

Gender Participation in Rural Training Programmes in Kwara State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The study aimed at examining the extent of involvement of rural men and women in trainings organized by selected Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Kwara State; and how training has affected their participation in such programmes. The subjects studied consisted of 186 men and women randomly sampled and interviewed using a structured interview schedule from September to December, 2003. Data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study revealed that less than 20 percent of rural men and women had access to the various training opportunities available at the rural level. Many women participated in trainings that improve their gender role performance. Respondents had access to and control over trainings organized by Agricultural Development Programmes, Family Economic Advancement Programme, Village Alive Women Association and Cooperative Societies. Access to and control over trainings organized by Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes (RPAPs) is a determinant of participation in the studied RPAP's, but access to training is more an important determinant than control of training. However, some of the RPAP's did not provide training opportunities for the beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty involves not only the lack of the necessities of material well-being but the denial of opportunities for living a tolerable life. Life can be deprived of knowledge and communication, which can be robbed of dignity, confidence and self-respect (Narayan et al., 2000). The rural poor especially women lack basic human capabilities that deny them means of livelihood. They need to be empowered to enable them develop self-confidence and raise their social status in order to improve their socio-economic conditions. Education empowers individuals to control their destiny (UNDP 2000). Meaningful education is the most potent instrument for alleviating and eventually abolishing poverty (UNDP 1998). Education is expected to provide opportunities for acquisition of knowledge and skills that would ensure sustainable livelihood strategy. However, many Nigerians are still not literate. Only 55.6 percent of adult Nigerians are literates who are concentrated in urban areas, while women's literacy rate is even lower.

There are limited rural employment opportunities due to lack of specialized skills. Farming had been the main occupation of most of the rural people. However, because the youths are no longer interested in farming, an occupation that had hitherto provided the bulk of the employment

in the rural areas, the rate of unemployment has increased over the years. Most of the poorest households tend to have zero employability by virtue of their not having any skill; thus they are marginally employed (Oludimu, 1991). In addition, women are still lagging behind men in paid employment since paid employment has always been tagged to educational levels (Kwesiga, 1998). Since most rural women do not have opportunities for formal education, they therefore rely on acquiring specific income-generating skills through training provided at the rural level to enable them enter the labour market.

Training is concerned with those activities which are designed to improve human performance on the job that people are at present doing or are about to be engaged in (Halin and Ali, 1997). Training is the process of transferring specific skills to user for performance improvement. Hence focusing on training should provide opportunities for the unskilled men and women to be self-employed or in paid employment. Most self-employed are involved in small-scale enterprises. Entrepreneurship has been found to be the most frequent pathway out of poverty, also have multiple sources of income (Narayan et al., 2000). However most rural women and men are lacking in both technical and managerial skills, which could be addressed by training.

The rural poor have not been empowered to

effectively participate in rural enterprise development. There is reliance on unreliable casual labour and petty trading especially by women who engage in food processing. It is envisaged that most of the RPAPs would have facilitated training or enabled rural men and women develop skills, which should increase their chances of employability. Therefore, the objective of the study is to examine the extent of involvement of rural men and women in trainings implemented within the context of selected RPAPs in Kwara state. Specifically, the study is to:

- compare participation of men and women in rural training programmes;
- analyse the effect of training on participation in rural poverty alleviation programmes; and
- determine the possible influence of training on participation in RPAPs.

The following null hypothesis was set for the study:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between training as a resource and participation in Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted in six purposively selected villages in Kwara State of Nigeria. The villages were selected for the study based on the existence of Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the villages. The villages were Elerin-jare, Jimba-Oja, Ganmo, Tsonga, Sanchitagi and Kanko.

A total of 186 male and female respondents were randomly selected from the registered list of Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes' participants in the selected villages. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the objective of the study. The respondents were interviewed in their local languages using the structured questionnaire as a guide. The data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested with the use of multiple regression analysis and F-test.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The programmes that the rural dwellers in the study areas of Kwara State predominantly participated in included Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), Village Alive Women Association (VAWA) and Cooperative Societies. The other RPAPs in the study area were River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Family

Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Nigeria Agriculture and Cooperative Bank (NACB), which have been reconstituted and renamed Nigeria Agriculture, Cooperatives and Rural Development Bank and other Non-Governmental Organizations/ Community Based Organizations (NGOs/CBOs). However, the awareness of the existence and involvement in these RPAPs varied from community to community and between both sexes.

Literacy and Educational Level

The percentage of RPAP participants who could read and write in English fell below the national literacy rate of 55.6 percent (UNDP, 1998). The percentage of participants who could read English was 31.3 percent while in other languages, the percentage ranged between 26 and 63 percent. But the percentage of those who could write any of the languages was very low. It ranged between 8 and 26.5 percent.

Occupation

The major occupation of the participants was trading (45%), followed by farming (34%) then, by providing services and food processing. However for participants' minor occupation, farming ranked the highest and was followed by trading. It could be deduced that trading and farming were the common occupations of RPAP participants. This implies that rural areas were still dominated by agro-based enterprises.

Access to Infrastructural Facilities

Access to infrastructure is germane to availability of employment opportunities. The availability of the facilities reduces workload, saves time and reduces drudgery that could lead to poverty. The analysis showed that most of the participants had access to some basic infrastructure. Except for schools and health facilities to which more men had access than women, more women had access to electricity, potable water, and market facilities.

Access to Training and Training Organizations

The access of RPAP participants to training in agricultural field demonstrations, cooperative societies, small business enterprise development

and food processing was low. Evidence from data presented in table 1 shows that there were less than a third of the participants who had access to such training. The percentage of men who benefited from training activities of RPAPs were higher for Agricultural field demonstration and cooperative management than for women. This could be that these trainings corresponded to male gender role while more women (23.3%) benefited from trainings on food processing and business management, which also corresponded with female gender role. The Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) trained more participants (42.5% and 37.5% respectively) than the other organizations.

Access to and Control Over RPAPs' Trainings

The analysis of data revealed that some RPAPs' participants had access to and control over trainings under ADP, FEAP, VAWA and Cooperative Societies. As evident in Table 2, the proportion of participants who had access to and control over training programmes was low. There were less than 20 percent of both male and female participants that had access to trainings under

the RPAPs. The other RPAPs, that is RBDA and NACB did not facilitate access to trainings for any of the participants. This means that no participants had training opportunities under these RPAPs.

Control over trainings by both male and female participants was also low, but slightly higher than their accessibility to training. This means that they had more decision – making power on selecting and choosing types of trainings than the trainings were made available to them. Under the ADP system, 38 percent of the participants had control over training. These were the participants who had the right to make decision on the type of training or choose trainings required under the ADP.

Gender analysis showed that more men than women had access to trainings under the ADP system. This finding corroborated that of Momsen (2000) which asserted that women benefited less than men from the predominantly male agricultural extension services. The major source of trainings for farmers is through the extension services. If extension activities were skewed towards men, then women would have fewer opportunities to receive trainings under extension services.

Table 1: Gender distribution of RPAPs participants trained by organizations

RPAPs	Female N = 86		Male N = 74		Total N = 160	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	Total
ARMTI	31	36.0	21	28.4	52	32.5
ADP	28	32.6	40	54.1	68	42.5
Cooperative Departments	18	20.9	17	23.0	35	21.9
Home Economic Department	20	23.3	7	9.5	27	16.9
NGOs/CBOs	4	4.7	1	1.4	5	3.1
Group members	2	2.3	2	2.7	4	2.5
Other Training Organizations	4	4.7	1	1.4	5	3.1

Source: Field survey, 2003
Multiple responses

Table 2: Gender distribution of RPAPs participants by their access to and control over RPAP trainings

RPAPs	Access						Control					
	Female N = 86		Male N = 74		Total N = 160		Female N = 86		Male N = 74		Total N = 160	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
ADP	12	13.9	12	16.3	24	15.0	32	37.2	28	37.8	60	37.5
FEAP	6	7.0	4	5.4	10	6.3	9	10.5	7	9.5	16	10.0
VAWA	6	7.0	2	2.7	8	5.1	22	25.6	20	27.1	42	26.3
Coop. Soc.	13	15.2	10	13.5	23	14.4	33	38.4	27	36.8	60	35.5
Other RPAPs	8	9.4	7	9.5	15	9.4	6	7.0	4	5.5	10	6.3

Source: Field survey, 2003
Multiple responses

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The result of F-test for the relationship showed that the F-value was significant for both access to trainings ($F = 15.722$) and control over training ($F = 6.677$). Hence there is a significant relationship between available training opportunities and participation in RPAPs; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore, concluded that access to and control over RPAPs' trainings was a determinant of participation in the RPAPs studied.

Access to Training Programmes

Table 3 showed the variation in participation of RPAPs with access to and control over training. Access to training predicted the level of participation in RBDA ($T = 3.563$), FEAP ($T = 6.696$), VAWA ($T = 3.068$), Cooperatives ($T = 1.94$) and NGOs/CBOs ($T = 2.94$).

The implication of this finding is that specific skills required to engage in economic activities were promoted by these RPAPs through access to relevant trainings. This means that poor people who usually lack skills for income generation activities would participate in RPAPs if availed the opportunity for skills development, hence, the positive relationship observed between access to training and RPAPs that provided training opportunities.

The relationship between participation in RPAPs and access to training is expressed in the following multiple regression equation. $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$

Where Y = dependent variable of the sample; a = value of Y when X is zero and it is constant, which is the predicted level of participation in

the RPAPs; X_1 to X_n = the independent variables that significantly contributed to the variation observed in Y ; and b_1 to b_n = the slope of the line which is partial regression coefficients attached to the respective variables. The arrangement of b_1 to b_n was done according to the rule of partial regression equation. The equation provided a mathematical description of the relationship between the variable X and Y and the equation also allows the value of Y to be predicted when the value of X is known.

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$$

Where X_1 = RBDA, X_2 = FEAP, X_3 = VAWA, X_4 = NGOs/CBOs, X_5 = Cooperatives.

Given the values of a and b observed from computer analysis, the equation is represented as $Y = 8.59 + 115.83 X_1 + 70.53 X_2 + 27.68 X_3 + 15.58 X_4 + 9.61 X_5$

Access to trainings accounted for 42 percent of the variation observed in participation of all the RPAPs ($R^2 = 0.41997$). This implied that not less than two-fifth of RPAP participants would increase their participation if given adequate skills development opportunities.

Control Over Training

Control over trainings accounted for only 23.5 percent of variation in participation of all the RPAPs studied ($R^2 = 0.23517$). The lower variation means that the ability to make decision on type of trainings required by the participants and when to receive such trainings (control over training) contributed less as participation determinant than access to training.

Control over trainings was not significant for participation in five of the seven RPAPs studied. This is not surprising because rural people are

Table 3: Result of multiple regression analysis showing the relationship between participation in RPAPs with access to and control over trainings

Variables	Access to training $a = 8.590$		Control over training $a = 6.369$	
	<i>B-Value</i>	<i>T-Value</i>	<i>B-Value</i>	<i>T-Value</i>
ADP	3.50	0.603	8.34	0.945
RBDA	115.83	3.563*	-20.32	-1.242
FEAP	70.53	6.695*	39.10	4.159*
NACB	8.25	0.523	-4.604	-0.738
VAWA	27.68	3.068*	-1.23	-0.465
Cooperative Societies	9.69	1.942*	4.76	1.452
Other NGOs/CBOs	15.58	2.94*	32.51	3.793*

*Significant at 0.05 level

B = regression value

T = T-value statistic used to determine level of significance of the regression results.

often not involved in determining their training needs. However, control over trainings under FEAP ($T = 4.16$) and NGOs/CBOs ($T = 3.79$) had positive and significant effects on participation.

The relationship between control over training and participation is expressed in the following multiple regression equation based on observed data.

$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2$, where X_1 is FEAP and X_2 is NGOs/CBOs

$$Y = 6.37 + 39X_1 + 33X_2$$

However, it could be inferred that access to training was more important in determining the level of participation in RPAPs than control over training. This is because access to training predicted level of participation in five RPAPs while control over training has positive effect on only two RPAPs. Also, the variation brought about in participation is higher for access to than control over training

CONCLUSIONS

1. Women participated more in RPAPs that specifically targeted women's training needs; namely FEAP, VAWA and NGOs/CBOs. On the other hand, men participated more in RPAPs promoting on-farm activities such as ADP and RBDA. The different genders pursued different activities.
2. Participation in RPAPs facilitated access to trainings for both men and women while more men had control over the trainings. Community rooted organizations such as the ADP, VAWA, Cooperative societies and NGOs/CBOs facilitated access to and control over training for more people than those, which are largely controlled from outside the communities such as the NACB.
3. There were inadequate infrastructural facilities in the communities, which made the job

environment difficult. Such facilities, which are deemed necessary to enhance participation in RPAPs, include roads, transportation, and access to relevant information, potable water and market. Communities having presence of RPAPs witnessed more people participating than communities without RPAPs' agencies.

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