

Gender Mainstreaming in Agri-Preneurship and Sustainable Development in the Northeastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship and sustainable development in the north-eastern Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are: to examine the role of gender mainstreaming in Sustainable Development in Nigeria; to determine the extent to which women are involved in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria; to identify the challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria; and to suggest the strategies for gender mainstreaming in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria. Feminist theory is adopted to explain the differential opportunity in the agri-preneurship in the study area. Sample size of 402 respondents was selected using multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques, out of which 387 were respondents for quantitative data and 15 for qualitative data. The instruments of data collection are questionnaire, in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) and the analysis was based on mixed method. The study finds that gender mainstreaming is playing a significant role in achieving sustainable development in the north-eastern Nigeria. Women are also involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the study area because majority of the population lives in agricultural setting. But the women are facing some challenges emanating from cultural factors, lack of support from the Government and non-state actors. To address these challenges, the study made some recommendations, including: overcoming cultural barriers through religious and traditional leaders and the use of media in creating awareness; soft loans and incentives to the women from the Government and non-state actors; and introduction of intensive training on the agri-preneurship for women in the north-eastern Nigeria, etc.

KEYWORDS: Agri-preneurship; Gender mainstreaming; North-eastern Nigeria; Sustainable development

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is both a developmental goal in itself and a precondition for achieving other developmental aspirations; it is necessary for both manifest and latent development at the family, regional and global levels. It enhances peace and promotes social cohesion among various social sub-populations because failure of a nation to equitably distribute the fundamental human rights (gender equality inclusive), development in the social, political and economic spheres will remain a mirage. However, gender inequality is a universal phenomenon (Lawal, Ayoade&Taiwo, 2016) with more prevalence in the developing countries of Africa, where women are seen performing substantial work at home without pay while men obtain these services and are still ascribed the headship role and family providers. Consequently, understanding gender denotes proper dimensioning of opportunities, constraints and the effects of change as they impact on both men and women.

Entrepreneurship is a vital economic activity in which women could empower themselves towards partaking in economic development in the absence of other forms of employment. This is why agricultural entrepreneurship is recognised as a viable enterprise for women to invest in Nigeria. Incorporation of women into agricultural entrepreneurship is a welcome development as it will

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contribute to the Sustainable Development initiatives; however, it is a herculean in Nigeria due to numerous challenges. Firstly, women often encounter an array of business challenges in many societies. For example, work hour restriction set against women, the types of job permitted for women to engage in and other socio-cultural factors pose hindrances to the successful operation of women's businesses, thereby depriving them of harnessing their own economic opportunities and contributing their part as productive members of the labour force in Nigeria (Lawalet *al.* 2016).

In the north-eastern Nigeria, many people are in acute food insecurity and the risk of famine in inaccessible areas will remain high due to Boko Haram insurgency (Famine Early Warning System Network, 2017). Madagali in Adamawa and Gujba and Gulani in Yobe are LGAs close to the Sambisa forest where households have been unable to engage in crop production and where there is limited access for humanitarian actors. In these LGAs, households continue to face Emergency acute food insecurity, while other less affected LGAs in Northern Adamawa and rural Yobe are forecasted to have food crisis (Famine Early Warning System Network, 2017).

In addition, Lawalet *al.* (2016) note that the omission of women from the green economy as a result of decreasing access to green opportunities in primary, secondary and tertiary sector sowing to discrimination, gender-segregated employment, and traditional attitudes also constitute source of concern in Nigeria. This is very obvious in the north-eastern Nigeria States and, by implication it has posed a threat to the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the north-eastern Nigeria in particular. To overcome these challenges there is the need for deliberate effort by the Nigerian government to introduce women to various sectors of the economy, agribusiness inclusive.

In addition to concrete objectives and targets in the strategy, European Institute for Gender Equality (2016) suggests that, gender mainstreaming requires a clear action plan. Such a plan should take into account the context, satisfy the necessary conditions, cover all the relevant dimensions, foresee the use of concrete methods and tools, set out the responsibilities and make sure that the necessary competences exist to achieve the anticipated results within a planned time frame. Gender mainstreaming strategies will be successful when there is a political commitment for gender equality and a compatible legal framework are the basic conditions for the development.

In view of this background, the present study will investigate the role of gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship and sustainable development in the north-eastern Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

- A. To examine the role of gender mainstreaming in sustainable development in Nigeria;
- B. To determine the extent to which women are involved in agricultural entrepreneurship in thenorth-eastern Nigeria;
- C. To identify the challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship in thenorth-eastern Nigeria; and
- D. To suggest the strategies for gender mainstreaming in agricultural entrepreneurship in north-eastern Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Clarifications

Agri-preneurship: Agri-prenuership is a new hybrid concept that merged agriculture with entrepreneurship. By definition, agri-prenuership is multiplex concept that involves active, creative, and innovation approach to agricultural business from production to processing, packaging through to marketing along value-chain. Agri-prenuership is also applied in the various agricultural activities, such as fishery, crop production and marketing of livestock, poultry, and horticulture. Soil Cares (2015) also looked at agri-prenuership as a concept with diverse activities, that agri-prenuership can be seen as: a) Taking farming as a serious business; b) Looking at farming with an eye of an investor; c) Creating sustainable business of agri-commodities (goods and services); d) Opportunity to set up small industries; e) Allowing participation of rural populations; and f) Being innovative to increase efficiency.

In view of the above definitions of agri-prenuership, the actors within this activity (agriprenuers) would consider the full range of 'agribusiness' opportunities within the extended food system (Carr & Roulin, 2016). These agribusiness' opportunities can include as diverse activities as processing,

packaging, logistics, services, cooking and recycling waste as related to the agribusiness.

Gender is the division of people into two categories, "male" and "female". Through interaction with caretakers, socialization in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, and gendered work and family roles, women and men are socially constructed to be different in behavior, attitudes, and emotions. The gendered social order is based on and maintains these differences. In sociology, the main ordering principles of social life is called *institutions*. Gender is a social institution as encompassing the four main institutions of traditional sociology-family, economy, religion, and symbolic language. Like these institutions, gender structures social life, patterns social roles, and provides individuals with identities and values (Lobber, 2000).

Just as the institutions of family, economy, religion, and language are intertwined and affect each other reciprocally, as a social institution, gender pervades kinship and family life, work roles and organizations, the rules of most religions, and the symbolism and meanings of language and other cultural representations of human life. The outcome is a gendered social order (Lobber, 2000) and gendered role. Gender roles referred to distribution of certain social behaviors culturally perceived as appropriate to either male or female. Thus, Hensl in (2009) buttressed that gender consists of whatever behaviors and attitudes a group considers proper for its males and females. Consequently, gender varies from one society to another.

Gender Mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016: 5). Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. While mainstreaming is clearly essential for securing human rights and social justice for women as well as men, it also increasingly recognized that incorporating gender perspectives in different areas of development ensures the effective achievement of other social and economic goals (King, 2002).

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development is the effort of attaining development putting into consideration the present conditions of people without compromising those that come later. Therefore, the concept of sustainable national development remains the modern parameter of measuring development (Boyi, 2013). The concept of sustainability focuses on achieving human well-being and quality of life, pursued through the maintenance, care and equitable use of natural and cultural resources. Terminology around sustainability is by necessity extremely complex and highly contested, with definitions varying according to context and perspective (Ryan, 2011).

Sustainable development is often considered as varied interaction between social, economic and ecological dimensions of development. In other words, achieving sustainability depends on paying equal attention to social, economic, and environmental factors and their harmonization through sustainable development strategies.

Green economy initiatives, a sustainable development strategy aimed at creating more environmentally-sound economies may not fully include basic and essential social requirements such as job quality, income equity, and gender equality (Lawalet *et al.* 2016).

It should be noted that gender equality is the hallmark of gender mainstreaming and the goal of gender mainstreaming is subsumed into the complex Sustainable Development Goals. That is why King (2002) noted that clear intergovernmental mandates for gender mainstreaming have been developed for all the major areas of the work of the United Nations, including disarmament, poverty reduction, macro-economics, health, education and trade.

2.2. The Need for Gender Mainstreaming in Agri-Preneurship in the North-Eastern Nigeria

According to AOA & NWGAV (2013), across a range of poverty measures, the Northeast performs particularly poorly. The region has the highest mortality rate of all national regions. The Northeast also has the highest rate in the country of male respondents who reported having no educational attainment whatsoever, and the second highest rates of female respondents reporting they had no educational attainment. Bauchi and Yobe States in the Northeast are among the five states with the highest rates of absolute poverty-at 84 and 81.75, respectively (NBS, 2012). Although the region has been a major contributor to national net food production today, statistics showed that the North East of Nigeria has the worst socioeconomic conditions in the Country (NBS, 2012).

Northeast's average absolute poverty rate put at sixty-nine percent (69.0%) is above the national average of sixty point nine percent (60.9%) (NBS, 2012). According to Jijji (2007), poverty is more prevalent in northern Nigeria than in the southern and the disparity between the two regions is very high. Using relative poverty measurement in a 2010 survey, the Nigerian Insight(2014) reported that 112,519 million Nigerians (69% of 163 million total populations) live in poverty. The report also cautioned that the rates might increase in the subsequent year. The highlight of the report also showed that Northeast and Northwest had the highest poverty rates in the country. Agbaje (2014) contends that, socio-economic conditions in the general North and North-East in particular facilitate religious demagoguery poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and ignorance, decades of tolerance for sectarian conflicts.

This characterises the Zone as having the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria (NBS, 2012). For example, FAO (2017) reported that 5.1 million people face acute food insecurity in three northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States). Thus, immediate intervention is required to assist these populations. A recent alert on Borno State noted that a famine is likely ongoing and will continue in inaccessible areas of Borno State assuming conditions remain the same (FAO, 2017). The alert also noted that the current response by the authority is insufficient to meet needs of the affected populations.

In view of this economic crisis in the northeast, FAO asked for USD 62 million under the Humanitarian Response Plan for Nigeria in 2017. Of this USD 62 million, USD 20 million is urgently required to reach 500,000 people during the

upcoming main planting season starting in June 2017, because if they missed that season it will mean food insecurity and, therefore, humanitarian costs will continue rising into 2018. In other words, a combination of food assistance and food production support is the only way to address the scale of hunger facing the people of north-eastern Nigeria (FAO, 2017). Although economic crisis has been the feature of many developing countries (Nigeria inclusive), the root cause of the north-eastern Nigeria's economic crisis is not unconnected to the state of insecurity unleashed by the radical movement of *Boko Haram*.

In 2019, Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria entered its eleventh year. Since 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency and the government's military response have killed tens of thousands of civilians and displaced millions across the Lake Chad region, which straddles Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria (Famine Early Warning System Network, 2017). North-eastern Nigeria continues to be affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, with Borno State experiencing the most severe impacts. Famine Early Warning System Network (2017) published an in-depth analysis for Borno at the LGA and IDP camp level in December. In addition, to the high level of need in Borno State, significant populations in Adamawa and Yobe States continue to be affected. Although these states are experiencing an improved security situation and an increasing number of IDPs returning to their communities, Northern Adamawa and rural Yobe remain areas where large populations continue to face significant restrictions to their livelihoods and markets (Brechenmacher, 2019), and women and children are at the receiving ends because they represent the most vulnerable populations as widows and orphans in the region. This makes it necessary for women to complement the roles of males by involving in agri-preneurship to overcome these challenges.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory is adopted in the study because it can explain why gender-based differential opportunities in agri-business exist in the north-eastern Nigeria. Feminist theories are those theories that discuss the social relationships between men and women in society. There are various feminist theories. Moghadam (2005) mentioned that feminist theories include cultural determinism, biological determinism, Marxian/radical feminism, liberal feminism and social feminism, but virtually all of the theories make their postulations on a recurring theme; that is "marginalisation of women", but on different reasons.

For instance, cultural feminists claim that traditional religious, economic, political, and judicial institutions are masculinist by nature and masculinist in practice. Biological feminist theory posits that nature and biological factors, such as genes and hormones are reasons for the subordination of women under men (Moghadam, 2005). Liberal feminism, also called sameness or rule-equality feminism, argues that formal equal treatment of men and women will result in formal and functional equality between the sexes. Liberal feminists are called sameness feminists because they focus on the similarities between individual men and individual women as the basis for their advocacy for gender-neutrality. By "gender neutral", it means "categories that do not rely on gender stereotypes to differentiate between men and women" (Williams, 1989: 837).

Radical (also called dominance) feminism contends that the overarching oppression against women in society is gender inequality or sexism (Hopkins & Koss, 2005). Traditional radical feminists argue that religious, economic, political, and judicial institutions undergird as well as create men's dominance over women, emphasising the centrality of patriarchy and masculine control of women's labor and sexuality. For radical feminists, the fact that sex is the arena where masculine control is most clearly exerted speaks to just how deeply patriarchal domination goes in our society (Hopkins & Koss, 2005).

Marxist feminism and socialist feminism share the lens of looking at gender through the lens of class and economic oppression in the public and private spheres. Marxist and socialist feminists focus on the expropriation of women's labor through unpaid work in the home, prostitution, and so on. For Marxist feminists, economic and class oppression are the primary oppression. These feminists link women's oppression to the origins of private property and to the social organisation of the economic order. Thus, to a Marxist feminist, only the overthrow of the existing economic order and class structure will liberate women (Hopkins & Koss, 2005).

In line with the above, feminist approach can explain why women have not occupied equal business environment or opportunity compared with men in north-eastern Nigeria. And to have a well-balanced society and sustainable development, women should be economically empowered alongside men. This is because female population represents an important structure in the region and the Country at large as it comprises of daughters, wives and mothers. If women are not properly empowered, men will not engage in mutual support with the women as they cannot be supportive partners in progress, and children cannot receive effective support necessary for good upbringing in education and other economic needs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Background of the Northeast Geo-Political Zone

The study area is the North East (NE) Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The Northeastern Nigeria is comprised of 6 states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. It covers close to one-third (280,419km²) of Nigeria's land area (909,890km²). According to projections for 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012), the six states combined would have a population of 23, 558, 6741 (i.e. 23.5 million). This figure represents a 3.5% of Nigeria's population which is put at 173,905,439 (Nyako, 2015). Additionally, the Zone shares international borders with three countries: Republic of Cameroon to the East, Republic of Chad to the North East and Niger Republic to the North.

Today's north-eastern Nigeria was in the pre-colonial era largely made up of two major kingdoms south of the Sahara, namely the Kanem-Bornu kingdom and Kwararafa empire (Iwuchukwu, 2013). Kanem Bornu is an area of more than 300,000 square miles. The empire was amalgamated and separated in different times but this never stopped its link to surrounding areas. Kanem was located at the southern end of the trans-Saharan trade route between Tripoli and the region of Lake Chad. Therefore, Kanem-Bornu Empire existed in modern Chad and Nigeria. It was known to the Arabian geographers as the Kanem Empire from the 9th

century CE onward and lasted as the independent kingdom of Bornu until 1900(Scamillo, 2012).

According to NOUN (2014), Herbert Richmond Palmer coined the term Kwararafa for the Jukun kingdom when assessing his sources for the history of Kano and its relations with the outside. It is not clear if the Jukun recognised the use of Kwararafa, in the same way it kept appearing in the legend and histories of the *Kasar Hausa*. The Kano Chronicle mentions it as one of the seven 'bastard' sons of *Bayajidda*, the acclaimed founder of the seven legitimate Hausa states. Ndera (as cited NOUN 2014) attempted to assess the debates for existence of Kwararafa on the basis of three oral historical sources, which have roots in traditions mainly external to the Jukun themselves but emanating from outside sources. There is mention of Pindiga, Kalam and Gerikom, Biyri and Kundesouth of Bauchi region as former Jukun capitals, but their extent, movements and hierarchies as well as formations are still the subject of debate.

Spanning the two empires located in modern-day Nigeria (KanemBorno and Kwararafa) discussed in the historic sketch, the northeast geopolitical zone is a region covering a vast expanse of areas including Lake Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Libya. The KanemBornoempire alone can be described as a large medieval state in central Sudan, and spanning its border to the north by the Sahara Desert. The empire was amalgamated and separated in different times but this never stopped its link to surrounding areas.

3.2. Research Design

The study is exploratory-descriptive research design. It will explore the possibility of gender mainstreaming through agri-entrepreneurship as a strategy for the ultimate attainment of sustainable development in north-eastern Nigeria. The study will also describe the challenges faced by the women in north-eastern Nigeria in the business environment, agri-business in particular.

Population: The study population will include businessmen and women of 18 years and above in the Northeastern Nigeria. The target population of the study will be few men, businesswomen, women leaders, leaders of business associations, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) dealing with commercial and women affairs.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The sample size for the study was 402 respondents. Out of the total sample, 387 are respondents for quantitative data and 15 are respondents for qualitative data. The sampling technique was multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the north-eastern Nigeria was divided into six (6) clusters, based on the six State Governments that make up the region-Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba States. In the second stage, one state, Yobe State, was selected using purposive sampling technique. In the third stage, three local government areas (LGAs) were selected purposively from the wards were selected from three senatorial districts, Zone A, Zone B and Zone C. In the fourth stage, 3 political wards were selected from each LGA using simple random sampling, which gave 9political wards. In the fifth stage, 43 houses were selected systematically selected based on the numbers of the houses/blocks. From each of these houses, one male or female household member was selected conveniently, who then administered a questionnaire. The total number of respondents for quantitative data will be $9 \times 43 = 387$.

Purposive sampling technique will also be used to collect data, using in-depth interview (IDI) from 5 women, such as women political leaders, leaders of women associations, representatives of states' ministries of commerce, agriculture, and women affairs. One (1) FGD was also conducted with a research assistant who served as a note-taker. The FGD involved 10 respondents. The total number of respondents for the qualitative data gave (5+10=) 15 respondents. The sum total sample for the study therefore is 387+15= 402.

Instruments and Sources of Data: The data were collected from primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was both qualitative and quantitative. Hence questionnaire guides, interview and focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed. The secondary data was generated from text-books, new papers, journal articles, magazines, conference proceedings, etc.

Method of Data Analysis: the study adopted mixed method in analyzing the data collected. This is because the questionnaire guides can conveniently be analysed using the quantitative technique and the FGD is best analysed using qualitative method.

4. Results and Discussions

The instruments employed for the data collection were questionnaires, in-depth interview (IDIs) and FGD. The data collected using questionnaire guides were presented in tabular form and being interpreted first, and complemented with qualitative responses gathered from the IDIs and FGD. For the quantitative data, a total of 387 questionnaires were administered to the respondents but only 358 questionnaires were retrieved. Thus, the analysis is based on the 358 questionnaires and by extension the 5 IDIs and 1 FGD conducted.

Section A: Socio-Economic and Demographic Information of the Respondents

This section deals with the socio-economic and demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1.1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	82	22.9
2	Female	276	77.1
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.1 is the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of the total sample, 22.9 percent constitutes males and 77.1 percent represents females. This indicates that males are under-represented, which is a very likely because the activity focused mainly on females rather than males.

Table 1.2: Age of the Respondents

S/N	Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Below 20 years	89	24.9
2	20-30 years	102	28.4
3	30-40 years	72	20.1
4	40-50 years	41	11.5
5	51 and above 54	54	15.1
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.2 is the age distribution of the respondents, which shows that 24.9 percent of the total sample is below 20 years, 28.4 percent is between 20 and 30 years, 20.1 percent between 31 and 40 years, 11.5 percent from 41 to 50 years, and 15.1 percent involves those from 51 years of age and above.

Table 1.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

S/N	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Single	63	17.6
2	Married	231	64.5
3	Divorced	29	8.1
4	Widowed	3	9.8
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.3 is the marital status of the respondents, where singles constitute 17.6 percent; married 64.5 percent, divorced for 8.1 percent, and widowed 9.8 percent. Therefore, majority of the sampled respondents are married.

Table 1.4: Educational Attainment of the Respondents

S/N	Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Primary school	32	8.9
2	Secondary school	109	30.5
3	Tertiary	92	25.7
4	Others	125	34.9
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.4 presents the distribution of the educational attainment of the respondents. Respondents with primary school education constitute 8.9 percent; those with secondary school qualification accounted for 30.5 percent; respondents with tertiary education constitute 25.7 percent; and those with other educational attainment, such as non-formal education and vocational training represent 34.9 percent.

Table 1.5: Occupation of the Respondents

S/N	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Farmer	35	9.8
2	Civil servan	72	20.1
3	Businessman/ woman	152	42.5
4	Student	83	23.2
5	Others	12	3.37
	No response	4	1.1
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.5 shows the occupational distribution of the respondents, where farmers constitute 9.8 percent; civil servants account for 20.1 percent, business people represent the majority (42.5%); students constitute 23.2 percent; others (such as artisans and bankers) constitute 3.3 percent; and 1.1 percent of the respondents did not respond.

Table 1.6: Income Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Less than N10,000	36	10.1
2	N10,000-N19,999	51	14.2
3	N20,000-N29,999	66	18.4
4	N30,000-N39,999	82	22.9
	N40,000-above	123	34.4
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.6 is the distribution of the respondents' monthly income. Respondents earning Less than N10,000 constitute 10.1 percent; those earning between N10,000 and N19,999 represent 14.223.8%; those earning N20,000 to N29,999 represent 18.4 percent; those earning N30,000 to N39,999 constitute 22.9 percent; and those earning N40,000 and above per month are the majority(34.4%). From the finding, it is obvious that about 65 percent are earning less than N40,000 per month. This replicates the finding of Agbaje (2014) who reported that north-eastern Nigeria is having high rate of poverty and unemployment among other economic problems.

Section B: The Role of Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Development

This section deals with the respondents' awareness of gender mainstreaming, the role played by gender mainstreaming in sustainable development and the relationship between gender mainstreaming and sustainable development.

Table 1.7: Whether Respondents Are Aware of Gender Mainstreaming

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	296	82.7
2	No	52	14.5
3	No Response	10	2.8
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.7 presents data on the weather respondents are aware of gender mainstreaming. Majority of the respondents (82.7%) reported that they are aware of gender mainstreaming. Those that reported that they are not aware of gender mainstreaming constitute 14.5 percent, while 2.8 did not respond.

Table 1.8: The Relationship between Gender Mainstreaming and Sustainable Development

S/N	Response	Yes	No
A	Gender mainstreaming is among SDGs	301 (84.1%)	57 (15.9%)
B	Gender mainstreaming is a threat to sustainable development	21 (5.9%)	337 (94.1%)
C	Gender mainstreaming is necessary for sustainable development	322 (89.9%)	36 (10.1%)
D	Others, specify	181 (50.6%)	177 (49.4%)

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.8 presents data on the relationship between gender mainstreaming and sustainable development. Out of the total sample, majority (84.1%) reported that gender mainstreaming is among SDGs, while minority (15.9%) said gender mainstreaming is not among SDGs; very slim minority (5.9%) reported that gender mainstreaming is a threat to sustainable development, while 94.1 percent said gender mainstreaming is not a threat to sustainable development. Those who reported that gender mainstreaming is necessary for sustainable development formed the majority (89.9%), while 10.1 percent are of the opinion that gender mainstreaming is not necessary for sustainable development. Respondents who suggested other relationships, such as "both go hand-in-hand", "societies that gave equal rights to both genders are more at peace", and "gender mainstreaming can enhance sustainable development, but with caution, because women and men have different biology and by implications, different responsibilities".

An FGD respondent mentioned that:

You cannot separate gender equality from development of any kind. Any system that gives women a second citizenship, there is bound to be backwardness, because the mother of the family or the society in general is not given the position she should be accorded. Therefore, no gender streaming means no sustainable development. (FGD Respondent,2020).

An IDI respondent stated that:

Things to do with gender mainstreaming are always germane to the issue of development. The reason why the development of our society is retarded is because of gender inequity experienced by women and vulnerable groups. Unless women are allowed to harness their potentials in businesses like agri-prenuership, be it fish farming in our backyards or horticulture or even agro-allied businesses, sustainable development is not forthcoming in the north-eastern Nigeria. (IDI Respondent, 2020).

Table 1.9: Responses on Whether Gender Mainstreaming Plays Significant Role in Achieving Sustainable Development

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A	Strongly agree	193	53.9
B	Agree	116	32.4
C	Undecided	31	8.7
D	Disagree	12	3.3
E	Strongly disagree	06	1.7
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.9 presents respondents' opinions whether gender mainstreaming plays significant role in achieving sustainable development. Majority of the (53.9%) strongly agreed that gender mainstreaming plays significant role in achieving sustainable development; 32.4 percent agreed that gender mainstreaming plays significant role in achieving sustainable development; 8.7 percent reported that they were undecided; 3.3 percent disagreed that gender mainstreaming plays significant role in achieving sustainable development; while 1.7 percent strongly disagreed that gender mainstreaming plays significant role in achieving sustainable development.

According to an IDI respondent:

If allowed to become deeply entrenched, gender mainstreaming can play significant role in achieving sustainable development in the north-eastern Nigeria. But it is sad that we women are incapacitated in some respects, particularly economic deprivation which will not allow us to even try starting the agri-preneurship. (IDI Respondent, 2020).

Section C: Women’s Involvement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

This section deals with the respondents’ awareness of women’s involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship and the extent of women’s involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship in the study area.

Table 1.10: Respondents’ Awareness of Agricultural Entrepreneurship

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	313	87.4
2	No	41	11.5
3	No Response	04	1.1
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.10 presents data on the respondents’ awareness of agricultural entrepreneurship. Majority of the sampled respondents (87.4%) reported that they are aware of agricultural entrepreneurship; 11.5 percent of the total sample is not aware; while 1.1 percent did not respond. A female IDI respondent stated:

Of course we are aware of it. We are dealing with it day-by-day because even if some of us want to venture into this type of business and cannot do, people can patronize or become an agent (Female IDI Respondent, 2020).

Table 1.11: Whether Northeastern Nigeria Women Involve in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	191	53.3
2	No	162	45.3
3	No Response	05	1.4
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.11 presents respondents perception of whether northeastern Nigeria women involve in agricultural entrepreneurship. Slight majority of the sampled respondents (53.3%) reported that northeastern Nigeria women involve in agricultural entrepreneurship; a slight minority (45.3%) of the total sample reported that women do not involve in agricultural entrepreneurship in the northeastern Nigeria; while 1.4 percent did not respond. This finding is contrary to the finding of Lawalet *al.* (2016), who found out that women are segregated in the agri-business environment in the whole of Nigeria.

Table 1.12: The Level of Women’s Involvement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A	Very high	194	54.2
B	High	78	21.8
C	Undecided	12	3.4
D	Low	28	7.8
E	Very low	46	12.8
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.12 presents the level of women’s involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship in the northeastern Nigeria. Majority of the respondents (54.2%) reported that the level of women’s involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship is very high; 21.8 percent reported it is high; 3.4 percent were undecided; 7.8 percent reported that the level of women’s involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship is low; while 12.8 percent opined that the level is very low. The above finding is in contrast with that of Lawalet *al.* (2016) who noted that women are omitted from the green economy due to discrimination, gender-segregated employment.

Section D: The Challenges faced by Women in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

This section deals with the challenges faced by women involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria.

Table 1.13: Whether Women Face Challenges for Involving in Agricultural Entrepreneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	321	89.7
2	No	34	9.5
3	No Response	0.3	0.8
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.13 presents data on whether women face challenges while involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria. Vast majority of the sampled respondents (89.7%) reported that women face challenges while involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the study area; 9.5 percent reported that the women do not face these; while 0.8 percent did not respond.

Table 1.14: Challenges Faced by Women While Involving in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

S/N	Women’s Challenges in Agricultural Entrepreneurship	Yes	No
A	Cultural factors	349 (97.5%)	9(2.5%)
B	Lack of institutional support from the Government	323 (90.2%)	35 (9.8%)
C	Lack of support from non-state actors	184 (51.4%)	174 (48.6%)
D	Environmental challenges	96 (26.8%)	262 (73.2%)

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.14 presents data on the challenges faced by women while involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria. Majority of the total respondents (97.5%), reported that cultural factors constitute the challenges, while 2.5 percent did not consider cultural factors as the challenges faced by women while involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria. Although sameness theorists opined that formal and functional equality between the men and women in business environment is achievable through creating laws that guarantee the equality, cultural feminists are of the view that traditional religious, economic, political, and institutions are masculinist by nature and in practice (Moghadam, 2005), thereby making the women’s challenges in agri-preneurship unsurmountable. Similarly, Lawal et al. (2016) observed traditional attitudes also constitute source of concern for gender inequality in the green economy in Nigeria.

Majority of the total respondents (90.2%) reported lack of institutional support from the Government as the challenge, while 9.8 percent did not consider it as a challenge; 51.4 percent reported lack of support from non-state actors (such as NGOs, civil societies, and private individuals and organisations) as the challenge, while 48.6 percent did not believe it is a challenge; 26.8 percent reported environmental challenges to constitute challenge for women while involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria, while majority (73.2%) did not agree they constitute the challenges.

According to an interviewee:

There are many challenges from the family, through community to the country at large. People are looking at women who venture into agri-preneurship as deviants, thinking that commerce and agriculture are ascribed to men only. Some husbands also refuse to allow their wives work. (IDI Respondent, 2020).

Another female FGD respondent stated the following:

There are many challenges and that is why women are restricted to petty trading and selling minor things, compared with men. Government is not helping matters. If you look at the entire businesses in this community, majority of the prestigious commercial activities are owned by men. The women only do petty businesses like selling *kosai* (fried beans) and *awara* (fried soy beans). (FGD Respondent, 2020).

Table 1.15: Opinions on Whether Gender Inequality is one of the Major Challenges Faced by Women in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A	Strongly agree	96	26.8
B	Agree	201	56.1
C	Undecided	8	2.2
D	Disagree	34	9.5
E	Strongly disagree	19	5.4
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.15 is a Likert scale on whether gender inequality is one of the major challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship. Out of the total sample, 26.8 percent strongly agreed that gender inequality is one of the major challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship. Majority of the respondents (56.1%) agreed that gender inequality is one of the major challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship; 2.2 percent were undecided; 9.5 percent disagreed that gender inequality is one of the major challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship; while 5.4 percent strongly disagreed that gender inequality is one of the major challenges faced by women in agricultural entrepreneurship. In the same vein, Lawalet al.(2016), gender inequality is a universal phenomenon, but more prevalent in African countries, Nigeria in particular. However, the finding of Famine Early Warning System Network’s (2017) study associated most of the agri-business challenges to Boko Haram insurgency, rather than cultural factors or Government’s commitment.

Section E: Strategies for Gender Mainstreaming in Agri-Preneurship

This section deals with strategies for addressing challenges for gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria.

Table 1.16: The Strategies to Adopt in Addressing Gender Mainstreaming Challenges in Agri-Preneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria

S/N	Strategies	Yes	No
A	Address cultural barriers to women’s involvement in agri-preneurship	351 (98.0%)	07 (2.0%)
B	Enhanced schemes to support women in the agri-preneurship	333 (93.0%)	25 (7.0%)
C	More support from NGOs and private organisations	201 (56.1%)	157 (43.9%)
D	Address the environmental issues hindering women in agri-preneurship	107 (29.9%)	251 (70.1%)

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.16 presents data on the strategies to be adopted in addressing gender mainstreaming challenges in agri-preneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria. From the total sample, vast majority (98.0%) reported addressing cultural barriers to women’s involvement in agri-preneurship as a strategy for addressing gender mainstreaming challenges in agri-preneurship, while 2.0 percent did not consider it as such; majority (93.0%) reported enhanced schemes to support women in the agri-preneurship as the strategy for addressing these challenges, while 7.0 percent did not consider it as a good strategy for addressing the challenges. In line with the above, a female FGD respondent suggested that:

The government should be giving us financial support and training on how to avoid some agri-business risks. Our husbands should be educated on how to allow us do decent businesses like agri-preneurship. (FGD Respondent, 2020).

Table 1.17: The Roles of the NGOs in Gender Mainstreaming in Agri-preneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A	Giving soft loans to women	44	12.3
B	Organizing Workshops	23	6.4
C	Enlightenment/ Advocacy	26	7.3
D	Giving capital for kick-off	181	50.6
E	Others	67	18.7
F	No Response	17	4.7
	Total	358	100

Source: Survey, 2020

Table 1.17 presents data on the roles of the NGOs in gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship in the Northeastern Nigeria. Out of the total sample, majority (50.6%) suggested that the NGOs should be giving capital for kick-off; 12.3 percent suggested giving soft loans to women; 6.4 percent suggested that the NGOs should be organizing workshops; 18.7 percent gave other strategies (such as collaboration with the Government and spark new policies to enhance gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship); while 4.7 percent did not respond.

There are also suggestions on the roles of the community in gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria. In which a respondent said: The community should not be looking at women's involvement as a sign of deviation, but a sign of development. The women are partners to men in development and their involvement agri-business will complement the family income to the extent that the men would not be disturbed with collecting money every day. (IDI Respondent, 2020).

Another respondent stated that:

There are rich people in the community who can be giving either soft loans or small money free to the economically disadvantaged mothers for them to embark in the agri-preneurship. This can be done even during their *zakka* (alms).(IDI Respondent, 2020).

However, European Institute for Gender Equality (2016) suggests that, gender mainstreaming should be backed by a clear action plan to satisfy the necessary conditions, and make sure that the necessary competences exist to achieve the anticipated results within a planned time frame. This idea is needed to overcome the challenges faced by women in their attempt to involve in agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship and sustainable development in the north-eastern Nigeria. In conclusion, gender mainstreaming is playing significant role in Sustainable Development in Nigeria, because gender equality within the goals set by both Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs, and there gender mainstreaming is inseparable with sustainable development. Therefore to enhance the development of the

study area, gender inequity experienced by women and vulnerable groups should be addressed. Also, women are involving in agricultural entrepreneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria because the society is agricultural society, but not without challenges. Some of the challenges faced by women agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria include: cultural factors; lack of institutional support from the Government; and lack of support from non-state actors, such as NGOs, civil societies, and private individuals and organisations. As would be recommended in the next section, addressing these barriers to adequate involvement of women in agri-preneurship is therefore needed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. First of all, cultural barriers to women's involvement in agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria should be addressed through religious leaders, traditional leaders and the use of the media in creating awareness.
2. The Government should be giving soft loans and incentives to the women to have little capital for kick-starting the agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria.
3. The Government should also introduce programmes for offering intensive training on the agri-preneurship for women just like other vocational trainings in the north-eastern Nigeria.
4. The NGOs should also combine their gender equality advocacy with gender mainstreaming in agri-preneurship in the north-eastern Nigeria, because it is a viable venture and women can choose the most suitable aspect of the agri-preneurship for themselves, such as poultry farming, fish farming, horticulture or animal husbandry among others.
5. Members of the community should also contribute their part through community development programmes that can initiate agri-preneurship for women and youths in the north-eastern Nigeria.

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