

Abstract

Development organizations in Africa have been at the forefront in fighting for women inclusion in agriculture but little has been documented on how these initiatives impact on women's lives'. This study explored the extent at which MARKETS II – an agricultural value chain project whose stated objective is to economically empower female farmers – has increased women's participation in agricultural activities in Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria. The objectives of the study include: (1) To evaluate the extent to which MARKETS II project has influenced women participation in soybean farming in Kaduna state; (2) to determine the change in productivity and gross margin for MARKETS II soybean female farmers in Kaduna state; and (3) to find out how women negotiate their challenges in soybean production through participation in MARKETS II project. The study will focus on soybean crop due to its broad usage since it can be easily processed at household level after harvest thus gives chances to show impacts on women. The study will be guided by social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (1977), which acknowledges the influential role of evolutionary factors in human adaptation and change, but rejects one-sided evolutionism in which social behavior is the product of evolved biology. The theory recognises that gender is a social construction rather than a biological given. Cross-sectional research design will be employed and purposive sampling methodology will be used. The study will generate qualitative data that will be used to gauge women's level of participation in relation to their previous situation prior to the introduction of the MARKETS II project as indicated by qualitative data available from the project's baseline study, midterm evaluation report and other related studies. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews will be used to collect qualitative data. Soybean farmers working with the project in Kaduna state will form the study population. Kaduna state has both Muslim and Christian populations and patriarchal system are in existence thus good to determine MARKETS II impacts. Five FGDs and 10 key informant interviews will be conducted for both female and male farmers and gender specialists. The qualitative data collected will be analysed using content analysis. Relevant quantitative data already collected by MARKETS II will be presented in form of descriptive statistics to complement the qualitative data.