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Dr. W. B. BELLO, Dr. M. A. MOSOBALAJE

Dr. G. O. OYELERE, Mr. R. A. AJAO

CUSTOMARY LAND TENURE SYSTEM AND ITS EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURAL FARMLAND IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA.

¹Ogunjimi, M. O., ¹Oyekan, A. P., ²Gbopa, A. R., ¹Ogunremi M., ¹Adejumobi, A. O.
and ²Babawale, J. O.

¹Department of Agricultural & Bio-Environmental Engineering, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria; ²Department of Electrical Electronics Engineering, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria;

wolejimmy@gmail.com (+23480347500827)

Abstract

Land allocation systems are determined by cultural and traditional make up of communities. Different land tenure are controlled by traditional value systems of people practiced in different geocultural zones of Nigeria. Communal land tenure is practiced in the western part of Nigeria predates the colonial period in Nigeria. The system has some basic effects on the allocations of agricultural farmlands to the farmers. The study investigated the mode of accessibility of farmlands to farmers, difficulty or ease of accessing land, farmland sizes, the interest of farmers in farmland expansion and the literacy level of farmers. Questionnaires were distributed to farmers in Ibarapa and Idere to collect data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. It was observed that farmers that are non indigenes found it difficult to access land while the indigenes found it so easy. It is recommended that government should take proactive steps to formulate policies that will encourage farmers to have more farmlands and strict adherence to government policies must be enforced.

Introduction

Communal land ownership is the expression used to describe the system whereby land is collectively owned by an extended family, clan or community of ancestrally related people, with the control or administration vested in the leader or his appointee, w

ho may give out portions of the land to the community members to be used or an individual or a more or less nucleated family basis, or a cooperative basis or through such recognized ways for variable lengths of time (Edwin, 1994). In Nigeria, different land tenure systems are practiced in different regions based on their traditional makeup and belief. In the southern part, specifically the south western region of Nigeria, communal tenure is regulated by customary laws is practiced. Land belongs to the community, village or the family, never to the individual.

This group ownership under the indigenous system gives rise to some distinctive features. All members of the group, community, village, or family have equal right to the land, but in every case the chief or the head of the family occupies a unique position in relation to the land. He has charge or control of and in a loose mode of speech, is sometimes called the owner (Ehi, 1990). This type of tenure system is widely practiced in the western part of the Nigeria, the region where the study area is situated.

This type of tenure system entrust the village, community or family land in the hand of a head who is probably the most elderly in the community, village or family. The trustee is charged with the responsibility of allocating the land to members according to the custom guiding it. The trustee could be Chief of a community, Baale of a village or Mogaji as a family head. This is widely practiced among the Yoruba ethnic nationality of which the case study area is one.

This type of land tenure system has advantages and limitations on the agricultural land of places where it is practiced. The paper investigated the effects the system has on agricultural land and activities of farmers in the study area.

Material and Method

Ibarapa Central is a local government Area in Oyo State, Nigeria. The local government consists of Igboora and Idere and with headquarter in Igboora. It has an area of about 440kilometers square and a population of 102,979 at the 2006 population census. In 2018 the population was estimated to be around 322,189 people. The local population is made up of Ibarapa people who are in turn a Yoruba ethnic group and the indigenous Fulani settlers who have decimated the forest land. Ibarapa Central falls approximately within longitude 30°E and 30.3°E and latitude 70.16°N and 70.55°N. It is located approximately 100km north of coast of Lagos. It is bounded by Abeokuta, Ogun state in the Southern part, Eruwa the Headquarter of Ibarapa east to the Eastern part, Bounded by Ayete to the western part and Iseyin axis to the north. Most of the land in Ibarapa central lies at elevations ranging between 120 and 200 above sea level. Rocky inserbergs and outcrops can be seen rising at 340 meters, the particular one is oke idere.

Precipitation is characterized by a double rainfall maximum; that is two high rainfall peaks, within a short dry season and a longer dry season falling between and after each peak. The first raining season begins around March / April and ends at the end of July. The peak usually comes up in June. The short dry season is experienced throughout the month of August. The short raining season is characterized with torrent and heavy downpour at the beginning of September and ends towards the end of October or early November. This is followed by long dry season which starts in November and last till March.

The vegetation was originally rainforest but now transformed to derived savannah due to deforestation from slash, bus burning and intense grazing. The combination of forest and grassland provides good habitat for animals and birds like Antelopes, fowls, eagles, sparrows e.t.c.

The population of study is basically farmers in Ibarapa central local Government comprising of two major towns of Igboora and Idere. The study employed the primary data (research designed questionnaire) collected from the study area in May 2021. Oral interviews were also conducted from the respondents. For even representation, Igboora was divided into 17 segmented areas of Igboole, Pako, Odofin, Sagaun, oke odo, Oke iserin, Isale Oba, Oja Igboora, Oremeji, Imeleke, Igbo Asio, Ajegunle, Surulere, Olorunsogo, Abolonko, Pako Tuntun and Isale Pembo. A total of 100 copies of questionnaire were administered. Five questionnaires were allotted to each area. Simple random sampling was employed in each area for adequate representation of the entire population.

Idere as a community or town was treated as a single entity and 15 copies of questionnaire items were administered. The data collected were representations of the various parts of the study area. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which is one of the statistical tools of mean and percentage was used for the analysis.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Source of Access to land by the farmers

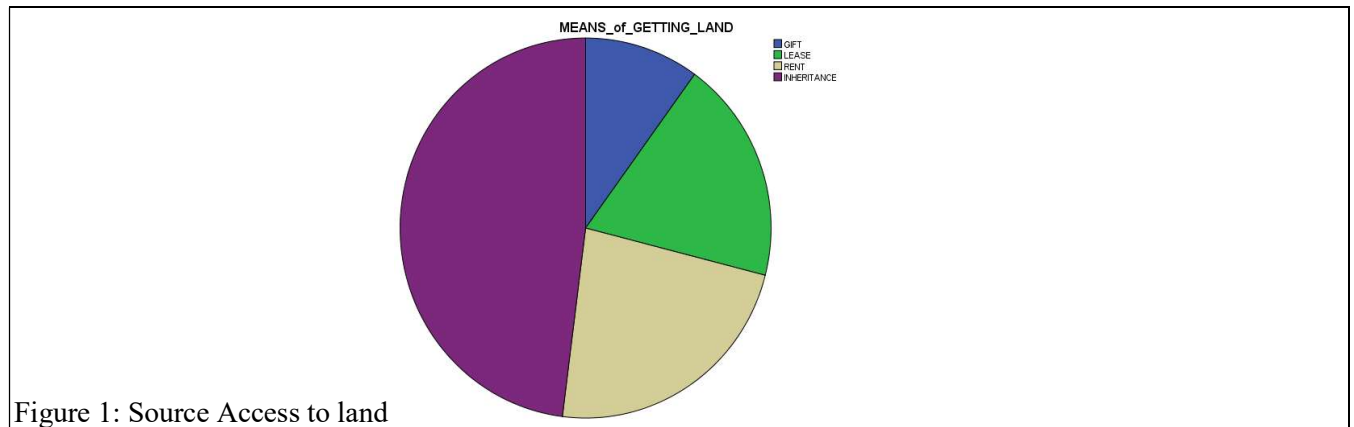


Figure 1: Source Access to land

The Figure 1 revealed that there are four main sources of accessibility to land by the farmers. 48% of the respondents inherited the land, 23% got the land through rent, 19% through lease while 10% had their own through gift. The inference that can be drawn from this is that inherited portions of land form the highest mode of accessibility to land in the study area. This clearly explained the custom of the Yorubas where farmlands are allocated or transferred by the village or family head who is the trustee to the land.

Most of the respondents who got the land through rent and lease are non indigenes that have financial commitment for the usage of the land as agreed by them and the original owners of the land

Ease or Difficulty of acquiring land.

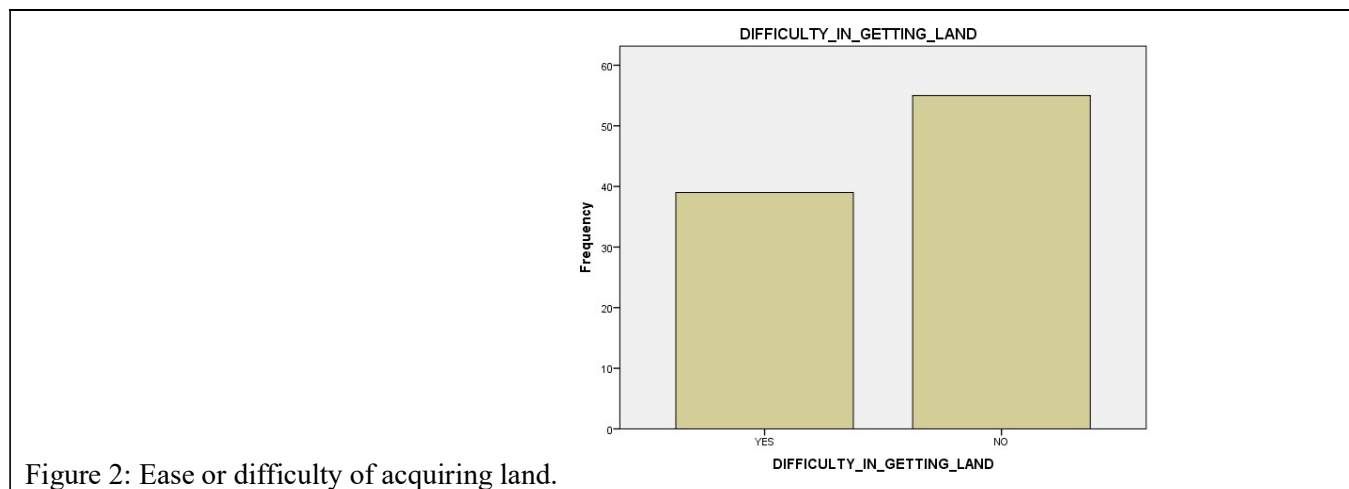


Figure 2 revealed the ease or difficulties of acquiring land by the respondents. 39% finds it difficult to get land while 55% acquire land easily for farming. The reason for this was that most of the respondents are indigenes and acquired land easily through transfer or inheritance from the family land. Those who had difficulty in getting land are non indigenes that have to go through rent or lease before they could get land for farming. Among the non indigenes, 19% of them said family land available for rent or lease is far. 15% said families don't release their land for farming while 5% said rent is high. All these indicated that non indigenes find it difficult to get land for farming

Size of Land

Size In Acre	Frequency	Percentage
ONE	7	7.0
TWO	21	21.0
THREE	23	23.0
MORE THAN THREE	49	49.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 1: size of land used by Farmers.

The table revealed the sizes of farmlands occupied by the respondents. 48% respondents had more than three acres of land for farming, 23% of them had three acres, 21% with two acres while 7% respondents add one acre. The respondents with less farmland are non indigenes with less access to land and the aged indigenes who engaged in rudimentary and subsistence farming.

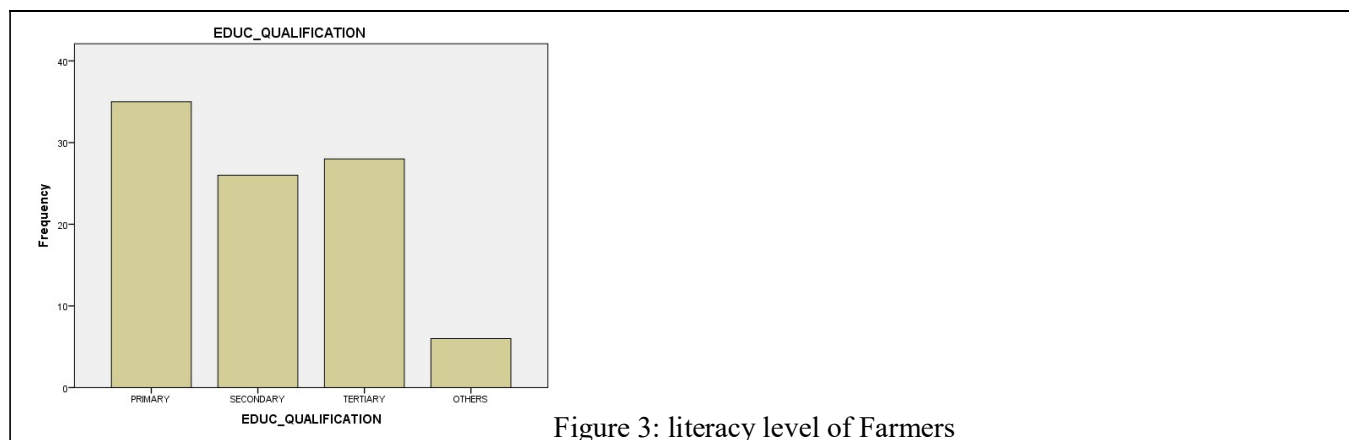


Figure 3: literacy level of Farmers

From figure 3 above it is inferred that 35% of the respondents had primary education, secondary education 26%, Tertiary 28% while others which are probably illiterates take 11%. This indicated that there are drifting of well educated people from pursuit of white collar jobs to farming. Some well educated people had been forcefully engaged in farming because of the hostile economy which made no provision employment.

Farmland Expansion

From the survey conducted, 52% of the farmers indicated readiness to expand their farmland if they are opportune to more land. 12% respondents are satisfied with the portion they presently occupy. 32% did not respond. Those who want more land are mostly the non indigenes and few non indigenes who want more land to be added to their allocations. 12% who do not want expansion and 32% who did not respond are mostly indigenes who had enough land to farm and they could get more anytime they wish.

Recommendations

Land is considered most important for production, especially agricultural production. Although the supply of land area is limited and cannot be increased at our wish. Without enough land to farm, agricultural production will be limited and will in turn affect food production that will meet the demand of the growing population. Government policies as regard land should be the type that will favour farmers. Indigenous land tenure systems which had posed threat to agricultural productions should be reviewed to favour farmers who are not indigenes of a particular area. Government should start or revive farm settlement to accommodate those who need land for farming, particularly young graduates who had developed interest in farming. Rent and lease of land should be regulated by Government to favour farmers. Trustees to land particularly the chiefs, the bales and family heads should be trained and encouraged by government to release land for agricultural purposes. Strict adherence to government policies should be enforced for farmlands to be made available to those who need them.

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