

Assessment of Gender Roles in Potato Production: A Case study of Nakuru County, Kenya

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Summary

Potato is the second most important staple food crop after maize in Kenya. It is a cash crop which improves the livelihood and household food security. Potato provides employment to 800,000 men and women in Kenya. However, potato production is biased in Kenya due to gender disparities in access to productive resources like land, labour, inputs, financial and extension services. In order to close gender disparities gap in access to productive resources, assets, financial and extension services that affect productivity and food security status, this baseline study for Seed-Potato Community Action Research Project sought to assess gender roles in potato production in Nakuru County because the county is one the leading potato producing counties in Kenya. The County was purposively selected because it's one of the leading potato producers. Njoro and Kuresoi North sub counties were selected due to their high involvement in potato farming. Mauche, Mau Narok, Kamara, and Sirikwa wards were selected from the two sub counties. 175 respondents were selected randomly from four wards and interviewed using structured questionnaires. Primary data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. SPSS Version 20 and Microsoft excel were used for data analysis and Chi square was used to analyze gender roles in potato production. The results revealed that 61% female and 39% male respondents participated in the survey. Interestingly, female farmers reported that most of the activities were done by male farmers. Roles play by men include land leasing, land preparing land, furrow preparation, seed purchasing, transporting seed, purchasing fertilizer, spraying provision of labour for dehauling, packaging produce and transporting harvested produce. Women weed the third time only during the production period. Roles play by both men and women include ridging, provision of labour for planting, weeding the first and second time, and provision of labour for harvesting. The survey revealed that most of farm activities were undertaken by male farmers. Therefore the study concluded that there is statistically significant difference between roles play by both men and women in potato production in Nakuru County.

Key words: Agricultural productivity, food production, food security, men, women, productive resources

Introduction

Agriculture contributes 30% of Gross Domestic Product to economic growth of most developing countries in the world. In Sub Saharan countries, it provides 45% incomes to men and women and employ 65% labour force made up of men and women (World Bank, 2015). Men and women play different roles in agricultural productivity that affect productivity and food security status directly and indirectly (Mukasa and Salami, 2016). Studies show that there is gender bias in agriculture sector where men and women have unequal access to productive resources, assets and services (Mukasa and Salami, 2016). Again, some studies reveal that women have more edge in agricultural production than men (Sah et al., 2007) while other studies also say men perform better in agricultural production than women (Ogato et al., 2009).

Potato is the second most important staple food crop after maize in Kenya; it is also a cash crop (Gildermacher et al, 2011), which improves the livelihood and household food security. It reduces rural poverty and enhances income of small-scale farmers in the rural community (Okello et al., 2016). Riungu, (2011) reported that potato provides employment to 800,000 men and women in Kenya. However, potato production is bias in Kenya due to gender disparities in access to productive resources like land, labour, inputs, financial and extension services. In order to close gender disparities gap in access to productive resources, assets, financial and extension services that affect productivity and food security status, this baseline study for Seed-Potato Community Action Research Project seek to determine gender roles in potato production in Nakuru County because the county is one the leading potato producing counties in Kenya.