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ASSESSMENT OF RURAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LIVESTOCK (POULTRY) AGRIBUSINESS IN EGBEDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess rural women's participation in poultry agribusiness in Egbeda Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 120 respondents, and data were collected using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used alongside regression analysis to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that 28.3% of respondents were within the age range of 31–40 years, 51.7% were married, and 47.5% attained tertiary education. Most households (68.3%) had between 1–5 members, while 43.3% of respondents had 6–10 years of poultry farming experience. Majority (89.2%) owned more than 301 birds. Additionally, 35.0% earned between ₦50,000–₦100,000 monthly. Feed milling and storage (mean = 1.97) ranked highest in women's participation, while gender inclusion (mean = 1.86) was the most significant benefit. Conversely, climate change effects (mean = 1.90) were the leading constraint to participation. Regression results revealed significant relationships between women's participation in poultry agribusiness and socioeconomic factors such as marital status ($t = 2.441$; $p < 0.05$), household size ($t = 5.541$; $p < 0.05$), and estimated monthly income ($t = -2.833$; $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that women's participation in poultry agribusiness was generally low, despite its potential to reduce unemployment, enhance food security, and contribute to national economic development. It recommends the strengthening of women-focused cooperatives and the implementation of gender-sensitive extension programs to improve access to resources, technical skills, and business opportunities.

Keywords: *Assessment ,rural women, participation,Agribusiness*

INTRODUCTION

Livestock is an essential part of agriculture and an advantageous production system with incredible opportunities to raise living standards for a sizable portion of the rural population (Singh *et al*., 2004; Thornton, 2010). Livestock is often regarded as a vital resource for rural residents, providing enough opportunity to boost family income (Batool *et al*., 2014; Quisumbing *et al*., 2015). Livestock has always been an integral part of the sub-Saharan African family agricultural system, and rural women have always been the primary caretakers of these animals (Fonjong and Athanasia, 2007). Men and women from rural areas are equally involved in livestock management. Women play a vital role in agricultural development, particularly in the production of animals (McDermott *et al*., 2010; Alabi *et al*., 2019; Adesogan *et al*., 2020). Most rural women make their living through livestock farming (Sesay *et al*., 2022a). Smallholder farming systems have always included women in livestock production to increase family income and ensure nutritional security (Altieri *et al*., 2012; Wodajo *et al*., 2020). Women, who make up about half of the rural population, do the bulk of the work in animal husbandry (Baiphethi and Jacobs, 2009). Cleaning animal shelters, treating sick animals, raising calves, providing enough nutrition and water, milking animals, and processing milk into ghee, yoghurt, and butter are all part of their daily routine as livestock farmers (Batool *et al*., 2014).The care and grazing of animals, the harvesting of feed, cleaning of animal shelters, and the processing of milk are all important responsibilities that fall squarely on the shoulders of the women of rural areas (Herath, 2007; Rathod *et al*., 2011). They are responsible for practically every conceivable aspect of work in the agricultural and livestock industries (Zahoor *et al*., 2013). Women perform

the majority of important jobs in the agricultural livestock industry (Arshad *et al*., 2013). In many rural areas, women traditionally bear the responsibility for household welfare, and poultry farming is seen as a practical way to contribute to family needs (Ajayi and Salami, 2021). The sale of eggs and poultry meat can provide a steady stream of income, while the by-products of poultry farming, such as feathers and droppings, are often used for other purposes like crafts and fertilizer, further contributing to the economy of rural families (Ezekiel *et al*., 2020). However, women's involvement in poultry farming is not without its challenges. Gender-related barriers, including restricted access to land, limited control over household resources, and societal norms that constrain women's decision-making power, often hinder their ability to fully participate in or benefit from poultry farming (Chukwu and Oladipo, 2020). In many rural communities, women have limited access to extension services, credit facilities, and modern farming techniques, which can reduce their productivity and profitability (Oyeniyi, 2018).

Poultry farming is one of the most prominent forms of livestock farming globally, providing essential protein in the form of eggs and meat, which are vital components of the human diet (Ajayi and Salami, 2021). It is an activity that has been integrated into both large and small-scale farming operations, with significant contributions to the economies of many countries, especially in rural areas. In rural settings, poultry farming offers a flexible and less capital-intensive agricultural venture, making it an ideal choice for smallholder farmers, particularly women who may have limited access to other income-generating opportunities (Oluwaseun and Adedeji, 2019). In many developing countries, rural women are increasingly involved in poultry farming as a means of subsistence, income generation, and empowerment. Traditionally, women in rural areas have been key players in agricultural activities, yet their contributions are often undervalued or overlooked (Okunlola and Olayanju, 2019). Poultry farming, with its relatively low startup costs and manageable space requirements, presents an accessible opportunity for women to engage in income-generating activities while also contributing to household nutrition and family welfare.

The benefits of poultry farming extend beyond providing nutritional food and income for rural families. It also plays a role in improving the socio-economic status of rural women by allowing them to gain economic independence, make decisions regarding the allocation of resources, and participate actively in local markets (Ogunwusi and Jolaoso, 2019). Poultry farming has the potential to contribute to rural economic development, poverty alleviation, and food security, as it is both a low-investment and high-return agricultural activity (Akinwumi, 2019). However, subsistence poultry farming, commonly practiced by rural women and smallholder farmers, is typically characterized by smaller-scale operations that focus on family consumption, local trade, and supplementary income (Chukwu and Oladipo, 2020). Women, especially in rural areas, are often responsible for day-to-day management of small-scale poultry operations, including the feeding, cleaning, and marketing of eggs and birds (Adeyemi and Ojo, 2020). Poultry farming is often seen as an accessible and profitable venture, especially for women, because it requires relatively low capital investment and can be managed alongside other household duties (Ogunwusi and Jolaoso, 2019). It also provides a flexible form of employment, as poultry can be raised in small or large-scale operations, making it ideal for women who may have limited access to land or formal employment opportunities (Akinwumi, 2019).Based on the study, the following specific objectives were identified.

i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
ii. determine the level of rural women participation in poultry agribusiness,
iii. determine the perceived benefit of rural women participation in poultry agribusiness ;and
iv. investigate the constraints militating against women participation in poultry agribusiness.

Hypothesis of the study

Ho : There is no significant relationship between selected socio- economic characteristics and women's participation in poultry farming

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at Egbeda Local Government Area. Egbeda Local Government was created in 1989 with the administrative Headquarters situated at Egbeda. *The study area is on latitude 7°22'46.55"N and longitude* 3°58'2.88"E or 7.379596 and 3.967468 respectively. The rainy season typically lasts from April to October, with peak rainfall occurring in June and September. Relative humidity levels in Egbeda can vary throughout the day, typically ranging from around 20% during the hottest part of the day to over 80%

during the night and early morning hours. It covers a landmass of 185.508 square kilometers with a population density of 1,722 persons per square kilometer. The estimated figure population of the Local Government as at 2010 was 319,388 people based on a growth rate of 3.2% using 2006 census figure. The Local Government Area shares boundaries with Osun State to the east, Ibadan North Local Government area to the north, Ibadan North East Local Government Area to the west and Ona-Ara Local Government to the south. It has 12 wards namely; Kereku, Olanla /Oboda/Labode, Arulogun/Eniosa/Aroro,Olode/Amosun/Onidundu,OjoEmo/Moniya,Akinyele/Isabiyi/Irepodun OlodoIII,Osegere /Awaye, Egbeda, Olode/Alakia, Olubadan Estate.

The Local Government is dominated by Yoruba's and endowed with a wide expanse of land for the production of livestock such as sheep and goat and arable farming such as cassava, maize . The fertile soil and climate favoured the growing of maize, cassava, yams, cocoa, oil palm vegetables and citrus fruits.

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents for the study. In the first stage; 50% of the six (6) wards out of ten (10) principal wards in Egbeda local government area were randomly selected, due to the high concentration of poultry farmers in the area. They are namely Kereku, Olanla, Arulogun, Olode, Olodo and Osegere In the second stage, a purposive sampling method was used to select twelve (12) villages where poultry production is mostly done. Twenty (20) women poultry farmers were randomly selected from each of the six (6) wards. This led to the selection of One Hundred and twenty (120) women participate in poultry production which constituted a sample size for the study. The tools used for data analysis include descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive analytical tools used include frequency distribution, percentage and means while regression analysis are used as inferential tools for hypotheses at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 showed that 28.3% of the respondents were within the 31–40 years age group, 22.5% were within 41–50 years while 16.7% were within 20–30 years, 16.7% were within 51-60years, while 15.8% were above 61years. This suggests that the respondents in the study area were in their productive and economically active years, this was aligns with findings by Adepoju *et al*. (2019) that youth and middle-aged women often drive agricultural productivity in rural settings. 51.7% of the respondents were married, 21.7% were widower, 16.7% were single, while 10.0% were divorced. This indicate that greater percentage of the respondents in the study area are married. This shows the possible access to family support, land, and labor resources often more accessible through marriage in rural contexts (Fawole & Oladele, 2007). The table also shown that 47.5% of the respondents had tertiary education, 38.3% had secondary education, 9.2% had no formal education while 5.0% had primary education. This implies that most of the women are formally educated, which could positively influence their capacity to adopt modern poultry practices and access agribusiness information. This corroborates the findings of Oladeji *et al*. (2020) who emphasized that education plays a vital role in enhancing farmers' awareness, decision-making abilities, and adoption of improved agricultural practices while (68.3%) of the respondents had 1–5 members, 30.8% had 6-10 household members while 0.8% had above 10 household members. The average of 4 household implies that the respondents in the study area had moderate household size. The table shown that 43.3% of the respondents had 6–10 years of experience, 35.0% had 1-5years of experience, 12.5% had 11-15 years of experience, 5.8% had 16-20years of experience while 3.3% had above 21 years. The mean of 9 years of experience is an indication that the respondents in the study area have been in the business long enough to acquire technical knowledge, market networks, and financial understanding. majority (89.2%) of the respondents had above 301 birds, 5.0% had 151-200 birds, 4.2% had 251-300birds while 1.7% had 201-250birds. This implies that most of these women are commercial-scale poultry farmers rather than backyard keepers. This highlights their significant contribution to poultry production in the local economy. The result shown that 35.0% of the respondents earned ₦50,000–₦100,000monthly, 30.8% earned above ₦301,000 monthly, 12.5% earned 151000-200000, 10.0% earned 201000-250000, 9.2% earn 101000-150000 and 2.5% earned 252000-300000. This suggests that poultry agribusiness is a profitable venture for a sizable number of participants

Table 1: Socio Economic Characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
20-30	20	16.7	
31-40	34	28.3	
41-50	27	22.5	35years
51-60	20	16.7	
61 above	19	15.8	

Marital status			
Married	62	51.7	
Single	20	16.7	
Widow(er)	26	21.7	
Divorced	12	10.0	
Educational			
status Primary	6	5.0	
Secondary	46	38.3	
Tertiary	57	47.5	
No formal education	11	9.2	
Household size			
1-5	82	68.3	4persons
6-10	37	30.8	
11-15	1	0.8	
Years of			
experience 1-5	42	35.0	
6-10	52	43.3	9years
11-15	15	12.5	
16-20	7	5.8	
21 above	4	3.3	
Stock size			
151-200	6	5.0	
201-250	2	1.7	350birds
251-300	5	4.2	
301above	107	89.2	
Monthly Income			
(naira) 50,000-100,000	42	35.0	100,000
101,000-150,000	11	9.2	
151,000-200,000	15	12.5 10.0	
201,000-250,000	12		
301000 above	37	30.8	

Source: Field survey, 2025

Women's Participation in Poultry Agribusiness

Table 2 showed the women participation in poultry Agribusiness in the study area. The result showed that Feed milling, and storage (mean=1.97) was ranked first. Closely followed by Sales of veterinary drugs and vaccines (mean=1.95) and Slaughtering and processing of poultry meat (mean=1.93) and were ranked second and third respectively. The result further showed that Breeding and hatching of chicks (mean=1.37) had the least mean and was ranked twelfth as the women participation in poultry Agribusiness in the study area. This implies that Feed milling and storage, Sales of veterinary drugs and vaccines and Slaughtering and processing of poultry meat were parts of their various ways of participation at their respective rank. This trend is consistent with findings from Adesope *et al*. (2014) who reported that women in rural agribusiness tend to concentrate in less capital-intensive and less technical segments due to constraints such as lack of finance, inadequate training, and limited access to modern technologies

Table 2: women's participation in poultry Agribusiness

poultry Agribusiness activities	Always	Often	Not at all	Mean	Rank
Breeding and hatching of chicks	81(67.5)	34(28.3)	5(4.2)	1.37	12
Rearing of poultry (broilers, layers, cockerels, turkeys, ducks, etc.)	65(54.2)	45(37.5)	10(8.3)	1.54	11
Feeding and nutrition management	54(45.0)	50(41.3)	16(13.3)	1.68	8
Waste management (manure handling and recycling)	58(48.3)	43(35.8)	19(15.7)	1.68	8
Slaughtering and processing of poultry meat	45(37.5)	39(32.5)	36(30.0)	1.93	3
Packaging and storage of processed meat	55(45.8)	40(33.3)	25(20.8)	1.75	7
Egg collection, grading, and packaging	58(48.3)	43(35.8)	19(15.8)	1.68	8
Formulation and production of poultry fee	46(38.3)	43(35.8)	31(25.8)	1.88	4
Feed milling and storage	40(33.6)	42(35.3)	37(31.1)	1.97	1
Wholesale and retail sale of poultry products (meat, eggs)	45(37.5)	54(45.0)	21(17.5)	1.80	6
Supply of poultry farming equipment (cages, feeders, drinkers, incubators)	53(44.2)	34(28.3)	33(27.5)	1.83	5
Sales of veterinary drugs and vaccines	44(36.7)	38(31.7)	38(31.7)	1.95	2

Source: Field survey, 2025 , Figures in parentheses are in percentage

Perceived benefit of participation in poultry Agribusiness

Table 3 shows the benefit of participation in poultry Agribusiness in the study area. The results showed that gender inclusion (mean=1.86) was ranked first. Closely followed by Promotion of Innovation (mean=1.75) and Women can support local development (mean=1.73) were ranked second and third respectively. The result further showed that Improved Household Income (mean=1.49) had the least mean and was ranked ninth as the benefit of participation in poultry Agribusiness in the study area. This implies that gender inclusion, Promotion of Innovation and Women can support local development were the major benefit of participation in poultry Agribusiness in the study area. These results align with findings by Fabiyi *et al*. (2007) who emphasized that women's participation in agriculture contributes significantly to gender equality and community development, even if financial returns are not immediate.

Table 3: perceived benefit of participation in poultry Agribusiness

Benefit	Highly beneficial	Moderately beneficial	Not beneficial	Mean	Rank
Improved Household Income	71(59.2)	39(32.5)	10(8.3)	1.49	9
Increase in food supply at local level	64(53.3)	52(43.3)	4(3.3)	1.50	8
Economic Empowerment	59(49.2)	53(44.2)	8(6.7)	1.58	6
Reduction of Poverty	64(53.3)	42(35.0)	14(11.7)	1.58	6
Increased Agricultural Productivity.	64(53.3)	35(29.2)	21(17.5)	1.64	5
Women can create Employment Opportunities for themselves and others	55(45.8)	52(43.3)	13(10.8)	1.65	4
Women can support local development	38(31.4)	77(64.2)	5(4.2)	1.73	3
Promotion of Innovation	45(37.5)	60(50.0))	15(12.5)	1.75	2
Gender Inclusion	42(35.0)	53(44.2)	25(20.8)		1

Source: Field survey, 2025 Figures in parentheses are in percentage

Constraints militating against women's participation in poultry agribusiness

Table 4 showed the constraints militating against women participation in poultry agribusiness in the study area. The result showed that climate change effects (mean=1.90) was ranked first. Followed by limited access to agricultural insurance (mean=1.85) was ranked second while outbreak of poultry diseases (mean=1.84) and weak women-focused cooperatives or associations (mean=1.84) were ranked third. Furthermore, the result showed that high cost of poultry inputs (mean=1.43) had the least mean and was ranked sixteenth as the constraints militating against women participation in poultry agribusiness in the study area. This implies that climate change effects, limited access to agricultural insurance, outbreak of poultry diseases and weak women-focused cooperatives

or associations were the major constraint in the study area. These findings are consistent with previous studies. For instance, Ogunlela and Mukhtar (2009) emphasized that climate variability and inadequate institutional support structures are key barriers to women's effectiveness in agriculture.

Table4 : Constraints militating against women's participation in poultry agribusiness

Constraints	Very severe	Severe	Not severe	Mean	Rank
Limited access to land	68(56.7)	44(36.7)	8(6.7)	1.50	14
Limited access to credit and financing	61(50.8)	53(44.2)	6(5.0)	1.54	13
High cost of poultry inputs	77(64.2)	35(29.2)	8(6.7)	1.43	16
Market fluctuations and price instability	75(62.5))	35(29.2)	10(8.3)	1.46	15
Gender norms and stereotypes	52(43.3)	52(43.3)	16(13.3)	1.70	10
Heavy domestic responsibilities	53(44.2)	55(45.5)	12(10.0)	1.66	11
Inadequate access to extension services	44(36.7)	60(50.0)	16(13.3)	1.77	5
Low adoption of modern poultry farming technologies	49(40.8)	53(44.2)	18(15.0)	1.74	8
Time constraint due to household responsibilities	57(47.5)	49(40.8)	14(11.7)	1.64	12
Limited decision making power due to gender bias or limitation	51(42.5)	48(40.0)	21(17.5)	1.75	7
Inadequate technical skills	45(37.5)	59(49.2)	16(13.3)	1.76	6
Lack of supportive government policies and incentives for rural women	49(40.8)	56(46.7)	15(12.5)	1.72	9
Weak women-focused cooperatives or associations.	42(35.0)	55(45.8)	23(19.2)	1.84	3
Limited access to agricultural insurance	46(38.0)	46(38.0)	28(23.3)	1.85	2
Outbreak of poultry diseases	49(40.8)	41(34.2)	30(25.0)	1.84	3
Poor biosecurity measures	54(45.0)	42(35.0)	24(20.0)	1.75	7
Climate change effects	46(38.3)	40(33.3)	34(28.3)	1.90	

Source: Field survey, 2025 Figures in parentheses are in percentage

Test of hypothesis

Results of the regression analysis showing the relationship between some selected socio economic characteristics and women's participation in poultry Agribusiness

The result in Table5 . shows that there was a significant relationship between the women's participation in poultry Agribusiness and selected socioeconomic characteristics of the women Household size ($t=5.541$; $p<0.05$) and the Estimated income per month ($t=-2.833$; $p<0.05$) were significant at 5% and 1% respectively . This is similar to that of Garba *et al*. (2015) who also found that the household size of the respondents was significant in influencing women's participation in poultry farming in Nigeria. Adams (2017) also recorded that, age, family size, education level and income were positively related to women's participation in agricultural production. It is also consistence with the findings of Amugo and Odinwa (2022) who indicated that age, additional occupation, household size, and annual income were variables that influenced women's participation in poultry farming.

Table 6 : Results of the regression analysis showing the relationship between some selected socio economic characteristics and women's participation in poultry Agribusiness

Model	B	Coefficients Unstandardized coefficients Std.Error	Standardize coefficient Beta	t-value	Significant
(Constants)s	5.281	2.400		6.368	0.000
Age	-0.061	0.040	-0.136	-1.520	0.131
Marital status	0.982	0.402	0.189	2.441	0.016
Educational status	0.251	0.249	0.086	1.009	0.315
Religion	-0.380	0.343	-0.082	-1.109	0.269
Poultry farming experience	-0.139	0.149	-0.217	0.933	0.353
Household size	0.423	0.076	0.121	5.541**	0.000
Estimated income per month	2.004E-006	0.000		-2.833*	0.005
Stock size	0.403	0.243	0.363	-0.615	0.540
Secondary occupation	-0.205	0.111	0.212	1.659	0.100
Sources of credit	-0.201	0.126	0.131	-1.848	0.067
Member of poultry cooperative	-9.725e007	0.000		-0.128	-1.588	0.115
R	**0.6943**				
Adjusted R^2					
F-Value	**0.6763**				
	42.86				

Source: Field survey 2025 ** significant@5%, significant@1%

Conclusion And Recommendations

This study shows that the assessment of rural women participation in livestock poultry Agribusiness in the study area was low, as the rate of unemployment keeps growing and thereby leading to high crime rate and other social vices in the country.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1.Develop and implement climate adaptation strategies for agriculture, including climate-resilients crop and animal production systems

2. Develop and promote agricultural insurance products tailored to the needs of farmers, including crop and livestock insurance

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