



Gender Participation in Forestry and Agro-Forestry Practices in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the level of gender participation in forestry practices in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the gender distribution of operators among various economic activities in forestry practices and gender differences in income. Data were collected on the marital status, age, educational qualification, number of years of experience in forestry/agroforestry practices, income and challenges encountered from 91 respondents drawn by simple random sampling technique. The data were collected by using copies of a structured questionnaire and were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings, among others, were that: though there was significant difference in gender distribution by occupation within the subsector, there was no significant gender disparity in gender involvement in terms of number; there was no significant gender difference in the educational qualifications of the operators. Furthermore, that a sizeable proportion of single again women depend on forest resources for their livelihood; that a good proportion of the female in the subsector had no alternative opportunity, finally that there was no significant gender difference in income. We conclude that the forestry economy has high potential for the pursuit of gender equality and for poverty alleviation and recommend that policies and programmes directed towards poverty alleviation in the subsector should, however, be gender sensitive.

Keywords: Gender, Forestry, Agroforestry, Delta State

Introduction

Gender has virtually nothing to do with biological differences between sexes. Rather it is an idiom used to express the roles of men and women and their socio-economic and cultural relationships in any community (FAO, 2005). Gender has to do with men and women and how they relate to each other in terms of roles, responsibilities, obligations and entitlements. It defines what men and women do, the degree of access, control and authority to resources and

decision-making and consequently, the abilities to discharge these duties effectively.

The current debate revolving around issues on women integration into the national economy variously referred to as women liberation or women empowerment and, to some extent, gender mainstreaming simply put, has to do with the giving of equal access to opportunities to both men and women for involvement in economic activities and in benefiting from the fruit of economic development. The perceived unfairness in this system of roles and relationships and how to make it acceptable is the crux of the issues involved in gender mainstreaming and more specifically, women

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