. The process is as follows: one {1} leader as representative selected from all the (20) FGDs { $20 \times 1 = 20$ }, that also made the total numbers of the KII to be {20}. Thus, in this study total numbers of four hundred and twenty {420} respondents were involved { $100 + 300 + 20 = 420$ }, these tremendous approaches were used to carried out this research in order to achieved the set objectives of the study and to help reveal the current level of women involvement in agricultural value chain utilization or any agricultural initiatives in these two selected states in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The data collected are interpreted using the simple descriptive statistical tools in the form of tables and charts for graphical explanation.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Figure: 1. Socio-Demographics of selected Women in Jigawa State & Niger State



Source: Field Survey, Jigawa and Niger, 2015.

Table 1: Respondents in Jigawa State & Niger State

Distribution of Respondents (Women Farmers) in Jigawa and Niger States				
Identification of Instruments	Jigawa State	Niger States	Total Respondents	Total Percentage of Distribution
Questionnaire	50	50	100	100%
FGDs	150	150	300	100%
KIIs	10	10	20	100%
Total	210	210	420	100%

Source: Field Survey, Jigawa and Niger States, 2015.

The table and figure above captures the distribution of the respondents from the two selected states where Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews were conducted in this study. From the above, it shows that in Jigawa state 210 women respondents participated in the survey; likewise in Niger state 210 women respondents also participated in Niger state, and were between the ages of 28-57years. The total numbers of 100 questionnaire was also administered to the respondents in the two states, 50 women per each state. The women that actually participated were selected using random selection methods from the women farmers' operating in those communities in the two selected states. The categories of women are those who have participated in one or more previous agricultural initiatives which include FADAMA and GESS platform but, yet think were not fully incorporated.

Likewise in the some past studies, as indicated some specific programmes on women also recorded that the marginalization of women farmers is part of a set of factors that undermine agricultural productivity (Grace, 2014). Thus, where development issues relating to gender are in focus, the men will logically make the greater number than women; but not marginalizing them. 'Marginalized' is not used here to mean maltreated but to capture a group or groups that have not been critically considered or included in development issues in rural Nigeria due to some traditions or religious practices. Olowologbon et.al. (2013). as cited in Grace, (2014). The results equally corroborates the findings of which put the number of the male farmers at 69 and the female farmers at 20 out of the 89 farmers who participated in a research to find out the effect of agro-chemical on the health of farmers in Oyo State. The significance of this to this study is that there are divergent views and numerous reports on gender bias in agricultural value chain utilization and initiatives in Nigeria. Thus, these would continue to hinder the position of women in family farming and hamper the increase productivity and sustainable development year in the Nigeria and other developing nations.

Integrating Participatory Communication into Agribusiness The Genesis

When the promises of the modernization paradigm failed to materialize, and its methods came increasingly under fire, and the dependency theorists failed to provide a successful alternative model, a different approach focusing on people's participation began to emerge. This participatory model is less oriented to the political-economic dimension and more rooted in the cultural realities of development. The development focus has shifted from economic growth to include other social dimensions needed to ensure meaningful results in the long run—as indicated by the consensus built in the definition of the Millennium Development Goals. Sustainability and people's participation became key elements of this new vision, as acknowledged also by the World Bank, “Internationally, emphasis is being placed on the challenges of sustainable development, and participation is increasingly recognized as a necessary part of sustainable development strategies”.

There is no meaningful participation that can occur without communication. Unfortunately, too many development programs, including community-driven ones, seem to overlook this aspect and, while paying attention to participation, do not pay similar attention to communication, intended as the professional use of dialogic methods and tools to promote change. To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices. That is why communication is increasingly considered essential in facilitating stakeholders' engagement in problem analysis and resolution.

Similarly, there is an increasing recognition that the old, vertical, top-down model is no longer applicable as a “one-size-fits-all” formula. While acknowledging that the basic principles behind the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver model can still be useful in some cases, development communication has increasingly moved toward a horizontal, “two-way” model, which favours people's active and direct interaction through consultation and dialogue over other traditional one-way information dissemination.

Many past agricultural projects and initiatives failures can be attributed directly or indirectly to the limited involvement of the affected people in the decision-making process. Hence, call for the horizontal use of communication, which opens up dialogue, assesses risks, identifies solutions, and seeks consensus for action, came to be seen as a panacea to the success and sustainability of development efforts.

There are a number of terms used to refer to this emerging conception. According to Mefalopulos (2003), some of the better known are “another development,” “empowerment,” “participation,” and “multiplicity paradigm.” This new paradigm is also changing the way communication is conceived and applied. It shifts the emphasis from information dissemination to situation analysis, from persuasion to participation, which is in consonant with what this paper posits for the agricultural initiatives in Nigeria. Rather than substituting for the old model, it is broadening its scope, maintaining the key functions of informing people and promoting change, yet underscore, the importance of using participatory communication to involve stakeholders in any development process. Among the various definitions of development communication, the following two provide a consistent understanding of the boundaries that define this field of study and work.

The first is derived from the Development Communication Division of the World Bank (DevComm), which considers development communication as an interdisciplinary field based on empirical research that helps to build consensus while it facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development initiatives. It is not only about effective dissemination of information but also about using empirical research and two-way communication among stakeholders. It is also a key management tool that helps assess sociopolitical risks and opportunities.

The second definition emerged at the First World Congress of Communication for Development, held in Rome in October, 2006. It is included in the document known as the Rome Consensus in which the more than 900 participants of the Congress (World Bank, 2007) agreed to conceive it as a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communication.

In spite of the above, different theories and strategies shared the premise that problems of development were basically rooted in lack of knowledge and that, consequently, interventions needed to provide people with information. Instead, the difficulties in Third World countries were at least partially related to the existence of a traditional culture that inhibited development. The researchers explored this paradigm due to its relationship to the set objectives of this study. The goal was, therefore, to instil family framing and modern ways of values chain utilization and the adoption of innovations originated in the developed world to Nigeria, “from family farming to increase productivity and sustainable development” (ffip&sd) that this paper posits.

Results

1. It was revealed that most of the women level of participation in previous agricultural and development initiatives in the study areas was low; due to marginalization i.e. not involved because of tradition, culture or religious practices.

2. It was also unveiled that their awareness level was low; most women in the study areas do not participate in most agricultural and development initiatives due to lack of awareness.
3. It was discovered that women in the study areas could contribute to attain increase productivity. If allowed to participate in any agricultural initiative due to their zeal, potentials and will to contribute to national development.

Discussion

From the foregoing, this study has explored and underscored the concepts gender in agriculture and development; ways in which the paradigm shift associated with these terms can contribute to increase productivity and bring about sustainable development yearn through women participatory role in agriculture and the society at large. Though, before the advent of agricultural value chain initiatives, the Federal Government has always relied on the reports and documentation of activities between farmers, through the state Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and Research Institutes to formulate most of its policy for agricultural development. Under these former arrangements, the ADPs and research institutions used the farm visit where group discussions and meetings were held with farmers before, during and after planting season to discuss farming challenges and find solutions to them.

It is obvious that women want more participatory forum where they could ask questions and express their opinion and experiences freely. Also, the number of shortcomings and challenges observed are in line with the above position. Nigerian women especially the smallholder farmers, that contribute more to food production for their household are not carried along due to numerous factors; lack of awareness on agricultural value chain utilization, new innovations and initiatives, lack of involvement (participation) in agricultural value chain initiatives due to some cultural believe. Thus, leave them with sub-standard ideas, marginalized and lack concepts which in turn affect their family farm. Reduce their produce, income and create impediments to yearn for sustainable development.

More so, this would create a sphere between government and the populists, by putting in place policy and the right implementation strategies. The researchers thus, posit that participatory approach, if effectively adopt could create room for mutual understanding and better working relationship among the populace, and accelerate actualizing the increase productivity and sustainable development yearn and the desire for a more food secure future.

Conclusion

This paper describes the promotion of gender in development, particular the redirection of policy and role to incorporate gender into agricultural initiative and empowerment in Nigeria: agricultural initiative, through participatory approach and also taking account of the fact that women and men often have different needs in society. Also as well, underscore the concepts gender, the dynamism of gender and development communication, development communication cum agricultural communication, participatory paradigm and sustainable development and taking into consideration the methodological tools and data analysis. It mentions briefly the background to the study and situating such approaches to Nigeria, before describing the underlying rationale and introducing the distinction between gender capacities and needs. It critiques a number of

different development initiatives particularly from the perspective of women noninvolvement in agricultural value chain utilization and development programmes.

The paper discusses gender equality, agricultural value chain utilization challenges and prospects, women, family farming for increase productivity and sustainable development in Nigeria. This paper projects women perspective, emphatically, their participation in development process or any empowerment initiatives in communities for rural development, and suggest practical ways on how to create synergy between the available human, technological know-how and natural resources to achieve increase productivity and sustainable development. In addition, it is really surprising that agricultural policy and development initiatives reached and engaged and empowered more men than women, especially in rural areas. Who says Women are not a key to Sustainable Development!

Recommendations

- i. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should build stronger advocacy, mobilization, sensitization and communication approaches that will improve the success of family farming by increasing the percentage of women's involvement in agricultural initiatives.
- ii. There is the need for the women farmers to form groups i.e. cooperatives societies and should also be encouraged as well recognised as stakeholders in policy planning, if any. This arrangement will empower and strengthen the women's groups, enhance their commitment to agricultural business, create wealth and in turn enrich the rural poor, increases productivity yearn and bring about the sustainable development.
- iii. Based on the above statements, we thereby recommended for a synergy between the women groups in these selected zones and Nigeria Bank of Industries to create a more accessible loan facilities and market as a hub for the region's 'black gold', for alternative sources of revenue to fuel and, in addition as an industrial strategy to increase productivity in the world market.
- iv. There should be evidence based sustainable agricultural policy, i.e. planning, review and integrated programming in the light of the multifunctional aspect of agriculture, particularly with regard to food security and sustainable development.
- v. There is the crucial need for policy redirection and inter-independent diplomacy for the agricultural sector for increase productivity and to attain sustainability.

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