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“Solidarity in a competing world —
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Gender Disparities in Intra-Household Roles and Decision Making among Cocoa Producing Households in Nigeria

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Abstract

The decision making landscape in rural households has been said to be dominated by men over the years. But could there be a difference in households where male and female members participate in production activities of major cash crops like cocoa? If there are, to what extent and what are the driving forces behind it? This study profiled cocoa households, examined the extent of men and women’s participation in cocoa production and marketing activities, and the factors which influenced the decision to participate. Primary data were collected through interviews with structured questionnaires from 100 households which were randomly selected through a multi-stage sampling approach from a cocoa producing local government area of Osun state. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and probit regression. The results show that over 80 percent of the decisions associated with cocoa production and marketing are made by men who are the household heads. In a few cases, joint decisions are made and in fewer cases the woman makes the decisions. It also shows that men and women participate effectively in the different activities from production through processing to marketing. Cultural norms/traditional belief systems, group membership and income are the constraints perceived to limit women’s participation. Factors which drive the imbalance in decision making include education and extension training. The policy implication is that as Nigeria advances her match in cocoa expansion, women are likely to be excluded and left behind. The cocoa value chain needs to be made more gender responsive and the market development made more inclusive for different gender groups.

Keywords: Cocoa, households, inclusion, value chains, women