

JOURNAL OF
RURAL
ECONOMICS
AND
DEVELOPMENT

Vol.13

1998/99

NO.1

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**EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON GRICULTURE:
A CASE STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN AKOBO
VILLAGE A TRANSITIONAL AREA**

FAWOLE, OGBARAENO P.
Department of Agricultural Extension Services
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

ABSTRACT

The expansion of the city of Ibadan has transformed the agrarian village of Akobo into an urban suburb in the Lagelu Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State. This was the outcome for a study conducted to investigate the income-generating activities and attitude towards agriculture of 85 women in Akobo. Data were collected during the investigation using a personal interview schedule. The findings of the study indicated that Akobo women still engage in agriculture and agro-allied activities. However, majority interviewed were more involved in non-agricultural activities with greater access to markets. It is recommended that vocational and literacy programmes be organized for the Akobo women. This will allow them to learn new skills, trade and establish small cottage industries that will enable them cope, survive and maintain viable life-styles in a changing environment.

INTRODUCTION

Rural communities are increasingly being engulfed by rapidly expanding urban centres - a trend regarded as development. Changes notably accompanying such phenomenon are often manifested in the economic activities and socio-cultural relationship among the people of the affected community.

The economic activities in rural areas are agro-based and women constitute 60-80% of the total work force engaged in agricultural production (UN/ECA, 1974; Hunger Project, 1990; FAO, 1995)

The deteriorating material situation of women, particularly in the farming regions of the world, is linked with modernization and development activities. It is in this regard that Anand (1983), as cited by Byerly (1990), stated that development projects failed to consider women's important productive roles in the growing and marketing of food crops and maintenance of domiciles. In the same vein, Byerly (1990) posited that development process displaces women from their previously held

agricultural roles and are moved towards male-controlled, low-paid, unskilled urban jobs, or into restructured agricultural industries aimed at high-yield cash crops. A report by IFAD (1985) also stated that displaced women engage in farming as landless farmers, tenants or a hired farm labourers.

The situation of rural women trapped in the web of modernization, as a result of expanding urban centres, is common in developing countries including Nigeria. A study conducted by Olawoye (1987) in a rural community in Akinyele LGA of Oyo State revealed that women take up new roles, as new opportunities become available.

The agrarian village of Akobo in Lagelu LGA of Oyo State is a community in a transitional phase. Akobo which was on the outskirts of Ibadan metropolis, has gradually but steadily merged with Ibadan. Farmlands have been fragmented and the rural setting distorted. Much of the transformation of Akobo can be attributed to the construction of the Ibadan/Lagos expressway which passes by the village, and the presence of an over head bridge which links Akobo and the Bashorun area of Ibadan. Also, the population pressure in Ibadan led to the acquisition for parcels of land for residential buildings and economic enterprises. Currently, Akobo is less than 3 kilometers to Orita Bashorun, Iwo/Ife road and about 5, and 10 kilometers to Ojo Army Cantonment, Ojo end of the express road and the University of Ibadan respectively. These developments may have role implications on the agricultural activities and livelihood systems of women in the continuum. However, no empirical investigation has been conducted to document this latent or manifest changes.

Hence this study raises the following questions:

What is the influence of engulfment of Akobo community by Ibadan on agricultural activities and livelihood systems of Akobo women, and attitude of Akobo women towards agriculture;

To provide an insight to these issues this study investigated current agricultural activities and livelihood system of Akobo women Akobo women's attitude towards agriculture

Akobo's women attitude towards engulfment of their community by Ibadan.

METHODOLOGY

A. Study Area and Sampling

Akobo village is located in the south eastern part of Lagelu LGA and separated from Ibadan by the Ibadan /Lagos express road, and this shares boundary with the northern end of Ibadan metropolis. The climate and

vegetation types are the West- African monsoonal and forestgrass land which are predominant in Lagelu LGA (Oguntoyinbo, 1987).

Akobo falls within ward (8), and has an area of 31.5 squares kilometers (Town Planning Division, Lagelu LGA Headquarters) and a population of 972 inhabitants of which 357 are females (1991, Census Data, National Population Commission). The inhabitants are predominantly Yorubas. Eighty-five women were interviewed and formed the effective sample size for this study.

B. Measurement of Variables

A structured interview schedule was developed for the purpose of data collection from the respondents. The interview schedule had two sections. Section I focused on the independent variables of the respondents, which are age, marital status, educational status, income-generating activities, family size and participation in local organizations. Section 2 focused on the dependent variables of the respondents and these included:

- involvement in different agricultural activities, land ownership, types of crop grown and reason for production,
- respondents attitude towards agriculture. Attitude towards agriculture was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale that had 15 items related to their predisposition to agricultural activities.
- respondents attitude towards the engulfment of Akobo community by Ibadan. This was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale which had 19 items.

In both cases the response categories were strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The assigned numbers were reversed for the negatively worded statements. For validity and reliability, the instrument was pretested on women in Sasa community, which is a suburb of Ibadan in Akinyele LGA of Oyo State.

C. Hypotheses

Hypotheses tested are in the null form and they are

1. Ho: There is no relationship between respondents age and attitude towards agriculture.
2. Ho: There is no relationship between respondents educational level and attitude towards agriculture.
3. Ho: There is no relationship between respondent position among wives and attitude towards agriculture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that 41.2% of Akobo women are between 35-39 years and a few (14.1%) are below 35 years. Approximately 29% are between 40-50 years while 3.5% are 50 years and above. Evidently, the majority of Akobo women are in their productive and reproductive ages.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Akobo Women - Independent Variables.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	30 - 34 years	12	14.1
	35 - 39 years	35	41.2
	40 - 44 years	25	29.2
	45 - 49 years	10	11.8
	50 years and above	3	3.5
Marital status	1 st and only wife	54	63.5
	2 nd wife	16	18.8
	3 rd wife	15	17.6
Educational level	No formal education	7	8.2
	Functional literacy	31	36.5
	Some primary	41	48.2
	Finished primary	6	7.1
Participation in Local organization		0	0.0
Livelihood Systems	Petty trading	84	98.8
	Food processing	80	94.1
	Farming	78	91.8
	Street trading	34	40.0
	Food vending	26	30.6
	Tailoring	12	14.1
	Pepper grinding	8	10.6

Source: Field Survey 1991

It is also indicated in Table I that most of the women are married as first and only wife, 18.8% as second wife and 17.6% as third wife. This could be attributed to the christian faith which is predominant in this area as majority (84.7%) of the women are christians.

Most of the women (36.5%) have functional and some (48.2%) primary education, a few (7.1%) finished primary education and 8.2% have no formal education. The implication is that educational level of Akobo women is generally low.

The prevalent livelihood systems are petty trading (84%), food processing (80%), farming (78%), street hawking (34%), food vending (26%), tailoring (12%) and pepper grinding (8%).

All the women surveyed work on family farms. Only a few (16.5%) own and work (18.8%) on personal farms. Crops grown on family farms are mainly for home consumption and include maize, cassava, yams, cocoyams, vegetables, pepper and melon while cassava and maize are grown on personal farms. The agricultural activities they engage in are planting, weeding, transplanting and harvesting. However, in the agro-allied activities, majority of the women (78.8%) engage in gari frying and 63.5% of them are involved in the preservation and storage of agricultural products, while none of them are involved in neither soap making or palm oil processing.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS AGRICULTURE

Women's predisposition to agriculture in Akobo was based on eight items of the 15-item attitudinal scale that showed discriminatory power. Results presented in Table 3 indicate majority of the women (75.3%) show least favourable attitude towards agriculture, 17.1% are indifferent while 7.1% show most favourable attitude towards agriculture. These findings show that these women are not favourably predisposed to agriculture, although majority still engage in agriculture and agro-allied activities (Table 2). Their continual involvement in agriculture could be due to their low educational level (Table 1) and lack of skills required for paid employment in a transitional area. Also as opportunities for alternative sources of income increase with rural development, more rural women may opt out of traditional roles (Olawoye, 1988).

Table 2
Agricultural and Agro-allied Activities of Akobo Women

Agricultural Activities	Participation	Percentage
Agricultural Activities		
Planting	84	98.8
Weeding	84	98.8
Fertilizer application	1	1.2
Transplanting	84	98.8
Harvesting	84	98.8
Agro Allied Activities		
Gari processing	67	78.8
Preservation and Storage	54	63.5
Soap Making	-	-
Palm Oil Processing	-	-

Source: Field Survey.

Testing of Hypothesis

Table 3 indicates that the null hypotheses 1 and 2 are accepted while hypothesis 3 is rejected ($X^2=17.89$, $p<0.05$). In other words:

1. There is no relationship between respondents age and attitude towards agriculture. Irrespective of age, Akobo women are less favourably predisposed to agriculture. They are stuck with agriculture, possibly due to their lack of viable options, low educational level and lack of capital to start off small cottage industries.
2. There is no relationship between respondent's educational level and attitude towards agriculture. In effect, increase in literacy level has no effect on respondent's attitude towards agriculture. Indeed, the educational level of Akobo women is not high enough to make a difference, in their ability to have alternative occupation.
3. There is a relationship between respondent's position among wives and attitude towards agriculture. Implication is that the position among the wives influence respondents attitude towards agriculture, and this is consistent with the norm of younger wives, irrespective of their age to do most of the work on the farm.

Table 3

Test of relationships between respondent's age educational level, position among wives and attitude towards agriculture.

Variable	Least Favourable	Indifferent	Most Favourable	Total	a	df	X _{tab}	X _{crit}
Age								
<40 years	33 (35.9)*	8(7.2)	6(3.8)	48	0.05	1	5.99	3.41
40 years & above	32(29.1)	5(5.8)	1(3.1)	38				
Educational Level								
No Formal education	27(29.1)		11(8.9)**	38	0.05	1	5.99	1.15
Some Formal education	38(35.9)		9(11.1)**	41				
Marital Status								
Only wife	46(41.3)	7(8.9)	1(3.7)	54				
2 nd wife	14(13.8)	3(3.0)	1(1.3)	18	0.05	2	9.49	17.89
3 rd wife	5(9.9)	4(2.1)	4(10.9)	13				

* Number in parentheses represent percentages.

** Data under "Indifferent" and "Most favourable" categories combined.

Source: Field Survey: 1991.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that with transformation of Akobo community women in Akobo are less favourably predisposed to agriculture. However these women still engage in agriculture and non-agricultural livelihood activities such as petty trading, street hawking, food processing, pepper grinding and tailoring.

Although other opportunities now abound in Akobo, low educational level and lack of necessary skills limit their occupation options. Making agricultural production more attractive may alleviate the economic situation of these women and enable them cope with their current situation.

It is recommended that these women are powered by encouraging them to form groups that will enable them have access to resources such as land, and credit facilities vocational training should be made available to them. This will enhance their material situation and enable them to cope and survive in their current environment.

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