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Food Security in Nigeria: Law as a Tool for Ensuring Contributions of Small Scale Women  
Farmers

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*Abstract*

*The presentation discusses the role of law in ensuring that the agricultural productivity of small scale women farmers in Nigeria are not encumbered by cultural practices and absence of extant laws and policies. Employing the feminist theory, it examines the existence and enforcement of equality rights for women to access productive assets including land, credit and agricultural extension services. It explores the specific challenges women encounter from perspectives other than limited access, including gender based violence and gender specific roles. The paper challenges some ubiquitous socio-cultural practices that hinder the agricultural activities of small scale women farmers contributing immensely to food security in Nigeria. It concludes with recommendations on adequate legal frameworks, a commitment to intensify rights and policy awareness, as well as increased public investment in rural infrastructure to promote production of adequate, affordable and safe food produced in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.*

**Keywords: Agro-Feminism, Feminization of Agriculture, Food Security, Small Scale Women Farmers.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

*“70% of the world’s farmers are women, but most programmes that offer farmers credit and training target men. This is unfair and impractical”.* Hillary Clinton, Former US Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup>

The population of Nigeria is projected to be the third largest in the world by 2050.<sup>2</sup> The need to ensure its ability to adequately feed its projected quadruple population is pertinent now, more than ever before.<sup>3</sup> Even though it is very difficult to empirically verify the extent of the contribution of small scale women farmers to agricultural and food production, it is not debatable that these contributions are significant and important in achieving food security.<sup>4</sup> Agriculture is floundering in Nigeria partly due to the fact that small scale women farmers, who are a significant resource in agriculture and the rural economy, are confronted with challenges that reduce their productivity.<sup>5</sup> Small scale women farmers continue to encounter several specific barriers, distinct from their male counterparts, inhibiting them from realizing their full potential as farmers and entrepreneurs as well as undermining their productivity, food security, nutrition, health and incomes.<sup>6</sup>

They experience the burden of juggling numerous domestic responsibilities with systematic prejudice in access to productive assets, social and religious discrimination, cultural encumbrances, gender based violence and limited political representation. In addition, they overwhelmingly suffer from the impacts of climate change. Global warming and climate change intensify prevailing stressors and undermine susceptible agricultural systems.<sup>7</sup> Droughts,

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<sup>1</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa, Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. <[http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf)> accessed 16/6/17 p2

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables. Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248. p5

<sup>3</sup> Nigeria to become 3rd most populous country by 2050 – UN report on June 21, 2017. <<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/nigeria-become-3rd-populous-country-2050-un-report/>> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>4</sup> Terri Raney and Cheryl Doss, The Role of women in agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02 March 2011. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf> , accessed 3/7/17 p1

<sup>5</sup> Terri Raney and Cheryl Doss, The Role of women in agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02 March 2011. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf> P1

<sup>6</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. <[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf)> accessed 16/7/17 p.15

<sup>7</sup> Africa’s Smallholders Adapting to Climate Change : The need for national governments and international climate finance to support women producers. 2015.

deforestation, and irregular rainfall compel small scale women farmers to strain harder in order to meet their domestic needs for food, water and fuel. This leaves them with even less time to improve their agricultural undertakings.<sup>8</sup>

There has been a lot of conversation on agriculture being the ‘driver of development’ and the crucial role of women in agriculture and food security.<sup>9</sup> The problem is that the discourse has focused on women’s roles and responsibilities – and not on their rights as women and as farmers.<sup>10</sup> This may occasion more duties and higher expectations being heaped on women’s shoulders, making their already heavy workload, heavier.<sup>11</sup> Yet, contemporary agricultural policies and programmes in Nigeria remain gender-blind, and fundamentally insensitive to small scale women farmers, thus affecting their agricultural productivity.<sup>12</sup>

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, closing the gender gap in agriculture or increasing women’s contribution to food production by providing equal access to resources and opportunities – ‘could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 per cent, or by 100 to 150 million people.’<sup>13</sup> Supporting small scale women farmer’s access to agricultural resources and services does not only have a multiplier effect of ensuring food

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<[https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/bn-african-smallholders-climate-change-141015-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bn-african-smallholders-climate-change-141015-en.pdf)> accessed 25/7/17 p2

<sup>8</sup> Africa’s Smallholders Adapting to Climate Change: The need for national governments and international climate finance to support women producers. 2015.

[https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/bn-african-smallholders-climate-change-141015-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bn-african-smallholders-climate-change-141015-en.pdf), p3

<sup>9</sup> Agriculture: A Driver of Growth and Poverty Reduction. September 2016.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/publication/uganda-poverty-assessment-agriculture-a-driver-of-growth-and-poverty-reduction>; Omobowale Ayoola Oni, Ephraim Nkonya, John I. Pender, Dayo Phillip, Edward Kato, Trends and drivers of agricultural productivity in Nigeria,.

<http://www.ifpri.org/publication/trends-and-drivers-agricultural-productivity-nigeria>; Terri Raney and Cheryl Doss, The Role of women in agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02 March 2011.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf>; Chika Amanze-Nwachuku, Agriculture as Driver of Nigeria’s Economic Resurgence. September 2, 2016.

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/09/02/agriculture-as-driver-of-nigerias-economic-resurgence/>; all accessed 26/7/17

<sup>10</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.

<[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf)> accessed 19/7/17 p 6

<sup>11</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf) p 6

<sup>12</sup> Garba, A. Umar, A.G, Babuga, U. S. Ubayo, Contributions of Small Scale Women Farmers for sustainable Agricultural Production in Jigawa State, Nigeria.

<[https://www.academia.edu/17594276/Contributions\\_of\\_Small\\_Scale\\_Women\\_Farmers\\_for\\_sustainable\\_Agricultural\\_Production\\_in\\_Jigawa\\_State\\_Nigeria](https://www.academia.edu/17594276/Contributions_of_Small_Scale_Women_Farmers_for_sustainable_Agricultural_Production_in_Jigawa_State_Nigeria)> accessed 26/6/17 p 1

<sup>13</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf). p1

security, it is also a human rights based approach to development. Promoting the rights of women to increased factors of production will contribute immensely to the realization of goals 1, 2, 5 and 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>14</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> aspiration of the Agenda 2063.<sup>15</sup>

Extensive research has been made on small scale women farmers, agriculture and food security in Nigeria. One set of research has studied production efficiency questions - comparing male and female farmer productivities.<sup>16</sup> A second set of research has investigated resource constraints encountered by small scale women farmers- access to land, labour and credit.<sup>17</sup> A critical gap in literature is, what role the law and policies can play to ensure that the agricultural productivity of small scale women farmers in Nigeria are not encumbered by socio-cultural practices and absence of extant laws and policies. This paper employs feminism as its theoretical framework to argue for and advocate that the productive activities of small scale women farmers should not be encumbered by social, cultural, religious and economic discriminatory practices and customs.

Espousing feminism as a tool for gender justice in agriculture necessitates the adoption of a pertinent fragment of it. Therefore, agro- feminism will guide the discourse in this paper. Agro-feminism asserts the significant role played by women in food production along with the

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<sup>14</sup> Goal One seeks to end poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal Two strives to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal Five pursues achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, while Goal Twelve seeks to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. See <http://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/post-2015/sdg-overview.html>> accessed 20/6/17

<sup>15</sup> An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. See Agenda 2063 Framework Document -The Africa We Want. <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063-framework.pdf>> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>16</sup> Garba, A. Umar, A.G, Babuga, U. S. Ubayo , Contributions of Small Scale Women Farmers for sustainable Agricultural Production in Jigawa State, Nigeria. [https://www.academia.edu/17594276/Contributions\\_of\\_Small\\_Scale\\_Women\\_Farmers\\_for\\_sustainable\\_Agricultural\\_Production\\_in\\_Jigawa\\_State\\_Nigeria](https://www.academia.edu/17594276/Contributions_of_Small_Scale_Women_Farmers_for_sustainable_Agricultural_Production_in_Jigawa_State_Nigeria); Gideon, P. K. and Yager, G. O, Role of Women Farmers in Agricultural Development in Jalingo Local Government Area, of Taraba State, Nigeria, Nigerian Journal of Agriculture, Food and Environment. (2016) 12(1):75-79; Yahya Zakari Abdullahi, Hussainatu Abdullahi, Yelwa Mohammed , Food Security First: The Role Of Women Through Empowerment For Sustainable Food, General Security And Economic Development In Nigeria ,European Scientific Journal May edition vol. 8, No.9; Odurukwe S N, Matthews-Njoku E C and Ejiogu-Okereke N 2006: Impacts of the women-in-agriculture (WIA) extension programme on women's lives; implications for subsistence agricultural production of women in Imo State, Nigeria. Livestock Research for Rural Development. Volume 18, Article 18. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.lrrd.org/lrrd18/2/odur18018.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Emmanuel Ukeje, Modernizing Small Holder Agriculture to Ensure Food Security and Gender Empowerment: Issues and Policy. <https://g24.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Modernizing-Small-Holder-Agriculture-to-Ensure-Food-Security.pdf>; Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar, Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, Humanity & Social Sciences Journal 4 (1): 19-30, 2009;

fundamental feature of food production and security in the society.<sup>18</sup> Agro-feminism condemns the glaring male domination in most rural agricultural communities and strives to liberate women with gender specific measures and feminist agricultural methods.<sup>19</sup>

In the remainder of this paper, feminism in agriculture is broadly interrogated. Here, feminization of agriculture in Nigeria is examined with the role that small scale women farmers play in agriculture. The next section scrutinizes the challenges to small scale women farmers' contribution to food security. These include issues on: unequal access to natural resources and services, social and cultural/religious based encumbrances, domestic and gender based violence, gender differences in roles, activities and needs, gender differences in labour market, gender and agricultural extension services/training, empowerment and access to decision making, as well as gender and nutrition security. Section four investigates the legal framework and policies to protect small scale women farmers. Law here is used to include formal legal rules, adequate implementation of the laws, customary laws, legal concepts and legal principles reflected in policies. The last section is the concluding section with recommendations on how to ensure that the activities of small scale women farmers contribute to food security in Nigeria.

## **2.0 FEMINISIM IN AGRICULTURE**

### *2.1 Feminization of Agriculture*

Feminization of agriculture refers to an increase in women’s participation in the agricultural labor force, whether as independent producers, as unremunerated family workers, or as agricultural wage workers.<sup>20</sup> This could be prompted by the increased involvement of men in off-farm wage work, including labour out-migration.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, war, sickness and death

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<sup>18</sup> P. Vedhanayagi, Agro-feminism: An Ideology of Hope for Dalit Women. Asian Journal of Women's Studies. 2013, Vol. 19 Issue 3, p186-200.

<sup>19</sup> P. Vedhanayagi, Agro-feminism: An Ideology of Hope for Dalit Women. Asian Journal of Women's Studies. 2013, Vol. 19 Issue 3, p186-200.

<sup>20</sup> Susana Lasterria-Cornhiel, Feminization of Agriculture: Trends and Driving Forces , 2006 (version 1). <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/655741468338477909/pdf/41367optmzd0Fe1Agriculture01PUBLIC1.pdf>> accessed 17/7/17, p2

<sup>21</sup> Radel, Claudia, Labour Migration and Gendered Agricultural Relations: The Feminization of Agriculture in the Ejidal Sector of Calakmul, Mexico.(2012) Journal of Agrarian Change, 12 (1), p. 101

from HIV/ AIDS take a toll on rural male inhabitants, leaving households deprived of the principal earning member, and increasing the responsibility of household survival on women.<sup>22</sup> Women have also expanded their commitment in agricultural production over the last few decades as they respond to economic prospects in commercial agriculture.<sup>23</sup>

Traditionally, agricultural activities have gender-differentiated tasks with women predominantly engaged in labor intensive activities such as weeding the farms, selection and cutting of farm produce, food processing, sorting and packing. Men were predominately engaged in tasks that require vigor such as lifting crates, construction of barns/pens , land preparation, or that entail use of machinery such as driving tractors, applying pesticides, etc.<sup>24</sup> However, today, women are taking over more of the agricultural chores once done only by men. For instance, in a study in Anambra State Nigeria, majority of the women farmers reported some of the new roles they had assumed in agriculture to include clearing of farm land, making of mounds and ridges, planting of white yams, staking of yams with bamboo and harvesting of white yams. They also harvested oil palm fruits, tree crops such as mango, orange, pear, cashew nut etc.<sup>25</sup> This reveals further that traditional beliefs about planting of certain crops as the preserve of men are fast fading away. Before now, it was a taboo in Igbo land, for a woman to plant white yam while cocoyam, cassava etc. were regarded as women’s crop.<sup>26</sup>

The feminization of agriculture has several implications on the responsibilities and workload of women. It results in excess work load on women, exposes them to environmental hazards and

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<sup>22</sup> Ajani, E.N. and Igbokwe, E.M. Implications of Feminization of Agriculture on Women Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria.(2011)  
<http://www.unn.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Implications-of-Feminization-of-Agriculture-on-women....pdf>> accessed 10/7/17, p 32

<sup>23</sup> Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel, *Feminization of Agriculture: Trends and Driving Forces* , 2006 (version 1).  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/655741468338477909/pdf/41367optmzd0Fe1Agriculture01PUBLIC1.pdf> p1

<sup>24</sup> Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel, *Feminization of Agriculture: Trends and Driving Forces* , 2006 (version 1).  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/655741468338477909/pdf/41367optmzd0Fe1Agriculture01PUBLIC1.pdf> p 5 -6

<sup>25</sup> Ajani, E.N. and Igbokwe, E.M. Implications of Feminization of Agriculture on Women Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria.(2011)  
<http://www.unn.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Implications-of-Feminization-of-Agriculture-on-women....pdf> p 34

<sup>26</sup> Okwor, G. C., Asiedu, R. and Ekanayake, I. J. (1998). *Food yams: Advances in Research*. International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), African Book Builders Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, cited in Ajani, E.N. and Igbokwe, E.M. Implications of Feminization of Agriculture on Women Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria.(2011)  
<http://www.unn.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Implications-of-Feminization-of-Agriculture-on-women....pdf> p 32

requires them to work extra hours, thereby adding to their stress level. Conversely, it also results to increased food production, boosts food security, improves household food consumption and enhances the availability of different varieties of crops.<sup>27</sup>

Notwithstanding these positive effects, research indicates that women are not recognized as farmers by their communities, the governments and even international donors.<sup>28</sup> The results of this is that the needs of women farmers are ignored when it comes to policy, legislation, extension services, research, and other government support.<sup>29</sup> More so, while export-oriented value chains offer valuable employment opportunities for women, small scale women farmers are typically excluded from contracts with agro-industrial corporations for the provision of high-value produce.<sup>30</sup> These agro-industrial corporations confirm that they strongly prefer contracting with men because most women ‘lack secure access to productive resources and so cannot guarantee delivery of a reliable flow of produce.’<sup>31</sup>

## ***2.2 Small Scale Women Farmers and Agriculture in Nigeria***

There is no unique and unambiguous definition of a small scale women farmer. Often, scale measured in terms of farm size is used to classify farmers. For example, small scale farmers could be described as those who farm less than a threshold size of 2 hectares.<sup>32</sup> However, in different countries, the distribution of farm sizes depends on a number of agroecological and

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<sup>27</sup> Ajani, E.N. and Igbokwe, E.M. Implications of Feminization of Agriculture on Women Farmers in Anambra State, Nigeria.(2011)  
<http://www.unn.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Implications-of-Feminization-of-Agriculture-on-women....pdf>  
p 36

<sup>28</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.  
[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf) p3

<sup>29</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.  
[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf) p3

<sup>30</sup> Terri Raney and Cheryl Doss, The Role of women in agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02 March 2011.  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf> P26

<sup>31</sup> Terri Raney and Cheryl Doss, The Role of women in agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02 March 2011.  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf> P26

<sup>32</sup> Why The Small-Holder Farmer? <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/ac484e/ac484e04.htm>> accessed 22/7/17

demographic conditions as well as economic and technological factors.<sup>33</sup> Though the size of a farm could be delineated by the cultivated area, a small scale vegetable farmer on a 5 ha land will obviously be more enormous, from an economic point of view, than a small scale cereal farming on a 10 ha.<sup>34</sup> Therefore using only farm size may not adequately capture an apt description of who a small scale farmer is.

Another attempt defines small scale holders as ‘all people in the rural areas of developing countries who do not have the means to provide for their basic needs or are living in constant fear of losing their means.’<sup>35</sup> This however does not capture small scale farmers in semi-urban areas nor the migratory cattle herders. The FAO defines small-scale farmers to include pastoralists, forest keepers, fishers who manage areas varying from less than one hectare to 10 hectares.<sup>36</sup>

In Nigeria, there is no defined description of who a small scale farmer is. However, taking clue from the categorization of micro, small and medium scale enterprises by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN),<sup>37</sup> and available literature, a small scale woman farmer could be described as any farmer who cultivates on a farm of less than 10 hectares,<sup>38</sup> with less than forty nine workers. This type of farming is usually characterised by

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<sup>33</sup> A Data Portrait of Smallholder Farmers: An introduction to a dataset on small-scale agriculture. [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/esa/smallholders/Concept\\_Smallholder\\_Dataportrait\\_web.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/esa/smallholders/Concept_Smallholder_Dataportrait_web.pdf)> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>34</sup> Smallholders and their Characteristics. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0211e/T0211E03.htm>> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>35</sup> The Small Farm Scenario. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/t0757e/T0757E02.htm>> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>36</sup> Smallholders and Family Farmers. [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/sustainability\\_pathways/docs/Factsheet\\_SMALLHOLDERS.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/sustainability_pathways/docs/Factsheet_SMALLHOLDERS.pdf)> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>37</sup> Micro enterprises are those enterprises whose total assets (excluding land and buildings) are less than Five Million Naira with a workforce not exceeding ten employees. Small Enterprises are those enterprises whose total assets (excluding land and building) are above Five Million Naira but not exceeding Fifty Million Naira with a total workforce of above ten, but not exceeding forty nine employees. Medium Enterprises are those enterprises with total assets excluding land and building) are above Fifty Million Naira, but not exceeding Five Hundred Million Naira with a total workforce of between 50 and 199 employees. If there exists a conflict on classification between employment and assets criteria (for example, if an enterprise has assets worth seven million naira (N7M) but employs 7 persons), the employment-based classification will take precedence and the enterprise would be regarded as micro. See SMEDAN and National Bureau Of Statistics Collaborative Survey: Selected Findings (2013) [http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/SMEDAN%202013\\_Selected%20Tables.pdf](http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/SMEDAN%202013_Selected%20Tables.pdf)> accessed 25/7/17, P 11

<sup>38</sup> R.N. Mgbenka, E.N. Mbah and C.I. Ezeano , A Review of Small holder Farming in Nigeria: Need for Transformation. *Agricultural Engineering Research Journal* 5(2): 19-26, 2015. [https://www.idosi.org/aerj/5\(2\)15/1.pdf](https://www.idosi.org/aerj/5(2)15/1.pdf)> accessed 24/7/17, p19

intensive labour, limited use of agrochemicals and produce supply to the surrounding markets.<sup>39</sup> It will include hobby farmers, retirement farmers, lifestyle farmers.<sup>40</sup>

A small scale women farmer will therefore be described as any female who cultivates on a farm of less than 10 hectares, with not more than forty-nine workers working on the farm, while the farm will usually be characterised by intensive labour and the farm produce is predominantly supplied to the surrounding market. Small scale women farmers play a quintuple role in agriculture in Nigeria: food production, food processing, food promotion, food preparation and food knowledge preservation. This means that they interface with the key components of food security: food availability, food accessibility, food affordability and food adequacy. Small scale women farmers participate significantly in farm production and labour, principally engage in food processing and storage, predominantly convey and market the produce in neighborhood markets;<sup>41</sup> essentially provide and prepare the food consumed in the households as well as consciously preserve the traditional knowledge of the value and uses of herbs, spices and other plants.<sup>42</sup>

### **3.0 CHALLENGES TO SMALL SCALE WOMEN FARMERS' CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SECURITY**

Small scale women farmers experience certain challenges, distinct from their male counterparts that limit their contributions to food security in Nigeria. The typical small scale woman farmer in Nigeria is subsisting on a small plot of impoverished land, with insecure tenure and inadequate access to productive resources that lead to minimal or stagnant yields.<sup>43</sup> This is aggravated by domestic and gender based violence, overwhelming workload from domestic chores and lack of

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<sup>39</sup> Lashiola Kutya, Small-scale agriculture. (2012) <http://www.ngopulse.org/article/small-scale-agriculture>

<sup>40</sup> Brenda Dawson, So, What is a Small Farmer? (2011) <http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=4222>> accessed 22/7/17

<sup>41</sup> Esther Vivas. Feminism and the global fight for food sovereignty, (2012) <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2012/10/26/feminis-food-sovereignty-2/> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>42</sup> Camilus Basse Ben, The Role of Rural Women Farmers in Household Food Security in Cross River State, Nigeria, Global Advanced Research Journal of Agricultural Science, Vol. 4(3) pp. 137-144, March, 2015., <http://garj.org/garjas/index.htm>> accessed 21/7/17 p139

<sup>43</sup> Fertile ground: How governments and donors can halve hunger by supporting small farmers. 2010. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile\\_ground.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile_ground.pdf)> 16/7/17, P 16

access to agricultural information, training, technology and political representation.<sup>44</sup> Even where the same access, assistance or benefit is supposedly available to men and women, socio-economic, socio-religious and socio-cultural dynamics interact to produce distinct patterns of access, effect and benefit. This is notwithstanding that the overall contribution of these women to food security is significant and important in the realization of food security goals. Laws and policies should recognize that some issues and restrictions are gender-specific and arise from the fact that men and women play different roles, have different needs and face different challenges at different fronts. Women cannot be assumed to benefit from projects and policies, unless specific steps are taken to ensure they do.<sup>45</sup>

#### ***4.1 Unequal access to resources and inputs***

Land is the most valuable factor of production in agrarian societies.<sup>46</sup> The provisions of the Land Use Act (LUA) in Nigeria are not discriminatory based on gender. However, its provisions incorporate customary law on land acquisition and management. For instance, Section 51 (1) of LUA provides that ‘customary right of occupancy’ means the right of a person or community lawfully using or occupying land in accordance with customary law and includes a customary right of occupancy granted by a Local Government under this Act. ‘Occupier’ means any person lawfully occupying land under customary law and a person using or occupying land in accordance with customary law. This makes customary law on land acquisition part of that legislation. Consequently, the combination of a tripartite system of statutory, customary and religious laws make it challenging to harmonize legislation with customs and eliminate discriminatory measures.<sup>47</sup>

Most customary laws and customs in Nigeria do not allow women to own, inherit or even buy

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<sup>44</sup> Ayoade AR, Ogunwale AB and JG Adewale (2011). Impact of the National Special Programme for Food Security on Poverty Alleviation Among Women in Oyo State, Nigeria. African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition, and Development: AJFAND(1684-5358), 11 (4).p 5066

<sup>45</sup> Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, Humanity & Social Sciences Journal 4 (1): 19-30, 2009 IDOSI Publications, p26

<sup>46</sup> A. G. Adekola, F. O. Adereti, G. F. Koledoye and P. T. Owombo, Gender discrimination in Agricultural land access: Implications for food security in Ondo State, Nigeria. Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics Vol. 5(2), pp. 49-56, February 2013.

<http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/JDAE/article-full-text-pdf/A72A3CE1942>> 17/7/17, p 49

<sup>47</sup> Women in Agriculture Closing the gender gap for development The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>,> accessed 24/7/17, p vi-vii

land by themselves.<sup>48</sup> For instance, the Igbo custom precludes an unmarried women or a widow without a male child from inheriting from his father and deceased husband respectively. Therefore, even where formal legal land rights seem to be guaranteed, customary law and practices inhibit the implementation of formal legal provisions. Traditions can sometimes be more compelling than the formal law on land matters, especially where the formal law incorporates customary law. Village authorities and male household heads can sometimes frustrate land reform attempts that seek to extend legal land rights to single and married women.<sup>49</sup> Even with customs that allow female ownership of land, studies have proved that male had more access to any form of land access than their female counterparts,<sup>50</sup> with larger and more fertile lands.<sup>51</sup>

Studies also reveal that women have more difficulties than men in gaining access to credit facilities and productivity enhancing inputs and services.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes, women desire to access bank loan facilities but are restricted by the requirement for collateral, usually land.<sup>53</sup> In the few cases, where women farmers accessed formal credit from banks, they demonstrated high credit worthiness.<sup>54</sup> The ability of women farmers to save from extremely insubstantial incomes is established through thrift and credit co-operatives.<sup>55</sup> Women farmers are also less likely to access and exploit modern inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pest control procedures and

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<sup>48</sup> Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C. 1993, Socio-Cultural Context of High Fertility among the Igbo, cited in Togunde, Oladimeji R (1999) "Determinants of Women's Employment in Urban Nigeria: the Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors". *Journal of Asian and African studies* (Leiden), 34 (3), p. 282

<sup>49</sup> Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>> accessed 17/7/17, p46

<sup>50</sup> A. G. Adekola, F. O. Adereti, G. F. Koledoye and P. T. Owombo, Gender discrimination in Agricultural land access: Implications for food security in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics* Vol. 5(2), pp. 49-56, February 2013.

<http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/JDAE/article-full-text-pdf/A72A3CE1942>> accessed 11/7/17, p53

<sup>51</sup> Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal* 4 (1): 19-30, 2009 IDOSI Publications; Fertile ground: How governments and donors can halve hunger by supporting small farmers. 2010.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile\\_ground.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile_ground.pdf) P17

<sup>52</sup> Women: The Key to Food Security. Women and sustainable food security. FAO Corporate document Repository. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e02.htm>> 25/7/17

<sup>53</sup> Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, Sidqat (2013). Role of extension services in the livelihoods of pastoralist women in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Albanian Journal of Agricultural Sciences* (2218-2020), 12 (4), p. 614

<sup>54</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O, The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity and Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. *IOSR Journal of Engineering* Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013), PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p 55-56> accessed 19/7/17

<sup>55</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O, The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity and Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. *IOSR Journal of Engineering* Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013), PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p 55-56

mechanical implements.<sup>56</sup> These credit facilities and farm input should be made more accessible to women through women farmers’ cooperative societies.<sup>57</sup>

#### ***4.2 Social, cultural and religious based encumbrances***

It is evident that Christian and Islamic scriptures relegated women to the position of a helper. This has led to the popular belief that women are second class citizens in the society. Most cultures incline to a tendency to assume that males are superior, that females are subordinate to males and assign a higher value to the roles played by men than those played by women – domestic chores.<sup>58</sup> This reveals religious and cultural bias as well as discrimination against women.<sup>59</sup> These ignorance and prejudice have been identified as some of the major obstacles to women empowerment.<sup>60</sup>

In some cultures, women are equated to and perceived as sheer personal property of their husbands.<sup>61</sup> In some other cultures, women are not allowed to plant or harvest their crops until certain rituals have been performed by the men.<sup>62</sup> There is usually one form of ritual or the other

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<sup>56</sup> Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development, The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>, p vi-vii

<sup>57</sup> Gideon, P. K. and Yager, G. O. (2016) Role Of Women Farmers in Agricultural Development in Jalingo Local Government Area, of Taraba State, Nigeria, Nigerian Journal of Agriculture, Food and Environment. 12(1):75-79. p79

<sup>58</sup> See Oyekanmi, F.D. (2004) Socio-economic dimensions of gender equality in Nigeria in Akinbode, ed. Paradox of gender equality in Nigeria Politics, Concept Publications Limited, Lagos, Chapter 2; Olurode, Lai and Olusanya, P.O. (1994) The Nigerian Heritage. The Yoruba Example, cited in Chioma, Joseph-Obi (2011). "Oil, gender and agricultural child labour in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria: implications for sustainable development". Gender & behaviour (1596-9231), 9 (2), p. 4081

<sup>59</sup> Akanji, Babatunde. 'Exploring Business Management Obscurities Encountered by Female Entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Prospecting an Agenda for Social Change', Management Research and Practice, vol. 8/no. 4, (2016), pp. 39

<sup>60</sup> Amusan, Lere (2016). Conceptualising Afrocentric-Feminism and Social Constructivism through Alma Ata Declaration (Primary Health Care, PHC) in Rural Nigeria". Gender & behaviour (1596-9231), 14 (2), p. 7246.

<sup>61</sup> Obasi, V. A. (2013). Gender, education and globalization, cited in Amusan, Lere (2016). Conceptualising Afrocentric-Feminism and Social Constructivism through Alma Ata Declaration (Primary Health Care, PHC) in Rural Nigeria. Gender & behaviour (1596-9231), 14 (2), p. 7247

<sup>62</sup> For instance, the Igbos, the Ibibios and the Efiks must have their New yam festival ritual and celebrations before anyone is allowed to harvest or cook new yam. See Achebe’s novel *Arrow of God* when the protagonist, Ezeulu, who is the chief priest of Ulu (an Igbo community) refused to announce the New yam festival at the expected time and so the new yams could not be harvested, rotted in the fields and caused famine cited in . Jude Ejikeme Obidiegwu and Emmanuel Matthew Akpabio, The Geography of Yam Cultivation in Southern Nigeria: Exploring its social meanings and cultural functions. Journal of Ethnic Foods Volume 4, Issue 1, March 2017, Pages 28-35. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352618116301147>. Accessed 27/7/17

to be performed by the husband or the closest male relative.<sup>63</sup> Women are thus required to be in the good books of their husbands or his relatives in order not to delay the performance of such rituals.<sup>64</sup>

The freedom allowed by the different cultures determine to a large extent the level of participation of women in economic activities, including agriculture. For instance, upon marriage, the Yoruba custom expects the husband to provide the initial capital (‘owo okowo’) to set up the wife’s economic activity.<sup>65</sup> Thus, compared to the Hausa and Igbo women, the Yoruba women have more economic liberation and participate more in economic activities.<sup>66</sup> Under Islamic religion, seclusion restricts women’s mobility and economic prospects.<sup>67</sup> Some of these beliefs have been practiced for so long that they are embedded in the societal perception, so much so that the laws and international instruments which protect the rights of women, are blatantly violated in the guise of these lingering cultural and/or religious beliefs.<sup>68</sup>

#### ***4.3 Domestic and gender based violence***

In Nigeria, it is socially apparent and culturally acceptable to batter a woman with the purpose of chastising her.<sup>69</sup> Domestic violence in Nigeria comes in different modes including physical, sexual and emotional battering in the form of molestation, wife beating, acid attacks and corporal

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<sup>63</sup> See Gendered Ritual Dualism in a Patrilineal Society: Opposition and Complementarity in Kulere Fertility Cults Barbara Frank, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*. Vol. 74, No. 2 (2004), pp. 217-240, where the author explained that rituals beginning of sowing, farming, harvesting and storing were considered exclusively men’s domain.

<sup>64</sup> Walter E. A. van Beek, *Harvest and its Rituals*, in *The Dancing Dead: Ritual and Religion Among the Kapsiki/Higi of North Cameroon and Northeastern Nigeria.*, Oxford University Press, USA, 5 Jun 2012. <https://books.google.com.ng/books?isbn=0199858160>> accessed 28/7/17 P 147

<sup>65</sup> Omideyi, A.K. 1987 “Status, Cultural Beliefs and Fertility Behavior among Yoruba Women”. *Proceedings of the Ife Conference on the Cultural Roots of African Fertility Regimes*, cited in Togunde, Oladimeji R (1999). *Determinants of Women's Employment in Urban Nigeria: the Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors*. *Journal of Asian and African studies* (Leiden), 34 (3), p. 282

<sup>66</sup> Togunde, Oladimeji R (1999), *Determinants of Women's Employment in Urban Nigeria: the Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors*. *Journal of Asian and African studies* (Leiden) , 34 (3), p. 282

<sup>67</sup> Togunde, Oladimeji R (1999), *Determinants of Women's Employment in Urban Nigeria: the Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors*. *Journal of Asian and African studies* (Leiden), 34 (3), p. 281

<sup>68</sup> Ifemeje, S., and Ogugua, I., (2012), *Global Trend Towards Gender Equality: Nigeria's Experience in Focus*. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(3), pp. 51-63

<sup>69</sup> Nnandi, I. (2012) *An insight into violence against women as human rights violation in Nigeria*, cited in Amusan, Lere (2016). *Conceptualising Afrocentric-Feminism and Social Constructivism through Alma Ata Declaration (Primary Health Care, PHC) in Rural Nigeria*. *Gender & behaviour* (1596-9231), 14 (2), p. 7247

punishment.<sup>70</sup> Domestic violence is a rampant and limiting factor in women farmers’ productivity and contribution to food security. Where women are battered, they are required to stay out of farm work and farm produce processing based on health grounds. These affect their productivity. While wife battery is generally prohibited in the southern part of Nigeria, under the Criminal Code,<sup>71</sup> it is allowed in the North.<sup>72</sup> The Violence Against Persons Act,<sup>73</sup> though a commendable legislation is applicable in only a few states. Nevertheless, even in states where violence against persons and wife battery are prohibited, the law enforcement agencies perceive complaints on domestic violence as domestic matters that should be settled at the family level and not as crime.<sup>74</sup> This is notwithstanding the adverse effects it has on the health, social wellbeing and physical abilities of the women. It is interesting to note that some of the circumstances that lead to these violence being meted out on women include periods of food scarcity,<sup>75</sup> lateness in preparing food due to time spent on fire wood hunt.

Gender based violence in form of rape is another challenge women face in the course of carrying out their farming activities, distinct from their male counterparts. There have been several allegations of women being raped in farms while trying to contribute to food security.<sup>76</sup> In one of such cases, a 25-year-old man allegedly raped a 12-year-old girl, on her father’s farm in Kano State.<sup>77</sup> Women are thus forced to only tend to some of their agricultural activities in the company and convenience of adult males who watch over them. This limits the time they spend

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<sup>70</sup> Yusuf, N. (2000) Incidence and Dimension of Violence against Women in the Nigerian Society, cited in Amusan, Lere (2016). Conceptualising Afrocentric-Feminism and Social Constructivism through Alma Ata Declaration (Primary Health Care, PHC) in Rural Nigeria. *Gender & behaviour* (1596-9231), 14 (2), p. 7247

<sup>71</sup> See Section 353 of Criminal Code

<sup>72</sup> See Section 55 of the Penal Code

<sup>73</sup> This Act prohibits all forms of violence against persons in private and public life, and provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders

<sup>74</sup> Amusan, Lere (2016). Conceptualising Afrocentric-Feminism and Social Constructivism through Alma Ata Declaration (Primary Health Care, PHC) in Rural Nigeria. *Gender & behaviour* (1596-9231), 14 (2), p. 7247

<sup>75</sup> Women and Food Security / March 2015. P2

<http://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/women-and-food-security.pdf>> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>76</sup> Gabriel Engholase, Herdsmen rape woman, beat husband to pulp in Edo May 16, 2017

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/herdsmen-rape-woman-beat-husband-pulp-edo/>; Naziru Mikailu, Making sense of Nigeria’s Fulani-farmer conflict, 5 May 2016 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36139388>; Farmers Reveal How Fulani Herdsmen Allegedly Rape, Kill People in Oke-Ogun, October 22, 2015.

<http://scannewsnigeria.com/news/farmers-reveal-how-fulani-herdsmen-allegedly-rape-kill-people-in-oke-ogun/>> all accessed 28/7/17

<sup>77</sup> Man allegedly rapes 12-year-old girl in farm, threatens to kill her June 30, 2017. Nigeria network News.

<https://nnn.com.ng/punch/man-allegedly-rapes-12-year-old-girl-in-farm-threatens-to-kill-her/>> accessed 28/7/17

on agricultural activities and adversely affect their productivity levels. While rape is generally prohibited under the law, the social stigma associated with it preclude the victims from reporting the crime and participating in subsequent prosecution. There is also a superficial societal blame on most raped women as being the cause of why they were raped. The burden of proof in criminal cases beyond reasonable doubt also frustrates the effective prosecution of rape cases in rural areas where medical services to help establish the crime may not be immediately available. The fact that rape in farms are always in isolated areas where witnesses may not be around is another clog in effectively prosecuting rape cases in farms where corroboration is required.

#### ***4.4 Gender differences in needs, activities and roles***

It has been argued, and rightly so, that women experience energy needs and poverty distinct from their male counterparts.<sup>78</sup> In the same vein, it can be argued that the energy needs of women are not paid attention to and reflected in energy laws and policies including their requirements for agricultural activities. Predominantly, women engage in farm produce processing distinct from males. For instance, cassava processing - milling and frying; palm oil processing - milling and boiling, etc are in the exclusive domain of women. These require milling machines and cooking energy services. More often than not, agricultural policies are not geared towards providing equipment that help women in these activities. Even when they do, it is usually provided for to the male to run and provide the services for the females for a fee. Rarely are clean energy services for processing agricultural produce canvassed for. Small scale women farmers and processors are thus forced to use firewood and open fire cooking services to fry garri and cook palm oil. They expend manual labor in palm oil processing, etc.

Women farmers perform multiple roles, distinct from the male. There is a lot of pressure on them to perform domestic, reproductive and child care chores. The burden of fuel and water collection reduces the amount of time women can spend in agricultural production. Women are virtually always the ones responsible for garnering fuel wood that is used for cooking and food

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<sup>78</sup> Judith Gardam, A Gender Aware Approach to Legal and Policy Strategies for Achieving Access to Modern Energy Services in Sub-Saharan Africa in Yinka Omoregbe ed, Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in Africa, forthcoming.

processing.<sup>79</sup> Women carry farm harvests from farms on their heads for several kilometers for storage or to the market for sale.<sup>80</sup> Projects and policies should contemplate the domestic roles of women and provide cheaper and cleaner energy, as well as neighborhood water sources. Women should be given access to participation in the decision making processes of community management arrangements for water and fuel.<sup>81</sup>

Advancements in technology often circumvent the activities of small scale women farmers. In Nigeria, women farmers use hand tools much more than the men.<sup>82</sup> For instance, small scale women farmers prefer to use traditional hand-held hoes, because ploughs tools are usually too heavy or inappropriate for women.<sup>83</sup> Relevant research and technology are necessary to develop suitable working implements including labour-saving tools in agricultural production,<sup>84</sup> light transport facilities for conveying firewood, farm produce and other loads and other crop processing equipment. Such technologies will not only free up time for women to engage more in productive activities but will also help in improving their health,<sup>85</sup> and could substantially raise labour productivity and yields.<sup>86</sup>

#### ***4.5 Gender differences in Labour market***

The significant discrimination in rural labour markets where men are paid more than women for the same work load is also a limiting factor to women's productivity and contribution to food

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<sup>79</sup> Camilus Basse Ben, The Role of Rural Women Farmers in Household Food Security in Cross River State, Nigeria, Global Advanced Research Journal of Agricultural Science Vol. 4(3) pp. 137-144, 2015.  
<http://garj.org/garjas/index.htm> . p138

<sup>80</sup> David Uru Iyam, The Broken Hoe: Cultural Reconfiguration in Biase Southeast Nigeria. 15 Jun 1995, University of Chicago Press, <https://books.google.com.ng/books?isbn=0226388492>> accessed 28/7/17 P 41

<sup>81</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa. Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. [http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf) p26

<sup>82</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O., The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity and Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. IOSR Journal of Engineering Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013), PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p55

<sup>83</sup> Investing in Women Smallholder Farmers: An ActionAid International Briefing. 2011.

[http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy\\_briefing-\\_investing\\_in\\_women\\_smallholder\\_farmers.pdf](http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy_briefing-_investing_in_women_smallholder_farmers.pdf) p5

<sup>84</sup> Jacques Diouf, Women– key to food security FAO AT WORK 2010–2011.. P 6

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/am719e/am719e00.pdf> 30 june> accessed 30/6/17

<sup>85</sup> *FAO Women in Agricultural Development, Gender Issues in Rural Food Security in Developing Countries, Rome. 1990 in Women: The key to food security. Women and sustainable food security. FAO Corporate document Repository.* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e02.htm>> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>86</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O., The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity and Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. IOSR Journal of Engineering Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013), PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p55

security.<sup>87</sup> Situations where women will be paid a meagre amount compared to their male counterpart for the same workload is very discouraging and can lead to low morale and productivity. Given the more limited ability of women to start their own businesses, women tend to become employees rather than self-employed and their workforce contribute to food productivity and security. Where they are significantly discriminated upon, it could lead to low and shabby jobs being done and this can affect the farm productivity level. Women could invariably be forced to work more hours in order to receive the same income as the men.<sup>88</sup>

Women also experience poorer labor conditions than their male counterparts. For instance, lack of adequate toilet facilities to attend to excretory and sanitary needs of a women could discourage women from engaging in agricultural activities especially during their monthly menstruation cycle or during pregnancy. Lack of proper safety kits also affect women more than men as women have more delicate and sensitive body parts. Pregnant women are more adversely affected by harmful chemicals. Pregnant and nursing mothers will naturally stay off work at some point to attend to their reproductive and child care roles. These circumstances inhibit the productivity of women to agricultural production.

There exists a gender-biased tax regime in Nigeria. For instance, the Personal Income Tax system discriminates against married women with respect to tax reliefs and allowances. Thus, the married men can claim children’s allowances, as long as he is not legally separated from his wife.<sup>89</sup> The Personal Income Tax burden therefore reveals that since married men are granted the tax relief on the assumption that men are breadwinners, the average tax paid for equivalent levels of income is higher for female taxpayer than male.<sup>90</sup> This also happens in collection of levies and rates at the local government level, albeit in form of extortion and intimidation. Small scale women farmers are usually harassed and intimidated, as vulnerable groups to extort

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<sup>87</sup> Esther Vivas. Feminism and the global fight for food sovereignty. 2012.

<http://climateandcapitalism.com/2012/10/26/feminis-food-sovereignty-2/> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>88</sup> Esther Vivas. Feminism and the global fight for food sovereignty. 2012.

<http://climateandcapitalism.com/2012/10/26/feminis-food-sovereignty-2/> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>89</sup> Abubakar Jimoh, How Nigerian women suffer from unjust tax regime. Daily Trust, Apr 22 2017.

<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/how-nigerian-women-suffer-from-unjust-tax-regime/194636.html> accessed 27/7/17

<sup>90</sup> Abubakar Jimoh, How Nigerian women suffer from unjust tax regime. Daily Trust, Apr 22 2017.

<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/how-nigerian-women-suffer-from-unjust-tax-regime/194636.html> accessed 27/7/17

different levies from them on their way to and in markets to sell their goods.

#### ***4.6 Gender and agricultural extension services / training***

Small scale farmers benefit from agricultural extension and training services that promote productivity. They will benefit from information on new improved crops and seedlings, several brands of fertilizers and their uses, better storage measures and systems and other technologies that can enhance their farming activities and the marketing system.<sup>91</sup> However, Nigeria’s agricultural extension system is pro-male and gender-insensitive towards women farmers.<sup>92</sup> These services focus on men and are tailored towards their farm production needs, while neglecting the needs of the female farmers.<sup>93</sup>

There are several reasons for this misdirection. First, there is a general misconception that extension advice will eventually ‘trickle down’ from the male household head to all other household members, including women. This has made some extension agents to target male farmers than female farmers.<sup>94</sup> Second, since male farmers have more access to the factors of production, some extension services are directed to them as they are more likely to adopt modern innovations, owing to sufficient resources and time. Thirdly, women farmers usually have lower levels of education than their male counterparts, which may limit their active participation in new technology and manuscript training.<sup>95</sup>

In addition, women’s social and domestic workloads impose severe time burdens on them and prevent them from attending regular meetings, trainings and extension activities, such as field

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<sup>91</sup> Sabo, B.B., Isah, S.D. , Chamo, A.M. and Rabi, M.A., Role of Smallholder Farmers in Nigeria’s Food Security Scholarly Journal of Agricultural Science Vol. 7(1), pp. 1-5 February, P4

<sup>92</sup> Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar, Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, Humanity & Social Sciences Journal 4 (1): 19-30, 2009, IDOSI Publications, p24

<sup>93</sup> Fertile ground: How governments and donors can halve hunger by supporting small farmers. 2010. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile\\_ground.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile_ground.pdf)> accessed 22/7/17, P17

<sup>94</sup> Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development, The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11,p32 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>> accessed 30/6/17

<sup>95</sup> Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development, The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11,p32 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

days outside their village or within mixed groups.<sup>96</sup> In some customs and religions, women are not allowed to interact with males whom they are not related to by birth or marriage.<sup>97</sup> These prevent them from benefiting from these services and from gaining greater knowledge of available products and services.<sup>98</sup>

Where female extension agents interacted with women farmers on a regular basis, they had good working relations and were able to formulate solutions to the challenges that women farmers faced.<sup>99</sup> The women farmers were comfortable, uninhibited by cultural and religious barriers to learn and communicate their challenges.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, more female extension agents should be empowered to bridge the gap of these cultural barriers. Meetings and trainings should also be fixed in consultation with women and at convenient times for women to attend, as activities and discussion therein may improve their contribution to food security.

#### ***4.7 Empowerment and access to decision making***

It has often been argued that in dealing with gender imbalances and to empower women, laws and policies should be gender sensitive and not gender neutral.<sup>101</sup> Women can be empowered by facilitating access to market for their products. Small scale women farmers have limited access to local markets to sell their produce due to time constraints, little access to market information and lack of facilities to add value to their produce.<sup>102</sup> The high cost of trading licenses, presence

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<sup>96</sup> Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development, The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11,p32 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, Sidiqat (2013). Role of extension services in the livelihoods of pastoralist women in Kwara State, Nigeria". *Albanian Journal of Agricultural Sciences* (2218-2020), 12 (4), p. 611

<sup>98</sup> María del Mar Hidalgo García., The Role of Women in Food Security, 92 <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/4229912.pdf>> accessed 30/6/17

<sup>99</sup> Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar, Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal* 4 (1): 19-30, 2009, IDOSI Publications, p24

<sup>100</sup> Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, Sidiqat (2013). Role of extension services in the livelihoods of pastoralist women in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Albanian Journal of Agricultural Sciences* (2218-2020), 12 (4), p. 614

<sup>101</sup> Implement Gender-sensitive Law Reform- UN Women’s Rights

<http://womensrights.silk.co/page/3.%20Implement%20%20gender-sensitive%20%20law%20reform>  
; Empowering women: Need stressed for implementing gender-sensitive laws , The Express Tribune, Pakistan, March 8, 2014

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/680184/empowering-women-need-stressed-for-implementing-gender-sensitive-laws/>;

Kevin Nengia, Women Activists Advocate Gender Sensitive Laws., January 31, 2011.

<http://www.thetidnewsonline.com/2011/01/31/women-activists-advocate-gender-sensitive-laws/>> accessed 29/7/17

<sup>102</sup> Investing in Women Smallholder Farmers: An ActionAid International Briefing. 2011.

[http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy\\_briefing-\\_investing\\_in\\_women\\_smallholder\\_farmers.pdf](http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy_briefing-_investing_in_women_smallholder_farmers.pdf) p5

of middlemen who take up most of the profits and bribe demands from government officials also inhibit women’s realization of high profits and productivity from agricultural ventures.<sup>103</sup> Where women have access to reliable cooling and storing facilities, it will reduce spoilage and increase productivity.<sup>104</sup> Adequate processing facilities for their produce, for instance to dry fish, will help them offer good quality products that will sell at higher prices.

Women’s low participation in national agricultural policy-making, have resulted in poor design and implementation of many gender specific developmental policies and programmes.<sup>105</sup> Only few women are on the rank of a director and above in the Nigerian Ministry of Agriculture, where most agricultural policies emanate from.

#### ***4.8 Gender and nutrition security***

Women provide for and prepare the food eaten in the household and are responsible for the nutritional needs of the children.<sup>106</sup> Women farmers have an enhanced knowledge of the nutritional qualities of several indigenous foods which they produce.<sup>107</sup> Research reveals that poor households headed by women often thrive better in providing more nutritional food for their children than those headed by men.<sup>108</sup> Research also indicates that women are more likely to spend their income on food and the nutritional needs of their children than men.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, empowering small scale women would produce significant improvements to agricultural

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<sup>103</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf) p 21

<sup>104</sup> Maurice Okafor, Small Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON) identifies problem. 24-07-2017.

[http://authorityngr.com/2017/07/Small-Scale-Women-Farmers-Organization-in-Nigeria-\(SWOFON\)-identifies-problems/](http://authorityngr.com/2017/07/Small-Scale-Women-Farmers-Organization-in-Nigeria-(SWOFON)-identifies-problems/) accessed 26/7/17

<sup>105</sup> Yemisi I. Ogunlela and Aisha A. Mukhtar, Gender Issues in Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria: The Role of Women, *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal* 4 (1): 19-30, 2009, IDOSI Publications, p25

<sup>106</sup> Carine Pionetti and Meena Bilgi, *The Long Road from Household Food Security to Women’s Empowerment Signposts from Bangladesh and The Gambia*. 2011.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/final\\_the\\_long\\_road\\_from\\_household\\_food\\_security\\_to\\_women\\_s\\_empowerment-doc.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/final_the_long_road_from_household_food_security_to_women_s_empowerment-doc.pdf) accessed 23/7/17 p4

<sup>107</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O, The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity and Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. *IOSR Journal of Engineering* Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013),PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p 55

<sup>108</sup> Women and Food Security / March 2015. P1

<http://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/women-and-food-security.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p2

production, food security, child nutrition and health.<sup>110</sup>

Despite this, women are the ones most affected by hunger.<sup>111</sup> However, women’s susceptibility to hunger and responsibility for food security and nutrition are preventable situations. They are socially fashioned and enthusiastically sustained.<sup>112</sup> The responsibility for food security and nutrition should not be heaped on the shoulders of women. It should be a collective responsibility of states, international organisations, men and women. Women should not have to suffer the inconvenience of resolving the world’s food crisis, alone.<sup>113</sup> Governments should strive to deliver on the realisation of the right to food to their citizens without overstraining women with food security and agricultural policies that rarely take them into account.<sup>114</sup>

#### **4.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES TO PROTECT SMALL SCALE WOMEN FARMERS**

The role of the law in promoting gender-specific measures to agricultural productivity will have significant impacts on food security in Nigeria.<sup>115</sup> Law will be used in this sense to include formal legal rules, adequate implementation of the laws, customary laws, legal concepts and legal principles reflected in proposed policies. Law is an imperative tool for social change and development. It can be used to influence the protection of vulnerable groups like women, by being gender specific. These gender specific laws should be implemented with gender specific policies and programmes. A vibrant judiciary should also be prepared to interpret and give effect

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<sup>110</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p2

<sup>111</sup> Esther Vivas. Feminism and the global fight for food sovereignty. 2012. <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2012/10/26/feminis-food-sovereignty-2/> accessed 23/7/17

<sup>112</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa. Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. [http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf) P25

<sup>113</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa. Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. [http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf) P25

<sup>114</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa. Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. [http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf) P25

<sup>115</sup> Land, Gender and Food Security: The Rule of Law as an Enabler. International Development Law Organization October 19, 2016 <http://www.idlo.int/news/events/land-gender-and-food-security-rule-law-enabler>> accessed 24/7/17

to the laws when the need arises.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, values are not static. Customary laws and traditional structures should be deliberated and necessary changes generated.<sup>117</sup> Gender-based reforms that will positively influence customs should be pursued.<sup>118</sup> Informal dispute settlement mechanisms should also be engaged, to ensure that they are non-discriminatory. Situations where family constituted dispute settlement committees treat domestic and gender based violence with kids’ gloves or give verdicts that undermine the basic rights of women should be discouraged through male targeted reforms and campaigns.

Notwithstanding that Goal Five of the Sustainable Development Goals seeks to promote gender equality, the 6th aspiration of Agenda 2063 strives for women inclusion, and the Nigerian Constitution guarantees no discrimination on the basis of sex, discrimination against women still persist in Nigeria. As outlined above, this has affected women’s productivity in agriculture thereby hindering their contributions to food security in Nigeria. Gender neutral legislations co-exist with an often paradoxical set of corresponding customary laws. This is worse where the legislation incorporates customary rules in it. For example, the Land Use Act incorporates customary laws on acquisition of land,<sup>119</sup> even where it is obvious that most customs in Nigeria are prejudicial in affording women opportunities to access land rights on their own. There is a need to amend that section of the Act to provide for ‘non-discriminatory customary laws on acquisition of land’. While this may seem like all other non-discriminatory provisions without legal bite, it can be relied on by women to access the courts where there are indiscriminate gender biased allocations in favour of men.

Then again, research reveals that programmes and projects cannot be effectively implemented without adequate funds. Agricultural budgets must not only be adequate but should focus on small scale women farmers, who do most of the farming activities. The budgets should also be channeled to projects that will benefit women farmers specifically, without assuming that general projects would.<sup>120</sup> Government banking services, for example the Bank of Agriculture and Bank

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<sup>116</sup> Gita Gopal, Empowering Women To Achieve Food Security, Law And Legal Reform, Focus 6, Policy Brief August 2001, p2 <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/empowering-women-achieve-food-security>> accessed 24/7/17

<sup>117</sup> What Women Farmers Need: A blueprint for action. 2011.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the\\_blue\\_print\\_for\\_women\\_farmers.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_blue_print_for_women_farmers.pdf) p10

<sup>118</sup> Gita Gopal, Empowering Women To Achieve Food Security, Law And Legal Reform, Focus 6, Policy Brief August 2001, p2 <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/empowering-women-achieve-food-security>

<sup>119</sup> See Section 51 (1) of Land Use Act.

<sup>120</sup> Lucy Ferguson and Zohra Moosa. Farming as equals: How supporting women’s rights and gender equality makes the difference May 2011. [http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa\\_farming\\_as\\_equalslores.pdf](http://peuples-solidaires.org/sites/files/actionaid/aa_farming_as_equalslores.pdf) p2

of Industry, should offer more flexible and innovative credit proposals that demand the type of collateral which small scale women farmers possess and can present e.g. group guarantee.<sup>121</sup> Agricultural aids that support women farmers should be on the priority list for funding.<sup>122</sup>

Multilateral and bilateral donors are encouraged to invest in gender sensitive interventions. Currently very limited donor investments target gender specific projects. Less than 10 per cent of the Official Development Assistance that is directed toward agriculture explicitly incorporate gender issues.<sup>123</sup> Financial, human and material resources should be mobilized to strengthen gender-sensitive food security and nutrition interventions with priority given to assisting sustainable small scale farming and gender responsive basic services in rural areas.<sup>124</sup> The Rural Finance Institution Building Programme (RUFIN) though not gender specific, is however commendable. RUFIN is a 27.5 million U.S. dollar loan agreement between International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Federal Government of Nigeria. The central objective of the programme is to develop and strengthen Micro Finance Banks and other Micro Finance Institutions by boosting access of the rural public to funding to improve agricultural productivity as well as micro and small scale enterprises.<sup>125</sup> Few women have been beneficiaries. However, the problem of corruption usually inhibits the prospects of some of these projects. For instance, the Nigeria Labour Congress had alleged that political farmers were the main beneficiaries of the Central Bank of Nigeria’s interventions to support rural farmers.<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, Government agencies responsible for Small Business Development must recognise the importance of small scale women farmers and outline programmes that benefit them specifically. Section 8 of the SMEDAN Act mandates the agency with the responsibility of

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<sup>121</sup> Adenugba, A.O & Raji-Mustapha, N. O, The Role of Women in Promoting Agricultural Productivity And Developing Skills For Improved Quality of Life In Rural Areas. IOSR Journal of Engineering Vol. 3, Issue 8 (2013),PP 51-58. [http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3\\_issue8%20\(part-5\)/H03855158.pdf](http://www.iosrjen.org/Papers/vol3_issue8%20(part-5)/H03855158.pdf) p 55-56

<sup>122</sup> Investing in Women Smallholder Farmers An ActionAid International Briefing. 2011.

[http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy\\_briefing-\\_investing\\_in\\_women\\_smallholder\\_farmers.pdf](http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy_briefing-_investing_in_women_smallholder_farmers.pdf) p2

<sup>123</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p15

<sup>124</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p15 and 17

<sup>125</sup> CBN, IFAD give awards to 60 MFBs, others for supporting rural businesses. 18-03-2017 <http://authorityngr.com/2017/03/CBN-IFAD-give-awards-to-60-MFBs-others-for-supporting-rural-businesses/> accessed 28/7/17

<sup>126</sup> Oscarline Onwuemenyi., NLC says CBN agric loans given to political farmers. 18 January 2017, <http://sweetcrudereports.com/2017/01/18/nlc-says-cbn-agric-loans-given-to-political-farmers/> accessed 28/7/17

initiating and articulating ideas for small and medium scale industries policy thrusts. The explanatory memorandum to the Act further provides that by establishing the agency, the Act further enhances and supports services to accelerate rural development, poverty alleviation and eradication.<sup>127</sup> In furtherance to this mandate, SMEDAN has rolled out several programmes, one of which is the National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDP). NEPD was established in 2012 with an aim to create a minimum of one million jobs annually by strengthening the existing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria and making them employers of labour. It is interesting to note that while ‘Promoting Youth Inclusion’ appears as one of the priority agendas for the programme, there is no single programme that is gender sensitive to the plight of women in general.<sup>128</sup>

In addition, climate resilient methods that increase productivity should be funded instead of chemical-intensive approaches that often benefit richer farmers, most of whom are men.<sup>129</sup> Adverse agrichemicals affect men and women differently, especially concerning reproductive health. For instance, specific chemicals can cause miscarriage of unborn babies.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, the laws and policies on safety standards should be gender specific in such areas as the outcome is usually fatal and gross. Agricultural workplaces should have separate washrooms for men and women. Sexual harassment remains a labour concern in most work places, including agricultural enterprises. Managerial and supervisory officials usually intimidate small scale women farmers in order to have sexual relations with them by threatening to fire or hire.<sup>131</sup> Strict policies and implementation of labour laws are needed in these areas.

Collective action in the form of women cooperatives have been shown to be a powerful channel to organise women and increase their agricultural productivity. It is a medium to share information, form savings groups, set up local seed or grain banks, engage in collective

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<sup>127</sup> <http://www.smedan.gov.ng/images/PDF/SMEDAN-ACT.pdf>> accessed 28/7/17

<sup>128</sup> National Enterprise Development Programme. Release 1.0. <http://www.nepza.gov.ng/downloads/nedep.pdf> p 14

<sup>129</sup> Fertile ground: How governments and donors can halve hunger by supporting small farmers. 2010.

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile\\_ground.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile_ground.pdf) p4

<sup>130</sup> Celia Mather, Safe farms, safe workers, safe communities: Improving occupational health, safety and environmental standards on plantations and farms in Africa. March 2015.

<http://www.iuf.org/w/sites/default/files/2015%20Safe%20Farms%2C%20Safe%20Workers.pdf>> accessed 24/7/17  
P23

<sup>131</sup> Celia Mather, Safe farms, safe workers, safe communities: Improving occupational health, safety and environmental standards on plantations and farms in Africa. March 2015.

<http://www.iuf.org/w/sites/default/files/2015%20Safe%20Farms%2C%20Safe%20Workers.pdf>, P25

marketing and provide supportive services.<sup>132</sup> More importantly, they can be used to structure credit and market access, enlarge their bargaining power and strengthen their political voice.<sup>133</sup> They can also serve as breeding grounds to prepare them for decision making and leadership roles. The success of these collective actions can be gleaned from the overwhelming increase in production and easy access to market, resulting from support services offered to the Zembaba Bee Products Development and Marketing Cooperative Union in Ethiopia. This group provided a platform where small-scale women producers were trained in production techniques with the use of a new technology that was more socially acceptable to women. The training was made available at times when women could attend. Due to these efforts, small scale women farmers who hitherto produced small quantities of low-quality honey expanded production by 400% in two years, boosted household proceeds by 200–400% and started exporting certified organic honey to international markets.<sup>134</sup>

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Law is not merely a compilation of written laws and regulations, it includes the manner in which these rules are actually implemented by government agencies, applied and interpreted by judges and its principles reflected in policies. Therefore, law was used here to include formal legal rules, adequate implementation of the laws, customary laws, legal concepts and legal principles reflected in proposed policies. Laws and legal systems can play a significant role in guaranteeing that women’s productivity contribute to food security.

Despite overwhelming evidence to show that the contributions of small scale women farmers is significant to the realisation of food security, Nigerian law and policies, and the ways they have been implemented, have neglected this important group. Social, cultural, religious and economic barriers exist to limit the agricultural activities and productivity of small scale women farmers. The low productivity is aggravated by gender specific roles that burden women, distinct from

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<sup>132</sup> Investing in Women Smallholder Farmers: An ActionAid International Briefing. 2011.

[http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy\\_briefing-\\_investing\\_in\\_women\\_smallholder\\_farmers.pdf](http://actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/policy_briefing-_investing_in_women_smallholder_farmers.pdf) p5

<sup>133</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security. London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p3

<sup>134</sup> What Works for Women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security, London March 2012. [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what\\_works\\_for\\_women\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf) p4

men. The peculiar and obvious needs of small scale women farmers justify the demand for gender specific projects. Only by understanding how these issues are interlinked can gender responsive approaches be embarked on. Therefore, there should be a gender sensitive approach to legal and policy measures for achieving food security in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government should collaborate with traditional rulers in Nigeria and other stakeholders to ensure that harmful traditional practices which target only women, are displaced.<sup>135</sup> Legal frameworks should be strengthened especially with implementation of laws. There should be a renewed commitment to intensify rights and policies awareness and increased public investment in rural infrastructure to promote production of adequate, affordable and safe food produced in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

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<sup>135</sup> Ifemeje, S., and Ogugua, I., 2012. Global Trend Towards Gender Equality: Nigeria's Experience in Focus. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(3), pp. 51-63