

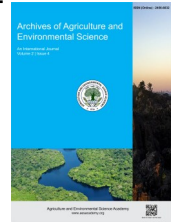


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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE



A study on family farm-enterprise of producers in rural communities of the Gambia

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ABSTRACT

The agricultural systems of the Gambia entirely depend on rain-fed agriculture, and it propels economic growth. Agriculture's contribution to the Gambia's GDP is 22%. The Gambia's economy heavily depends on agriculture and provides 30–40% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Family farm enterprise is a lucrative business, but limited research work has been done to determine its economic contributions in improving the livelihoods of producers. The problem statement of the research work is to identify knowledge gap, finance, and markets of family farm producers to enhance production capacity, yield and income. The objective identifies the contribution of family enterprise to the economy, and to address the challenges that affects profitability. The study applied a purposive sampling technique for qualitative and quantitative approaches. The methodology of data collection was focus group discussion, key informants' interviews and review of secondary data from other research work. A total of (5) focus group discussions, (90) interviews and (10) key informants was conducted in 3 agricultural regions. The results showed female participates immensely in family farm production than male of 443 and 25 respectively. The result showed positive contribution in socio-economic development were North Bank Region scored D2, 709,225 while lowest income earned was Central River Region amounting to D279,700.00 respectively. In conclusion, family farm enterprises can boost local economy of rural communities enhancing livelihoods. Thus, recommend government to create easy access to finance, market and training on business management skills for the family members engaged in agriculture as a business entity.

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INTRODUCTION

The agricultural systems of the Gambia entirely depend on rain-fed agriculture and it propels economic growth. Agriculture's contribution to the Gambia's GDP is 22%. The Gambia's economy heavily depends on agriculture, and provides 30–40% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The family farm engaged in agricultural production in the rural communities plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of family members for sustainable livelihood. Importantly, investment in family farms enterprise be observed in broader economic perspective where agriculture is crucial for socio-economic activities (Macharia *et al.*, 2018). According to Ishak *et al.* (2020), family business involves ownership control by the family which strategically

influence members to adhere on business management skills. The women and youths as member of family farm actively participates in business entities to earn their income. The women and youths plays a vital role in farm family enterprise management, however are not given opportunities to per-take key decision making processes but contribute substantially to farm labour (Fieve & Chrysostome, 2022). Importantly, women and youths had inadequate innovative ideas, knowledge and skills but are involved in various enterprise activities like value addition, poultry production, petty trading and sheep fattening as source of income for livelihood sustenance. The main economic bottle neck of family farms operations is access to productive resources such as land, finance, access to markets, and climate change variations. According to

Bernatovic *et al.* (2021) family enterprises are the main contributor to food and nutritional security, income and creation of employment to enhance rural economy. The issue of community development approach can be linked to family enterprise which will promote development initiatives. The significance of this research finding would help the government institutions and CSO to take decisive decisions on family farm enterprises and by extension would have direct impact on the lives and livelihood of family members. Primarily, family farm enterprise benefit is not only employment creation, but serves as mechanism of improving the quality of life for families and the society in a sustainable environment. Notably, family farm enterprises cannot bear the burden of management costs where they lack information, knowledge and skills needed for modern business management. In economic terms, family enterprise relies on specific entrepreneurial skills, ownership, management, risk behaviour and resilience achievement (Nermin & Eray, 2020). The government need to formulate national policies and strategies ensuring that family farm enterprises have the leverage to control productive resources, facilitate farmers' organizations to support youth and women for growth and employment in rural communities. Arguably, family farm enterprise that does not have a coherent business model would not have financial muscles to generate sufficient profit on sustainable manner will fail in long term basis (Aljuwaiber, 2020). Therefore, it is prerequisite to involve all family members to participate in each of

the business stages to nurture the idea of transparency and accountability to avoid chaos or conflicts among members.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In any scientific research the process of developing methodology is to arrive at empirical results which is vital for social research. Research methodology is a guide to follow the steps in order to achieve research objectives, draw conclusions and recommendations. This research work was conducted in three (3) agricultural regions namely, North Bank Region, Central River Region and Upper River Region, respectively (Figure 1). The study applied a purposive sampling technique for both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Crossman, (2020), indicates that purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, and non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the respondents to participate in their surveys. The method of data collection was focus group discussion, key informants' interviews and review of secondary data from other research work. A total of 5 focus group discussion, 90 interviews and 10 key informants was conducted in the agricultural regions of the Gambia. The data analysis and interpretation was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS).

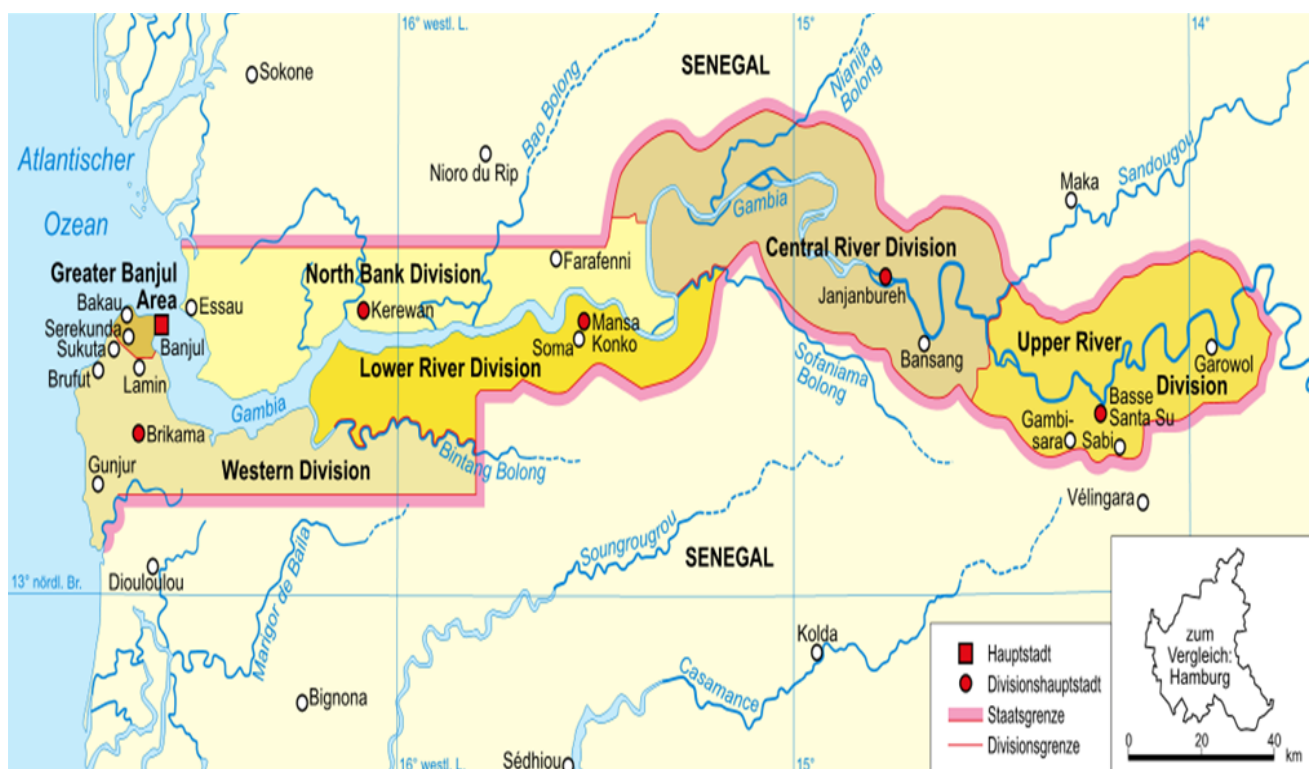


Figure 1. Map of the Gambia showing the study areas marked in colours.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation and data analysis was based on descriptive statistics deriving at conclusion and recommendations of the research findings. The interpretation and discussion of this research focuses on yield, price and income as key variables. The family farm is a model of business entity in the rural dwellings where they are actively engaged in vegetable production, processing and livestock activities. The result presented in Table 1, clearly shows gender disaggregation between male and female indicating that female participates immensely in family farm enterprise management than their male counter parts of 443 and 25 respectively. Importantly, from imperial evidence women were seen as drivers of vegetable and livestock production and marketing. According to Bunthan *et al.* (2020) male dominance into other food production systems was probably due to their accessed to farmlands and productive resources than their female counter parts. The family farm enterprise plays a critical role in revamping the local economic of rural settings in boosting their lives and livelihood of members (Wiatt *et al.*, 2019). In order to determine the growth and profitability of family enterprise, three (3) important parameters was factored which include price, yield and income. Family enterprise is booming in the socio-economic activities of entrepreneurs in rural communities particularly women and youths. In Table 2, Njoben enterprise obtained a yield of 55,500 kg of onion or 56 tons/ha while Jamali Nyangado obtained 41,134 kg while the lowest yield obtained was Illiassa with 5 tons/ha respectively. According to Ovharhe (2019) family enterprise activities are based on members' choice of choosing a high value and profitable agricultural commodities to serve the needs of its members on sustainable manner.

The production and marketing of tomatoes of different family enterprises in rural communities have achieved positive results from business transactions serving as source of food, nutrition and income security to maintain their standard of living. The government and civil society organizations in recent times have given priority to food systems seeing it as lucrative business enterprise for family members (Taye *et al.*, 2018). The results Table 3, clearly shows that, Njoben and Gui-Jahanka registered 62 and 21 tons/ha of tomato respectively. Importantly, these two (2) family enterprises have comparative advantage of obtaining high yields as a result of adoption and application of best agricultural technologies. The utilization of knowledge, skills, innovative ideas, and experience has great potentials to increase financial and non-financial benefits to the family members in the rural communities (Boers & Henschel, 2022). The family enterprise in developed and developing countries are seriously challenged with markets and marketing related issues. Moreover, market transaction is an approach where large producers sold similar kind of agricultural commodities (Edeoba *et al.*, 2020). The result in Table 4, indicates aggregate market transactions in three (3) regions where three hundred and fourteen kilogram (314kg) of onion were rejected as a result of poor-quality onions. However, the implications of financial losses at a tune of D8, 500, due to post-harvest losses and poor quality produce would impacted on the profit margin of the enterprise. Urgently, smallholder farmers need to maintain high quality produce to meet consumers' satisfaction in order to sell their produce at a better price to obtain better profit margin (Dlamini *et al.*, 2019). Primarily, the success of business enterprise depends on cash flow to meet it operational transactions to give window of opportunity for a sustainable and profitable family farm enterprise (Baltazar *et al.*, 2023).

Table 1. Gender segregation by region.

S. No.	Region	Gender		Aggregation by gender	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	West Coast Region	7	91		
2	North Bank Region	15	279	25	443
3	Central River Region	3	73		

Table 2. Production and yield data of onion.

Producers	Crop	Bed size	No of beds	Production (Kg)	Yield (Tons/ha)
Illiassa	Onion	1 × 10m ²	286	5,232	5
Gui-Jahanka	Onion	1 × 10m ²	354	24,780	25
Jamali Ganyando	Onion	1 × 10m ²	792	41,134	41
Njoben	Onion	1 × 10m ²	929	55,500	56
Mamufana	Onion	1 × 10m ²	390	10,140	10

Table 3. Production and yield data of tomato.

Producers	Crop	Bed size	No of beds	Production (Kg)	Yield (tons/ha)
Illiassa	Tomato	1 × 10m ²	63	15,750	16
Gui-Jahanka	Tomato	1 × 10m ²	70	21,000	21
Jamali Ganyando	Tomato	1 × 10m ²	152	3,300	3.3
Njoben	Tomato	1 × 10m ²	515	61,800	62
Mamufana	Tomato	1 × 10m ²	23	1,564	2

Table 4. Aggregate market transactions.

Regions	Quantity delivered (Kg)	Quantity bought (Kg)	Quantity bought (bag/18kg)	Quantity rejected (Kg)	Quantity rejected (bag/18kg)	Price (18kg) (Dalasi)	Potential income (Dalasi)	Actual income (Dalasi)	Loss income (Dalasi)
WCR	9,529	9,215	512	314	17	500	264,000	256,000	8,500
NBR									
CRR									

Table 5. Monetary and share value.

S.No.	Region	Value (D)	Share (%)
1.	West Coast Region	910,250.00	23
2.	North Bank Region	2,709,225.00	69
3.	Central River Region	279,700.00	7
4.	Total	3,899,175.00	100

The family enterprise cements socio-economic initiatives of rural communities to make ends meet at household level. The multiplier effect on family members in order to enhance their living conditions by reducing poverty and increasing income of family (Barry & Rousselière, 2022). In addition, Table 5, shows the income earned from the three (3) regions where family enterprise actively participates in income generating activities. The North Bank Region scored D2, 709,225.00 while the least income earned was Central River Region with D279, 700.00 respectively. The share obtained was 69% while lowest share was 7% by Central River Region. The total value of money earned was D3, 899.175.00 from the three (3) family enterprises with 100% of shared value. The income earned as profit would determine the performance of a business venture (Eric *et al.*, 2019). In the Gambia agriculture plays a critical role in boosting socio-economic development of smallholder farmers particularly women vegetable producers in the rural communities. Agriculture contributes 28% to GDP of the economy and seventy (70%) of the population are actively engaged in agriculture as source of income. The driving force of economic growth is being propel by agriculture with active participation of women farmers to attain food and nutritional security. Vegetable production is one of the government's priority areas to address food insecurity, income and ameliorate nutrient deficiencies while creating employment opportunities for youths in rural communities of the Gambia. The research finding reveals that, women greatly participates in the management of family enterprise than their male counter parts of 443 and 25 respectively. The implication of the research finding is that, for rural development initiatives the involvement of women in family enterprise would have direct impact on their lives and livelihood than their male counter parts. In addition, research findings also revealed the production capacity and yield data of onion and tomato as depicted in table 2 and 3 respectively.

Furthermore, the research also depicts aggregate market transactions in which family enterprises have the opportunity to gain potential income of D264, 000 everything being equal but were able to obtained D256, 000 from their transactions. However, the family enterprise was able to register loss income of D8, 500 bearing on the negative economic impact of the profit. The loss of income was attributed to poor quality, and inappropriate handling of post-harvest losses and management at field level. In addition, Monetary and share value shows that, North Bank Region and West Coast Region obtained a shared value of 69 and 23% respectively with a total amount of D3, 899,175.00. In addition operations in agriculture was associated with daunting working conditions, limited access to knowledge, land ownership, and access to finance restricting active participation of family farm members.

Conclusion

In conclusion, family enterprise is an integral part of socio-economic development in rural communities that would boost the lives and livelihood of women and youths in the areas of income generation, and poverty reduction. The research findings recommend to the government to create that window of opportunity for easy access to finance, more market-out lets and capacity building opportunities and formulation of rural development policies directed to improve the livelihood of family members.

DECLARATIONS

Author contribution statement

Conceptualization, Methodology, Software and validation, Formal analysis and investigation, Resources, Data curation, writing original draft preparation, writing review and editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration, funding acquisition: S.E.S.

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