



Research Article

Emerging Roles of Women in the National Food Security Campaign of the Federal Government of Nigeria: A Review

---

<sup>1</sup>Ademilua, O.S., <sup>2</sup>Adeeko, A., <sup>1</sup>Gbotoso, O.A., <sup>1</sup>Akomolafe, A.M. and <sup>2</sup>Ishola, O.O

<sup>1</sup>Library Department, Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, Ondo State

<sup>2</sup>Department of Agricultural Extension and Management, Federal College of Agriculture, Akure. Ondo State.

Corresponding Author: [dkabiodun@gmail.com](mailto:dkabiodun@gmail.com)

---

Abstract

*The issue of food security in Nigeria is of national concern as it affects young and old, male and female. The review assessed the emerging roles of women and their contributions to food security in Nigeria. Specifically, it explained the concept of food security, identified the specific roles of women in food security and identified factors affecting women participation in national food security. Food security is a situation that exist when all people at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. In Nigeria, the structural role of men and women in agricultural cycle reveal that women are more active specifically in processing and marketing of agricultural products. Factors affecting women participation in National Food Security includes inadequate supply of farm inputs, low level of education, poor extension services, low access to technology, training and infrastructure and low access to finance, communal or religious crisis. The review concluded that the potentials of women in food security is a pointer to providing adequate food for all household in Nigeria. It was recommended that women should be exposed to more training and better technology to be effective in supporting the food security campaign in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** National Food security, Women farmers, Nigeria, Roles of Women.

Received: 22/05/17

Accepted: 10/09/17

---

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)  
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Food security is a situation that exist when all people at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO,2002). Food security, by definition is therefore not simply about availability of food, it entails accessibility that is the ability of individuals or a nation to acquire food on a sustainable basis; and the reliability and distribution of food. The former relates to utilization and consumption of safe and nutritious food, while the later relates to the equitable distribution of food to points of demand at the right time and place (Mkanawire, 2004). The genesis of the rise in food security threat worldwide started in 1995 and all attempts at curbing it seems unfruitful at least in different region. More than one billion of the six billion of the world population are undernourished (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2009).

In Nigeria, governments came up with different programmes and policies in order to sustain the food security, among such programs is National Food Security Programme which was aimed at offering a practical vehicle for piloting and eventually extending the application of the innovative low cost approach both technical and institutional to improving the productivity and sustainability of Agricultural system with the ultimate objective of contributing to better livelihoods for poor farmers on a sustainable bases.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) plan for of action for world food security adopted by the conference of the Food and Agricultural Organization also introduced the term National Food Security as a way to describe or achieving a better national distribution of food. The main goal of National Food Security is for individual to be able to obtain adequate food needed at all times and to be able to utilize food to meet the body's needs so, the role of women cannot be over-emphasized in achieving National Food Security because women play a major role in agricultural production and processing activities of the developing countries including Nigeria.

Women are the backbone of Agricultural sector accounting for 70% of farm labour and being responsible for 80% of food production (Adisa and Okunade, 2005). In spite of these substantial contributions of women to agricultural and rural development, women's role continue to be systematically marginalized and not given adequate recognition in economic policies (Rahman and Alamu, 2003); while men's role remains the central and often times the only focus of attraction.

### **Objective of the Paper**

The objective of this paper review is to assess the emerging roles of women and their contributions to food security in Nigeria. Specifically, it explained the concept of food security, identified the specific roles of women in food security and identified factors affecting women participation in national food security. The paper review adopted a literature review approach in discussing the roles of women and their contribution to food security.

### **Specific Roles of Women in food Security**

Women are the backbone of the development of rural and national economy, they comprise 43% of the world's agricultural labour force, women comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector, women are the backbone of the agricultural sector, accounting for 70% of the farm labour force and being responsible for 80% of the food production (Adisa and Okunade, 2005).

Recent research findings have indicated that women play a pivotal role in food security because of their strategic position and the role they play in the household and productive work they do outside. These personal characteristics such as position in the family, education, income, social status and many other equally affects their productivity (Ekong, 2003). In Nigeria, reports indicate that women play more important roles in Agricultural production compared to men (Umar *et al.*, 2003).

The 2006 National Population Census figure indicates that Nigerian women constituted 49.2% of the total population and are found to be responsible for 60-80 percent of food produced in the country (Nigeria Data Portal, 2016). The growing awareness of the numerous roles of women in food production has resulted in the establishment of Women-In-Agriculture (WIA) programme in Nigeria. In fact, Nigeria has been described as a center of female farming per excellence (Boserup, 1970).

Women play a prominent role in agricultural production and their contribution to the household food basket varies from one ethnic group to the other (OGADEP, 1999). In Nigeria, the structural role of men and women in agricultural cycle reveal that women are more active specifically in processing and marketing of agricultural products. They provide approximately 40% of total agricultural labour but own only 1% of the land. Data compiled by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) revealed that African women perform about 90% of the work of hoeing and weeding, processing food crops, about 80% of providing household water and fuel, 95% of the work of marketing food crops, about 80% of the work of food storage and transportation from the farm to the village, and 60% of harvesting (Quisumbing *et al.*, 1995).

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)  
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

**Factors Affecting Women Participation in National Food Security**

- 1) Inadequate supply of farm inputs: the unavailability of major farm inputs critical for agricultural production (fertilizer, seed, agro-chemical, machineries etc) at the appropriate time and at the right price has remained a source of worry and frustration (Ukeje, 2004).
- 2) Low level of Education: the low level of education of small scale women farmers especially women who form the bulk of the agricultural labour force has remained a major constraint to the adoption of modern farming techniques and the ability to access other inputs necessary for increased productivity in the sector (Adeniji, 2016).
- 3) Poor extension services: more emphasis should be placed on having well trained extension officials and considerations should be given to extension workers to address the problem of gender access to new innovation to women's in agriculture.
- 4) Low access to technology, training and infrastructure: Gendered roles of women hinder them from accessing technology, agricultural training and rural infrastructure. Women's success in food security most countries revolve around their reach to equal resources as men in aforementioned factors. Women's limited access to technology resulted in the failure to address women's time constraint to agricultural technology. Moreover, agricultural training marginalized women as they are normally conceived as farm wives rather than farmers.
- 5) Low access to finance: most financial services in rural areas are directed towards household and the male members usually receive credit and insurance via development agencies. Another issue is that women are employed as mere helpers without any substantive decision making power within rural farming families, rather than entrepreneurs who should have access to credit. Moreover since there is bias in control over access to finance, livestock which is high-value is usually owned by man, whereas, women mostly own low-value animals such as poultry.
- 6) Another factor affecting women's participation in National food security is that of lower level of education among women, this hinder their ability to communicate and understand the information that is being communicated to them in writing which in turn limits their understanding of complex financial product that are being offered to them (FAO, 2009).

- 7) Communal/Religious Crisis: the frequent communal/religious crisis in some region of the country is also a major constraint to food security. The crises occur either during planting, weeding, or harvesting period.

### **Conclusion**

The roles of women in the campaign for food security in Nigeria are evident because women contribute to food production, processing and marketing. It is important to note at this juncture that involving women in women specific agricultural roles will bring out the maximum performance in women. The review therefore concluded that the potentials of women in food security are a pointer to providing adequate food for all household in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

It was recommended that women should be exposed to more training and better technology to be effective in supporting the food security campaign in Nigeria, women should also be given a voice to speak and encouraged to play specific roles that are gender sensitive in the food value chain linkage.

### **References**

Adeniji, O.B (2016). Agricultural extension for food security: Implications for sustainable development goals: Inaugural lecture series 43, 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, 2016, pp 20-23.

Adisa, B. O and Okunade, E. O (2005) Women in agriculture and rural development in Adedoyin, E.S (Edition) Agricultural Extension in Nigeria, Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria. (AESON) Ilorin, Nigeria pp 67-70

Argawal,B. (2010) Gender and green governance: The political economy of women's presence within and beyond community forestry, New York, Oxford University Press, Publishing. ISBN 978-0-19-956 Publishing.

Boserup, E. (1970). Woman's Role in Economic Development. Accessed online at [https://books.google.com.ng/books/about/Woman\\_s\\_Role\\_in\\_Economic\\_Development.html?id=EzXxQOf77K0C&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.com.ng/books/about/Woman_s_Role_in_Economic_Development.html?id=EzXxQOf77K0C&redir_esc=y). On September 27, 2017. Earthscan Publications, pp 1- 283.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)  
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

**Continental J. Sustainable Development**  
**Ademilua *et al.* (2017) 8 (2): 1 - 7**

---

Ekong, E. E (2003): An introduction to rural sociology 2<sup>nd</sup> ED. Uyo, Dove Educational.

FAO (2002) anti-hunger programme: reducing hunger through agriculture and rural Food and Agriculture Organization (2009a). The State of Food and Agriculture 2009. Livestock in the balance. Rome.

Food and Agriculture Organization (2009b). The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009. Economic crises: impacts and lessons learned. Rome.

Hangmann, J. Chuma, J. and Gundanni, D (1996). Acknowledging the role of gender in agricultural research and extension: review of experiences of a project in Zimbabwe GTZ, GMBH, Eschborn. p 6.

Heyzer, N (1992) "Gender issues in anti-poverty programmes in Asia" Washington D.C, World Bank.

Mkandiwire, R (2004). Food security strategies and poverty eradication in Africa; "From subsistence to sustainable agriculture in Africa, S. A Breth (ed.), Papers from the workshop, from subsistence to sustainable agriculture: policies, strategies and implementation, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, Nov. 18-19.

Michael, B. M, Ravallion and L, Squire (1996): "Equity and growth in developing countries" Old and New perspective on the policy issue. Policy research working paper, Washington D.C. World Bank.

Nigeria Data Portal (2016). Nigeria-Population Census-2006. Retrieved from:  
<http://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/xspplpb/nigeria-census.on September 28, 2017>.

Oakley, P and C, Garfirth (1992): "Guide to extension Training (Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO NO II).

Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (OGADEP), (1999). Annual Fisheries Report, Fisheries Unit, Abeokuta. p.3.

Quisumbing, A, Lynn, R.B, Hillary S.F, Lawrence, H and Christies, P (1995) "Women: the key to food security. Food policy Report, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C.

Rahman, S.A and Alamu, J. F (2003). Estimating the level of women interest in Agriculture, An application of logit regression model. *The Nigerian Journal of Scientific Research* Vol. 4 No.1. pp 45-48.

Sorenson, A and Hullo, D. V (1990): Gender dynamics in contract farming: women's role in small holder tea production in Kencho District, Kenya". Centre for development research, Denmark occasional paper vol. 2.

Ukeje, E. (2004). Modernizing Small Holder Agriculture to Ensure Food Security and Gender Empowerment: Issues and Policy. International Group of Twenty-Four. Research Papers. Downloaded from: [https://g24.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/03/Session-2\\_216.pdf](https://g24.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/03/Session-2_216.pdf). on September 27, 2017.

Umar, A.G, Owa, O, Kareem, A.I and Madugu (2003) Socio-economic characteristics and agricultural productivity of women Farmers in two local government areas of Plateau State. In promoting private sector participation in Nigerian Agriculture. Amalu, C (ed.) Paper presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Management Association of Nigeria (FAMAN) 3-8 DEC. 2003, University of Calabar Nigeria.

United Nation (2009). World survey on the role of women in Development. Women control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including micro-finance (Report). New York,