GENDER AND LAND USE FOR FARMING IN RURAL UBAHA-AKPULU COMMUNITY IMO STATE NIGERIA

Ifeoma Elizabeth Ohachenu

Abstract
Land is an important resource in African farming systems. It is the solid part of the earth's surface and includes the rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, hills, mountains valleys. In fact, it is fundamental to people's existence in most rural communities. In a predominantly farming community land is equal to life, and most activities revolve around land. Access to this important resource in our farming system is, therefore, critical to the life and well-being of the people in our rural economies. This papers examines the issues of gender by examining the differential access to this resource among men and women in our rural communities. Using Ubaha-Akpulu community in Ideato-North L.G.A of Imo State as a case study, the paper explores the dynamics of gender in the processes governing ownership and control of land resources in the community. Specifically, we look at the ownership structure, method of allocation, the target users, costs (if any), and the factors that play out in the allocation and how women's needs are addressed in the process. The findings inform our stance and recommendations for gender -inclusiveness in policy formulations that will place women on a proper footing in rural agricultural reforms.
Keywords: Gender, Land, Farming, Rural, Ubah-Akpulu.

Introduction

Land is an important resource in African farming systems. And farming is the mainstay of Africa's rural economies. Land is, therefore, fundamental to people's existence in most rural communities. In a predominantly farming community land is equal to life, and most activities revolve around land as it is needed for agriculture, residential, industrial, commercial and transport purposes. Its place cannot be overemphasized. No wonder the English economist T. R. Malthus (1766–1834) highlighted "humanity's dependence on food from land in dynamic terms when he wrote that the slow *addition* of food from land would limit humankind's exponential *multiplication."(*Wikipedia*).*Access to this important resource in our farming system is, therefore, critical to the life and well-being of the people in our rural economies.

This paper essentially focuses on issues of gender in our land use systems by examining the differential access to this resource among men and women in our rural communities. We take as our point of departure the thesis that gender is an important variable in understanding the significance of land use in rural farming systems. Land tenure is pivotal to achieving sustainable rural development generally and household food security in particular, especially in the context of the increasing changes and/or

challenges in the rural economies. Any discourse in this regard that fails to factor in gender is therefore of questionable utility value and doubtful policy effectiveness.

Prior to the Land Use Decree No.6 of 1978 the land tenure systems in Nigeria had varied across regions, and among communities within regions. On 29 March, 1978 the various systems of land tenure in the country were harmonised into one unified Land Use Act by the then Federal Military Government. The purpose was clearly spelt out in the preamble, to wit: "...it is in the public interest that the RIGHTS OF ALL NIGERIANS TO LAND IN NIGERIA be asserted and preserved by law; And ...the rights of all Nigerians to use and enjoy land in Nigeria and the natural fruits thereof in sufficient quantity to enable them to provide for the sustenance of themselves and their families should be assured, protected, and preserved..."(Anyadiegwu, I.I.1981, Nwocha, E. (2016), PDF (2020) Land Use Act).

This policy reform in land use, though an important landmark in land use administration in Nigeria, was completely gender-blind by:

1. not recognising why gender issues are of paramount importance in land matters; and
2. not providing adequate guidelines to protect and preserve the rights of women and other vulnerable groups in society.

And increasing social, political, economic and technological changes in the rural landscape of most communities call for urgent attention to a thorough re-examination of issues relating to procedures guiding the administration of rights and access to this all important resource of life and livelihood in rural communities: what rights are available to men and women for farming in the rural communities, how are such rights administered among the rural farmers, and under what conditions? This study combines the x-ray of ethnographic details pertaining to land use in the community under study and information generated from our role as participant observers. Also most of the ethnographic data are generated from previous studies in the study area from the eighties to the present times.

Study Aims and Objectives

Our goal is to demonstrate the complex relationship between gender on the one hand and the use, ownership and control of land resources in rural farming systems on the other. Our objectives, therefore, include:

(a) Examining the sex/gender structure of rural farming activities; that is the gender division of labour in the rural farming systems;

(b) Identifying the enabling factors and/or constraints to increasing gender inclusiveness in rural farming systems;

Scope and Methodology

Scope

Using Ubaha-Akpulu community in Ideato-North LGA as a case study, this paper explores the dynamics of gender in the processes governing access, ownership and control of land in the community. Our analysis covers the ownership structure, method of allocation, target users, nature of land rights as well as the enforcement characteristics of such rights, decision-making processes on land use matters, how rights to land are distributed and used, security of tenure (how long and under what conditions).

Methodology

The method of this paper is a combination of ethnography and participant observation. Most of the ethnographic data are generated from previous studies in the study area from the eighties to the present times. Our major sources include "Social Stratification In Akpulu Community: An Unobtrusive Approach" (June, 1980); "The Involvement of Women In Small-Scale Food Processing And Distribution Industries In Nigeria: A Case Study of Anambra, Benue And Imo States" (where the author served as a field enumerator in 1988); "A Brief History of Akpulu-From The Earliest Times To 1980" (1997); "Perception Of Child Adoption Among The Igbo of Orlu North-East, Imo State, Nigeria" (the author's Ph.D thesis in 2016); and numerous other unpublished materials in the community library. We also rely on the author's personal on-the-spot observations and experiences as an active participant in the community governance. The author is an active member of the case study community, and has served as the President of the community's apex women organisation, NneamakaUbaha-Akpulu Women Organisation for six years running.

In addition to her membership of other women's organisations at both the lineage and community levels, the author has represented the women at the defunct Community Development Council (CDC) under the Imo State Community Government reforms of the past administration of His Excellency, Anayo Rochas Okorocha. These and other experiences have in no small measure equipped the writer with a sound ethnographic information about the case study community. Our analysis, therefore, derives substantially from the insider's point of view. The rest of the paper is organised in four sections. The first section presents the relevant ethnographic data about our case study community to provide the necessary background to our analysis. This is followed by our conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The third section dwells on the role of men and women in the farming systems of the community, trying to demonstrate how gender is an all important issue. The final section contains our conclusions and recommendations for gender inclusiveness in land use and administration for sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Ubaha-Akpulu: The Case Study Community

Ubaha-Akpulu is an "autonomous community" carved out from Akpulu in Ideato-North LGA of Imo State. Located in the northern fringes of Imo State, Akpulu is a rural community. It occupies an area of about 32 square kilometers, with an estimated population of about eleven thousand. The western boundaries are clearly marked by the Urashi River which flows in a horse-shoe direction to the southwest where it is joined by Nneiyi waters. With a mean annual temperature of about 80-82 degrees, and an annual rainfall of about 70-75mm, the community has a thick vegetation in the northern and northeastern ends (Ogbu, C.N. 1997) The community has the same kinship system with most Igbo communities in Anambra and Imo States: unilineal patrilineal descent system, and patrilocal in post-marital residence. The pattern of settlement is the village form. Surrounding each dwelling are plots of land(mbubo/obubo) on which vegetables, tree crops such as breadfruit (ukwa), oil palm, coconut and other food crops such as yams, cassavas, and cocoa-yams etc are grown and cultivated.

In terms of spatial distribution of the population, there are two sections, the "obi-ulo" (the parent or home settlers) and the "obinikpa" (the satellite or farm settlers). The people are predominantly subsistence farmers in the generic sense of the term. Oil palm, kola nuts, breadfruits, etc are grown as cash crops, while livestock are raised as stored wealth. Major staples include yams, cocoyams, cassava, plantains and bananas, etc. Other occupations such as fishing, blacksmithing, crafts, etc are also practised by a few.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Land

Land is an all-embracing concept used to describe "the solid part of the earth's surface: the soil together with the vegetation, minerals, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, hills, mountains, valleys and air space immediately above the land"(Anyadiegwu 1981:9). In physical terms, it defines the territory of each community and to a large extent determines the people's livelihood, their patterns of residence, economic and social activities, and general wellbeing. Every society therefore has a well established set of rules and regulations regarding its ownership and control generally referred to in popular literature as land tenure. This has been a (if not the) major source of conflict between communities as well as between individuals and families within communities.

Gender

Gender "refers to the attitudes, feelings and behaviour that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. It generally refers to the socially constructed aspects of male-female differences, as different from sex which is a biologically determined variable (American Psychological Association (APA), 2012). In human society, gender is a prominent organising feature, and directly affects people's life right from birth through socialization to adulthood.

In the words of David, H. (2004) gender "refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." In other words, it is a conceptual delineation of male sex or the female sex with regard to their social and cultural role specifications rather than biological attributes. Gender roles are individuals' roles prescribed on the basis of their socially identified sex which are the basis of the division of labour in most societies (Wood and Eagly, 2010). These roles are imbibed through contact with parents, school and the local media in form of folklores etc. Thus gender is social construction as different from biological constitution. Acker (1999) highlights five different interacting social processes where gendering takes place, notably;

- The construction of divisions along the lines of gender, such as those produced by labor, power, family, the state, even allowed behaviors and locations in physical space
- The construction of symbols and images such as language, ideology, dress and the media, that explain, express and reinforce, or sometimes oppose, those divisions.
- Interactions between men and women, women and women and men and men that involve any form of dominance and submission.
- The way that the preceding three processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity, i.e., the way they create and maintain an image of a gendered self
- Gender is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures.

Thus gender is cultural prescriptions of roles, behaviours, attributes for men and women which is different from their biological sex that is by nature's hand laid on.

Land Tenure

Land tenure essentially refers to "the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land, (which includes) other natural resources such as water and trees. Rules of tenure define how property rights in land are distributed within societies, along with associated responsibilities and restraints. (They) determine who can use what resources, for how long, and under what conditions"(FAO 2002:3). Mixta Africa (2021) defined land tenure system as the process of granting ownership of land to individuals, legal bodies, corporate bodies, and natural bodies baased on their use of these lands. This body going further highlights seven types of land tenure system, namely;

1. Freehold Tenure System: Under this individuals pay a predetermined amount for the right to own a plot of land

2. Inheritance Tenure System: In this case land ownership is transferred to the next of kin. Some villages transfer lands to the children upon their parents' death.

3. Communal Land Tenure System: The community is the ruling power of the land under this system and the communal head spearheads the sharing ratio.

4. Leasehold Tenure System: In this system an individual is granted temporary ownership of land by the owner. He may have temporary access to the land for use but cannot use it as collateral for loans.

5. Gift Tenure System: This type of land ownership, just as the name goes is a situation where landowner gives up his or her land voluntarily to another and the new owner owns the land. He uses it for any purpose, eg, collateral for a loan.

6. Rent Tenure System: The tenants occupy the land and pay a rent amount to the landlord for the period of time they use the property.

7. Tenants at Government Will: According to this system, land is leased to farmers for cultivating especially for large-scale farming and crop production.

Gender and Land Rights Administration and Management

The gender dimensions of land use are clearly revealed when the "bundle of rights" to land is carefully unwrapped. According to the FAO Land Tenure Studies 4 (2002:5), the bundle consists of use rights, control rights, and transfer rights. Use rights refer to the right to use the land for grazing, growing subsistence crops, gathering minor forest products, etc". Control rights refer to "the right to make decisions on how the land should be used and to benefit financially from the sale of crops, etc"; and transfer rights are "the right to sell or mortgage the land to others through intra-community reallocations or to heirs, and to reallocate use and control rights". In most of today's societies, there a great gender inequalities in access to land…. (United Nation's Women Summit, 1995). United Nation's Economic and Social Council Commission (1998), on the status of women, states that " land rights discrimination is a violation of human rights."

Rural Farming Systems

Farming system is a mix of farm enterprises such as crops, livestock, aquiculture, agro forestry and fruit crops to which farm family allocates its resources …. It also refers to the totality of farming activities in the rural communities as integral factors in rural development. It covers a very wide range of activities on land, including food production and processing, systems of cultivation, livestock and fisheries, general agriculture and forestry, and all that are geared towards household security and sustainable development. (www.ISQAPER-is.eu 2015-2024)

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the gender sensitivity approach of the United Nation's as espoused in Sustainable Development Goal 5 which is "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Three key objectives are clearly spelt out to achieve this goal, namely;

a) Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws;

b) Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women; (and)

c) Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels". Under these objectives, SDG indicator 5.A.1 specifically talks about women's land rights and ownership. This indicator is operationally defined as:

(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by the type of tenure" in the UN SDG framework; and

c) Percentage of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control. It is projected that by 2030 the target is to "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control of land and other forms of property".

In the words of Achim Steiner and Sima Sami Bahous (2023) this issue of "delivering on the promise of gender equality, securing the human rights of women and girls and ensuring that their fundamental freedoms are fully realized" is an "unfinished business of our time", yet to be fully accomplished. The UNDP and the United Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) have, therefore, jointly developed a twin-index approach which effectively combines the new Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI). The one (the WEI) measures "women's power and freedoms to make choices and seize opportunities in life", and the other (the GGPI) measures the gender gap across four major dimensions of human development, notably health, education, inclusion and decision-making. The purpose of the twin-index approach is to provide a complete picture of women's empowerment and gender equality (UNDP & UN WOMEN 2023:iii). It is against the backdrop of these approaches that we present our analyses in the next section.

ANALYSIS

ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE: AN OVERVIEW

Land, Religion, and Gender

In Igbo cosmology land (Ala) has a religious significance. It is the earth goddess, and it is said to possess supernatural powers, believed to protect the people's right to life and property in the community (Okafor 1992; Ogbu 1997; Igbozurike). Any interference to another person's life is regarded as a direct assault to Ala, the earth goddess. In Ubaha-Akpulu, every family, kindred and village unit has their own Ala-Ndishii(or Ndi-Ichie as they called it in some Igbo communities). This is a small piece of land consecrated to the dead MALE ancestors. Land disputes and "very important family disputes or quarrels which if not arrested in time can constitute danger to anyone's life are taken to Ala-Ndishii for decision. Very serious crimes such as murder, stealing of yams, incest, and proved cases of poison or any means used to encompass one's death are regarded as crimes against Ala"(Ogbu 1997:25). Here there's a gender paradox, the fact that Ala is a goddess (female gender), but Ala-Ndiishii excludes the women. Ala-Ndiishii is made of MALE ancestors to the total exclusion of women or FEMALE ancestors.

Land Tenure Systems in the Community

In Ubaha-Akpulu (like in most Igbo communities) there are basically three major types of land tenure, aptly described in literature as Private, Communal, and Open Access (FAO 2002:4). Private is where the rights to land are assigned to a private party as an individual, a family or a group of families, a commercial organisation or a non-profit making organisation such as the Church. Communal refers to a "right of commons... within a community where each member has a right to use independently the holdings of the community" In the case of our study community, male members of the community have the right to harvest palm fruits in the satellite farm areas and stream forests belonging to the community at a token fee on specified days in the month. This practice is known in the community as Ogbunaasaa. The etymology of this term originated from the scramble for the available palm-fruits among the harvesters who want to maximize the one-day free opportunity to harvest the palm fruits.

In the process they cut down even the unripe palm fruits (na-asaghi asa/na-achaghi acha). Like in most Igbo communities, the same type of right is also assigned to members of the community to fish in the water bodies in the community. Members also have free access to forests for hunting and gathering of forest products, etc. The open access tenure is where "specific rights are not assigned to anyone and no-one can be excluded": in our study community, the streams and rivers, the bamboos on the river banks, and all aquatic plants and animals fall under this category. There are

individual holdings, family lands and communual lands, just like in most Igbo communities. In the private type of holding generally, the management and control are vested on the first son (Nwa-Diokwara or Okpara/Okpala as they are called in some Igbo communities).

Gender and Land Rights Administration and Management

The gender dimensions of land use are clearly revealed when the "bundle of rights" to land is carefully unwrapped. According to the FAO Land Tenure Studies 4 (2002:5), the bundle consists of use rights, control rights, and transfer rights. Use rights refer to the right to use the land for grazing, growing subsistence crops, gathering minor forest products, etc". Control rights refer to "the right to make decisions on how the land should be used and to benefit financially from the sale of crops, etc"; and transfer rights are "the right to sell or mortgage the land to others through intra-community reallocations or to heirs, and to reallocate use and control rights". While men have access to the forms of right, the women, by tradition and custom have access to use rights only.

There are various forms of land administration and management as there are different forms of ownership in the community. While some are owned by individual families, some are communal land and some are kindred lands. In either of the variations the control, use, management and administration of the land rests on the first son at each of these levels. This particular right vested with the first son (diokwara) makes him the greatest beneficiary as he owns the lion share by virtue of his position as the first son. It's usually part of tradition to arrange and share the land among first sons who would in turn share the said land with their male siblings (imenne) excluding and undercutting the female siblings and their access to any of their father's lands. At each stage of distribution the first son has a double share.

The ownership of his father's compound is his and it is "not negotiable. That and one other land referred to as "akambubo" are his and are outside all the land that are shared equitably. The position of the first son on issue of land ownership is non-transferable and is passed on from generation to generation. It is only lost if the first son dies while his father is alive and his immediate younger male sibling steps into that first son position and appropriates the attached rights. It's called inwufu obi." Regrettably the children of the deceased first son loses the rights that hitherto were their father's before his demise. The tradition is that they are assigned another land to settle in when they can afford to build a house of their own.

The kindred land is shared in bits to get to every family by a system referred to as *nturuogugu* (bit by bit sharing) It's usually a little portion of land that cannot be put into any use except farming due to its small size that is occasioned by the number of those involved in the sharing. The communal land too is allocated the same way among first sons at the community level who then replicate the action of sharing the land to the first sons within the kindreds and this action continues down to the families units.

Land ownership, use and administration is a serious source of conflict in Ubaha-Akpulu. As at the time of this study, there were over eleven cases that are pending in

the customary courts and too many at the various Kindred Assemblies. All the rights are vested with the first son who sometimes out of greed and covetousness seize the lands for personal use and not allow his kit and kin or direct male siblings have access to the lands.

The challenges posed by the sex-gender system with its attendant social, psychological antecedents for women in the area of this study are enormous. The place of women in land matters is very precarious. No woman owns a land but have access to use (not own) land through marriage. In the family, daughters are not given anything even lands as inheritance. Personal experience of the author at the demise of her father attest to this. She and her female siblings did not get any land, money or any other property of their father. The reason often adduced is that women are on transit and do not belong to their father's family. In local language what they mean is expressed as "nwanyi bu ama onye ozo," that is women belong to other families. Cases abound where women who left their marriages for reasons of physical abuse, neglect and deprivation are denied access and use of family house and farmlands which contradicts the popular Igbo saying that one's father's house is one's last resort for refuge(Onye oso chubara o laa be nna ya).

Women are complacent with the situation probably because they are adjusted and comfortable in their husbands' homes coupled with their advantaged position of access to multiple social capital, that is having a place in their families of orientation (that is where they are allowed), in their family of procreation (husband's home), maternal home(umerenne/ikwunne), in their married daughters/ sons in-law homes (ogo). What of the unmarried daughters who do not have any other place except their father's house? The kinsmen accept the unmarried daughter's son(s)(sons born out of wedlock (imenkpuke, imeokwa) as bonafide sons of their father but will not allow their daughter who bore the sons own any land. Whatever land she cultivates is borrowed or by lease.

Gender Division of Labour in Rural Farming

Our findings show that the culture of the community on land perpetuates the invisibility of women in major economic initiatives /activities. Women are excluded from land matters. All decisions about land places women in a very big disadvantage.
Farming activities are allocated by gender. In a particular farm gender relations are conspicuous and the crops for cultivation are gender –specific. There are male and female crops. Male crops are mainly the yam which is celebrated at the beginning of every harvest. The female crops include cassava, cocoyam, vegetables, legumes and other related crops mainly for household consumption. The women are restricted from cultivation of cassava, cocoyam, vegetables and legumes. These a wife plants in the same yam farm that is owned by her husband and a later time allowed by her husband as he wouldn't want those crops to affect the growth of his yam. The major economic crops like yam, also trees like palm tree, palm wine are owned by men, the husbands. The man exercises authority over distribution of these masculine farm products. His

yam barn is out of bound for the wife who would only have the share deemed appropriate and given by her husband for meals (Ituashi).

Institutions, Customs and Cultural Practices that Promote Gender Inclusiveness.

(a) The Institution of Male Daughters and Female Husbands: The Institution of "male daughters and Female Husbands" has been properly dealt with in previous studies (Amadiume,1987, Ohachenu, 2020) meaning a daughter assuming the position of a son in the familyand the position of a husband respectively. The former is a situation where a couple with only female children keeps one of their daughters from getting married but living with them and bearing children for them. They make her a male head and perfect that through traditional rites of notification (with ceremonies) to the kinsmen for the legitimization of the offspring from that arrangement.

The Institution of "Female Husbands" (Amadiume, 1987, Ohachenu, 2020) otherwise known as woman to woman marriage (Ohachenu, E.U. 1980, Ohachenu, E.I., 2020). This is a cultural provision of a childless woman marrying a wife in her name and she bears children for her husband. She cares for these children as her own and they are duly acknowledged as hers. This is done when the husband is still alive or at his demise and the arrangement also benefits the male gender and the woman who now attain the status of a mother that has children she can call hers. These are still practiced in the community. This and the above practice are what Amadiume, 1987) branded as "male daughters, female husbands." This practice promotes gender inclusiveness.

(b) The Ihe-Ala Custom. Ownership of economic trees and other land resources stabilizes the woman's position in the family. While a husband guards ownership of yam and palm trees, other staples are for the woman. That is the first consideration by a family to allow their daughter get married to a man. They will first ask to ascertain that the prospective husband has land resources (ihe-ala). In local language they would ask "o nwekwara ihe ala" If the ask is in the affirmative the marriage is contracted without hesitation. This safeguards the economic security of the woman, as long as she is capable of harnessing the resources (imechata ihe ala), even if the prospective husband is an imbecile or henpecked man.

(c) The Ihe-Alu Custom. At childbirth the umbilical cord of the child is severed and buried under a particular economic tree, or a tree is planted where it is buried to establish a permanent ownership of that economic tree by the mother. Resource ownership is restricted to only the economic tree and not the land. This practice however has almost died because of influence of Christian religion as it is seen as being a heathen practice.

(d) Access to Multiple Social Capital. This has been expressed here.

Institutions, Customs And Cultural Practices That Constrain Women In Rural Farming

(a) The Custom of *Okike-aku* (Royalty on a Wife's Wealth)

This is a major culturally approved type of income tax imposed on a wife by the husband on the proceeds from the sale of any of her property in form of livestock (such as goats, fowls, etc). This is a mandatory claim by the husband, violation of which attracts reprisals against the woman. This custom is still widely practised in many rural households in the community. This directly violates/contradicts the SDG 5(a)objective of giving women equal rights to economic resources and financial services.

(b) Adjudication of Land Cases/Conflicts

A woman has no right and will never partake in the discussion of a land case even if the land in question is her husband's or son's land.

Social, Economic and Political Changes in The Rural Landscape

Our analysis is restricted to the major changes that have direct implications on the issues under review. They include;

(a) Siting of Community Development Projects such as Schools, Churches, Civic/Recreational Centres leading to Families Losing their Farm Lands

This is one of the manifest, adverse results of development. It has dealt a great blow to women economic prowess having disposed them of their husbands' farmlands they cultivate.

(b) Rural-Urban Migration

The men and the youth are mostly involved in the rural-urban movement in search of greener pastures. This has led to a situation where women and children are left with most of the work on the farms, with its toll on women's health and wellbeing.

(c) "Unwanted" Pregnancy among the Village Girls

This has led to a phenomenal increase in the number of single mothers in the community. This class of women face more severe challenges than the married women. The patriarchal family units accept the children resulting from such "unwanted" pregnancies, but their mothers are denied access to the family lands. Unlike the male daughter, a single mother has no right in the family lands and property.

(d) Rapid Growth of Land Market in the Community

This is a completely new development. The Naira value of land in the community has risen out of the reach of the poor. This is as a result of people coming from outside to

buy land for investment. In this new dispensation, women are the worst hit as they lose even the use rights they hitherto had over their husbands' lands for subsistence farming.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

This paper has examined the issues of gender in rural farming activities as they impact on the livelihood of women in particular and other vulnerable groups in general. Using ethnography and participant observation techniques in our analysis, the following conclusions are reached.

Conclusion

(a) The global objective of delivering on the promise of gender equality in respect of access to land in particular, and economic resources in general is still a far cry at the grassroots level of the rural community.

(b) Gender is an important variable in rural land use and administration.

(c) Women's access to land is limited to use rights only. They have no right of ownership and control, and are completely excluded from land administration and management. Men take all decisions pertaining to land, including adjudications.

(d) Some customs and traditions of the rural community do not guarantee women's equal opportunities and rights to land ownership and control. Apart from the case of male daughters, there is zero percentage of women with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land in the rural community.

(e) There are, however, some indigenous institutions, customs and traditions at the grassroots level of the rural community that have potentials for promoting gender-inclusiveness, but the patriarchal structure of the community sets limits to their effectiveness in empowering women.

Recommendations

(a) There is an urgent need for a community-based background information to land administrators and other land professionals on why gender is an important issue in access to land.

(b) We recommend a bottom-top institution building by which the community-based institutions that promote gender-inclusiveness will be linked to the programs of the Ministry of Women Affairs and other relevant agencies in the State for more effectiveness.

(c) The Government should key into the Sustainable Development Goal 5 target of embarking on "reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property" by 2030.

(d) There is also the compelling need for researchers to be gender sensitive in providing information to development agencies and administrators in Government.

Ifeoma Elizabeth Ohachenu, PhD
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
Email: ifeomaohachenu@yahoo.com

References

Acker,J.(1990). *"Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations"(PDF).* Gender & Society. 4 (2): 139–158.

Amadiume, I. (1987). Male heads female husbands. Gender and sex in an African society. London & New Jersey, Zed Books, Pp 31-33.

American Psychological Association (APA, 2012). Gender. APA Publication Manual, 7th Edition. apastyle.apa.org> bias –free –language.

Anyadiegwu, I.I. (1981).”Land Use and Conservation in Nigeria: Implementation, Approaches, and Strategies” in Igbozuruike, U.M.(1981). Land Use and Conservation in Nigeria– Theory, Methodology, Empiricism, Policy. University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka. ISBN 978 -2299 -01 -4

David, H. (April 2004). *"The inexorable rise of gender and the decline of sex: Social hange in*

academic titles, 1945–2001" (PDF). Archives of Sexual Behavior. 33 (2): 87–96.DF). Archives of Sexual Behavior. 33 (2): 87–96.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations(FAO) (2002).LAND TENURE STUDIES 4 Gender and access to land www.fao.org Joint.

Federal Republic of Nigeria(1978). Official Gazette, “Decree No. 6 – Land Use Decree 1978”, Vol. 65, No. 14, Governnment Printer, Lagos.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations(2015). SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. 17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR W9RLD FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Igbozuruike, U.M.(1981). Nigerian Land Policy: An Analysis of the Igbo Traditional Land Tenure System www.ijesi.org> Version 2.

Igbozuruike, U.M.(1981). Land Use and Conservation in Nigeria – Theory, Methodology, Empiricism, Policy. University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka. ISBN 978 -2299 -01 -4

Kismanyoky, T, Hermann, T., Toth, B., Toth, G., Fernadez-Ugalde et al (2016). Classification Document of Farming Systems across Europe and china ISQAPER Project Deliverable 2.2 21 pp

Land Use Act and the Nigerian Housing Sector. www. cbn.gov.ng.out.rsd, PDF (2020)

Nwocha, E.M. (2016). Impact of the Nigerian Land Use Act on Economic Development in the Country. ActaUniversitatisDanubiusAdministratio, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2016).

Ogbu, C.N.(1997). A Brief History of Akpulu from the Earliest Times to 1980.Unik Oriental Prints Limited, Enugu, Nigeria.

Ohachenu, I.E. (2020). African Ideologies, Human Security and Peace-Building: The Case of Child Adoption in Igbo Communities: A Journal Article published online in Igwebuike Journalwww.igwebuikeresearch, 2020.

Ohachenu, I. E. (2023). The Politics of Gender in Child Adoption Online article published in ZIK JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH, 6(1) 2023 Retrieved from https://journal.aphriapub.com/index.php/ZJMR/article/view/20 70

Okafor, F. U. (1992). Igbo Philosophy of Law. Department of Philosophy University of Nigeria , Nsukka.

Our World in Data (2023). SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5. Achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Robles, E. (2009). The Malthusian Catastrophe. Loyal Dog Publishing. ISBN 978-0615-33552-0 –via Google Books.

Steiner, A. & Bahous, S. S. (2023). The Importance of Joint Development Solutions and… ww.unwomen.org>2023/06>spe….

United Nation's Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women (1998). Report of the forty second session (2-13 March 1998. Supplement No 7. E/CN.6/1998/12 – E/1998/27.

UN Women (1995): The fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, 4-15 September, 1995.

UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2023 Women in Local Database. https//localgov.unwomen.org/sdg-55 1b - country- ranking- Accessed 24 May 2023.

UN Women (2023)."The Paths to Equality: Twin Indices on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. www.unwomen.org.

Wikipedia. Malthusianism.w.en.wikipedia.org>wiki>malthus

Wikipedia. Land. en.m.wikipedia.org>wiki>Earth

Wood, W. and Eagly, A. H. (2010). "Gender," in Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 1, 5th Edn, eds S. T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, and G. Lindzey (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons), 629–667.