

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES IN THE RURAL AND PERI-URBAN KANO, NIGERIA

Mairo Haruna

Department of Geography, Bayero University, Kano,  
NIGERIA.

[mharuna.geo@buk.edu.ng](mailto:mharuna.geo@buk.edu.ng)

### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the nature of women's access to land and other agricultural production resources in Kura Local Government Area of Kano State. It uncovers the nature of women's land tenure status and access to other agricultural production resources including capital, fertilizer, farming implements, extension services, etc. One hundred women (twenty-five respondents in each ward) were interviewed using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Technique in four wards of the study area. Women in Kura were found to face a range of difficulties with regard to access to basic agricultural production resources. Land accessibility through other means than inheritance proves very difficult for the women, thus about two-thirds of the respondents inherited farmlands. Slightly higher than two-thirds of the respondents hired labour while one-fifth work on their farmlands and 14% worked on others' farms as hired labourers. In order to motivate and enhance women's performance for sustainable agricultural development, the study recommends that Government provides women with agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, seeds, and formal credit in good time and at affordable prices because of their poverty level, and the procedure for obtaining credit should be made as simple as possible because of the high illiteracy rate among rural women.*

**Keywords:** PRA, women's access land , agricultural production resources, rural women

### INTRODUCTION

Since 1893, when the Department of Botanical Research was established with its headquarters at Olokemeji in the former Western Nigeria by the British Administration till this present moment, Nigerian government has been using different strategies to bring about self-sufficiency in food and raw materials production in the nation (Alao et al, 1996). Several rural development programmes and projects such as River Basin Development Authority RBDA (1970s), Operation Feed the Nation OFN (1975), Green Revolution (1978) Agricultural Development Programmes ADP (1990s) among others have been planned and implemented in order to reach the rural populace who are the primary sources of food and raw materials for the nation. The main objective of rural development programmes in the country is to increase per capital out-put and income of rural families by providing the rural population with basic infrastructure agricultural inputs and extension services (Ogungbile et al, 1991).

However, the plight of women in rural areas of Africa has only recently received the attention it deserves. It is now recognized that women all over the world work in agriculture and in food processing, preparation and cooking but have very little or no say in decision or policies on food production. Comprehensive information on female participation reveal the important role women play in various regional economies where agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. A report by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW (1985) estimates that about 87% of the female

labour force in low-income African countries are in the agricultural sector, 70% in India, 74% in China and 66% in other low-income Asian countries. In the rural areas of Nigeria, women constitute nearly three-quarters of the population (Ibrahim, 1996). They constitute a substantial proportion of the Nation's farmers and provide about 60 to 80 percent of the rural labour input (Adekanye, 1988 in Adereti, 2005). Women have been shown to partake in most agricultural production activities ranging from planting to crop processing (Haruna, 2004).

In spite of their enormous contributions to agricultural production and development, women constitute the majority of landless. A United Nation's (1995) report on the state of World's women remarked that women perform two-third of the world's work, receive less than 10% of it's income and less than 1% of it's property. Recent findings by Ojo et al (2012) also give an indication that women farmers in rural areas are generally resource poor due to low accessibility to resources of agricultural productivity. Over half (52%) of the women respondents in the study had no opportunity to receive extension services since extension information was mostly directed towards male farmers and female extension agents were very limited in number.

Women's access to and control over resources such as agricultural lands, external inputs, improved technology, extension information and encouragement will certainly improve the scope and level of their performance in agricultural production. Thus, we need to have a better understanding of women's unique relationship with the environment, their pivotal role in agricultural production and the nature of their access to important resources. These information are important ingredients in policy planning and implementation.

## THE STUDY AREA

The study covers four widely distributed wards in Kura Local Government Area of Kano state. They are Kura, Dan-Hassan, Karfi, and Dukawa. Kura LGA lies some 30km south of the city of Kano on the Kano-Zaria road and is part of an intensively cultivated area known as the Kano Close Settled Zone (Figure 1). It also falls within Phase one of the Kano River Project, thus there is adequate supply of irrigation water. The population is active in both rain-fed and irrigation farming. The major ethnic groups are Hausa and Fulani and they are predominantly Muslims.

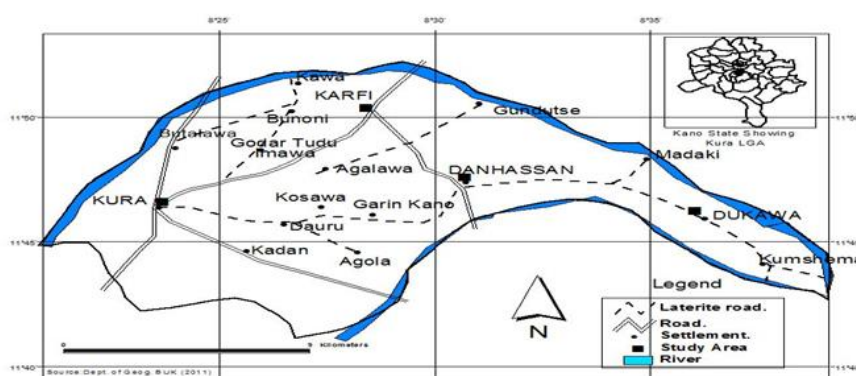


FIGURE 1: KURA LOCAL GOVT. SHOWING STUDY AREAS

## METHOD

Data was gathered from respondents through personal interviews and group discussions. Twenty-five respondents were randomly selected from each of the wards. This is because the community being a homogenous one shows little or no stratification in economic, educational and religious status. Information sought include: access to land by respondents, nature of land tenure status (ownership), access to agricultural production resources, membership of women

cooperative societies and constraints hindering their access to these resources. Open ended questions (what? when? why?) and probes were employed in order to be as non-direct as possible. In addition, direct observations were made of the study area. Data for this research is therefore both of quantitative and qualitative types. Data obtained were subjected to basic statistical methods of analysis, which include measures of central tendency: mean mode and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic and Social Characteristics of Respondents

The age range of women interviewed is between 22 and 64 years with the average at 34 years (Table 1). This shows that the young adults (between 21 and 40 years) which accounted for 39% of the sample, followed by the older women (50 years of age and above) are more involved in agricultural production in the study area. Younger girls of ages between 10 and 18 years are also actively involved in farm work but are not part of this research. The age at which a woman should stop working in the fields in these communities was given as 60 – 70 years.

**Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Category (years)	Kura Ward	Dan-Hassan Ward %	Karfi Ward %	Dukawa Ward %	Total (N) %
21-30	40	08	28	20	24
31-40	24	48	44	40	39
41-50	16	16	08	16	16
>50	20	28	20	24	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field work (2011)

About three – quarter of the women interviewed are married and in purdah with the highest percentage in Dukawa (Table 2). One seventh of the women are divorced and one-fifth are widowed. These women claim farming as their main occupation but the married ones practice it through the help of their husbands and relatives. This is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Marital Status of Respondents**

Marital status	Kura Ward %	D/Hassan Ward %	Karfi Ward %	Dukawa Ward %	All Wards
Married	60	60	68	84	68
Single	12	16	20	08	14
Widowed	16	16	08	16	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field work (2011)

### Membership of Women Farmers Co-operative

One-third of the sample in the whole wards belong to Women Farmer’s Co-operative (WFC) Two-fifth of the women interviewed in Kura Ward, one-fifth in Dan-Hassan and almost one-third in Dukawa belong to WFC.

**Table 3. Percentage of women Membership of Farmers' Cooperative (WFC)**

MEMBERSHIP STATUS	Kura Ward %	Dan-Hassan %	Karfi Ward %	Dukawa Ward %	All Wards %
Belong to WFC	40	20	24	32	29
Do not belong to WFC	60	80	76	68	71
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field survey:2014

Some of the reasons given by the women for non-membership are lack of awareness, domestic responsibilities, old age and religious and cultural inhibitions. About two-fifth of women in Kura and Dan-Hassan, half in Karfi and three –fifth in Dukawa said they could not attend most gatherings because they are in purdah. Some of the women claimed that the co-operatives have been politicized and one or her husband had to belong to a strong political party in the area to enjoy certain privileges. Membership of cooperative societies have been shown to increase women’s access to resources (Mohammed, 2004)

### Access to Agricultural Resources

A very high percentage of the women interviewed in all the wards own farmlands. Table 1 shows that fourth-fifth of the women in Kura and Dan-Hassan, three- quarters in Karfi and about two-thirds in Dukawa own farmland. Out of the landless women, 9% get access to land through hire while the remaining 14% work as hired labourers. It should be noted however that these farmlands are quite small in size (Table 2) with range of size of farmlands between 0.30 and 1.50 hectare. One of the reasons given by the women themselves for the smallness of their farmlands was that most farms owned by women are inherited portions. Being an Islamic community, a widow is allowed to inherit one-eighth of her husband’s property while a daughter inherits half the share of a son. This result corroborates the study of Omokore and Omokore (1996) in Kaduna state which showed that 81% of the women respondents owned personal farmlands, but 78% owned less than a hectare of land.

**Table 4. Percentage of Women having access to Agricultural Resources**

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES	Kura %	Dan-Hassan %	Karfi %	Dukawa %	All Wards %
Land	88	92	88	76	86
Local farming tools	76	88	84	96	86
Capital/loan	32	20	20	24	24
Tractors	8	0	4	0	3
Processing machine	40	8	0	0	12
Fertilizer	68	40	48	56	53
Drought animals	20	20	4	8	13
Extension services	20	40	40	24	31

Source: Field survey, 2014

**Table 4. Land Ownership status and Average sizes of Womens' Farmlands**

Land Ownership Status	Kura %	Dan-Hassan %	Karfi %	Dukawa %	All Wards %
Own land	84	84	76	64	77
Do not own land	16	16	24	36	33
AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMLAND (hectares)	0.74	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.55

Source: Field survey, 2014

The main methods of land acquisition in Kura community are inheritance, gift, hire, purchase and allocation by the local authority (Table 5). About three-fifth of the sample inherited their farmlands with the highest percentage in Karfi followed by Dan-Hassan, and Kura wards.

**Table 5. Percentage Form of Access to Farmlands**

FORM OF ACCESS	Kura %	Dan-Hassan %	Karfi %	Dukawa %	All Wards %
Inheritance	60	72	76	56	66
Purchase	20	12	0	0	8
Hire	4	8	12	12	9
Gift	4	0	0	8	3
Alocation	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Field survey, 2014

Hire is slightly more popular than outright sale. Purchase is found only in Kura and Dan-Hassan while gift is more rare – found only in Dukawa and Kura wards. None of the women has been allocated individual land by the local authority but co-operative members have access to land which they operate collectively using hired labour. Sale of farmland in the community is low. This is because people prefer to rent it out than to sell. Most people regard their farmlands as a source of security. The women complained of inadequate sizes of farmlands and they wish to acquire more land in order to increase production.

The major farming tools are hoes and cutlasses which all households possess. Even though most of the women do not work on the farm, their husbands and children did. Less than half

of the women interviewed Table 6 have received loan from the government in the past. The loan facilities are only extended to members of the women co-operatives.

None of the households interviewed own a tractor but two women in Kura and one in Karfi have access to tractor services which they hire to work their farmland. Preference is usually given to men with larger farmlands. Most of the women also practice intercropping which makes it difficult to operate machinery on the farmlands. None of the women interviewed owns any processing machines but members of the co-operative in Kura ward own two large rice mills, which are currently out of use due to mismanagement. They claim to have been short-changed by the man they appointed to manage them. The women rely on manual labour for grinding and pounding their grains. A few of the households in the sample have work bulls usually owned by the husbands because of the high cost and maintenance of the animals. Only a few of the women have access to the services of these animals on their farms. Even for this group, the animals usually finish the work on their husbands farmlands before working on the women's farms.

Slightly more than half of the sample has access to fertilizer. Those without access mentioned lack of funds, lack of awareness and non-membership of co-operative as major constraints. Those that have access complained of the high cost and delay in distribution. About two-fifth of the women, mostly aged and divorcees, have access to extension information. The extension officers usually come from the Hadejia- Jama'are River Basin Development Authority and are all males. Therefore the married women in purdah have difficulty in interacting with them. However, in the course of this research, a female extension agent was sent to Kura ward. Through her the women received information on better soil management, cropping systems and irrigation farming.

Labour input is an important factor of production which can be controlled to some extent by the farming household, since greater percentage of labour in traditional agriculture is from the family (Ogungbile et al, 1991). As has been underlined, most of the women in the study area do not work in the field. They usually hire male labourers to do most of the farm work. Only a few work on their farmlands or on other lands as paid labourers. Based on labour and land ownership status, the women in this study can be categorized into three groups (**Table 5.4**)

**Table 6. Percent Source of Labour**

CATEGORY OF WOMEN	Kura %	Dan-Hassan %	Karfi %	Dukawa %	All Wards %
Group A	68	60	68	76	68
Group B	20	32	20	8	20
Group C	12	8	12	16	12
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field survey,2014

**Group A:** Those who own land or hired land and do not work on the farms but hire labourers to do the work for them. Three-fifth of the women in Kura, Dan-Hassan and Karfi and three quarter in Dukawa belong to this group. Most of these women are married and from economically average families.

**Group B:** Those who own or hire land, do some of the work on the farm with their children and hire labourers to do the more tedious jobs. One-fifth of the women in Kura and

Karfi, about two-fifth in Dan-Hassan and less than a-tenth in Dukawa belong to this group. These women are usually widowed.

**Group C:** Those who do not own land and cannot hire or purchase land but work on other people's farmlands as paid labourers. This group consists mainly of poor, old and widowed women. About one-eighth in Kura and Karfi belong to this group, less than a tenth in Dan – Hassan and one-sixth in Karfi.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Acquisition or access to farmland in the area is very difficult regardless of gender. For women, the situation is even harder. This is because the economic return per hectare of land in the area is remarkably high; as such, the stake on land is also high. This partly explains why most of the women that have access to land were able to do so either through inheritance or rent, while a few purchased land and none was allocated individual farmland. Even the rented and inherited lands are relatively small in size. Access to machinery and other inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and extension services is equally difficult for the women in the area. Women are unable to compete with men because of the cost of these items as well as the corruption involved. Their co-operatives rarely benefit from some of the subsidized inputs. In order to motivate and enhance women's performance for sustainable agricultural development, the study recommends that Government provides women with agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, seeds, and formal credit in good time and at affordable prices because of their poverty level, and the procedure for obtaining credit should be made as simple as possible because of the high illiteracy rate among rural women. Government should also encourage and increase the number of women in training and extension schemes in an attempt to support women's role in activities of food production, processing and marketing. Women also need to be enlightened on the need to organize themselves to form function societies with effective membership drive among farmers in the study area to enhance access to credit, effective dissemination of extension information and inputs with a view to increasing resource use efficiency and farm income among women. Expansion of off farm income generating activities especially cottage industries should also be encouraged by providing women with training and appropriate facilities.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Adebuseye, P.P. (1991). "The role of women in small scale food Processing and Distribution industries". In Erinsho and Bello Imam (eds.) *Perspectives on Small Scale Food processing and Distribution Industries in Nigeria*. Social Science Council of Nigeria. Ibadan: Vantage Publishers International Ltd.
- [2]. Carr, M. (1985). "Technologies for rural women – impact and dissemination in Ahmed, I. (Ed.) *Technology and rural women: conceptual and empirical issues* London: G. Allen and Unwin
- [3]. Dixon-Mueller, R. (1986). "*Women's work in Third World Agriculture*" (Geneva, ILO).
- [4]. Hartin, E. (2000). "Women's Organizations and self-help groups. A step Towards independence?" *Journal of agriculture and rural development* vol. 7(1).
- [5]. Haruna, M. (2004). *Access to resources by women in agriculture in Kura, Kano state. Unpublished M.Sc thesis*. Department of Geography, Bayero University, Kano. Nigeria.
- [6]. Kaka, G. (1991). "Dimension of food processing and technology in small-scale industry". in Erinsho and Bello Imam (eds.) *Perspectives on small scale food processing and Distribution in Nigeria*. Social Science council of Nigeria. Ibadan: Vantage Publishers International Ltd, pp. 76 – 93.
- [7]. Madeley, J.(1989). *Releasing the potential of the poorest farmers: IFADS'S ROLE*. Rome, Italy: International Fund for Agricultural Development.
- [8]. Ogbodu, J.O. (1993). "Towards a Dynamic Forestry Extension Services: Medial Support for reaching rural women" in Akinsanmi, F.A (ed.) *Proceedings for The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Forestry Association of Nigeria*.
- [9]. Ogunbible, A. O, James, O.O. & Ahmed, B. (1991). "*Women participation in Agricultural production in Northern Nigeria*" in Ijere, M.O (ed.) *Women in Nigerian economy*. Enugu: Acena publishers.
- [10]. Mohammed, N. (2012). Gender participation in Environmental Management in Tofa Local Government Area of Kano State: Implications for sustainable development. *British journal of Arts and Social science*, 9(12) <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/NJASS.aspr>
- [11]. Ma'moun, U. B. (2007). *Access to residential land by Women in Kano metropolis*. Unpublished M.Sc thesis. Bayero University, Kano
- [12]. Mohammed, N. (2004). *Influence of Cooperatives on Female Participation in Income Generating Activities in Parts of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Bayero University Kano
- [13]. Ojo, C.O., Bila, Y., & Iheanacho, A. C. (2012) Women's accessibility to resources of agricultural productivity in Borno state Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* .3(9), 2012