



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN FARMING ACTIVITIES AND SELF-RELIANCE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM NIGER, KADUNA AND ZAMFARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research work seeks to examine socio-economic benefits of participation in farming activities among rural women in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. Women empowerment through participatory farming activities which is the focus of the work is a mechanism through which rural women are able to increase self-reliance in order to promote their well-being. A sample of 285 women farmers were selected from a study population of 985 through the use of Yamane formula from the three states of Kaduna, Zamfara and Niger and a schedule was designed and administered among the respondents. The results revealed that participation of women in planning farming activities is low as the interviewees rightly stated that “we are not involved in planning of the farming activities as the labourers are paid to plan the planting, weeding and harvesting activities who are majorly men”. The study contrarily found that monitoring of farming activities is the complete business of women. As the respondents during the interview section stressed that we monitor the activities to assess the difference (profit) between the input and the output. The paper therefore concludes that women involvement in planning and monitoring of farming activities is a mechanism for rural women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara State.

KEYWORDS: *Socio-Economic, Empowerment, Self-Reliance, Participation, Farming*

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Women all over the world are considered as an extremely pivotal point in the process of change in the rural areas and that is today in most of the developing countries, more emphasis is laid on the need for the development of women and their greater participation in the main stream of development process (Sigh, 2009). Nigeria as a nation is a country of over 180 million citizens. The National Population Commission (NPC, 2009) puts the population of women in Nigeria at 88.3 million out of 160 million and the male population is contributing 70 percent of labour force in agriculture. According to UNDP 2010, most of the poor in Nigeria are women who as a result of poor educational opportunity and the responsibilities of matrimonial homes have to fight to survive.

The rate of population growth, coupled with resources constraints, corruption, among other things, has resulted to poverty in Nigeria at a very, inhuman and disastrous (Mojirayo, 2009). The stagnation and undiminished scale of poverty among Nigerian rural women has given rise to active participation in numerous strategies and initiatives at the grassroots level to help cope with the challenges. In the face of the nature and magnitude of poverty situation in Nigeria, successive Nigerian regimes made several attempts to alleviate the poverty situation in the



country especially among Nigerian rural women. Despite these concerted efforts by previous regimes, the poverty situation in Nigeria seems to be getting worse especially among rural women.

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, while assessing the economic reforms of present civil administration from 1999, highlighted that economic reforms of the government did not tackle poverty effectively especially as it affects Nigerian rural women. As mentioned by (Iba, 2007) the reforms did not have appreciable impact in poverty reduction especially employment generation and women empowerment. It is against the dismal performance by the government in their efforts to fight the menace of poverty that NGOs stepped in to supplement government's efforts to fight against poverty by initiating various programmes target at empowering women and alleviating poverty in Nigeria especially as it affects women.

From the above, it is clear that the Nigerian government poverty alleviation programmes and policies aimed at empowering Nigerian rural women do not sufficiently address the need of women empowerment in Nigeria and this had led to the participation of women in farming activities. The overall objective of the study therefore, is to explore the extent to which women participation in agricultural activities by Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States women provides them with adequate empowerment. There is the need to enquire what participation on agricultural activities can do for a people in order to reshape their livelihood. Nigerian women contribute immensely to national development and there is therefore the need to encourage and support women to actively involve themselves in public life and governance. The study is therefore designed to assess the extent to which women's participation in agricultural activities (at the level of planning and monitoring) affected women empowerment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Globally, women who represent more than half of the human resources of most societies are generally low in status and power relative to men in employable jobs, prestige and in economic and political terms (Vida, 2011). It is observed that women are disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, income, access to programmes and services. They are relatively disadvantaged to men economically, socially, and politically and this tends to be true in most developing countries.

In Nigeria like many other developing countries, women access to positions of influence, power and resources is restricted. Nigerian women are still relegated to the background as they lack the educational, economic and political power necessary to actualize their innate potentials. The position of most Nigerian women is still traditional considering the population of women in Nigeria, a conscious or unconscious under representation of Nigerian women in educational, economic, social and political programmes had led to a serious setback in the process of their empowerment (Amale, 2009).

Thus, Nigerian women despite being more than half of the population, this numerical strength of the Nigerian women has not affected the age-long inferior status the society bestows on them. Several factors adduced for the degrading position of women in the Nigeria society most of which can be traced to the patriarchal system being operated where women have been socialized to accept the inferior status (Bisi & Biola 2007). Gender inequality is also experienced by the women and is manifested in almost all aspects of human endeavour in Nigeria. Cultural and religious beliefs tend to contribute largely to Nigerian women low status and as a result, the feminization of poverty has become a significant problem in Nigeria. In addition to economic factors, the rigidity of socially ascribed culture roles and women's limited access to power, education, training and productive resources as well as other emerging factors that may lead to securities for families are responsible. Due to these cultural roles, women are not given equal opportunity as the men to be educated and liberated economically because in some parts of the society, educating women is seen as a waste of resources (Sofa & Tunj 2003).

Women therefore, have moved their attention to farming activities in order to improve their economic power and boost their standard of living through agricultural practices. This sector is realized to be the only opportunity left for them owing to the land mass in the northern Nigeria and the encouragement received from the current Buhari's administration for people to go back to agriculture for self-reliance economy. On the contrary, the women out-cried their lack of participation in farming activities as captured in (Northern Farmer's Association record, 2018).

Finally, a number of studies relating to women participation in farming activities in Nigeria have emerged during the past few decades, for example, (e.g. Kelvin, (2010), Mukundane, (2011) and Mwiru (2015) showed the relevance of participatory approach to project management and rural development but failed to operationalize community participation into participation in planning and participation in monitoring. It is on that ground that this study is out to bridge this gap which has made the study a novel. Needless to state here that, we focused on women empowerment because it will be able to develop self-esteem, confidence, realize their potentials and enhance



collective bargaining power and improve their wellbeing and self-reliance. Thus, the increasing awareness and importance of women participation in farming practice in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research question is to evaluate the extent to which participation in farming activities has led to women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. Based on the stated problems the research answered the following specific questions:

- i. To what extent does participation in planning farming activities significantly affected women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States?
- ii. To what extent does participation in monitoring farming activities significantly affected women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is evaluate the extent to which participation in farming activities has led to women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Assess the effects of participation of women in planning farming activities on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.
- ii. Evaluate the effects of participation of women in monitoring farming activities on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho₁ Participation of women in planning farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

Ho₂ Participation of women in monitoring farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is dearth of literature on women empowerment through farming practices especially in the study area. This research will generate data on women empowerment and farming practices which will create awareness among public authorities, planners, policy makers and wider community specially women on the need to participate in farming activities. A critical examination of women empowerment issues and adequate involvement of women in farming programmes will lead to the alleviation of increasing poverty among Nigerian rural women. Thus, with increasing number of women participation in farming practices, it is timely that a study of this nature be conducted in order to come out with useful recommendations that would further improve the practice. Thus, the research is expected to enrich the assumed scarcity of literature on women in farming practices. This will therefore increase the data base of women participation in farming activities in Nigeria.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the understanding of farming practices in the scope of women empowerment focusing on the participation of Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States women involved in farming activities. Those places were chosen because of the presence of relatively large number of women participating in farming activities which makes it appropriate places for the research. As with any other research, time, capacity and financial constraints should be taken into consideration as limitation agents. The target group is women involved in farming activities from the study areas and therefore women are the main source of data in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted sequential mixed research design. Sequential mixed method procedures are those in which the researcher seeks to expand on the findings of one method with another method. This involved beginning with a quantitative method (e.g. questionnaire results) and followed by a qualitative method involving detailed exploration with a few individuals (Cresswell, 2009, p. 31).



POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States in Northern Nigeria. the target population of the study comprised the members of Women Farmers Association of the three States (including both the executives, the congress and the rank-and-files of the associations). The population is summarized in the table below:

Table I: Population of the Study

State	Executives	Members
Niger State	12 Executives	300
Kaduna State	16 Executives	328
Zamfara State	15 Executives	314
Total	43	942 Grand Total = 985

Source: Membership Register of Women Farmers Association, Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara State (2016).

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study adopted Yamane sampling technique for objective determination of representative sample size. According to Yamane (1967), for a 95% confidence level and $p = 0.5$, size of the sample calculated via the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = sample size required; N = number of people in the population and e = allowable error or Level of Precision (%). Let this formula be used for our population, in which $N = 985$, with $\pm 5\%$ precision. Assuming 95% confidence level and $p = 0.5$, we get the sample size as thus:

$$n = \frac{985}{1 + 985(0.05)^2} = \underline{\underline{285}}$$

SAMPLE SIZE

As shown above, the sample size is two-hundred and eighty-five (285) arrived at through Taro Yamane sampling technique. Among this sample size, the key Executives (i.e. The Chairmen from the three States, Vice-Chairmen and Secretary) were purposively selected as interviewees for corroboration of information generated through questionnaire. The questionnaire for the study was distributed via probability proportionate cluster sampling technique by dividing the total by the number of cluster as shown in table 1.2 below

Table 1.2 Questionnaire Distribution

Staff Category by State	Population of Staff	Distribution of Sample
Niger State	312	$312 / 985 \times 285 = 90$
Kaduna State	344	$344 / 985 \times 285 = 100$
Zamfara State	329	$329 / 985 \times 285 = 95$

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2020.

INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION/ DATA ANALYSIS

The instruments of data collection are both primary and secondary data. While questionnaire and interview were the primary methods of data; reliable documents (e.g. Membership Register of Women Farmers Association, Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara State (2016). constituted the secondary source of data for the study. However, as the



primary (quantitative) data was analysed using multiple regression, the interview responses were thematically presented and analysed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Empowerment & Economic Empowerment

The concept of empowerment is now widely used in a number of disciplines to characterize states and social processes of individuals and communities. It is broadly defined as power (control over one's own life and over resources) and agency (capability to originate and direct actions for given purposes). According to Wikipedia, the term originated in community psychology; in this case it refers to "measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority".

From this point of view, empowerment is both a collective process and an outcome. In the literature of individual psychology and human development, it is a set of characteristics that is acquired as part of the transition to adulthood (Zimmerman and Cleary 2006). In the management literature, empowerment is an approach to influence employee behavior – it means to provide employees with resources, knowledge, and decision-making power so they can take decisions that improve business performance; in other words, a particularly effective delegation (Alsop, Ruth, Bertelsen, and Holland, 2006, p. 10). In the same vein, the UN (n.d) cited in

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment> defines empowerment as thus:

Sense of self-worth; their right to have and determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally (p. 117)

The definitions above are not encompassing, because the broadest definition of empowerment incorporates both psychological and social development and the human rights of individuals in the society, such as the right to access opportunities and to organize collectively for change (in other words, legal rights as well as those restricted informally). This is in consonance with the argument of Sen (1999) that:

True development has to expand people's choices – their freedoms. In other words, development is not just the augmentation of assets and income, it is an augmentation of what a person can and cannot do. Going beyond the more simplistic notions of human and social capital, Sen described development as a process which augmented people's capabilities - their freedom to function, given their personal preferences. Sen also stressed the heterogeneity of individuals in their capability to respond to development policy, and therefore argued that, in particular, poor people need to be involved in development policy, in that they need to feel that they have a stake in the outcome. This requires empowerment (p. 172). In essence, augmentation of assets and income is just a part of empowerment – economic empowerment.

From the above argument, economic empowerment has to do with improvement in people's economic status by providing them with employment, improving their capacity to be involved in income generating activities, access to land and other credit facilities which is said to have serious positive impact on their participation in developmental process (Garba, 1999). Invariably we are implying that people with access to resources and credit facilities (e.g. CROWD1 beneficiaries) are likely to be economically endowed – empowered than those without access to resources and credit facilities.

Participative Planning

Participative planning approaches have been widely used to draw in local knowledge and understanding as the anchor for development initiatives, and to ensure direct participation of communities in development. The following points according to Bandung (2002) reflect the insights garnered on the current practice of participatory planning and underscore the challenges that practitioners the world over need to give constant thought and consideration to as they continue to promote greater citizen participation in local governance:

- i. Citizen participation in local development planning ideally involves the community in decision-making on the identification of priority problems, the formulation of solutions, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions, as well as the mobilization and management of resources.



- ii. Participative planning processes require different stakeholders to take on new roles that also assume attitudes and behaviors consistent with the values that underpin participatory approaches to local development. These values include transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusion.
- iii. Both civil society and external stakeholders alike require skills and capacities for participatory planning to happen. These include an understanding of the context within which participatory planning happens, technical and facilitative planning capacities, negotiating and lobbying, and abilities to work in complementation.
- iv. Participative planning initiatives builds stakeholdership in local plans. This, in turn, opens access to community resources. Transparent and accountable external stakeholders attract scarce resources needed for the implementation of local plans.
- v. Legal frameworks are important but not sufficient to make participatory planning happen. What is more important is to have the “enabling conditions” for participatory planning to happen. These include the political will of champions of participation within local environment and an informed and organized civil society, and a legal framework that at the minimum is supportive of participatory planning.
- vi. Finally, beyond further improving the current practice of participatory local planning, there is a need to be constantly rethinking the twin challenges of sustaining participatory planning in a manner that encouraged innovation so that these exercises continued to be relevant, responsive and meaningful on the one hand and the scaling up and scaling out the participatory planning without compromising the quality of the participation by citizens.

Participative Monitoring And Evaluation (PM&E)

Monitoring and evaluation is about assessing actual change against stated objectives, and making a judgement whether development efforts and investments were worthwhile or ‘cost-effective’. Therefore, M&E systems are generally constructed to provide information for reporting on achievements in order to fulfil accountability responsibilities. This has led to M&E being largely associated with a controlling and accountability function. Increasingly, however, there is recognition that M&E systems may also contribute to strategic management and learning lessons; and to feeding experiences into policy processes (Waglé and Shah, 2017).

PM&E being the special focus is defined here as a process where primary stakeholders – those who are affected by the intervention are active participants, take the lead in tracking and making sense of progress towards achievement of self-selected or jointly agreed results at the local level, and drawing actionable conclusions. The effectiveness (and sustainability) of such a process requires that it be embedded in a strong commitment towards corrective action by communities, project management and other stakeholders in a position to act (Guijt and Gaventa, 2018). This definition goes beyond involving primary stakeholders in a process of ‘conventional’ M&E, such as consulting them on indicators and asking them to provide information or feed-back on the results. Here the emphasis of PM&E is on deepening participation, a process that is intrinsically linked to learning and empowerment as well as linking monitoring to action. The PM&E process is built around agreeing on expected results and milestones, defining how to track progress, collecting required data, undertaking joint analysis and decide on actions.

Participation in Farming Activities

Participation in farming activities occurs as a result of women’s awareness of their felt needs and the fact that they possess the ability to confront and dislodge their limitations and solve their problems through their own individual or collective efforts (Josephine; 2011).

It is a strong desire for advancement that is move from a worse to a better situation in the socio-economic, political milieu (Agbegbu, 2009). Participation occupies a central place in development thinking and practice of women’s approach (Sanjau, 2013). In farming activities, the word participation is referred to power and power relationships. Participation in farming activities reinforces a sense of personal ability that creates expectations for a successful solution to their well-being problems (Keimar, 2010). Women participation in such activities promote empowerment (Arstein, 1969). The growing social awareness across the global has brought a number of issues to the fore among which women empowerment is very significant. Farming involves a crave to need achievement followed by enthusiastic action undertaken to meet identified needs and emphasizes inherent abilities in the people for the solution of individual and group problems, hence the needs for women participation in such activities is no doubt imperative (Agbegbu, 2009). In a study, Farzaneh and Indira (2011) emphasize the need for women participation in such activity because of effective strategy for poverty alleviation, human development and social and economic



empowerment. According to the authors, in order to achieve increased quality of life, improved income generation contribute to household welfare and improve well-being and happiness, women need to participate in such activities.

Empirical Studies on Participation for Development

Kelvin, (2010), conducted a study on “Community Participation as a tool for Development in Morogoro, Tanzania”. -A case of Kilakala and Mindu Primary Schools. This study aimed to investigate the community/local people participation in development of primary education. The study used both primary and secondary data collection techniques. The primary data conducted through semi-structured questionnaire, interview technique, participant observation, and focus group discussion. The finding reveals that participation of local people is very low as the number of people participate in development is limited. The study identified number of factors that limit effective community participation which include poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, political interferences, poor performance of the pupils, mistrust and misuse of money and lack of transparency.

Mukundane, (2011), carried out a study titled “Popular participation in rural development programmes in Uganda: A case study of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme in Mbarara District”. The premise of the study was in the light of claims and counter-claims by critics of and advocates for popular participation; thus precipitated the need to ascertain the degree of popular participation in, and its impact on, the implementation of the NAADS programme. The study employed in-depth interviews, semi-structured questionnaire, and focus group discussions as data collection methods. Research findings revealed that popular participation exists in the implementation of NAADS programme and beneficiaries have benefited from it. It was further revealed that popular participation in the implementation of NAADS programme is on the decline primarily because of dissatisfaction, disappointments, and skepticism on the side of the beneficiaries on the way the programme is being implemented. The regular ushering in of various versions of NAADS implementation guidelines with sometimes rigid directives from the Presidency seems to be one of contributing factors to the decline of popular participation in the programme implementation. The study recommends a more vivid bottom-up approach in the implementation of NAADS programme. Particularly much effort needs to be put on the farmer’s group level activities to decision making process.

Mwiru (2015) also conducted a study titled “The importance of community participation in development projects at local level: A study of Dodoma Municipal Council”. The researcher employed case study type of design. Four methods of data collection. Namely, observation, interview, questionnaire and documentary review. qualitative method was based on explanatory statements and quantitative method involved the descriptive method of using percentages and tables. The findings revealed low level of community participation as a result of some socio-economic factors. The study also noted the challenges of poor citizen participation in development projects; such as poor leaders (personal interest), ignorance and lack of dissemination of project related information. The study recommended among others, the need to involve the community to a greater extent in decision making and development project.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PARTICIPATION THEORY

Another theory which supports the objective of this study is participation theory. Participation theory represents a more from the global and top-down strategies that dominate early development initiatives to more locally sensitive methodologies (Storey, 1999). The important of participation grew out of the recognition that the world’s poor people actually suffered as a result of development and that everyone needs to be involved in development decisions, implementation and benefits (Holcombe, 1995).

The present study adopts Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (1999) theory of participation. To this theory, participation may be viewed along a spectrum with passive participation at one end and self-mobilization at the other end. Passive participation, as the term suggested, is where people are told what to do and on the other hand, there is self-mobilization participation where the local people or poor people themselves are in total command (Pretty, 1995; Wilcox 1999). Participation reinforces a sense of personal ability creates expectations for a successful solution for problems, and encourages civil commitment (Pretty, 1995).

Women participation in group and organizational frameworks promote empowerment as well as individual empowerment (Arnstein, 1969). Zimmerman and Rappaport (2003) demonstrated that participation in volunteer experiences can be empowering by enhancing self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-esteem, social and political understanding and the ability to play assertive role in controlling one’s resources in the community.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section deals with the data presentation and analysis. It presented, analysed and discussed the data collected through the questionnaire and interview with regards to the objectives and hypotheses postulated earlier using multiple regression analysis through SPSS computer package (Version 23.0) in order to draw inferences and establish relationship and degree of magnitude between the independent or predictor variables (i.e. participation in planning and participation in monitoring) and dependent or criterion variable (i.e. women's empowerment). Needless to state here that though, two-hundred and eighty-five (285) questionnaires were printed and distributed but 180 representing 63.1% approximately 63% of the total questionnaire were duly filled and returned; while 105 representing 36.8 approximately 37% of the questionnaire distributed were not returned. Therefore, 180 questionnaires formed the basis for analysis and interpretation.

Table 1.3 Regression Output 1
ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1802.639	3	600.880	3476.407	.000 ^b
Residual	67.237	389	.173		
Total	1869.876	392			

a. Dependent Variable: WOMEN'S_EMPOWERMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), PARTICIPATION_IN_PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION_IN_MONITORING

Source: SPSS Output, 2021.

Table 1.3 above depicts the result from the multiple regression analysis which tests the effects of the independent variables (participation in planning and participation in monitoring) on women's empowerment in Niger, Kaduna, and Zamfara States. The F-statistic which measures the adequacy and goodness of fit of the model used in the study stood at 3476.407 with a p-value of 0.000^b which is significant at 5%; this shows that the model is absolutely fit for the data.

Table 1.4 Regression Output 2
Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.982 ^a	.964	.964	.41575	1.65

a. Predictors: (Constant), PARTICIPATION_IN_PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION_IN_MONITORING

b. Dependent Variable: WOMEN'S_EMPOWERMENT

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 1.4 above depicts the summary of the multiple regression analysis. The empirical findings show that R, the multiple correlation coefficient, stood at 0.982^a which indicates a correlation. R², which is the multiple coefficient of determination of the variables stood at 0.964 indicating that about 96.4% of the total variation in women's empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States is explained by variations in the 'independent variables' – (participatory planning and participatory monitoring) captured in the study. Thus, the remaining 4.2% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by other variables not captured in the study.

**Table 1.5 Regression Output 3
Coefficients^a**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.039	.104		.348	.728
1 Participation in Planning	.606	.022	.837	27.385	.000
Participation in Monitoring	.152	.018	.199	8.248	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WOMEN'S_EMPOWERMENT

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 1.5 depicts the outcome of the respective variables on women's empowerment. Upon the fulfilment of the assumptions of regression analysis, multiple regression analysis was considered suitable in testing the research hypotheses. The respective hypotheses as tested in table 1.5 are discussed as follows:

Ho₁ Participation of women in planning farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

The coefficient of "participation of women in planning farming activities" stood at 0.606 which is positive. This implies that an increase in participation of women in planning farming activities among the beneficiaries would lead to women's empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as "sig". The t statistics of "participation of women in planning farming activities" stood at 27.385 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on the above analysis, the study failed to accept the null (Hypothesis Ho₁), which states that: Participation of women in planning farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

Ho₂ Participation of women in monitoring farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

The coefficient of "participation of women in monitoring farming activities" stood at 0.152 which is positive. This implies that an increase in participation of women in monitoring farming activities would invariably strengthen women's empowerment among in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as "sig". The t statistics of "participation of women in monitoring farming activities" stood at 8.248 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on the above analysis, the study failed to accept the null (hypothesis Ho₂) which states that: Participation of women in monitoring farming activities has no significant effect on women empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

Table 1.6 Analysis of Interview Responses Using Thematic Analysis

S/No	Name	Position	Code	Date
1.	Hajia Maimunah Suleiman	Chairman, Niger (WFA)	(R ₁)	14/06/2021
2.	Malama Aminat Haruna	Chairman, Kaduna (WFA)	(R ₂)	14/06/2021
3.	Hajia Jamila Idris	Chairman, Zamfara (WFA)	(R ₃)	16/06/2021
4.	Hajia Fateemah Binta	Secretary, Niger (WFA)	(R ₄)	16/06/2021
5.	**	Vice-Chairman, Kaduna (WFA)	(R ₅)	16/06/2021
6.	**	Secretary, Zamfara (WFA)	(R ₆)	18/06/2021

Source: Researcher's survey 2021. **Note:** WFA = Women Farmers Association

**Theme 1: Participation of women in Planning Farming Activities and Women's Empowerment**

According to the respondents, the women hitherto do not partake in farming activities in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. But with the clarion call made by the current administration on the need to go back to agriculture for self-reliance made women to be involved in planting rice, maize, corn, beans, etc. However, we are not involved in planning of the farming activities as the labourers are paid to plan the planting, weeding and harvesting activities who are majorly men. The monitoring is the complete business of we the women. We monitor the activities to assess the difference (profit) between the input and the output (R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 and R_6). The respondents added that, our less participation in planning has made us to be completely dependent on the labourers in the subsequent years. In essence, we lack the knowledge to control the farming activities on our own.

Theme 1: Participation of women in Monitoring Farming Activities and Women's Empowerment

According to the respondents, monitoring is the complete business of we the women. We monitor the activities to assess the difference (profit) between the input and the output. This has made us to avoid cheating in any form thereby empowered to detect any form of fraudulent act by the labourers. In essence, we are empowered to measure changes that occurred from the cultivation to harvesting (R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 and R_6).

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The study assessed women empowerment through participation in farming activities in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. From the data presented overhead, the study summarized the major findings as follows:

- i. The study found that participation of women in planning farming activities is low as the interviewees rightly stated that "we are not involved in planning of the farming activities as the labourers are paid to plan the planting, weeding and harvesting activities who are majorly men".
- ii. The study contrarily found that monitoring of farming activities is the complete business of women. As the respondents during the interview section stressed that we monitor the activities to assess the difference (profit) between the input and the output. This has made us to avoid cheating in any form thereby empowered to detect any form of fraudulent act by the labourers.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that participation of women in planning farming activities is not adequate. Even though the questionnaire responses are positive; as the coefficient of "participation of women in planning farming activities" stood at 0.606 which is positive. This implies that an increase in participation of women in planning farming activities among the beneficiaries would lead to women's empowerment in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. On hypothesis two (2); the result of both the questionnaire and the interview result all supported that women participation in monitoring of farming activities is adequate in Niger, Kaduna and Zamfara States. This has empowered the women to be able to assess the difference (profit) between the input and the output and to avoid cheating in any form thereby empowered to detect any form of fraudulent act by the labourers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the findings, the study came up with some policy proposals that will enhance the empowerment of women in farming activities through the following means:

- i. **Participation of women in the planning of farming activities:** If the women are involved in planning farming activities, they will be able to domesticate the strategies in subsequent seasons as such might not need the help of much hands. This will reduce their working cost thus increasing their gains.
- ii. **Full participation of women in the monitoring of farming activities:** Monitoring is seen as a continuous process evolving through every stage of project development. therefore, monitoring should be done from the planning stage to the sharing of benefits.

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