

AN INVESTIGATION OF LAND TENURE SYSTEM ON THE UTILIZATION OF LAND BY SMALL SCALE FARMERS IN OKPOKWU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study analysed the effect of land degradation on yield of maize in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Data were collected through structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that maize farmers in the study area were predominantly male (67.0%) whom were mostly married. Erosion, flooding, desertification at 2.27, 2.11 and 2.02 respectively recorded a mean above 2.0 stood out as the perceived type of land degradation that affecting the yield of maize. The study showed that over grazing (35%) was the major cause of land degradation. The results on the comparison of mean in degraded and non-degraded land showed indicated that there was a significant difference between the former and the later. With an R-squared value of 0.540, the study justified that factors of land degradation has significant influence on output of maize. It is recommended that agronomic practices should be taught to the farmers by extension agents on how to manage and control erosion, flood and desertification so as to prevent land degradation.

Keywords: Land, degradation, maize output, farmers, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Land is the basis for every form of physical development and constitutes the primary medium for food production, for the provision of shelter and utilities, for the manufacture of goods and the establishment of institutions to support the basic needs of modern communities (Kim and Muhammad, 2014). Land as a factor of production and as a natural resource is critical in agricultural production. Its importance is expressed in terms of availability, accessibility, quantity and quality. In Nigerian agriculture, the accessibility and quality factors stand out as major determinants of productivity. This is due to the problems associated with artificial amendments that can improve productivity of land (Fakoya *et al.*, 2007). The accessibility of most agricultural lands especially in the country, depends largely on land tenure system and the extent of competition by non-agricultural land uses (Udoh, 2010). Land tenure systems influence the use to which land is put for economic and social development. Land tenure is a mix or bundle of entitlements (rights and duties) concerning the use of land resources. It covers the rules under which those rights and duties are exercised and the time horizon or

guarantee of continued claim to such entitlements (Bromley, 2011). It is the integral set of principles, criteria and practices that reflects, operationalizes and regulates people's rights, privileges, duties, obligations in relation to ownership of, access to and use/alienation of land, including any conditionality and time dimension of these attributes (Adedipe, 2007).

Land rights are fundamental to the use and sustainable land management, since they specify access to land resources and the rights of use. Most land resource management problems are often seen as related to incomplete, inconsistent or ineffective tenure regimes. Land rights provide owners with the incentives to use land efficiently and to invest in land conservation and improvements (Feder and Feeny, 2011). Although, tenure systems vary from one rural community to another, it is pivoted on three broad systems of communal, individual and family ownership. With the continued growth of the human population, competition for limited land resources has steadily increased over recent years and most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa like Nigeria, have experienced an intensive use of the arable land. Although, scholars like Boserup (2011), Buckles and Erenstein (2006) and

Erbaugh (2010) had affirmed the potential of achieving agricultural growth through intensification.

However, commensurate uses of modern inputs were identified as fundamental condition for sustainable growth through increased land-use intensity. In the absence of this, increased land-use intensity could lead to continuous depletion of soil fertility, decline in productivity, loss of soil structure, soil erosion and land degradation (Sivanappan, 2005; Cassman 2009; Erbaugh 2009). The intensity of land use has been recognized as one of the most significant human alteration to the global environment (Matson, Parton, Power and Swift, 1997). Meanwhile, land degradation, the weakening of the structure, stability and productive potential of the soil, is one of the worst environmental problems facing many people world-wide, with over 40 million affected in Nigeria (Etuonovbe, 2009).

The most land tenure systems practices in Nigeria are communal, lease, free gift, purchase, land by will of government. These systems are challenging to the farmers as considering the farming investment decisions the farmer has in mind. These land tenure systems prevent capital investment and provide fragmented parcels of land to the farmers not encouraging for commercial production (Kim and Muhammad, 2013).

Small scale farmers use land for subsistence crop and livestock farming. Crop farming is carried out on fragmented piece of land and small number of livestock are reared. The decision to expand the use of land is taunted by the type of land tenure system practiced in the area of concern.

Proper utilization of land is essential to sustainable agricultural production and improvement in food sufficiency. In Nigeria, crop production is in serious competition, sometimes to the point of open conflict with nomadic cattle herders. This is aggravated by urbanization and growth of villages into towns, industrialization and construction of roads, which have resulted in cultivable land being withdrawn from its traditional agricultural uses, reduction in land-man ratio and average size of farm land (Lockwood, 1991). Although the Land Use Act of 1978 was meant to usher in a new land reform in Nigeria, it soon became a

clog in the wheel of development over the years. Those who are willing to carry out agriculture cannot because they do not belong to the community or no money to purchase and own land. This stands as a posing problem limiting food production and increasing demand for agricultural product as land tenure systems at times put cultivable lands into non-agricultural use (Tsue, 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is “an investigation of land tenure system on the utilization of land by small scale farmers in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue state. The specific objectives for the study are to:

- i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers in the study area;
- ii. identify the land tenure systems practices;
- iii. examine the factors influencing utilization of land by small scale farmers;
- iv. determine the effect of land tenure system on utilization of land by small scale farmers;
- v. assess the level land tenure systems in the study area posed constraints to land utilization by small scale farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The area of study is Okpokwu Local Government Area (LGA), which comprises of Okpoga, Edumoga and Ichama districts with Okpoga as the headquarters. The area was created in 1976 and takes its name from the Okpokwu stream. More so, the area shares boundary with Oturkpo, Ohimini, Ogbadibo and Ado LGAs of Benue State; OlamaboroLGA of Kogi State and Isi-UzoLGA of Enugu State. The major inhabitants of the area, who speak a dialect of Idoma are predominantly farmers with citrus fruits, maize, cassava, maize and groundnuts as the main produce in the area. The region is also popular for the quality of garri produced in the area.

The biggest town in OkpokwuLGA is Ugbokolo, which is the home to Benue State Polytechnic, the first indigenous tertiary institution in Idoma Land. Other towns in the LGA include Eke-Nobi, Eke-Olengbecho, Eke-Agide, Oji, Ella, Amejo and Okonobo.



Figure 1: Map of Benue State showing Okpokwu Local Government Area

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study comprises of all small scale farmers in Okpokwu LGA of Benue State. Multistage sample was used. First is the random sampling of six (6) political wards out of twelve (12) wards in Okpokwu Local government area which include Amejo, Eke, Ichama, Ojigo, Ojogba, Okonobo, Okpale-Ingle, OkpogaCentral, OkpogaSouth, Okpoga North, Okpoga West and Ugbokolo. The selected six (6) wards include; Amejo, Ojigo, Okonobo, Okpoga central, OkpogaWest and Ugbokolo. Second is the random sampling of twenty small scale farmers each from the six wards making a total number of 120 respondents.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data will be used for the study. Data will be collected with the use of structured questionnaire through interview method. The different section of the questionnaire defines the various ways the questions are formulated to achieve the specific objectives of the study. Section A is on the socioeconomic characteristics of the small scale farmers. Section B is on land tenure systems practiced in the area. Section C is on factors influencing utilization of land by small scale farmers, Section D is on effect of land tenure system on utilization of land by small scale farmers in the study area and Section E is on the level of land tenure systems in the study area pose constraints to land utilization by small scale farmers.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data for the study were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. These statistical tools were specified as follows. Objectives (i), (ii), (iii) and (v) were realized using descriptive statistics such as

frequency distribution, means, standard deviation, rating scale and percentages.

Multiple Regression

Objectives (iv) was achieved using multiple regression analysis. The model was expressed with Utilization of Land (UTL) as the dependent variable which is a function to the independent variables as explicitly stated thus:

$$UTL = f(LTS)$$

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + e_i$$

Where

Y= utilization of land (UTL)

X₁= communal land tenure

X₂= Inheritance Tenure system

X₃= Individual land Tenure system

X₄= Leasehold Tenure system

X₅= Rent Tenure system

X₆= Purchase or Free hold Land Tenure System

X₇= Tenant at government will

e_i= Error term

b₀ = Intercept,

b₁ – b₉ = Regression parameters to be estimated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on their socio-economic characteristics. An examination of table 2 shows that 0.8% respondents fell within the age of 20 years and below, majority 48.2% fell within 41-60 years, 42.5% fell within 21-40 years, while 7.5% fell within 61 years and above. The mean age of 43.29 implied that majority of the small scale farmers were in their most active years or most productive years as

opined by Umehet *al* (2013), that majority of small scale farmers were within the age bracket of 41- 50 years.

With respect to sex, males constituted the majority (56.7%) while (43.3%) were females. This implies that majority of the small scale farmers were males. This result is consistent with the findings of Kim and Muhammad (2013) who found out that male constituted the large number of small scale farmers.

The result further reveals that 20.0% were single, 60.0% were married, 11.0% were widows/widowers and 9.0% were divorced. Majority of the respondents were married. This implies that a sense of responsibility of married people is capable of prompting them to put more commitment to the business and towards meeting their family needs. This is in consonance with the findings of Umehet *al*, (2013) who stated that majority (79.7%) of the small-scale farmers were married.

The distribution of respondents according to their household size showed that majority (49.2%) had household sizes of between 1 to 5 persons, (38.3%) of the small scale farmers had between 6 to 10 persons, (6.7%) of the respondents had between 11 to 15 persons and (5.8%) had household size larger than fifteen persons. The mean household size was 6.88 persons. The implication is that there is a tendency for cost of farming to be reduced, since large family size translates to ready supply of family labour. This result agrees with the findings of Umehet *al*, (2013), who opined that majority of the small scale farmers; have a household size ranging from 5 - 9 persons with an average household size of six persons.

Majority (46.2%) of the small-scale farmers had between 1-10 years of experience in farming (38.3%) had between 11- 20 years of farming experience (8.7%) had between 21 to 30 years of farming experience and (6.7%) had more than 30 years of experience in farming. The respondents had a mean farming experience of 14.53 years. This implied that the respondents had more experience in farming business and hence the greater tendency to be technically efficient, as indicated by Kim and Muhammed (2013), that there is a positive correlation between experience and efficiency in business.

The result on educational status of respondents revealed that 6.7% of the respondents had secondary education, only 5.8% had tertiary education, majority 49.2% of the small scale farmers had primary while 38.3% of the respondents had no formal education. The mean score of 4.20 implied that majority of the respondents were literate with one form of formal education or the other and this also implies that they would be highly receptive to technological changes that could improve production and better adoption. This is in consonance with the view of Umehet *al*, (2013) who opined that, in line with World Bank reports, the output

of an educated farmer is about 13% higher than that of the uneducated. The obvious reason being that, the educated and literate farmer has the added advantage of learning with little promptings, the rules and application of production inputs in order to achieve optimum result.

Majority (58.3%) of the respondents had farm size of 5.1 or greater than 5.1 hectares, 1.7% had a farm size of 1 or less than 1 hectare, 20.8% had farm size of between 1.1-3.0 hectares while 19.2% had a farm size of 3.1-5.0 hectares. The mean farm size of the respondents was 9.23hectares indicating that the respondents were truly small scale farmers.

Most 57.5% of the respondents had nonfarm size of 5.1 and above hectares, only 13.3% had nonfarm size of 1 and below hectares, 22.5% had nonfarm size of 1.1-3.0, while 6.7% had nonfarm size of between 3.1-5.0 hectares. The mean nonfarm size was 4.17.

The distribution of respondents according to their primary occupation shows that (66.7%) were farmers, (10.0%) were business men and women, (5.8%) were consultant, (9.2%) were consultant while (98.3%) respondents were civil servant as their primary sources of income, making farming their secondary source of income. The implication of this result is that the respondents still engaged in other income generating activities; and this could be attributed to the seasonal nature of the farming business (Kim and Muhammed, 2013).

Income distribution from farming activities from table 2 shows that majority of the farmers 43.3% had annual farm income of ₦100001 to ₦300000, 24.2% had annual farm income ranging from ₦100000 and below, 16.7% had annual farm income ranging from ₦300001 to ₦500000 and about 15.5% earned ₦500,001 and above. The mean income from annual farming activities was ₦ 338,608.33.

Majority 85.0% of the farmers had ₦100,000 and below from off-farm activities, 12.5% had between ₦100,001 to ₦300,000, 0.8% had off-farm income of between ₦300001 to ₦500,000 Only 1.7% had between ₦500,001 and above. The mean off-farm income was ₦78,641.67 indicating that farmers could not only rely on off-farm activities for survival considering the large family size of the farmers.

Most (50.0%) of the respondents had no contact with extension agent with connotes no extension agent visitation, (36.7%) had extension agents visit between 1 to 2 times, (10.8%) had extension agents visit between 3 to 4 times while few (2.5%) had extension agents visit between 5 and above. This implies there is an inadequate extension agent's visitation to the study area.

The result also shows that 21.7% of the farmers have access to credit while majorities 78.3% have no access to credit. This implied that majority of the processors have no access to formal credit facilities.

Only 36.7% of the farmers belong to any form of member of agricultural cooperatives. agricultural cooperative, while majority 63.3% are not

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n=120)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
≤20	1	0.8	43.29
21-40	51	42.5	
41-50	59	49.2	
61 +	9	7.5	
	120	100	
Sex			
Male	68	56.7	
Female	52	43.3	
	120	100	
Marital status			
Single	24	20.0	
Married	67	60.0	
Widow/Widower	18	11.0	
Divorced	11	9.0	
	120	100	
Household Size			
≤5	59	49.2	7
6-10	46	38.3	
11-15	8	6.7	
16+	7	5.8	
	120	100	
Farming Experience			
≤10	56	46.7	14.53
11-20	46	38.3	
21-30	10	8.3	
31+	8	6.7	
	120	100	
Education			
<1	46	38.3	4.20
1-6	59	49.2	
7-12	8	6.7	
13 +	7	5.8	
	120	100	
Farm Size			
≤1	2	1.7	9.23
1.1-3.0	25	20.8	
3.1-5.0	23	19.2	
5.1+	70	58.3	
	120	100	
Nonfarm size			
≤1	16	13.3	4.17
1.1-3.0	27	22.5	
3.1-5.0	8	6.7	
5.1+	69	57.5	
	120	100	
Primary Occupation			
Business	12	10	
Civil Servant	10	8.3	
Consultancy	7	5.8	

Farming	80	66.7	
Trading	11	9.2	
	120	100	
Annual farming income			
≤100000	29	24.2	338608.33
100001-300000	52	43.3	
300001-500000	20	16.7	
500001+	19	15.8	
	120	100	
Annual income from other sources	102	85.0	78641.67
≤100000	15	12.5	
100001-300000	1	0.8	
300001-500000	2	1.7	
500001+	120	100	
Extension Visit	60	50.0	
≤1	44	36.7	
1-2	13	10.8	
3-4	3	2.5	
5+	120	100	
Access to Credit	26	21.7	
Have Access	94	78.3	
No Access	120	100	
Membership of Agricultural Cooperative	44	36.7	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Land Tenure Systems Practiced in the Study Area

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents based on the types of land tenure system practiced.

Majority (85.8%) of the small scale farmers were practicing individual land tenure system, (71.7%) of the small scale farmers used practiced communal land tenure system, (62.5%) of the respondents were practicing purchase tenure system, (48.3%) of the small scale farmers were using rent, (46.7%) of the small scale farmers were using gift tenure system, (45.0%) of the small scale farmers practiced leasehold tenure while (30.8%) of the

respondents were tenant of government. The high percentage (85.8%) of individual land tenure system implies that family inheritance is the major forms of land ownership in the study area.

The result is in agreement with the findings of FAO (2013) that small scale farmers own small portions of land through inheritance which they use in subsistence farming but contradict the findings of Tsue (2015) who opined that hired lands are mostly used for arable cropping by small scale farmers.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents based on the Land Tenure System Practiced

Land Tenure System	*Frequency	Percentage
Communal land	86	71.7
Individual land tenure	103	85.8
Leasehold tenure	54	45.0
Rent	58	48.3
Gift	56	46.7
Purchase	75	62.5
Tenant of government	37	30.8

Source: Field Survey, 2018

*Multiple Responses

Perceived Factors influencing Utilization of Land by Small-Scale Farmers

Table 4 shows the factors influencing utilization of land by small scale farmers in the Study area (as of the time of data collection). The factors influencing the utilization of land by small scale farmers were; arable crops production for sale in the market (M = 3.42), food for family consumption (M = 3.19), storage of agro-products during off season (M = 3.13), assembly of agricultural produce ready for transportation to urban centers (M = 3.12), cottage industries for traditional processing of agric-product like garri (M = 3.11), future sale of the land to make profit (M= 3.03), livestock keeping (M = 2.93), feeds for livestock (M = 2.48) and for leasing to other farmers (M = 2.24).

The serious factors that enable/prompt respondents to utilize land were; arable crops production for sale in the market (M = 3.42), food for family consumption (M = 3.19), storage of agro-products during off season (M = 3.13), assembly of agricultural produce ready for transportation to urban centers (M = 3.12), cottage

industries for traditional processing of agric-product like garri (M = 3.11), future sale of the land to make profit (M= 3.03), which is in agreement with the findings of Shimelleset *al*, (2009) which pointed arable crops production for sale in the market and food for family consumption as the major factors that influences small scale farmers use of land. Also the result is in conformity with the findings of Kim and Muhammed (2013) who reported that future sale of the land to make profit and livestock keeping are the factors influencing land utilization by farmers. The minor factors identified by the respondents were storage of agro-products during off season (M = 3.13), assembly of agricultural produce ready for transportation to urban centers (M = 3.12), cottage industries for traditional processing of agric-product like garri (M = 3.11. and feeds for livestock (M = 2.48) while the least factors that influences land utilization by the small scale farmers was leasing to other farmers (M = 2.24).

Table4:Percentage Response of Perceived Factors influencing Utilization of Land by Small- Scale Farmers

Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Mean
Food for family consumption	54(45.0)	39(32.5)	23(19.2)	4(3.3)	3.19
Arable crops production for sales in the market	58(48.3)	54(45.0)	8(6.7)		3.42
Future sale of the land to make profit	35(29.2)	55(45.8)	29(24.2)	1(0.8)	3.03
Shortage of agro-product during off season	42(35.0)	57(47.5)	15(12.5)	6(5.0)	3.13
Cottage industries for traditional processing of agric-product like garri	36(30.0)	66(55.0)	13(10.8)	5(4.2)	3.11
Assembly of agricultural produce ready for transportation to urban centers	46(38.3)	48(40.0)	21(17.5)	5(4.2)	3.12
Feeds for livestock	20(16.7)	40(33.3)	38(31.7)	22(18.3)	2.48
Livestock keeping	33(27.5)	58(48.3)	16(13.3)	13(10.8)	2.93
For leasing to other farmers	15(12.5)	39(32.5)	26(21.7)	40(33.3)	2.24

Source: Field Survey, 2018

**Values in parenthesis () are the percentages*

Effect of Land Tenure System on Utilization of Land by Small-scale Farmers

Results of the effect of land tenure system on utilization of land by small scale farmers are presented in Table 5. Regression was run using fourteen explanatory variables to determine what factors affects the farm size (land use) of the respondents. The R^2 value is 50.02% which implies that all the explanatory variables together explained about 50.02% of the total variation in value of farm size (Y). The associated F value (7.475) is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). This implies that the included independent variables significantly influenced utilization of land by farmers. Hence the null hypothesis that land tenure and other factors do not influence land utilization is rejected. The result further revealed that only coefficient of age of farmers (-3.358), sex (3.339), levels of education (-0.210), household size (0.393), annual farm income (4.622), annual nonfarm income (-9.279) and communal land inheritance (2.361) were significant ($p \leq 0.05$). The co-efficient of farmers' age was negative and significant at 5% level of probability, signifying that the older the farmer, the lower the volume and quantity of the farm size which connotes lower utilization of land and also output. The co-efficient of the respondents was positive and significant at 1% level of probability, implying that units change in the sex of the farmers from either female to male increase the farmers' farm size by 3.339 hectares while holding other factors constant, which also means increase in land utilization. The co-efficient of farmer's levels of education was negative and significant 5% level of probability, signifying that a unit increase in the small scale farmer's level of education reduces their farm size (land utilization). This could be as the result of learned farmers' seeking for white collar job which may lead to rural-urban migration. The co-

efficient of the respondents' household size was positive and significant at 1%. This implies that additional increase in the number of household can increase the land utilization (farm size) by 0.393 hectares while holding other factors constant, since more number of household members may lead to increase family labour which can boost the volume and quantity of production. This confirms the findings of Umehet *et al.* (2013), who opined that household size was positively associated with land utilization. The regression co-efficient of annual income from farm was positive and significant at ($p < 0.05$) signifying that higher income earners are more likely to increase their level of land use (farm size). The higher the income of the farmers the more they invest in the farming business which enhances the volume and quantity of production as opined by Kim and Muhammed, (2013). Small scale farmers are encouraged to increase their level of land utilization in order to maximize land use and output. Annual income from nonfarm activities had a negative and significant effect on the level of land utilization (farm size) at 5% level of probability. This implies that income from nonfarm can reduce the level of land use (farm size) by 9.279 hectares while holding other factors constant, due to unwillingness of the respondents to invest their off-farm income into farming business. The coefficient of communal land inheritance was positively and statistically significant at 10%, signifying that availability of communal land may likely increase small scale farmers' level of land use. Since communal land is readily available for use at 0% cost. It can be deduced from the findings that availability of communal land can substantially increase the chance of more land utilization. The results show that the remaining variables are not statistically significant, indicating that the variables are unlikely to substantially affect land utilization in the study area.

Table 5: Effect of land Tenure System on Land Utilization by Farmers

Variables	Coefficient	t-values	Sig.
Age	0.129	2.489	0.014**
Sex	3.339	3.143	0.002*
Years in School	-0.210	-2.160	0.033**
Household size	0.393	2.813	0.006*
Annual farm income	4.622	2.588	0.011*
Annual nonfarm income	-9.279	-2.134	0.035**
Agricultural cooperative	0.819	0.551	0.583
Access to credit	0.111	0.071	0.944
Extension visit	0.657	1.390	0.168
Communal land inheritance	2.361	1.936	0.056***
Individual land tenure	-1.306	-0.816	0.416
Leasehold tenure	0.780	0.806	0.422

Gift	1.124	0.857	0.393
Tenant of government	-0.357	-0.255	0.799
Constant	-3.358	-1.225	0.224
R ²	0.502		
F	7.475		

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

*, **, *** significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

Problems posed by land tenure system against utilization of land by small scale farmers.

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents' perceived problem posed by land tenure system against the use of land by small scale farmers in the Study area (as of the time of data collection). Majority (15.0%) of the small scale farmers believed lack of access road as the major problems posed by land tenure system against utilization of land by small scale farmers, (14.2%) of the respondents perceived inadequate

finance as the problems posed by land tenure system against land utilization, only (5.0%) believed insecurity as problems posed by land tenure system against land utilization, (2.5%) of the respondents believed climate change as the problems posed by land tenure system against land utilization.

The minor problems identified by the respondents were over population (1.7%) and others, while the least problem is over grazing (0.8%).

Table: Problems posed by Land Tenure System against Utilization of Land by Small-Scale Farmers

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Road Access	18	15.0
Inadequate Finance	17	14.2
Insecurity	6	5.0
Over Population	2	1.7
Climate Change	3	2.5
Over Grazing	1	0.8

Source: Field Survey, 2018

CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of the study investigated the land tenure system on the utilization of land by small-scale farmers in Nigeria. Hence, the need to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers; identified the land tenure systems practices; examined the factors influencing utilization of land by small scale farmers; determine the effect of land tenure system on utilization of land by small scale farmers; and accessed the level land tenure systems in the study area posed constraints to land utilization by small scale farmers. Results showed that majority of the small-scale farmers were males, majority who are married fell within their productive average ages with a reasonable average household size. Majority of the respondents had their major occupation as farmers. The study shows that majority of the small-scale farmers were practicing individual land tenure system. The study also shows that the significant factors enabling small-scale farmers in utilizing land for agricultural production are: arable crops production for sale in the

market, food for family consumption, as well as storage of agro-products during off season and assembly of agricultural produce ready for transportation to urban centers. The study further reveals that the farmers' age, sex, levels of education, household size, annual farm income, annual nonfarm income and communal land inheritance had significant effects on land utilization. Findings from this study showed that majority of the small-scale farmers believed lack of access road as the major problems posed by land tenure system against utilization of land by small scale farmers, while of the respondents perceived inadequate finance as the problems posed by land tenure system against land utilization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made;

- (i) Financial assistance should be given to small scale farmers through loans from agricultural banks or any other related financial

- institution. This should be done at low interest rates to encourage borrowing, which would lead to increase in the volume and quality of land utilization.
- (ii) People who are in their active years should be encouraged to go into farming by awareness creation through workshop, to mention a few.
 - (iii) Females should be encouraged to go into small scale farming by awareness creation through various media (seminars, workshop, television, radio and newspaper). This will ensure a balance in gender involvement in farm business.
 - (iv) Extension agents should be made readily available by state and local government agricultural department to enhance timely and adequate supply of various agricultural land use information to farmers, which may boost their level of land utilization.
 - (v) Small scale farmers should be motivated to cultivate more of arable crops for sale in the market. This will enable them to utilize more land for cultivation.

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