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Constraints and Gender Perspectives at Various Nodes of Cassava Value Chain in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Cassava, based on its versatility and product values, presents great potential to reducing food insecurity and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. However, in Nigeria, actors along the cassava value chain often face challenges that limit the realisation of this potential. With focus group discussions involving 168 respondents and quantitative data drawn from 225 farming households, this study describes the cassava food value chain around small-holder cassava farmers in two local government areas, Ayedire and Iwo, in Osun state, Nigeria. We aimed at understanding the major constraints of each stakeholder group at different nodes of the value chain. Women played an important role at each node except for transportation and dominated product selling, and 3 of 5 managers of the predominantly small scaled processing centres interviewed were female. For farmers (about 90%), cassava root provides cash for immediate exigencies, however, cocoa, oil palm and yam were considered more important for household income generation. For traders and transporters cassava was one of several crops; only processors (about 100%) relied exclusively on cassava with gari as the major product. None of the actors had access to formal credit facilities and this was viewed as a constraint by farmers, processors and traders of the final product. Similarly, only farmers (30%) had access to extension with perceived quality described as poor. Furthermore, poor road network (traders and transporters), lack of modern or poor state of equipment (farmers, transporters, processors), and fluctuation of prices or availability of root material according to the season (traders, processors) were among other constraining factors. The weak market, mentioned by processors (>60%) and final product traders (>80%), may indicate that the potential of the cassava value chain for our participating actors is limited if no new ways of marketing are explored. On the other hand, the cassava value chain in Ayedire also held several opportunities: farmers and transporters stated that they could generally trust their informal contract partners, and traders were satisfied with their final product. Therefore, concerted efforts targeting local constraints like better coordination among root producers and processors, for example through an innovation platform, to overcome seasonal root shortages, should be undertaken to enhance the viability of the value chain.

Keywords: Processors, product sellers, root producers, roots traders, transporters