



UNIVERSITY OF UYO

85th

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Voiceless Voices

BY

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PROFESSOR OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIOLOGY AND
DEVELOPMENT**

28th October, 2021



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DEVELOPMENT

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DEDICATION

This lecture is dedicated to
the Almighty God for always being there for me
My family, for believing in me
My students, for being a part of this journey
and
To rural farmers, for allowing me into their space.

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CITATION

OF

VALERIE APHIE SOLOMON (nee ASANWANA)
PROFESSOR OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIOLOGY AND
DEVELOPMENT

Department of Agricultural Economics and
Extension

Faculty of Agriculture
UNIVERSITY OF UYO

By

Dr. Eyakndue E. Ntekim

Parentage

Prof. Valerie Aphie Solomon was born into the Asanwana Royal family of Afaha Akai, Afaha Igbihi Clan in present day Okobo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, in the early hours of November 6 1970, to Chief (Maj.) Edet James Asanwana (Rtd) (the Akpagha of Oro and member, Council of Oro Traditional Rulers) and Mrs. Bernadette Edet Asanwana (a retired Chief Nursing Officer). She is the first daughter in the family of nine children. Spiritually, she is from the tribe of Judah, a Royal Priestess and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, the King of Kings who has never lost a battle. Her Father

is Jehovah Elshaddai the one in whom all families in heaven and on earth are named after.

Education

Prof. Valerie Aphie Solomon obtained her West African School Certificate (WASC) in 1986 from Command Secondary School, Jos, Plateau State, after the primary school which started in 1975 at Group Primary School Etinan, through the Army Children's School Oron, Township Primary School Jos and culminated in the Army Children's School, Rukuba Barracks, Jos in 1981. She obtained a Bachelor of Agriculture (B. Agric.) degree, Second Class honours (Upper Division), from the University of Uyo in 1994, a Master's of Science degree in Agricultural Extension Services from the University of Ibadan in 1997 and a Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development in 2001 also from the University of Ibadan.

She has attended a number of certificate courses on gender and proposal writing to sharpen her skills as a gender expert and researcher among which are: the Fun-Fun workshop for proposal writing sponsored by the Carnegie foundation in collaboration with Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife; Workshop on Feminists Methodology organized by the Centre for Gender and Women

Development, OAU; Training Workshop on Social Analysis Systems (SAS) – tools, approaches and methods for effective inquiry, action and learning sponsored by CIDA in collaboration with Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (NEST); and training on Gender and Climate Change, South Africa, (Organized by the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) in collaboration with IUCN, UNDP, WEDO, UNEP and FAO).

She has made history as the first in a number of areas. She is the first female Professor from Atak Oro, the first female Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Uyo, and the first female Professor from Agricultural Extension as a discipline from Akwa Ibom and Cross River States.

Prof. Solomon, the Agricultural Sociologist and Gender Expert, has won several distinctions, fellowships and awards, notably, Gatsby Charitable Foundation Award, administered by Rothamsted Research, U.K, to gain experience in “push-pull” systems for stem-borer and *striga* control, ICIPE, Kenya; Bowen University Grant for the multiplication of *desmodium* Seeds for the "push-pull" project; Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (NEST) grant for research on Building Nigeria’s Response to Climate Change (BNRCC); Gender Fellowship with

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Bonn, Germany; Research Grant by the Government of Japan, jointly administered by the UNDP and the Federal Ministry of Environment on the Capacity of Local Institutions to respond to the Gender Dimensions of Climate Change, under the African Adaptation Programme; Fulbright Fellowship on Gender and Climate Change, Bronx Community College of the City University of New York, NYC, USA; Tetfund Institution-based Research grant for the Promotion of Underutilized Crops for Household Food Security in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: A Case Study of Cocoyam, to mention a few. As a Fulbright scholar, she developed a curriculum on the Human Dimensions of Climate Change which is currently in use at Bronx Community College.

Work Experience

Valerie, as she is fondly called by her friends started work in 1994, when she served as an Agricultural Science and Economics Teacher during the NYSC, at Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi, Afijio LGA of Oyo State. She later became the Personal Assistant to the Pastor-in-charge of the Redeemed Christian Church of God –Jesus Embassy, Ibadan, in 1997. She joined the services of Bowen University, Iwo as a Lecturer II and pioneer acting Head of Department in 2002, and rose to the position of Senior Lecturer. She

relocated to the University of Uyo, her Alma mater, in 2008 and her appointment was confirmed in 2010. She rose to the position of a full Professor of Agricultural Sociology and Development in October 1, 2014, just before her 44th birthday.

Professor Valerie Aphie Solomon has taught several courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels both at Bowen University and the University of Uyo. She served as the first female Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Uyo from 2019 to 2021. She has also served in several committees within the University including Faculty of Agriculture *ad hoc* committee on Examination misconduct, Secretary planning committee, International Women's Day Celebration; Secretary, University of Uyo Gender Committee, which was mandated to draft the Uniuyo Gender Policy and lay the foundation for the establishment of the Uniuyo Centre for Gender Studies; Investment & Loans Officer of the University of Uyo Academic Staff Cooperative Society; Member, University of Uyo Research Committee, representative of Congregation on the Academic Staff Appointment and Promotion Committee, member, protocol sub-committee of the 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd Convocation ceremonies, and several administrative panels.

She has over 56 publications in both local and International journals, 2 books and 2 book chapters. Twenty of these were published after her last promotion. On academic mentorship, she has supervised several students' projects at the Undergraduate, Masters and PhD levels. She is also an External Examiner to undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, University of Calabar, Cross River State.

Her research interest is in gender, women and social issues in Agriculture, rural development and climate change.

Membership of Professional Bodies

Prof. Valerie Aphie Solomon is a life member of the Rural Sociological Association of Nigeria and one-time Vice-President; a member of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria, a member of the Pan African Anthropological Association (one-time Treasurer), and the International Rural Sociological Association.

Community Service outside the University

Prof. Valerie Aphie Solomon also participates actively in community service outside the University of Uyo; notably Member, Nigeria's Academic Support Group for the Implementation of the African Climate Change Adaptation Programme (Federal Ministry of

Environment) 2011-2014, President, Good-Women Fellowship, RCCG Abundance Mega Parish 2009-2012, House Pastor, Praise Center House Care Fellowship, RCCG - 2009-2012, Member, Provincial Corporate Social Responsibility Board, RCCG Province 1, Uyo (in charge of gender issues) 2011 to 2017, and as the State Coordinator, National Committee for the Domestication of the National Gender Policy, 2012 to 2018. She is the current Director of Welfare, Itta Mmvuvak Oro (a group of Oro intelligentsia).

Consultancy Services

She has also provided consultancy services among which are: In-house Gender Consultant to NEST on the 'Building Nigeria's Response to Climate Change' (BNRCC) project, funded by CIDA and was part of the team that developed the BNRCC gender training manual, Consultant to 'Gender and Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative' on gender & climate change issues, and capacity building of local institutions, Consultant to the Industrial and General Insurance Company Plc, on the Need Assessment and Integrated Rural Development (Project Inisha) of Inisha, Ejigbo Local Government Area of Osun State, In-house Consultant to the Centre for Gender Studies and Development, University of Uyo on Gender Policy formulation and implementation; and

consultant to the FGN/NDDC/IFAD assisted livelihood improvement family enterprise for the development of training curriculum for capacity building of rural institutions for LIFE-ND project.

Family Life

Professor Valerie A. Solomon comes from a very large family and about 60% of the people from her village are either related to her by blood or by marriage. She is blessed with her parents, eight siblings, two biological children – Jedidiah and Jemimah, many adopted and spiritual children, many cousins, nieces, nephews, uncles and aunties, and two beautiful dogs - Rolly and Brenda.

Hobbies

Valerie loves to read, write poems, knit, crochet, cook and watch movies. She also enjoys quiet walks in the park and sports – football and lawn tennis. She was very active in her younger days; was a member of the girls’ guide, participated in beauty pageants and was twice crowned Miss University of Uyo, Okuku Campus. She was also a member of the Judo and Karate club, Vice President of the Rho Sigma Club and the Director of Community Service of the Rotaract Club, University of Uyo. She enjoys meeting people and making friends, which has endeared her

to members of the University of Uyo Senior Staff Club where she is the Women Leader.

Presentation

The Vice Chancellor and Chairman of this occasion, visiting Vice-Chancellors, distinguished Professors and other scholars, ladies and gentlemen, I have the pleasure of presenting to you a woman of many parts – an intellectual, a minister of the gospel, an author and a poet. A woman who has combined effectively beauty, brain and the fear of God - Professor Valerie Aphie Solomon (nee Asanwana), the 85th Inaugural Lecturer of the University of Uyo.

PROTOCOL

The Vice Chancellor and Chairman of this occasion

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

The Registrar and Secretary to Senate

The University Librarian

The University Bursar

The Provost, College of Health Sciences

The Chairman, Committee of Deans

Deans of Faculties and Dean of Students' Affairs

Director of Directorates, Institutes and Heads of Units

Heads of Departments

Distinguish Professors and other members of Senate

Members of Congregation

Eminent Scholars of the University of Uyo and other Universities

Members of Non-Academic Directorates and Units in the University of Uyo

My Lords Spiritual and Temporal

Dear Colleagues, Friends, Associates and Well Wishers

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press

Greatest Nigerian Students

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I appreciate the opportunity to stand before you this afternoon; to deliver the 85th inaugural lecture of the University of Uyo entitled 'Voiceless Voices'.

Mr Vice-chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I have heard some people say they are self-made. Fortunately, I am an African, a Nigerian and in Nigeria, it takes a whole village to raise a child; I am not self-made. On an occasion like this, it is only natural that I acknowledge some of the people God has blessed me with, who have helped raised me through their commendable roles in my life. Of course, the list cannot be exhaustive and it may not be possible to mention all the names on this list because of time. Please bear with me if your name is neither mentioned nor on this list. God that openly rewards kindness done in secret will reward you accordingly.

Firstly, I acknowledge my heavenly Father, the almighty God, the giver and sustainer of life, the one that has revealed Himself to me as Jehovah Elshaddai - for His goodness and mercies over my life. It is in Him that I have my being and without His grace, I will not be alive today not to talk of being a Professor. In Isaiah 43:2, He promised me that when I pass through the waters, He will be with me and when I pass through the rivers, they will not

overwhelm me. When I walk through the fire, I will not be burned; the flame will not set me ablaze. One of the ways He has fulfilled this promise is by giving me a very strong support base and safety net - surrounding me with people who truly care about me.

I acknowledge my father, Chief (Major) Edet James Asanwana (Rtd.), (The *Akpagha* of Oro and member COTR) and my mother, Mrs. Bernadette Edet Asanwana (retired Chief Nursing Officer). I use this opportunity to thank them for their all-round investment in me and I pray that the almighty God will continue to keep them long enough to see the fulfillment of all their dreams. I thank members of my immediate family for their immeasurable contributions in one way or the other to the woman I have become. Specifically, I wish to thank my children, Jedidiah and Jemimah Solomon and their father, for their support even as I climbed my career ladder. My siblings Comrade Nomo Asanwana, Barr Arit Okon Osung, late Mrs Anna Okon-Otoyo, Mrs Victoria Ehis Francis, Miss Edu Asanwana, Engr. Oboho Asanwana, Dr. Grace Bassey and Mr. Eddy Asanwana have also been very supportive.

I also acknowledge my Uncles, Aunties, Cousins, friends, members of Victory Chapel (the Church on Campus), Members of Command Secondary School

Jos, Alumni Association (COJOSA) and all members of the University of Uyo Senior Staff club, who have stood by me all these years. They include Mrs. Arit Stone, Mrs. Victoria Asanwana-Boms, Deaconess Gem-Afi S.K. Okpo, Mrs. Atim Arikpo, Hon. Etim S.K. Okpo, Elder Etim Eyo Asanwana and wife, Rt. (Hon) Esu A. Asanwana and his wife, late Henry Asanwana, Auntie Nkoyo Asanwana, Auntie Uwana Okon Isaiah (my nanny and second mum), Late Very Rev J. J. Asanwana and wife, Mr Asanwana J. Asanwana and wife, Engr Edet Onomo Ukwa and wife, Mr Onomo Ukwa and wife. Others include Rt. (Hon) Okon Tom Osung, Hon Effiong Asanwana, Mr John Akpan, Sir Mike Ogbanje, Mrs. Joy Soremi (nee Iquo Johnson), Mrs. Helen Ekong, Mrs. Helen Egbe, Mrs. Nta Onkar, Prof Edem Eniang, Dr Sogbeye George (Akwa Ibom Chapter President of COJOSA), Chief (Engr) Ben Ukpong, Mr. Ntofon Amba Okung and my Chaplain, Rev (Dr) Iniobong Udoh and wife. Thank you, Chaplain, for accepting us and making the church conducive for us. I am most grateful to Mrs. Afolayan a.k.a Mummy Kemi (my daughter's nanny in Iwo), the Registrar - Mr Aniediabasi Udofia, Engr. (Prof)Monday Esiere, Dr Ako Akpabio, Prof Okon Ansa, Dr Glory E. Edet, Dr Effiong Eyoefoki, Mr. Oladipo Olasope (SAN), Prof Ini Jonah (President, Uniuyo Senior Staff Club), Mr. Musa Tijani, Prof Micheal Akpan, Dr Yomi Okediji, Engr Otobong Ansa,

Mrs. Martha Kenneth Akpan, Dr Myrtle Ibokette, Prof Ken Okpara, Prof Foluke Aderemi, Dr Sunday Ita, Mr Macdon Odiko (PPRO), Engr Best Umoh, Dr Kingsley Egemba and wife, Dr Emmanuel Attih, Prof EnoAbasi Urua and Mr. Lawrence C. Obinaju. I will not fail to mention Prof Mfonbong Umobong, Prof Uyoata Uyoata and wife, Prof Paul Nwafor, Rev (Dr) Larry Ayuba and wife, Dr. Eddy Eyenih, Prof. Etim Effiong, Dr Tamar Rothenberg, my Dean - Prof Godwin N. Udom, Prof Edet Udoh, Prof. Lawrence Etim, Dr Beulah Ekerete (Ag HOD- Agricultural Economics & Extension), Dr Clement Uwem, Mrs. Mercy Umoh, Mrs. Esther Edighienyong, Engr (Dr) Bassey and wife, Dr. and Dr. (Mrs.) Blessing Oribhabor, Dr. Charles Udoinyang, Capt Ubit (rtd), and wife, Dr. Aniebiet Etuk and wife, Dr. Unyime R. Etuk, Dr. Fred, and all my colleagues in the faculty of Agriculture, too numerous to mention. My interactions and relationship with these people have greatly enriched my social experience and enhanced my career.

Of course, I cannot forget my Pastor and father in the Lord, Engr (Dr) Olaniran Idowu Fafowora and his wife, Dr Toyin Fafowora; and my Uncle Engr. Effiong U. Ebong and his wife Mrs. Afi Ebong (nee Asanwana). God used these two couples to pay my fees during my Master's degree programme and Doctorate respectively. The Fafoworas also gave me free accommodation in the highbrow Bodija housing

Estate, Ibadan, throughout my Post-graduate studies and Engr Ebong also gave me free accommodation for over a year when I relocated to Uyo. They are some of the channels through which God fulfilled the promise He gave to me in Isaiah49:23 during one of my lowest points when I felt terribly alone, and I wept and cried to Him for help. I quote from the Amplified version of the Holy bible:

‘And kings shall be your foster fathers and guardians, and their queens your nursing mothers. They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust from your feet; and you shall know (with an acquaintance and understanding based on and grounded in personal experience) that I am the LORD. For they shall not be put to shame who wait for, look for, hope for, and expect Me’

I also wish to give a special recognition to my teachers, mentors and research partners. I am particularly grateful to Prof Carol Williams (aka mama- my HOD in the University of Ibadan during my MSc; if not for her timely intervention, I would

have been frustrated out of the programme), Prof Janice Olawoye (my HOD during my PhD), and my PhD supervisor late Prof Timothy Ogunfiditimi. I appreciate Late Prof Joseph Okedara (the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of Bowen University) who accepted my application letter after the deadline for submission and subsequently employed me. My appreciation also goes to my friend, Prof Emmanuel Adekoya, who encouraged me to become a University Teacher and I would probably not be standing before you today without that push from him. Prof Adekoya informed me of the Bowen advert and encouraged me to apply. He was my Lecturer and has been one of my mentors and research collaborators since 2002. I would not forget my father, friend, boss and mentor – Prof Timothy Olabode Olagbemi, fondly called grandpa VC by my children (former Vice-chancellor of Bowen University, Iwo and the Current Vice-Chancellor, Edwin Clarke University, Kiagbode, Delta State). Prof Olagbemi introduced me to the world of grant awarding research writing and international travels. He still creates time to give me a letter of reference whenever I need one and also goes through every proposal I write. I also appreciate the mentoring role of Prof Simi Afonja, former Director, Centre for Gender studies and women Development, OAU and CEO, Centre for Human Development. She gave

meaning to the feminist nudge I have felt since I was a child and exposed me to the different narratives in feminist epistemology. Also worthy of mention is late Mr. Remi Olowude, former Executive Vice-Chairman of Industrial and General Insurance (IGi) Limited. He believed in me and gave me my first consultancy job tagged 'Project Inisha', which was to transform Inisha in Ejigbo LGA of Osun state into a model village. This gave me the opportunity to apply first hand, all the things I was taught in my Rural Sociology and Community Development classes.

I acknowledge Prof. Akaneren Essien, my teacher and former Vice-Chancellor, University of Uyo. He was instrumental to my coming back to Uyo. My father and mentor, Prof. Ekong E. Ekong did not only facilitate my coming back to Uyo, but the light he lit in the tunnel of Rural Sociology is one of the reasons I love the study of rural societies. He has also been very supportive and a great encouragement since I came back to Uyo. My brother, friend, mentor and colleague Prof Gabriel S. Umoh has always been there for me since 1986. Prof Umoh literarily brought me into climate change research by engaging me as a gender focal point in the Building Nigeria's Response to Climate Change (BNRCC) project which was sponsored by CIDA in partnership with NEST. The BNRCC project also deepened my understanding of women and gender issues in climate change and

rural communities, and was the stepping stone to my Fellowship at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bonn, Germany in 2010 and the subsequent Fulbright Fellowship with Bronx Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) in 2014.

I acknowledge my big sister and mentor, Prof. Comfort M. Ekpo, the first female Vice-Chancellor of the University of Uyo. If she did not grant me the permission to travel to Germany, I would not have benefitted from the UNFCCC Fellowship. Secondly, when the Fulbright Fellowship in gender and climate change was advertised, she remembered despite her busy schedule as the then Vice-Chancellor, that I was an authority in the area of gender and climate change and encouraged me to apply. She did not also hesitate to approve my research leave with pay when I won the very competitive award. I also became an Associate Professor during her tenure. I must also acknowledge another big sister, nicknamed 'Prof. Eka Ufok' by my children because they know her to be my Eka Ufok, Prof. Felicia E. Etim, former University Librarian, University of Uyo. God has used her in several ways to look out for me when it mattered the most.

Of course, I cannot forget Prof. Enefiok E. Essien, *SAN*, the immediate past Vice-Chancellor. I was first

appointed Acting Head of Department in the 3rd year of his Vice-Chancellorship. God also used him to announce my 12th hour miracle of promotion as a Full Professor, after waiting for six years, at a time I least expected it.

I acknowledge Prof. Nyaudoh U. Ndaeyo, the Vice Chancellor, University of Uyo. He has been a good friend, mentor and a strong support base since our undergraduate days. I became Acting Head of Department during his tenure as the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. This may not have been possible without a strong recommendation from him to the Vice-Chancellor. I also thank him and all members of the University management for the opportunity to present this lecture today.

I acknowledge my sister, friend and immediate boss at the International Centre for Energy and Environmental Sustainability Research (ICEESR), Dr. Edu James Inam (under her leadership, I had the opportunity to attend fully sponsored research meetings in Nigeria, Ethiopia and the US). I appreciate my friends and research partners - Drs. Ubong A. Asa, NsikakAbasi Etim, Obot D. Akpan and Uduak Udosen (with these boys by my side, there is no remote village I cannot go to).

There are people here that actually taught me. I am standing before you today because these men did

not harass me sexually; neither did they ask me to *sort* before passing my exams. They held the light for me, some showed me the ladder, others pushed me to where the ladder is, and some held my hand to climb the ladder, while I actually stood on the shoulders of some of them to reach where I am today. It is my pleasure to openly acknowledge them with a token. Some of them are no longer here but many are present here today. Could all my teachers in the house please show by a lift of hand? The Ushers will locate you please.

This section will not be complete without a proper acknowledgment of the people who gave me the platform to be called a researcher. These are people that we often derogatively refer to as conservative and averse to change, yet they opened their communities, their homes and their lives to be used as social laboratories. Without them, I would have nothing to profess. These are the men and women, boys and girls that reside in rural communities and have agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. I also acknowledge all my students and thank them for their love and support. Great Nigerian students!

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to **Voiceless Voices**. I encourage you to be attentive as we explore the voices together.

CHAPTER ONE

Preamble and Definition of Concepts

1.0 Preamble

Voices

1. There are voices
And there are voices
Some meant to be heard
Some to be understood
Some you listen without hearing
Some you hear without listening
Some you hear because you listened, yet do not understand

2. Every being has a voice
Some we hear without listening
Some we listen without hearing
Listening and hearing give not understanding
Understanding the voice means connecting with the soul
The soul of the voice
The voiceless has a voice
I am a voice, you are a voice
Even the voiceless has a voice
Even the voiceless should be heard

3. Today we seek to give a voice
A voice to the voiceless
But alas the voiceless has a voice
How can you give a voice, to a voice?
The pretentious elite claim to be the voice of the
voiceless
Why be a voice, to someone that has a voice?
The voiceless voice is always speaking
We pretend not to hear
The voiceless voice is always speaking, we
prefer not to listen
The voiceless voice is always speaking, we
impose a voice over
And claim not to understand.

I know two questions that are on the mind of a lot of people here are –how can a voice be voiceless and what Agricultural Sociology is all about? We will gradually get there.

I believe it is an innate desire in every human to be heard and understood and that is the major reason God gave us voices. The human voice is the first sign of life when a baby is born otherwise, the midwives will pinch or spank the baby just to hear its voice. Voices are not necessarily expressed the same way. In other words, some voices may present as a departure from the norm. For instance, in the adoption of an innovation, people who express their

voices outside what is normative are considered as deviants. These deviants maybe called innovators or laggards depending on their adoption rate, in child development, we label children who do not conform as rebellious; and women who stand up for themselves are called feminists in the negative sense of that word, etc. All these and more refer to people voicing themselves differently from the norm. It is intriguing to be heard and understood. Those who know me say I am vocal. It did not start today. As a child and a teenage girl, I did not shy away from standing up for myself – it did not matter whether the aggressor was male, female or even older. I will take the person on squarely and this resulted in a few fights. This was my own way then of voicing against injustice and unfair treatment. I enjoyed climbing trees and my mother made it a point of duty to remind me that '*women do not climb trees*'. The more she did, the more I climbed. That was my own way of voicing then that no child should be restricted from doing anything on the basis of his/her sex. She probably felt I was stubborn and disrespectful (*I am sorry mummy if you felt that way*).

People use their voices everyday – to talk, to communicate their needs and wants. But the idea of 'voice' goes much deeper. Having a voice gives an individual agency and power, and a way to express his or her beliefs. But what happens when that voice is

expressed differently from the norm? What happens when that voice is in some way silenced or stifled, then we have a voiceless voice (Callahan, 2018). Voices could be voiceless if they are expressed differently from what is normative. The 'voiceless' is a socially constructed class which we affirm every time we claim to be 'a voice for the voiceless'. We cannot continue to do this. We must challenge the assumption upon which this idea is based, to move from limited symbolic gestures to systematic changes (Registre, 2017). Framing this lecture, the way I have, is one way of engendering conversation along this line with the hope that all the voiceless voices in our rural communities and agricultural systems will eventually be heard, understood and policies implemented in their context, thereby changing the narrative.

When I was preparing for JAMB, my real choices were courses in humanities and Arts – Sociology, Theatre Arts, Law, Mass Communication- and I had the prerequisite O'Level papers but in the wisdom of parents in those days, only science courses were marketable so, with the guidance of my father, I settled for General Agriculture as it was then called (this later became Agricultural Extension) and I found myself in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension. My father had to apply for a Pass so as to bring his 16 years old daughter all the way from Lagos to the then University of Cross River state, to

check her admission status and resume studies. I was handed over to my older cousin Deaconess Gem Afi S.K. Okpo, who automatically became the mother of a teenage girl overnight even without a prior experience of motherhood. Thank you aunty Fimma for your love and care.

I thoroughly enjoyed the extension aspect of my course probably because it was people and community oriented and I just flowed naturally into it. This feeling was reinforced when I went for my Masters and PhD, and did a number of courses in Rural Sociology, Educational Psychology and Community Development and also had the opportunity to go to the field for practical experience. Here, I saw a meeting point between the humanities I wanted to study and Agriculture I was guided into. Daddy, it is a win-win situation for both of us. Thank you for your guidance and encouragement. I enjoy what I am doing. This is the story of my journey into Agricultural Extension.

Definition of Concepts

1. 1 Agricultural Extension

Agricultural Extension is the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education. It encompasses a wide range of communication and learning activities

organized for rural people. Agricultural extension has three main facets:

1. As a discipline it deals with the behaviour of people. It is educational in content and purposive in approach. Whether the content consists of agriculture, medicine (preventive and social medicine), public health, education, engineering, etc., extension is always dependent on a firm knowledge and expertise in sociology, anthropology, psychology, administration, economics, communication arts, political science and so on. That is why the curriculum at all levels in the training of extension personnel incorporates courses in all of these areas.

2. As a process, agricultural extension seeks to influence the behaviour of rural people through education and information exchange. The aim is to assist them in gaining a livelihood, improving the physical and psychological level of living of rural families, and fostering rural community welfare. The success of the extension process requires an atmosphere of mutual trust, cooperation and respect on the part of both extension worker and rural people.

3. As a service, agricultural extension makes the government ministry, the university or voluntary agency as useful as possible to the people who support it through taxes and donations.

The concept that the broader function of extension work is to help people to solve their own problems through the application of scientific knowledge is generally accepted.

1.2 Agricultural Sociology

Now, to answer your second question, Agricultural Sociology is a specialized field in Agricultural Extension that applies sociological principles to the study of the social lives of people in Agricultural systems, who have agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. It covers the social aspects of all activities carried out in the agricultural sub-sector. It incorporates issues and social relations that border on Agriculture as a profession. To be an Agricultural Sociologist, you need a deep knowledge and understanding of the agricultural sub-sector and a working knowledge of sociological theories and principles, knowledge of human psychology, human communication, philosophy, educational psychology, administration, political science, etc. and should be able to apply them to the social lives of people in the agricultural sub-sector. We know that most of our farmers are in the rural areas but agriculture is not restricted to rural areas. This implies that, an Agricultural Sociologist can practice both in the rural and urban areas. Our laboratory is therefore, wherever we have farmers.

1.3 Rural Area

Rural area has been conceptualized at different time periods in Nigeria using population but according to Ekong (2003), this is problematic because there is no consensus as to the number. For instance, the colonial government in 1953 defined an urban Centre as a compact settlement with a population of at least 5000 persons, and in the 1963 census, an urban area was simply defined as one with a population of 20,000 or more inhabitants, and any area with lesser population in either case was regarded as rural. He further argued that the arbitrariness of 'numbers' could be made more ridiculous when one asks how much more rural a settlement of 4900 or 19900 in either case is than a settlement of 5010 or 20,010.

In contemporary Nigeria, rurality is commonly seen as the absence in a settlement of social amenities and the various trappings of modernization and not necessarily in terms of the population size or livelihood activities. Thus, according to Ekong (2013) a rural area maybe defined as a compact settlement that is sparsely populated, where at least 70% of the adult population have agriculture as their primary source of livelihood, and is also lacking in most of the following cultural objects or attributes:

1. Ten or more post primary schools
2. Two or more modern hotels

3. Two or more supermarkets apart from open air markets
4. Pipe-borne water supply
5. Electricity supply
6. One or more industrial and other establishments each employing not less than fifty people who are not original natives of the community
7. Two or more branches of commercial banks
8. Police and fire services
9. Entertainment and recreation facilities
10. Nursery and daycare centers
11. Two or more petrol stations with vehicle servicing centers
12. Two or more private clinics, besides government dispensary or mission hospital.

This therefore, means that a compact settlement in Nigeria that does not possess these basic indicators of urbanity can safely be described as rural. It is important to note however, that it may be impossible to find a typical rural area in Nigeria because most settlements have at least one of these indicators. Rural communities therefore, differ in their degree of rurality.

1.4 Community Development

This is a conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities to recognize their needs and to

assume responsibility for solving their problems, thereby increasing their capacity to fully participate in the life of the nation. It is a process by which the efforts of the people are united with that of governmental authority to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of community, thereby integrating the people in the life of the nation which in turn enables them to contribute fully to national progress. Community development can also be regarded as a method or process of tackling the problem of community organization in order to bring about economic development. Community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. Community development is seen as functional and process oriented and covers a wide field of activities. It emphasizes self- help by citizens and also initiates a people-directed process that is based upon their own perception of their needs.

1.5 Feminism

Feminism, also known as women movement, is a diverse collection of social theories, political movements, and moral philosophies, largely motivated by or concerning the experiences of women, especially in terms of their social, political, and economic situation. As a social movement, feminism largely focuses on limiting or eradicating

gender inequality and promoting women's rights, interests, and issues in society. As a movement and ideology, it aims at establishing greater rights and legal protections for women in all spheres of life. At the heart of the feminist movement are these three postulations:

- (a) a belief that women universally face some form of oppression or exploitation;
- (b) a commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression, in all its forms and
- (c) a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression" (Maguire, 1987).

1.6 Sex

Gender is often used interchangeably with "sex". This is not correct because sex is a biological identity depicted as male or female, and is determined by the sex chromosome you inherited from your parent but your gender is a social identity, determined by your society.

1.7 Gender

Gender refers to the qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted in culture. Cultural perceptions

determine roles and responsibilities as well as access to power and resources for women and men. Put differently, your gender is your social identity. It is the meaning and character that the society gives to masculinity and femininity, and this comes with expected roles, norms, behaviours, responsibilities, and of course rights and privileges. This meaning also affects the power relations between women and men in the society. All of these are socially constructed; they are not universal and change over time, even within the same culture.

Gender can also be seen as a socio-economic variable for analyzing roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities for both women and men. The explanatory power of gender is the basic key to understanding social structures and actions including production relationships within and across households, the setting of goals and priorities, the mobilization of resources, the willingness to take risk, and the right to benefits derived from increased production.

1.8 Gender and Sex Roles

Gender roles are a product of socialization, they are learned behaviours in a given society, that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male and female. Gender roles are not

universal while sex roles are divine and universal, e.g. reproductive roles are clearly defined by sex – the woman carries the baby in her womb, while the man provides the sperm needed to form the baby, but cooking is a learned behaviour. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by the geographical, economic and political environment. Changes in gender roles often occur in response to changing economic, natural or political circumstances, including development efforts.

1.9 Gender Equality

Gender equality is often misunderstood to mean that the wife wants to take over the leadership role of the husband in the family setting. This is far from the truth. As we all know, men and women have their anatomical differences; equality says these differences should not translate to discrimination in the distribution of resources. Gender equality means the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and the equal allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services. It means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they

play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society.

1.10 Gender Equity

Gender equity on the other hand, means fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs. It entails justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes. It is the process of being fair to men and women and to ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity is therefore the means while equality is the result.

1.11 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making, at all stages of the development process, projects, programmes or policy. It weighs the implications of all plans, actions, legislations, policies and programmes as they affect men and women.

1.12 Gender Awareness

An understanding that there are socially determined differences between women and men based on learned behaviour, which affects access to and control over resources. This awareness needs to be applied through gender analysis into projects, programmes and policies.

1.13 Gender Sensitivity

Encompasses the ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporate these into strategies and actions.

1.14 Gender-blindness

A failure to recognize that gender is an essential determinant of social outcomes impacting on projects and policies. A gender-blind approach assumes gender is not an influencing factor in projects, programmes or policy.

1.15 Power

Power as used here is the capacity of an individual to influence the actions, beliefs, or conduct of others. The use of power need not involve the use of force or the threat of force.

1.16 Empowerment of women

Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity-building leading to greater participation in

transformative action, to greater decision-making power and control over one's life. Empowerment of women as a policy objective implies that women legitimately have the ability and should, individually and collectively, participate effectively in decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives, especially about societal priorities and development directions

1.17 Access and Control

Productive, reproductive and community roles require the use of resources. In general, women and men have different levels of both access to the resources needed for their work, and control over those resources. Access is the opportunity to make use of resources while control is the ability to define its use and impose that definition on others.

1.18 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion (or marginalization) is social disadvantage and relegation to the fringe of society. It is the process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their sex, poverty, low education, inadequate life skills, etc. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that

affect them, or of bettering their standard of living. The socially excluded include:

- Women generally
- Poor women
- Poor men
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Internally displaced persons
- Early school leavers
- Older people living alone
- Homeless persons
- People with a disability
- Single parents
- Supporters of opposition political parties
- Unemployed persons, especially the long term unemployed
- Ethnic minorities, etc.

1.19 Social Vulnerability

Social vulnerability refers to the inability of people, organizations, and societies to withstand adverse impacts from multiple stressors to which they are exposed. These impacts are due in part to characteristics inherent in social interactions, institutions, and systems of cultural values.

1.20 Livelihood

Livelihood refers to the means of securing the basic necessities (food, water, shelter and clothing) of life.

It is also a set of activities involving securing these basic necessities and capacity to acquire above necessities, working either individually or as a group by using human and material endowments for meeting the requirements of self and that of household on a sustainable basis. Examples of livelihood activities include teaching, catering, farming, motoring, tailoring, foot balling, wrestling, prostitution and even begging on the road side.

1.21 Livelihood Diversification

Livelihood diversification refers to attempts by individuals and households to find new ways to raise incomes and reduce environmental risk, which differ sharply by the degree of freedom of choice (to diversify or not), and the reversibility of the outcome. Livelihood diversification includes both on- and off-farm activities which are undertaken to generate income additional to that from the main household agricultural activities, via the production of other agricultural and non-agricultural goods and services, the sale of waged labour, or self-employment in small firms, and other strategies undertaken to spread risk; included in this are what has been termed 'activity or environment diversification' in agriculture (Carter 1997), or more radical migratory strategies (Stark and Levhari, 1982). Ellis (1997) defines livelihood diversification as 'the process by which rural families

construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living' pointing out, rightly, that livelihood diversification is not necessarily synonymous with income diversification.

1.22 Sustainable Livelihood

Sustainable livelihood refers to a livelihood that can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provides sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation, while not undermining the natural resource base.

1.23 Food security

Food Security is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

1.24 Poverty

Poverty is deprivation (deprivation is defined as unmet basic human needs) due to a lack of resources, both material and non-material, e.g. income, housing, health, education, knowledge and culture. It requires a threshold to measure it.

1.25 Climate Variability and Change

Climate variability has been defined as seasonal and annual variations in temperature and rainfall and their distribution within and between countries. Climate variability has the potential to inundate, degrade and alter the chemistry composition of the earth, and in turn affect culture, economics and social systems. Climate variation and long-term climate changes have posed serious threats to African countries including Nigeria, as highly productive ecosystems (mangroves, estuaries, deltas and coral reefs) which form the basis for important economic activities have been negatively impacted (Hewawasam, 2005). The Coast has long contributed to human migration, cultural separation, population and the collapse of prehistoric and early histories of communities. Climate change as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a variation in the mean state of the climate, persisting for an extended period of time (typically decades or longer). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines it as a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity, that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

CHAPTER TWO

Abstracts of Published Research

Selected published abstracts have been grouped into two (2) sub themes to showcase specific studies and enhance readability as follows:

2.1 Gender, Women and Social Issues in Rural Communities and Agricultural Systems

2.1.1 Women and Power Transformation in Rural Households: A Case Study of Osun State, Nigeria

Solomon, Valerie A. and E. A. Adekoya

Abstract

The study presents trends in household power sharing in farm households in Osun State, Nigeria and attempts to postulate changes based on some characteristics of the mother of the household. Primary data were collected through random sampling technique for 100 female respondents using structured questionnaires and analyzed using statistical tools such as frequencies, means and percentages, as well as logit regression model. An analysis of the personal characteristics of respondents shows 83% were Muslims, 74% belonged to

polygamous households and the average age of respondent was 46.98 years. They were mainly illiterates with average years of formal schooling of 1.64 years and a mean monthly income of USS45. The test result shows that men had more power in household decision-making, but women will be able to negotiate more power even in rural settings with increased capacity and age. Therefore, for increased in the participation of rural women in rural development initiatives, they should be empowered educationally and economically and older women should not be left out.

Keywords: women, power transformation, rural households

2.1.2 Gender Participation in Livelihood Activities of Rural Dwellers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Asa, U. A. and Valerie A. Solomon

Abstract

The study ascertained gender participation in the livelihood activities of rural dwellers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data from 150 rural dwellers were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and ranks. Results revealed that the rural dwellers were mostly engaged in crop farming, trading/marketing and

livestock rearing as their livelihood activities. Findings also revealed that livelihood activities such as mechanic, brick-laying, commercial driver/motorcyclist, hair-barbing, shoe-mending, palm wine tapping, carpentry and vulcanizing were exclusively dominated by males while traditional midwifery/birth attendant as a livelihood activity was exclusively dominated by females in the study area. It is recommended that development programmes of Government and Non-Governmental Organizations aimed at enhancing rural livelihoods in Akwa Ibom State be gender-specific in order to enhance the success of such programmes.

Keywords: Gender, Participation, livelihood activities, rural dwellers.

2.1.3 Livelihoods and Poverty Status of Rural Women in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Asa, U. A and V. A. Solomon

Abstract

Rural women in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria are engaged in a multiplicity of livelihood activities to meet their needs as well as cope with poverty which is prevalent in the state. This study assessed the impact of livelihoods on the poverty status of rural women in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data for the study were obtained from 150 rural women in Akwa

Ibom State using multi-stage sampling procedure, and analyzed using frequencies and percentages, the Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (FGT) weighted poverty index; and the Tobit regression model. Results showed that the respondents were mostly engaged in crop farming, trading/marketing and livestock rearing as their livelihood activities; and they earned ₦19,204.55 (\$128.03) monthly from "salaried jobs" as their livelihood activity. About 58% of the rural women were poor and incomes from the women's livelihood activities led to a decrease in their level of poverty by 0.5196. It is therefore recommended that rural women in the state engage in many livelihood activities as this tended to increase their incomes/reduce their poverty level.

Keywords: Livelihood Poverty status, rural women, Akwa Ibom State.

2.1.4 Gender Power Relations among Indigenous Households in Iwo Community, Osun State, Nigeria

Solomon, Valerie A. and Omotosho, S. B

Introduction

Gender is a central factor in household power sharing, which affects productivity, time allocation, and

investment in developing countries. Local customs, traditions and tribal laws play a role in determining the status of men and women. The almost absolute uniformity, among communities in the West African sub-region on the issue of gender inequality remains one of the central challenges of the time. Gender inequality remains one of the facilitating factors of poverty. The foundations of some communities are laid on the assumption that gender differences expressed in inequality are not only necessary but also inevitable to the extent they are conceived as 'divinely sanctioned' (Onyeonoru *et al* 2004). In the process of social adjustment, individuals and groups interact with their physical and socio-cultural milieus and inevitably design the social structure to suit their particular needs. Thus, they relatively create and recreate their societies. Gender stratification as one of such creations is society defined. Stratification along sex lines has implication for the development of societies, impinging forcefully on the family, education and the political economy. Salihu *et al* (2002) emphasized the importance of gender relations at the household level. They argued that for women, whatever happens at the level of the domestic arena is in turn carried over to what is generally called the public space. This is significant because women may experience the denial of their citizenship and fundamental human rights at any one, if not more, of

these levels – family, community, private sector, state and so on. Hence it is necessary to go beyond the public space when we talk about women’s citizenship and rights, to address the interconnected and interlocking character of women’s lives as well as women’s rights. Realizing women’s fundamental rights requires addressing women’s unequal access to economic, political, social and cultural resources which are located not only in formal, public arenas but also in private and semi-private places, households and communities. An unequal gender relation is therefore embedded in the most fundamental ways – in the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious dimensions. Redressing these inequalities requires a systematic, deliberate approach that addresses the fundamental causes and effects of unequal citizenship status (Salihu *et al* 2002), both at the national, state and household level. This means creating the enabling environment in which policies and institutional mechanisms can be developed that give men and women equal access and control over the decision-making structures and processes that affect their lives as citizens of Nigeria at all levels, starting from the household. This study established the nature of gender power relations in rural households in Iwo Community of Osun State, as a baseline for gender involvement in sustainable rural development. It agrees with SIDA (2002, 2003) that women’s

empowerment conceived in their ability to make strategic life choices or decisions in contexts where the ability was hitherto denied is a necessary step towards development.

2.1.5 Correlates of Family Cohesion among Rural Dwellers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Solomon, V. A., Asa, U. A. and Archibong, E. M

Abstract

The study ascertained the correlates of family cohesion among rural dwellers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data obtained from 150 rural dwellers using a multi-stage sampling procedure, were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis. The study revealed farming as the primary occupation of 63.7% of the respondents and their average household size comprised seven persons; most (94.8%) of the respondents were functionally literate and their average age is 48 years. Result also revealed that a high level of family cohesion existed among 89.0% of the respondents and that the age of household heads; educational status of household heads; and the respondents' household sizes were significant correlates of family cohesion. It is recommended that enlightenment campaigns be organized by social workers, religious leaders, Non-

Governmental Agencies etc. and other development agents involved on the need for individuals to be physically and emotionally matured before going into marriages in the rural areas since the age of household heads in the study area significantly correlates with family cohesion.

Key word: women, men, family, cohesion.

2.1.6 Understanding Feminism

Solomon, V. A

Introduction

‘Understanding Feminism’ is an offshoot of over a decade of working with women in different spheres and realities. The idea of a book was first conceived in 2004 at a workshop on feminists’ view of society organized by the Centre for Human Development, and facilitated by Prof. Simi Afonja, at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria.

As a very religious and tradition bound people, I struggled with feminism as a concept and questioned myself as to my motives in women empowerment, attending gender mainstreaming workshops and encouraging women to use their God-given intellect and convictions and contribute to decisions affecting their lives. Living in a male dominated and chauvinistic society has been very challenging. I have seen myself resisting it and encouraging other women

to resist all forms of oppression and limitation on the basis of sex, all at the risk of being called a 'feminist'; which is considered as 'inherently evil and satanic' in some quarters. If feminism is evil, I will not want to perpetuate evil nor be associated with anything evil. This led to an in-depth study of feminism as a concept, its history, challenges, practice, religion, progress and the future. All these aspects are discussed in this volume.

Feminism has its own research methodology and research methods. The chapter on feminist research will be especially useful for researchers and feminists working with and for women. It is generally agreed by feminist researchers that there are no specifically feminist research methods but the challenge, using the words of Weston, 1988, is to 'continue to search for new and better topics, methodologies and strategies which will liberate women and, perhaps more than that, to challenge us to be feminists first in our research efforts'. The chapter on feminist research aims at this. It brings out the fact that, to effectively carry out a feminist research, you must be a feminist. It emphasizes the need for the researcher to restructure the unequal power relationship between the researcher and the subject to validate the perspective of the participant.

I have never been exactly sure of how to construct modern feminism but I am fairly certain

about what it means to me. For me, personally, feminism is the proactive opposition to patriarchy and sexist oppression. It is my belief in and fight for women's full participation in society, our equal access to the same rights, privileges, pay and status that men have historically enjoyed. It is not a contest for equality or superiority but just asking for equal opportunity to fulfill one's God's given potentials and to enjoy the privileges that come with the fulfillment of those potentials. It is a belief in the fact that 'women' as a class of people are not inferior to 'men' as a class just because they are women.

There is much more in terms of the changes needed to create a society where women can live a full, self-determined life. This book aims at contributing to these changes and moving gender equity forward by educating readers on what feminism actually means and what it stands for. The movement is large enough to accommodate people from diverse backgrounds and ideologies. At the heart of the feminist movement are these three postulations: (a) a belief that women universally face some form of oppression or exploitation; (b) a commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression, in all its forms and (c) a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression". And there is nothing 'inherently' evil about these postulations. Feminists have the right to choose their brand of feminism

according to their personal ideology and convictions, after all we do not all look alike.

Though there has been a lot of criticism of feminism both from within and without. Most of the criticisms have to do with the 'how' of the movement and not with the 'why', identity politics and not with the fact that women are indeed oppressed. Due to these controversies, many feminists would not want to be called feminist. I will therefore suggest the term 'equal-rightist', which is all embracing and will also adequately incorporate men who truly believe in the three cardinal points of feminism.

It is true that men and women are different in so many ways. But do these differences translate into superiority and inferiority? Is there a religious or natural basis for the inequity? Should the differences between male and female translate into inequality in access to power, productive resources, education and other opportunities? What do we need to do to ensure gender justice or equity? What role should those who have been direct beneficiaries of women oppression play in order to ensure equity?

Feminism started as a biblical movement but it has been hijacked by secular, radical feminist who think organized religion as exemplified in Judeo-Christian beliefs are inherently evil and oppressive to women. But should it remain so? Something has to be done to take it back and checkmate the negative

impact of radical feminism on communal life which is the main stay of the church and indeed, African societies. Religious leaders and indeed the church, should emulate the example of Jesus Christ in relating with women. He modeled a revolutionary new paradigm of empowerment by affirming women as co-heirs of God's grace and proving in so many ways that in the kingdom of God, there is no gender hierarchy. Unfortunately, the church throughout the centuries has not adopted His perspective of gender equality. Patriarchal attitudes in early church fathers led to the theology "*that women were put on earth simply to serve in the home, have sex with their husbands and bear children*", instead of following Galatians 3:28 which says: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male nor female, for you are one in Christ Jesus*". This perspective of gender equality runs throughout the bible from Genesis to Revelation.

What are the gender relations in the other major religion of the world - Islam? Should feminists keep quiet because we do not want to be misunderstood and because of the need to be politically correct? Or are there verses in the Koran that are liberating for women? Borrowing from the words of Zohra, 'it is not enough to say that there is nothing contradictory between feminism and Islam. Muslims must be an active, proactive force for change against the clear, sustained and grave oppression of Muslim women',

which stems mostly from the misinterpretation and misapplication of verses in the Koran by men.

Although, the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her, feminism should not be seen as an end in itself but a means to an end. Men and women are complementary, with no sex being inferior or superior and the man is not complete without the woman just as the woman is not complete without the man. Women should respond to injustice with forgiveness and not revenge and men should be humble enough to apologize for past injustices and make amends.

2.1.7 Rural Livelihood Diversification Constraints of Female Farmers: A Case Study of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Solomon, V. A. and Ogunfiditimi, T. O

Abstract

The study identified various constraints militating against diversification as a livelihood strategy of rural households in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data were collected randomly from 238 respondents from 8 Local Government Areas of the State using a set of close and open-ended interview schedules. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient and

descriptive statistical tools were used for data analysis. An analysis of the personal characteristics of respondents shows their average age to be 40 years, 76.5% were married, with 70.2% belonging to monogamous households. The dominant indicator of the head of some formal schooling and the average monthly income of N4, 000 was found to be rather low. The livelihood diversification constraint of respondents includes: inaccessibility to and lack of control over farm land (83.6%). Lack of credit (72.7%), fertilizer (90.3%), transportation difficulty (50.0%) and marketing on credit (70.2%). Others are over reliance by members of the extended family (50.4%), lack of nutritional and investment information (85.3%) and inadequate infrastructural facilities (95%). Inadequate access to information and education was found to be a very limiting factor. The constraints to livelihood diversification were found to be significantly related to farm size and income of respondents' households at 0.05 probability level with "r" values of .069 and .133 respectively. Constraint was however, not significantly related to the actual food consumption of households at 0.05 level with an "r" value of -.127. It concluded that removal of constraints to and expansion of opportunities for, diversification are desirable policy objectives because they give households more choice to improve livelihood security and to raise living standards.

Keywords: Livelihood diversification, food security, female farmers and constraints.

2.1.8 Indigenous Food Security Strategies of Female Farmers on Small Holder Farming Systems: A Case Study of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Solomon, V A. and Ogunfiditimi T. O.

Abstract

The study identified various indigenous strategies used by rural women to cope with food insecurity in their households. Their personal characteristics and their relationship with household food security were also determined. Data were collected through a multi-staged, random survey of 238 respondents, representing 238 households, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, means and the Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient. As an indigenous food security strategy, rural women engage in multiple cropping, cook a variety of indigenous dishes and practice short-term storage using indigenous storage method. Other strategies include eating of unconventional food items like the leaves of hibiscus flower and the rationalization of

available food to check wastage. The mean age of the respondents was 40 years, with an average education at the primary level. The mean marital status, marital structure and household head were found to be married, monogamy and male respectively. Pearson-product moment correlation shows a significant relationship between selected personal characteristics of respondents and household food security. It is recommended that rural women should be adequately harnessed and empowered in their indigenous knowledge through a participatory programme approach.

Key word: indigenous, food security strategies, small holder female farmers

2.1.9 Rural Social Development: Assessing the Social Inclusiveness of Fadama II project in Imo State, Nigeria

Valerie A. Solomon and Idongesit B. Ekong

Abstract

The study assessed the extent of social inclusion in Fadama II project in Imo State. Nigeria, using primary data obtained through the stratified proportionate simple random sampling of 150 Fadama II project beneficiaries. Data were analyzed using descriptive

statistics and t-test. The study reveals that 43.3% of the respondents were 31-40 years, 70.7% were males with 84.0% being married. Also 98.6% had formal schooling and 42.7% earned between ₦1000 and ₦20, 000 monthly. Average household size was 6-10 persons and 85.3% had a form of physical disability or challenge. This was used as a basis for assessing inclusiveness. The study reveals that Fadama II was perceived by respondents as highly inclusive but findings based on the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of respondents showed otherwise. Finding also revealed that Fadama II project was perceived as having a significant impact on it beneficiaries by respondents. The test result indicates no significant difference in the perceived extent of social inclusion of Fadama II project between the physically challenged beneficiaries and non-physically challenge beneficiaries. The study recommends the use of affirmative action and quota system in rural development projects to make them socially inclusive in practice.

2.1.10 The Scourge of HIV/AIDS in Iwo Rural Community: Implications for Rural Prosperity and Agricultural Development in Nigeria

Solomon V. A, Atoyebi T. A. and Ogungbenro O. K.

Abstract

In recent times, there has been series of articles, seminars and conferences on how to curb the spread of HIV/AIDs in Nigeria. Little or no attempt have been made to examine the knowledge and attitude of rural dwellers toward the preventive methods of HIV/AIDS and their attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS). The study therefore determined the knowledge and attitude of rural dwellers towards the preventive methods of HIV/AIDS and their attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS), using rural communities in Iwo as a case study. The implications of this for rural prosperity and agricultural development were also drawn. Respondents were selected using cluster sampling and data collected with the help of structured interview schedule. Descriptive statistical tools were used for analysis. The study concludes that to enhance rural prosperity and agricultural development, there is a need to intensify the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign especially in rural areas, with the objectives of

stemming the spread through incorporation into innovation packages to farm families.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, preventive methods, Rural prosperity, agricultural development, Nigeria.

2.1.11 Enhancing the Food Security of Small Holder Households in Iwo Community through Extension Communication and Education

Solomon A. Valerie and Adeyemi A.

Abstract

The study determined the food security status of smallholder households in Iwo land, using the per capita food expenditure mode, the relationship between access to extension services and household food security, as well as the extension communication constraints/problems. The personal characteristics of extension agents and female farmers were also identified. All the field extension staff of the Iwo zone of the Osun state Agricultural Development Project (OSSADEP) were interviewed through the use of open and close ended questionnaire. One hundred (100) randomly selected farmers were interviewed and the data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages,

means, the chi-square and the logistic regression model.

The household size, access to extension services, income of respondents and farm size were found to have significant relationship with household food security. The identified constraints to effective extension communication and education of rural women include: mobility problems, inadequate conservation of farmers and religious beliefs. Others are poor access roads, lack of inputs, high price of inputs and a predominantly male field staff.

It is therefore recommended that to enhance rural household food security, rural women should be harnessed through effective extension communication and education. The problems of extension communication must also be solved if extension is to remain relevant in the process of agricultural and national development.

Key words: Rural women, access to extension, household food security

2.1.12 Rice Farmers' Perceptions of Agricultural Credit in Rural Nigeria

Oloruntoba A., Ashimolowo O. R. and Solomon V. A

Abstract

Access to and control of credit give farmers the opportunity to make independent and lasting improvements to their living conditions, alleviate poverty and enhance household food security. This study examined the perceptions of farmers regarding agricultural credit in purposively selected rice producing villages in Western Nigeria using data collected with interview guides from 80 randomly selected farmers. The study revealed that the perception of rice farmers favoured informal agricultural credit sources like relatives and friends as against formal financial institutions such as commercial or community banks. It is noted that farmers highly favoured the use of credit for procurements of inputs and hiring of labour but disagreed with whether rice farmers have value for the use of agricultural credit or that credit could be used for the purchase of farmland. The chi-square statistic shows a significant relationship between marital status, farming experience of farmers and farmer's perception of agricultural credit. It is

concluded that sustainable rice production and household food security could be achieved through farmers' access to micro loan group credits techniques.

Keywords: Farmers, Perception, agricultural credit, rural Nigeria.

2.1.13 Effect of Participation in the Fadama - II Project on Participants' Socio-Economic Status

Adekoya, A. E. and V. A. Solomon

Abstract

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effects of Fadama – II project on socio-economic impact of Fadama users in Ibarapa North Local Government Area of Oyo State. One hundred and ten respondents were randomly selected from participating communities. The data collected through a validated and reliable questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For most respondents, the socio-economic status changed positively following participation in the project. Majority of the respondents in the study area participated actively in Fadama meetings and other activities involved in the project. Benefits derived

from taking part in the project were generally high for most respondents (95.5 percent) especially through increase in production assets, attending training and family welfare. Age, level of participation and benefits derived were significantly related to respondents' socio-economic status ($r= 0.37$, $r=0.340$, $r=0.208$ respectively). There were significant differences in benefit derived before and after Fadama project introduction in the study area (mean= -7542 before) and (mean= -7542 after) ($t=-2.396$, before) and ($t= 3.753$, $p\leq 0.05$)

Key words: Fadama, Benefits derived, Socio-economic status.

2.1.14 Determinants of Rural Poverty among Broiler Farmers in Uyo, Nigeria: Implication for Rural Household Food Security

Nsikak-Abasi A. Etim and Valerie A. Solomon

Abstract

Human population growth have fueled unprecedented rise in the demand for animal protein. This creates undue pressure in the market, but presents opportunities for the poor and hungry people who engage in farming activities to enhance their livelihood and welfare. But despite the involvement of

rural households in various farming activities including poultry keeping, generality of their incomes has remained low. Consequently, for these farmers to increase their purchasing power and meet the protein requirement of the increasing population, their poverty situation has to be reduced. This study was conducted to estimate the determinants of poverty among rural households. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents, while primary data from 60 broiler farmers were obtained using questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Tobit Regression analysis. Findings revealed that except for sex, age and marriage, type of household heads, all other explanatory variables specified in the model were significant rural poverty determinants.

Key words: Determinant; Poverty; Broilers farmer; Nigeria

2.1.15 Determinants of Catfish Production in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

U.A. Asa and Valerie A. Solomon

Abstract

The study ascertained the determinants of catfish production in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria having ascertained from literature that greater improvement in catfish production can be achieved with a proper analysis that will lead to knowledge of the profitability

of catfish production in the country. Ascertaining the factors influencing catfish production in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria was done based on this line of thinking. Data obtained from one hundred and twenty catfish farmers in Akwa Ibom State using multi-stage sampling procedure were analyzed using descriptive statistics, budgeting technique and multiple regression. Findings reveal that 79.17% of the respondents were males, with an average age of 41 years; and 80% of them having formal education. The average monthly income of the respondents was N 32,500.50 and their average year of fishing experience was four years. Results show that catfish production was profitable in the study area yielding a net income of N 18,539,760.00. The costs of fingerlings, pond construction, feed/chemicals, as well as fishing experience and amount spent on salary/labour were the significant factors influencing catfish production in the study area. It is recommended, among others, that catfish farmers in the study area be encouraged to form cooperatives to enhance their ability to access necessary inputs such as feed/chemicals at a subsidized rate. This will lead to an increase in the total revenue earned from catfish production.

Keywords: *Clarias gariepinus*, farming, profitability, Akwa Ibom, Nigeria.

2.1.16 Promotion of Underutilized Crops for Household Food Security in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: A Case Study of Cocoyam

Solomon, V.A., Asa, U.A., Akpan, O.D and U. Udosen

Abstract

The study explored the need for incorporation of cocoyam fufu into family nutrition as a substitute for *garri*. The study was carried out in two (2) local government areas of Akwa Ibom State. Data were collected through focus group discussion and structured questionnaire. Results indicate that subsistence farmers were willing to learn new ways of processing food items and incorporate same into their family nutrition. Factors influencing their perspective include the nutritional value of the substitute, the economic advantage of the new product, the health benefit and the need to be seen as progressive. It was concluded that, for underutilize crops to reach their optimum capacity in yield and utilization, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of subsistence farmers through agricultural extension communication and education.

Keywords: Underutilized, Food Security, Nutrition, Households, Nigeria

2.1.17 Perceptions of Agricultural Officers and Farmers on Agricultural Credit in Oyo State: Implications for Policies on Agricultural Credit

Solomon, V. A, A. Ayandiji and Salami, O. K.

Abstract

The study determined the perceptions of farmers and credit officers on agricultural credit and the implications of their perceptions for agricultural credit policies in Nigeria. Also, the differences in agricultural productivity among respondents with and without access to credit were identified and the extent to which officers of NACRDB ensured that the loans were used for the purpose for which they were required was determined. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire administered to 80 farmers and 30 credit officers in Ibadan North Local Government area of Oyo state. Data analysis shows that 77.5% of farmers obtained loans from NACRDB, 82.25% of the farmers interviewed used the load for agricultural purposes. The chi-square analysis of data showed that there was a significant relationship between personal characteristics and demand for agricultural credit ($p=0.001$), marital statue ($p=0.062$), farm size ($p=0.135$) and education ($p=0.001$). The T-test showed that there was a

significant difference between the perception of agricultural credit officers and farmers on the use of agricultural credit. Problems identified facing farmers on credit in the study area included: lack of adequate facilities, lack of feeder roads and high transport cost. The result shows that agricultural credit had helped to increase productivity and equally improve the standard of living in the rural area.

Keywords: Agricultural credit, Perceptions, Agricultural credit officers

2.1.18 Inclination to Superstitious Knowledge in Decision Making among the Annangs in Farming Communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Valerie A. Solomon and Ifiok D. Ekong

Abstract

The study analyzed the inclination to superstitious knowledge in decision making among the Annangs in farming communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Primary data from 150 randomly selected respondents from Ikot Okoro, Ikot Ubo, Ikot Eke and Ikot Okubara villages of Abak and Oruk Anam Local Government Areas were collected using questionnaires and key informant interview guide.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The study revealed that 94% of the respondents were aged between 21-60 years, 94% had acquired some formal education, all respondents were Christians, 61.3% of the respondents were married, 92% earned at least NGN 50, 000 monthly (about \$250) and about 52% of the respondents have farming as their primary occupation. Three indexes of luck, malevolence/benevolence, and omens/soothsaying were used to measure the belief in superstition. The study revealed that respondents believed less in luck (with a mean score of 22.9533) than they did in malevolence/benevolence (24.9332) and omens/soothsaying (27.3066). The study recommends that education with a focus on the enlightenment, re-orientation, and counseling of individuals on the subject matter be initiated effectively by agents of social change to reduce the levels of inclination to superstition in decision making among respondents. This will support the adoption of innovations to bring about increased agricultural productivity, rural development and a smooth rural transition.

Keywords: Superstition; decision making; Annangs; farmers; Akwa Ibom

2.1.19 Spiritual Connections and Complexities in Rural Communities: A Case Study of Annang Farmers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Valerie Aphie Solomon,
Margaret Abba Yaro and Ifiok David Ekong

Abstract

The study examined spiritual and religious connections and complexities in rural communities using the indigenous Annang people of Akwa Ibom state as a case study. The research made use of primary data from 150 randomly selected respondents and 8 purposively selected key informants, using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data analysis was both descriptive and inferential. Findings indicate that 94% of the respondents were aged between 21 and 60years, 94% had some form of formal schooling, all respondents were Christians, 61.3% being married and 92% earned a maximum of NGN50, 000 monthly. Fifty two percent of respondents had farming as their primary occupation. Respondents were highly inclined to spirituality with 98.7% of respondents attending religious functions at least once a week and a further 62.7% relying on fate, miracles and protection from charms and amulets. The multiple regression results

showed that there was no significant relationship between selected sociological factors and respondent's inclination to spirituality, while the T-test analysis showed that there was no difference in the inclination to spirituality between men and women. The study recommends that formal education with focus on the enlightenment, re-orientation, and counseling of individuals be effectively initiated to reduce the levels of inclination to spirituality. This will ensure that local level decision making is objective and based on facts.

Keywords: Spiritual connections, rural communities, Annangs, Nigeria.

2.1.20 Incorporating Subsistence Farmers' Perspectives into Extension Education and Dissemination of Technology on New/Underutilized Crops

Solomon, Valerie A. and Esu, Beulah B.

Abstract

The study surveyed the perspectives of subsistence farmers in the incorporation of new/underutilized crops into farming systems using *Desmodium* sp. as a case study. Data were collected from a total of 200 respondents in the Suba region of Kenya and Western

Nigeria. The analysis of data showed that the biological attribute of respondents like sex and age did not hinder the incorporation of *Desmodium* sp. into their farming system. The average age of respondents was 54 years, with majority (65%) being male. These perspectives were expressed by respondents in relation to the incorporation of new/underutilized crops into their farming systems: Adoption will be sustained even if a new crop increases the workload of the farmer granted that the benefits outweigh the extra workload; a new crop that also possesses human nutritional value will be more readily accepted; adopting a new crop improves your social status as someone who is knowledgeable and enlightened and a crop that is easy to cultivate is preferable. Others include the accessibility to planting materials is important and enhances adoption/sustainability of adoption and the importance of a ready market for the crop and/or its product. The study concludes that in addition to awareness of the constituent needs and cooperation between service groups, the perspective of farmers is important in any successful extension programme.

Key words: farmers' perspectives, extension, new crops, Kenya, Nigeria

2.1.21 Adapting the “Push-Pull” “Farmer Teacher” Concept to Agricultural Technology Transfer in Nigeria

Valerie A. Solomon, Emem B. Inyang and George O. Genga

Abstract

Evaluative survey of the Nigerian extension service reveals that there has been a consistent perennial constraint to effective agricultural extension practice. Many suggestions aimed at improving the system make efforts to address the “symptomatic attributes” without implicitly addressing the source of the problem. What seems as the real solution lies within the perspective of modifying the existing Training and visit system model, to inculcate and use the receivers of technologies and instructional objectives as an essential part of accountability mechanism (quality control). The extension component of the “push-pull” technology developed by the international Centre for insect physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) Kenya skillfully employs the elements of the learning situation to provide satisfactory learning experience for farmers by using other farmers (i.e. farmer-teacher). The “push-pull” “farmer – teacher” concept is discovered to be formative in orientation, cost-effective, programme-efficient and ensures empirical data base

generation. The concept offers full capacity building process for receivers of technologies and full stakeholders' participation, which is required for self-accountability and programme sustainability. Adaptation of the "farmer-teacher" concept to technology transfer in Nigeria will ensure the sustainability of innovations even after the research institute pulls out.

2.1.22 Paradigm Shift in Development Journalism Practices for effective Dissemination of Agricultural information to rural farmers

Isiaka. B. Y. and V. A. Solomon

Abstract

Development journalism practices in Nigeria are mainly mass media approach. Advocacy for a shift from mass to group media is stressed in this paper. The unenviable state of the farmers was highlighted. Development journalism was defined and developmental issues discussed. Development journalism practitioners were pointed out. They include practitioners in the broadcast and print media, multimedia approach is used with more inclination to mass media. The rationale for using groups were mentioned and seven strategies advocated involve the use of group associations. They include rural radio, video viewing center, cybercafé with internet facilities, information center, narrow casting, television viewing

center and decentralization of broadcast media. The policy implication was stated with the view that the government should provide their entire enabling environment for private organizations to set up information and telecommunication business enterprises for effective dissemination of developmental information to the rural farmers.

2.1.23 Participation of Youth Associations in Community Development Activities: A Case Study of Oron Local Government Area

Valerie A. Solomon.

Abstract

This study provided information on how youth associations contribute to development in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Data were collected from 40 youth associations using interview schedules and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics like frequencies, percentages and the chi-square (X^2). The average age of the association was about 7years, while 75% of them do not have educational restrictions on membership. Only 22.5% have representatives at the state youth council. The youth associations were sufficiently literate and were involved in community development

activities at various levels. People's participatory decision analysis reveals that the age of youth associations had no bearing ($P \leq 0.05$) with their level of participation. This result was computed using chi-square statistics at 0.05 levels. Since youth associations constitute significant component of community governance efforts, a need arises to involve more of them in developmental issues. This could be done through training for development and appropriate information dissemination at all levels.

Key words: participation, youth associations, community development, Oron.

2.2 Climate Change in Rural Communities

2.2.1 Social Impact of Environmental Change on Rural Communities: A Case Study of the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria

Valerie A. Solomon and Solomon C. Madubuike

Abstract

The study examined the social impact of environmental changes on selected rural communities in Nigeria Niger-Delta. This touches on social and cultural dislocations, political and ethnic conflicts as a result of environmental degradation occasioned by oil exploitation. It concludes that broadening and strengthening rural livelihood as well as concerted

efforts by all stakeholders at environmental reclamation and sustainable use of the environment, will go a long way in the social and economic stability of the region in general and the rural communities in particular.

Keywords: environmental change, social impact, rural communities. Niger-Delta, Nigeria.

2.2.2 Assessing the Capacity of Local Institutions to Respond to the Gender Dimensions of Climate Change

Solomon, Valerie A. and Adejuwon, Samuel A.

Abstract

Gender, a fundamental organizing principle in all societies, is a central factor in determining vulnerability and ability to adapt to a changing climate. Local institutions have shaped how rural residents responded to environmental challenges in the past as they play a role in determining the flow of external support to different social groups, and link local populations to national interventions. The research determined the capacity of local institutions in Nigeria to respond to the gender dimension of climate change by ascertaining their level of gender awareness and responsiveness and their awareness

and knowledge level of climate change by gender, and draw the implication for climate change adaptation. Primary data used was collected using a set of close and open-ended questionnaires. A variety of analytical tools were also used in analyzing the data collected in the study. This ranged from institutional analysis and characterization to descriptive presentation. Local institutions' level of awareness and knowledge of climate change issues and their understanding of key drivers of climate change/variability is commendable as majority of respondents are aware of climate change and variability in their locality. On the gender dimension of climate change, respondents generally felt that adverse climate events will have more negative impacts on women than men. Majority however, do not have a gender mandate/policy, gender focal points, trained staff on gender issues, are gender blind and as such may not be able to handle gender issues in climate hazards. There is therefore a need for policies that will support greater role for institutional partnerships in facilitating adaptation to enhance local institutional capacities and understand their articulation and access patterns before providing resource support in any climate change adaptation programme.

Keywords: Capacity, Climate change, Gender, local Institutions

2.2.3 Analysis of Upland Farm Household's Vulnerability to Climate Variability in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

Gabriel S. Umoh, Edet J. Udoh, *Valerie A. Solomon, Glory E. Edet, Godwin I. Okoro, Clement A. Uwem, Nkoyo E. Bassey and Obot D. Akpan

Abstract

The study analyzed the vulnerability of upland farm households to climate variability in the Niger Delta. Three states – Akwa Ibom, Ondo and Rivers were selected from the nine states that make up the Niger Delta region. A total of 120 respondents from upland communities of the Niger Delta were used for analysis. Household questionnaire and vulnerability questionnaire using Cost Route method were the instruments used for data collection and analyzed using Vulnerability Profile and Vulnerability/Risk Framework. The results of the analysis show that both male and female headed households in all the upland communities were vulnerable to flooding, windstorm, erosion and drying up of streams. Important factors that made households vulnerable to climate hazards were low agricultural out and income, non-availability of irrigation facilities, insufficient farm labour and lack of storage facilities. Technical capacities of household

members were assessed using both science-based knowledge as well as indigenous knowledge of climate change as indicators to adaptation to climate variability. It was assumed that the adaptive capacity of households could be enhanced by the number of persons with either science-based knowledge or indigenous knowledge across the region. Expenditure on carbohydrate was high across the region during disaster time, followed by expenditure in protein, vitamin/minerals and fat and oil and other class of food. Certain geographical factors such as distance to coastline and population have direct impact on climate variability in the Niger Delta Region. Recommendations include establishment of emergency evacuation systems, income opportunities and support programmes as well as capacity building on climate change knowledge, enterprise development and management.

Keywords: Farm households, Nigeria, poverty, rural areas, smallholder farmers

2.2.4 Institutional Factors Affecting the Execution of Projects by Local Institutions: Implication for Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation in Nigeria's Niger-Delta Region

Valerie A. Solomon

Abstract

This study sought to contribute knowledge on local institutions in community-based climate change adaptation by identifying important socio-economic characteristics of local institutions in the study area, determining institution-based factors affecting the execution of community-based projects by local institutions, identifying ways in which communities are connected to local institutions and exploring the implications of finding for climate change adaptation at the community level. Primary data which included information on selected socio-economic characteristics of local institutions and community-based projects executed were collected from 750 respondents randomly selected for list of registered local institutions in the state, using a set of close and open-ended questionnaires. The secondary data were on the staff strength (technical, administrative and trustees) of the institution and their climate change awareness and knowledge index. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution and the Poisson

regression analysis. The study concludes that there is great opportunity for local institutions to act as the bridge between communities and individuals if they are empowered and adequately funded.

Keywords: Adaptation: Climate Change:
Community: Local Institutions

2.2.5 The Capacity of Local Institutions to Respond to Gender Related Issues in Climate Change Scenery in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region

Valerie Aphie Solomon

Abstract

Gender is an important socio-economic variable in determining vulnerability and ability to adapt to a changing climate and local institutions are known to help in connecting local populations and social groups to external support. The research determined the capacity of local institutions in the Niger Delta to respond to gender issues in climate change by ascertaining their level of gender awareness and responsiveness, their awareness and knowledge level of climate change, and the implications of the findings for climate change adaptation. Primary data used were collected using a set of close and open-ended questionnaires from 750 randomly selected

respondents, representing 30% of the study population. Analysis was done using frequencies, percentages and ranking. Their knowledge and awareness were determined by calculating their knowledge and awareness index. Result showed that local institutions' level of awareness and knowledge of climate change issues and their understanding of key drivers of climate change/variability was commendable as majority of respondents were aware of climate change and variability in their locality. On the gender dimension of climate change, respondents generally felt that adverse climatic events would have more negative impacts on women than men. Majority however, do not have a gender mandate/policy, gender focal points, trained staff on gender issues, are gender blind, and as such, will not be able to handle gender issues in climate change hazards. There is therefore a need to build the capacity of local institutions in climate change and gender through appropriate policies and partnerships. This will ensure that resource support in any climate change adaptation programme through local institutions get to those affected.

Keywords: Gender; adaptation; local institutions; climate change; response.

2.2.6 Impacts of Climate Variability on Wetland and Fishing Households in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria

V. A. Solomon, G. I. Okoro¹, G. S. Umoh, E. J. Udoh,
G. E. Edet, C. A. Uwem, N. E. Bassey and O. D.

Akpan

Abstract

The study assessed the impacts of climate variability on wetland and fishing households in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. Three hundred and twenty-four respondents were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Primary data were collected using questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion, while secondary data was collected from literature. Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage were used for data analysis. Climate variability has brought about drought, flood, sea level rise and erosion. These have adversely impacted on farm households in various ways including loss of farmland and farm produce, displacement of residents and loss of property including residential buildings and fishing gadgets. Other adverse impacts include health problems, conflict, increased expenditure, poor yield and loss of income. Gender analysis of the impacts of climate variability shows that both men and women are equally impacted upon. Adaptation strategies should be developed to help in reducing the impact of climate variability on farm households.

Keywords: Climate variability; impact; wetland; fishing communities; Niger Delta.

2.2.7 Factors of Social Vulnerability to Climate Variability in Coastal Communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Mercy F. Akpe and Valerie A. Solomon,

Abstract

Climate variability causes adverse social effects which negatively impinge on the well-being of people, particularly, the rural dwellers. However, there is inadequate information on the isolation of vulnerability factors of the rural dwellers to adverse social effects of climate variability to help develop robust mitigation and adaptation measures. A total of 90 households were sampled, using closed and open-ended questionnaire for data collection. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, and factor analysis using principal component approach, to isolate critical factors. The result of data analysis revealed that 52.7% of the respondents were women, most of the respondents (80%) were between the ages of 60-80years and majority (64%) had no formal education. The result of factor analysis revealed that 17 factors influence social vulnerability namely: local resources inaccessibility, climate information/communication source, social capital/social safety net, climate knowledge barrier, population increase,

the age of residents, gender inequality, tribal issues/public assault//insecurity and infrastructure inaccessibility. Others include loss of properties and accommodation, mobility, environment/social discrimination, a local institution, income /employment replacement, cultural constraint, family structure, and disability. Based on these findings, all relevant agencies, community organizations and public-spirited individuals should join hands to provide the disadvantaged households with safety nets towards helping communities in any geographical context of their vulnerabilities. Effort must be made to enhance allocation of resources to maintain healthy safety nets. New modalities will have to be sought and developed so that vulnerable women and men can directly receive the benefit safety net practices to reduce household vulnerabilities to weather shocks and stresses.

Key words: Social Vulnerability, Climate Variation, Rural dwellers, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

2.2.8 Analysis of Upland Farm Households' Vulnerability to Climate Variability in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

Gabriel S. Umoh, Edet J. Udoh, Valerie A. Solomon,
Glory E. Edet, Godwin I. Okoro, Clement A. Uwem,
Nkoyo E. Bassey and Obot D. Akpan

Abstract

The study analyzed the vulnerability of upland farm households to climate variability in the Niger Delta. Three states - Akwa Ibom, Ondo and Rivers were selected from the nine states that make up the Niger Delta region. A total of 120 respondents from upland communities of the Niger delta were used for analysis. Household questionnaire and vulnerability questionnaire using Cost Route method were the instruments used for data collection and analyzed using Vulnerability Profile and Vulnerability / Risk Framework. The results of the analysis show that both male and female headed households in all the upland communities were vulnerable to flooding, windstorm, erosion and drying up of streams. Important factors that made households vulnerable to climate hazards were low agricultural output and income, non-availability of irrigation facilities, insufficient farm labour and lack of storage facilities. Technical capacities of household members were assessed using both science-based knowledge as well as indigenous knowledge of climate change as indicators to adaptation to climate variability. It was assumed that the adaptive capacity of households could be enhanced by the number of persons with either science-based knowledge or indigenous knowledge across the region. Expenditure on carbohydrate was higher across the region during disaster time, followed by expenditure in protein, vitamin/minerals and fat

and oil and other classes of food, implying that more carbohydrate food is consumed during disaster period than any other class of food. Certain geographical factors such as distance to coastline and population have direct impact on climate variability in the Niger Delta Region. Recommendations include establishment of emergency evacuation systems, income opportunities and support programmes as well as capacity building on climate change knowledge, enterprise development and management.

Key words: Farm households, Nigeria, poverty, rural areas, smallholder farmers

2.2.9 Social vulnerability of coastal dwellers to climate variation in rural communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Solomon, V. A. and Akpe, M. F.

Abstract

Climate variability causes adverse social effects which impinge on the well-being of people, particularly, coastal dwellers in rural communities. The study determined the social vulnerability of coastal dwellers in rural communities of Akwa Ibom State. Primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide. A

total of 90 households and two focused groups per community, were sampled, and data collected were subjected to descriptive statistical tools and composite index. The study reveals that, 85% of respondents are moderately vulnerable to climate impacts. Based on these findings, the study recommends, adaptive planning that will reduce the vulnerability of critical infrastructure in coastal areas, low-lying buildings and properties, transportation and market linkages as well as development of laws to safeguard hazard prone areas.

Keywords: Climate Variation, Social vulnerability, rural communities, Akwa Ibom State

2.2.10 Determinants of Local Institutions' Capacity to Respond to Climate Change in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria

Solomon, V. A. and Asa, U. A

Abstract

The study ascertained the determinants of local institutions' capacity to respond to climate change in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region. Data for the study were obtained from 750 members of local institutions in Akwa Ibom State located in the Niger Delta Region using a two-stage sampling procedure, and analyzed using institutional analysis and characterization method, descriptive statistics and Probit regression.

Results show that 52.0% of the institutions were within the age range of 6-10years, 70.7% were headed by males and 74.0% were located in the state capital. Majority of the institutions were aware of variations in climate elements in their domains and also had general a general knowledge of climate variation. The institutions are, however, poorly funded and do not have a clear-cut policy on climate mitigation and adaptation. Probit regression analysis revealed that the number of technical staff, number of administrative staff, and number of trustees in these institutions as well as the institutions' climate change awareness index and knowledge index were significant determinants of local institutions' capacity to respond to climate variability/change in the study area. It is recommended that the State Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and other development agencies provide technical assistance to local institutions since increase in the number of technical staffs is a major factor influencing the institutions' probability to respond to climate change in the state.

Keywords: Determinants, local institutions, capacity, Climate Change, Niger Delta Region.

CHAPTER THREE

The Voiceless Voices

3.1 Material and Methods

Mr. Vice-chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the voiceless voices. My intention is not to be the voice of the voiceless, but to describe and interpret the stories I gathered from my interactions with people in rural communities and Agricultural systems over a period of about 25 years.

Our respondents included male and female household heads, rural dwellers whose primary source of livelihood was agriculture, community and opinion leaders, community gate-keepers, groups of women, men, boys and girls, from diverse socio-economic groups and belief systems. We used both qualitative and quantitative research methods, in formal and informal situations, to gather data which were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

To ease the flow of our thoughts this afternoon, I have divided the voices into 2 streams: – we have voices from Gender, Women and Social Issues in Rural Communities and Agricultural Systems and voices from climate variability and change in rural communities.

3.2 Voices from Gender, Women and Social Issues in Rural Communities and Agricultural Systems

As an Agricultural Sociologist, I focused more on the social lives of farmers and as an expert in gender and women issues, I was particularly interested in the gender power relations as expressed in decision-making and citizen rights both at the private, semi-private and public domains. We conducted a number of studies on this in different communities across Nigeria and Kenya, and at different time intervals. From our studies, these voices were very loud and clear:

Voice 1: Unequal household power sharing is affecting our productivity, time allocation, and investment

Gender was observed to be a central factor in household power sharing in the communities we visited. We know that women are the major food crop producers, processors and marketers and are therefore, key to rural household food security and general well-being. Unfortunately, most of their production has remained at the subsistence level because of unequal, gender-induced heavy physical and mental work load at the household and on the farm.

For instance, in a typical rural household the woman is responsible for keeping the house and surroundings clean, washing clothes, fetching water from the stream, shopping, cooking, nursing and taking care of other family members, in addition to farming activities from planting to harvesting, processing and marketing and at the end of the day, she is also expected to be an ardent lover and sex partner. Upon all of these, she is denied control over land and other productive resources and opportunities for livelihood diversification and income generation. Thus, gender inequality affects productivity, time allocation, and investment and is also one of the factors facilitating poverty (Etim and Solomon, 2010, Solomon, 2021). This has also led to an increasing feminization of poverty in our rural communities (Etim and Solomon, 2010). Poverty, which denies women agency and access to citizen rights and privileges also reinforces unequal household power sharing and denies women access to political power both locally and nationally.

Voice 2: We can be food secure if we diversify

Rural household food security is directly linked with rural livelihood and the ability of individuals to diversify (Asa and Solomon, 2009) but women and men have been socialized to see livelihood activities along the gender divide and this has become a constraint to livelihood diversification. Our studies revealed that livelihood activities such as mechanic,

brick-laying, commercial driver/motorcyclist, hair-barbing, shoe-mending (Cobbling), palm wine tapping, carpentry and vulcanizing were exclusively dominated by males while traditional midwifery/birth attendant as a livelihood activity was exclusively dominated by females in rural communities (Asa and Solomon,2009).

Women want this to change, they want to be able to plant whatever they want on their farms and also use their incomes the way they want to. Women are saying that given an enabling environment, they can be food sufficient and have excess to save and sell. They are calling for the removal of constraints to and expansion of opportunities for diversification (the constraints include gender-based wage disparity, control over land and other productive resources, poor rural infrastructure, difficulty in accessing credit, etc.).

Voice 3: We are Excellent Home Managers

Interestingly, women have devised ingenious coping strategies to put food on the table for their households during the hunger months despite all the constraints they face. Some of these coping strategies include: eating of unconventional food items, rationalization and skipping of meals (Solomon and Ogunfiditimi, 2005). For instance, in some communities in the five Oro speaking Local government areas of Akwa Ibom

State, women used the leaves of hibiscus flower (flower otong) instead of okro, they prepare *eteh mbong* and *eteh njoro ada* as emergency soups.

Voice 4: Local customs, traditions, religious and tribal laws create unequal gender relation between women and men

It was interesting to note that, when we had focused group discussions and town hall meetings with men, women did not come to eavesdrop but in all our group discussions with women in Kenya, Western Nigeria and the Niger Delta, we had men monitoring our discussions and they sometimes interjected and tried to stifle the voices of the women. In one of our climate change studies, a community leader even proposed that one of the key drivers of climate change was because the gods were angry because of taboos that have been broken by women, like his wife sharing his bathing pail (Umoh, *et al*, 2011). This is because women are not regarded as equal with men in these communities and the foundations of some communities are laid on the assumption that gender differences expressed in inequality are not only necessary but also inevitable to the extent they are conceived as 'divinely sanctioned'. An unequal gender relation is therefore, embedded in the most fundamental ways – in the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious dimensions in these societies.

In a study on the plight of womanhood in Akwa Ibom State on behalf of *African Human Development Centre (AHDC)*, the voices of women were loud in calling for modifications in some local customs, traditions, religious and tribal laws that perpetuated injustice against them. These included the denial of the female child inheritance even against her late father's express wishes in some instances (the Akwa Ibom State inheritance law should have taken care of this, but the fear of *mbiam* still denies women access to and control over their inheritance), and wife inheritance (in some communities, widows are usually sent back to their families of birth after the burial of their husbands. A day is then agreed upon by both families when the woman would be made to remarry to protect her position and that of her children in the late husband's family. She has the choice of remarrying one of her late husband's relative or symbolically, her first son. If she decides not to marry any of these two, she will have to leave her matrimonial home. She can then remarry but her children may not have access to their late father's estate). Most widows are neglected because they refuse to marry their husbands' relatives. Others include *ekpo nka owo* (this is supposed to check infidelity in women while male infidelity is seen as the norm; a woman described her promiscuous husband

as '*Okpo essien*', wandering he-goat, but lamented that this behaviour is being encouraged and reinforced by tradition); and the rights of the married daughter in her family of birth (especially considering her high expenses when the father passes on).

No one could tell the origin of these practices (even the men had no knowledge of their origin), but women were quick to point out that female children inherited family property in the bible, led their communities to war and that as good Christians, these aspects of Christianity should also be preached often in churches and practiced as well. They also stated that women who have spoken against these practices in the past were killed through diabolical means, so non-governmental organizations should help to mobilize support against harmful traditional practices affecting them (AHDC, 2018).

Voice 5: We desire Autonomy

In several household surveys and focus group discussions with a cross section of women across religious, ethnic and socio-economic lines in rural and agricultural systems, they were unanimous in their assertion that they were denied autonomy both at the household and community levels as evident in their inability to make strategic life choices or decisions which is a necessary step towards personal and community development. At the household level,

these decisions included who to marry, when to get pregnant and the number of children to have, the type of crop to cultivate and the choice of who becomes their co-wives (Solomon and Adekoya, 2006). I know some of you are already screaming Beijing and women liberation! No, this has nothing to do with Beijing. Most of these women were illiterate and have lived in their villages all their lives. Most do not even have access to television and of course, no internet facilities. And some were Muslim women in purdah, where polygamy is the norm. You will agree with me that these are strategic life changing decisions but unfortunately, the voices of women are usually stifled as they are made passive recipients and implementers of household and community decisions. If you are polygamously inclined and if your marriage oath allows it, please consult your wife. Let the decision of who becomes her co-wife be jointly taken.

Voice 6: Token representation is not acceptable

Stratification along sex lines has implications for the development of societies, impinging forcefully on the family, education and the political economy. For women, whatever happens at the level of the domestic arena is in turn carried over to what is generally called the public space. This is significant because women experience the denial of their citizenship and fundamental human rights at any one,

if not more, of these levels – family, community, private sector, state and so on.

At the community level, women complained of token representation where only one woman is a member of the village council and she is usually invited to village council meetings when there is a need to mobilize women to meet the needs of the community like cleaning, cooking (during community functions) and paying of levies. The women leader is also most times excluded from strategic village council meetings like in the selection of a new village head, conflict escalation/ de-escalation/resolution with neighbouring communities, enactment and promulgation of rules/laws, village council court sessions - even when cases involving women are being judged, etc. (AHDC, 2018). Also, the process of the appointment/selection of the women leader is often skewed towards women who are docile and very malleable, who will normally not challenge the status quo. And such women do not always give good representation.

At the state level, the ratio of female–male representation at the Akwa Ibom State house of assembly is abysmally low with only 2 female legislators out of 26, while it is 1:29 in favour of men at the National Assembly despite the fact that we have a National Gender Policy which stipulates 35%

affirmative action in favour of women in all appointive and elective positions.

It is a known fact that where a woman is made a token representative, the trappings of tokenism proves counterproductive more often than not, such that, she loses a platform to advocate or push for real empowerment. Often times, such token representation stifles the 'token' and restricts them from accessing real power, let alone empowering other women.

In essence, women in rural communities and agricultural systems want to be active participants in strategic decision making both at the household and community levels. They kicked against token representation and crave for real empowerment. It is not just enough to invite a woman to the table, but she needs to be an active participant in strategic decision making at that table. Her knowledge, perception, thoughts, opinion and belief should influence the decisions as well.

Voice 7: We can sometimes negotiate Power

Women however, agreed that although men generally have more power in household and community decision-making, they were sometimes able to negotiate more power with increased capacity (educationally and economically), and that women's

autonomy also increases with age. For instance, some empowered women were able to negotiate with their husbands not to bring a second wife until after the 10th year of their marriages, they also had a say in the schools their children attended and in whether to go to the hospital or traditional healers when ill. This was confirmed statistically using the logit regression model where age, education and income were found to be positively related to participation in household decision making (Solomon and Omotosho, 2004). It is worth noting here that the popular saying that while the man is the head of the home, that the woman is the neck is not always true. Being a neck is directly proportional to your capacity and how well you bring this to bear on the power negotiation table.

To our young women, what this should do is to encourage you to go to school and complete your education, and also strive to be economically independent if you desire to be an active participant in strategic household and community decision making. You should also get married when you are convinced you are of age and not because all your friends are getting married.

Voice 8: Our spirituality and superstitions are important to us

The belief system of rural dwellers has a great influence on decision making so we looked more

closely into this with a view to understanding why certain decisions maybe taken. Specifically, we looked at the farmer's inclination to superstitions and spirituality as major influencers of farmers perception and decision making. Three indices of luck, malevolence/benevolence, and omens/soothsaying were used to measure the belief in superstition. The study revealed that respondents believed less in luck than they did in malevolence/benevolence and omens/soothsaying. We had people who said they will not go to the farm or embark on a journey if they hit their left foot on a stone on their way, some believed itching of the palm meant money will soon come to them, some believed black cats were witches, and some that a bird pooing on them was a good omen, etc.

Respondents were highly inclined to spirituality with 98.7% of respondents attending religious functions at least once a week and a further 62.7% relying on fate, miracles and protection from charms and amulets. The multiple regression result showed that there was no significant relationship between selected sociological factors and respondent's inclination to spirituality (meaning in these communities, spirituality was not affected by age, education, income, exposure, etc.), while the T-test analysis showed that there was no difference in the inclination

to spirituality between men and women (Solomon and Ekong,2015). With a highly superstitious and spiritual population, one could infer that local level decision making is not always objective and extension and other change agents will need to appeal to their superstitions and spirituality to be successful.

3.3 Voices from Climate Variability and Change Issues in Rural Communities

The threat from climate change impact is particularly grievous for the Niger Delta region in general and Akwa Ibom state in particular because the state lies below the sea level. The implication of this is that a 2-meter rise in the sea level which is being predicted by experts could lead to the submerging of entire communities, if not the entire state. Even with very effective mitigation measures, adaptation to the changes that have already occurred is a key to survival. Our research on climate variability and change covered the nine states of the Niger Delta region. The following voices were audible:

Voice 1: We know our climate has changed but we do not know why? The climate change awareness level in all communities visited was high but their knowledge level of the key drivers of climate change and adaptation measures was deficient.

Voice 2: Vulnerability of households to Climate Change has no sex

Although there are gender implications of climate change, both female and male headed households in the Niger Delta region are vulnerable to climate hazards. These have adversely impacted on farm households in various ways including loss of farmland and farm produce, displacement of residents and loss of property including residential buildings and fishing gadgets. Other adverse impacts include health problems, conflict, increased expenditure, poor yield and loss of income. Certain geographical factors such as distance to coastline and population have direct impact on climate variability in the Niger Delta Region. In some communities in Akwa Ibom State, heavy and continuous rainfall exceeding the absorptive capacity of the soil and flow capacity of rivers and streams are common, and inhabited areas situated adjacent to these rivers and streams, are subject to recurring inundation rendering the area “flood prone” and exposing the population to risk. For instance, in Ibaka in Mbo local government area of Akwa Ibom state, a respondent pointed at somewhere far into the sea, ‘about 10km’ where their family house used to be but all those areas have been taken over by the sea. The story was the same in coastal communities in Rivers and Ondo States.

Voice 3: We are also Socially Vulnerable to Climate Change

Climate variability and change also causes adverse social effects which negatively impinge on the well-being of people, particularly, the rural dwellers. We examined social vulnerability of people in farming communities of Akwa Ibom State in the context of climate change. Social vulnerability is the degree to which an area, people or physical structures (properties), economic assets (sources of livelihood) and the general welfare (health, happiness and safety) are exposed to loss or damage caused by impacts of climate related hazard (Chambers and Northon, 2009). Climate affects both natural and social systems through incidences of weather extremes and inter-annual variations.

We know that apart from inter-seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate, the State is also vulnerable to extreme weather events such as floods, severe storm and rising sea levels which translate into loss of food crops, household food insecurity, homelessness, starvation and exacerbating conditions that would lead to conflict, war and misery for millions of persons (Umoh, *et al* 2013). All these lead to social disruption and dislocation of rural populations thereby rendering them more vulnerable to climate variability.

Social vulnerability in the context of climate variation is important because some populations may have less capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from climate related hazards and effects, but as it is with most emerging phenomena and accompanying interventions, the social aspects are often given less attention and thus could explain why there are few social vulnerability studies either taken at national or state scale. Several studies examining spatial vulnerability of rural households relevant to climate variability focus mainly on the hydro-meteorological aspect of vulnerability but the relationship of people impacted to physical environment and their capacity to cope with and adjust to new situations is underestimated and often ignored (Boer and Jones 2008; Solomon and Akpe, 2017). Social vulnerability of humans has emerged as the least known element in the disaster literature and are largely ignored, that is why social losses are normally absent in after disaster cost/loss estimation report (White and Howe, 2012). Our study on social vulnerability to climate variability and change effectively filled this gap.

The result of factor analysis revealed that 17 factors influenced social vulnerability namely: local resources inaccessibility, climate information/communication source, social capital/social safety net, climate knowledge barrier, population increase, the age of

residents, gender inequality, tribal issues/public assault/insecurity and infrastructure inaccessibility. Others include loss of properties and accommodation, mobility, environment/social discrimination, local institution, income/employment replacement, cultural constraint, family structure, and disability.

Voice 4: Our local institutions need capacity building

After establishing the impact of climate change in the state and the social vulnerability of residents, it became necessary to establish how prepared our local institutions were to handle the gender aspects of climate change. This is because local institutions are known to help in connecting local populations and social groups to external support. The social institutions agreed that gender was an important socio-economic variable in determining vulnerability and ability to adapt to a changing climate but in Akwa Ibom State, most local institutions do not have the capacity to respond to gender issues in climate change because they do not have a gender mandate/policy, gender focal points, trained staff on gender issues, their operations are gender blind, and as such, will not be able to handle gender issues in climate change hazards.

CHAPTER FOUR

Recommendations and Conclusion

4.1 Recommendations

4.1.1. Realizing women's fundamental rights requires addressing women's unequal access to economic, political, social and cultural resources which are located not only in formal, public arenas but also in private and semi-private places, households and communities. Redressing these inequalities requires a systematic, deliberate approach that addresses the fundamental causes and effects of unequal citizenship status (Salihu *et al* 2002, Solomon,2021), at the national, state and household levels. Drawing from the different United Nations charters to which Nigeria is a signatory, equitable distribution is now being framed as a human rights issue and this has paved way for policies and legislations with prescribed consequences for any breeches (for instance Akwa Ibom State has the child's right act, widows and inheritance act, free and compulsory primary and secondary education, etc.). But the government at all levels need to be more decisive in ensuring that the right environment is created for the enforcement of the different policies and laws that have been made to empower women. For instance, public schools should be in such a condition that even the President will not

mind sending his children there, after which if children, whether male or female are not sent to school especially in states like Akwa Ibom, then, their guardians should be prosecuted, sentenced to community service, or risk a jail term; parents and husbands of child brides should be jailed; mutilators of female genitals should be prosecuted; family, village and clan heads where women are denied inheritance and other fundamental rights as guaranteed by law in their domains should be sanctioned, etc.

4.1.2. Our studies also showed that although men had more power in household decision-making; women were able to negotiate more power even in rural settings with increased capacity and age. Therefore, for effective power sharing and power transformation, rural women should be empowered educationally and economically and older women should not be left out as age was found to be an added advantage in power negotiation.

4.1.3. It is true that local customs, traditions, religious and tribal laws play a role in determining the status of men and women and an unequal gender relation is embedded in the most fundamental ways. But we also know that all the enforcers of these laws were once children and were once under the tutelage of their mothers. It is therefore, necessary to go beyond the

public space when we talk about women's citizenship and rights, to address the interconnected and interlocking character of women's lives as well as women's rights. Existing women empowerment approaches like the welfare; Women in Development (WID); Women and Development (WAD); Gender and Development (GAD); the Effectiveness (EA) and the Mainstream Gender Equality Approach (MGE) are all top-down approaches and the gains in terms of gender deconstruction have not been far-reaching. They have also resulted in gender war due to a clash of interest in some instances.

To contribute to the gender deconstruction process, we propose a '***bottom-up gender deconstruction approach***', where the key to changing the narrative lies primarily in the hands of women. This is by building an *equity mindset* in their children and grandchildren since they are the primary agents of socialization in homes and victims of gender-based discrimination. This model assumes that proper consequence management, gender sensitive socialization and awareness for both the female and male child from home, would encourage fair play and build an "equity mindset".

Unfortunately, instead of women building an "equity mindset" in children, we unconsciously reinforce gender inequality and suppression of women. We are

not just victims but sometimes the greatest perpetrators and gatekeepers of gender inequality (Solomon, 2013). We must be deliberate and intentional if we want to dismantle gender-based discrimination and denial of our rights both in the private and public spaces, and deconstruct our present reality as women.

The '*bottom-up gender deconstruction approach*' is based on the biblical principle in **Proverbs 22:6 that says 'train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it'** and women are key because most humans receive their earliest socialization through their mothers. The expected deliverable of this approach will be well socialized adults with equity mindsets, who will ensure gender equality in all their sphere of influence.

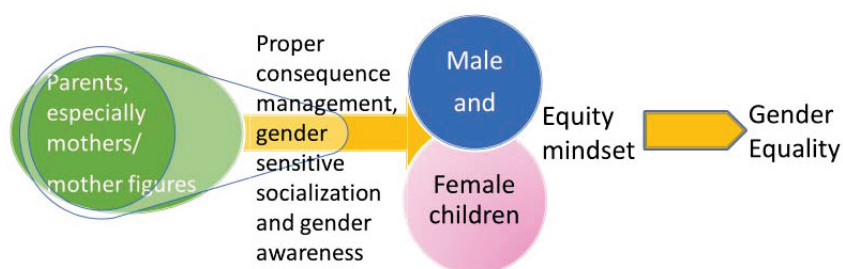


Fig 1: Bottom-up Gender Deconstruction Approach (Solomon & Akpan, 2021)

This approach can be measured statistically using factor analysis to quantify the variables which are then regress using the multiple regression.

Gender Equality (GE) is proposed to be a function of an Equity mindset (Ms), all things being equal.

$$GE=f(Ms) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$GE=f(Ms_i) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$GE=X_0+X_1Ms_1+X_2Ms_2+X_3Ms_3+X_4Ms_4+X_5Ms_5+X_6Ms_6+X_7Ms_7+u \dots\dots (3)$$

where Ms_i is the vector of the explanatory variables of equity mindset, representing proper consequence management, gender sensitive socialization and gender awareness for both male and female children.

In practical terms this may mean the following depending on the context:

Ms_1 = Equal distribution of age specific household chores

Ms_2 = Equal opportunity to learn life enhancing skills like care-giving, cooking, driving, changing of car tires, basic car engine checks, laundry, etc.

Ms_3 = Equal access to education

Ms_4 =Same degree of discipline for same/similar offences for both male and female children

Ms_5 = Equal access to rights and privileges

Ms_6 = Right to inheritance not differentiated by sex

Ms_7 = Equal distribution of family responsibilities and liabilities, etc.

U_i = error term

This list is by no means exhaustive.

4.1.4 There is a need to build the capacity of local institutions in climate change and gender through appropriate policies and partnerships. This will ensure that resource support in any climate change adaptation programme through local institutions gets to those affected. Also, their capacities, articulation and access patterns should be properly understood before providing resource support in any climate change adaptation programme or emergencies.

4.1.5 Owing to the fact that even with very effective mitigation measures, we still need to adapt to the changes that have already occurred in our climate to survive, recommendations for adaptation include establishment of emergency evacuation systems in very vulnerable communities, diversification of sources of income and livelihood, support programmes as well as capacity building on climate change knowledge and adaptation for communities and local institutions, enterprise development and management. We need to change designs and

structures of buildings in the state to prepare for sea level rise and encroachment. The DPC should be raised higher than it is currently in practice and an effective drainage system cannot be over emphasized. In other words, we need to be climate smart in the state – climate smart agriculture, climate smart town planning, climate smart infrastructure, etc.

Since social vulnerability to climate change is a function of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity, effective adaptation to climate change thus needs to improve and enhance adaptive capacity while decreasing exposure and sensitivity to climate events and impacts.

All relevant agencies, community organizations and public-spirited individuals should join hands to provide disadvantaged households with safety nets towards helping communities in any geographical context of their vulnerabilities. Efforts must be made to enhance allocation of resources to maintain healthy safety nets. New modalities will have to be sought and developed so that vulnerable women and men can directly receive the benefits of safety net practices to reduce household vulnerabilities and increase resilience to weather shocks and stresses.

4.2 Conclusion

We have seen that the people in rural areas and agricultural systems are not a silent majority. They are always speaking but their context is sometimes lost on us and so we do not apply it to policy decisions and programmes most of the time. How do we honestly expect their full cooperation when strategic, life changing decisions are made and implemented without their input from the conceptualization stage? How do you expect meaningful and impactful participation from rural women when they are denied basic fundamental citizen rights both in the private and public space? This renders our policy decisions inapplicable /inadaptable to them and most of the failed rural and agricultural development and women empowerment programmes can be traced to this.

This is always the case when there is a gap in communication and two interacting people do not understand themselves. The bible explains this more clearly in 1 Corinthians 14: 10-11 (KJV), I quote:

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me".

The fact that we may not understand what rural people are saying does not mean they are not speaking. It is hoped that the lessons we have learnt today will be applied when next we are planning a programme for rural communities and farmers, right from the conceptualization stage.

4.3 The Future

Moving forward, by the grace of God, I will like to deepen my research and advocacy in the areas of testing the 'bottom-up gender deconstruction approach', gender power transformation and social dimensions of climate variability and change. I will also continue in my community engagement with female farmers aimed at boosting household food security and economic empowerment through the introduction and consumption of new and under-utilized food crops like cocoyam, vitamin A and purple-flesh sweet potatoes. I wish to mention here that I am open to collaborations in these areas, we also need funding, as well as male and female volunteers.



Fig 2: Focus group discussion with rural women in Ikot Nseyen Iman, Etinan LGA



Fig 3: Town hall meeting with rural women in Ediene Attai, Oruk Anam LGA



Fig 4: Focus group discussion with rural women in Ikot Idaha, Ikono, LGA



Fig 5: Town hall meeting with rural women in Afaha Akai, Okobo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State



Fig 6: On farm training for rural women in Afaha Akai, Okobo LGA



Fig 7: Focus Group Discussion in Mbiabet Eyehedia, Itu LGA, Akwa Ibom State



Fig 8: Meeting with a cross section of women in Afaha Ubium, Onna LGA



Fig 9: Meeting with a cross section of women in Ikot Ntu, Itu LGA



Fig 10: Embankment to check sea level rise in Ibaka, Mbo LGA



Fig 11: Debris of brick building destroyed by sea level rise in Ibaka, Mbo LGA

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