



GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL LAND ACQUISITION AND RURAL FARMING HOUSEHOLDS' LIVELIHOOD IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

¹Osinowo, O. H., ¹Ogunnaike, M. G. and ²Mufutau, R. A.

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management,
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Yewa Campus, Ayetoro, Ogun State, Nigeria.

²Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology,
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Yewa Campus, Ayetoro, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author's E-mail: osinowotoks@gmail.com **Tel.:** 08034705095

ABSTRACT

The Nigeria Land Use Act of 1978 placed statutory ownership of land into the State governors' hands for public interest, and since then, the objectives of this act are yet to be met after 43 years of its enactment. Rural farming households in South West Nigeria has over the years experienced a forceful dispossession of their parcel of land by the State government and the conflicts arising from this take-over have remained largely unresolved both by lawful and peaceful means. The study examined the guiding principles of government agricultural land acquisition and rural farming households' livelihood in South West Nigeria. The study used primary data sourced from 480 displaced rural farming households whose land has being acquired by government. The respondents were selected using two-stage sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Likert five points scale was used to measures attitudes. The results revealed that the displacement of rural farming households pushed many of the farmers to engaged in other jobs rather than relying only on farming activities. Likewise, there was a notable difference between the income earned by the farmers before and after forceful dispossession. The Likert five points scale revealed that the comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land and a robust and inclusive engagement strategy with all stakeholders, including affected communities and vulnerable groups was not effective in South West, Nigeria. This was reinforced by the finding that majority (75%) of the respondents reported a substantial knowledge gap and lack of awareness about policy frameworks and procedures associated with government agricultural land acquisition. The study recommended that State government should embrace comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by Committee on World Food Security-Responsible Agricultural Investment (CFS-RAI) and payment of fair compensation to the affected families whose land has been acquired by government.

Keywords: Compensation, FRILIA, Land use act, Likert five points scale, Rural livelihood.

INTRODUCTION

Land is regarded as the most valuable natural resource in the sense that it affects every aspect of the lives of the people (Obayelu *et al.*, 2017). Land is an essential element in agricultural development and its accessibility is crucial to the attainment of a sustainable national development, hence any policy on land affects the economy of the nation positively or negatively depending on whether a right or wrong policy is initiated. Land is said to be fragile and scarce. Accessibility to land comprises of availability of usable land, affordability of such land, and ease of transaction with that land and security of the owner's right.

Availability of arable land is closely linked with food insecurity and agricultural development. Food production, housing, industrial production and nature conservation are



competing for the same land. Land availability for agricultural production as reported by Obayelu *et al.* (2017) involves a complexity of interacting variables such as population, land tenure system, level of technology and the stage of the country's development. Out of these variables, the land tenure system puts serious limitation on the amount of land that is available for all categories of farmers. Land tenure system in Nigeria varies with tribes, clans, states and communities.

According to Fabian (2013), land is a natural resource and acknowledged as part of the property that belongs to the people in a particular community or district. As a communal property resource, it is considered the economic, social and political backbone of their survival as a people. Land is very vital for agricultural production, and for any nation that wants to be self-food sufficient. Land is an important asset that improves the livelihoods of poorer groups in every society. In traditional Nigerian society, land is an indispensable factor of production and the source of all material wealth (Udoekanem *et al.*, 2014).

The history of land ownership, utilization and development in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era when the customary land tenure existed, it recognized that land in its entirety belonged to the indigenous people and could be owned privately or collectively (Ghebru and Okumo, 2016). The customary tenure was considered an impediment to agricultural development due to absence of secure and clearly defined property rights. Consequently, the federal government of Nigeria enacted land use decree of 1978 and vested ownership of all lands in the country on the government and its agencies with the aim of ensuring ease of land acquisition by prospective farmers especially for large scale production (Obayelu *et al.*, 2017).

The Nigeria Land Use Act of 1978 nationalized land, placing ownership of the land in the hands of the state governors "in trust" for the benefit of all citizen. The act also aimed to prevent land speculation by imposing restrictions on land transactions. With regard to security of tenure for smallholder agriculture, the act makes provisions for the registration of rural land using the instrument of Customary Certificates of Occupancy, which are supposed to be issued by local governments. However, less than 3 % of the country's land resources are formally registered (Birner and Okumo, 2011), indicating a far-reaching failure of the act and the institutions in charge of its implementation after 41 years of its enactment.

Nwoko (2016) noted that during the early period of the Act, the rate of land dispossession and forceful displacement of individuals and communities was minimal as well as the people's resistance to such dispossession. The reason was because the people saw those projects on their land as their own, as well as the fact that they were compensated most times and the developments on the land impacted their lives positively. However, in the era of global development drive, globalization and the increased pressure on governments desperate for foreign investments have tripled the allocation of this resource to private and corporate entities for investment purposes; construction, mining, communication and other industrial purposes. This meant that this scarce resource became a source of nightmare and restiveness for the communities and individuals concerned.

According to Lucain (2017), the global development drive has triggered much pressure on land as there is increasing demand for the extension of urban areas and the expansion of agriculture in the rural area. This pressure on land has resulted in challenges patterning to people in connection to their land and ownership rights. These land-pressured occurrences have strained the rules, procedures and institutions which decide which land resources are to be utilized, who to utilize them and under what conditions.

Birner and Okumo (2011) noted that more than 90% of agricultural rural land in Africa is not registered, which facilitates phenomena such as land grabbing and expropriation without substantial compensation. Nigeria constitution recognizes the right of the state government to



acquire land and pay compensation to the affected landowners. The government determined compensation is to cover losses incurred by landowners from surrendering their land to the government. This is to ensure an impartial and even balance between the constitutional right of the individual and public interest represented by government. But in a country pervaded by information asymmetry and corruption, putting all territorial land in the trust of a state governor perhaps is the biggest strength and weakness of the Land Use Act.

It is on this note that the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2014) endorsed the principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems known as the CFS-RAI (Committee on World Food Security - Responsible Agricultural Investment). The CFS-RAI principles are based on international frameworks that are put in place by States to govern and improve human rights standards throughout the world. Among these are international human rights treaties, as well as the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land (CFS, 2015).

In these regards, the World Bank has encouraged all her donor beneficiaries' states to adopt the *Framework for Responsible and Inclusive Land Intensive Agricultural Investments (FRILIA)*. The FRILIA provide a comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land and a robust and inclusive engagement strategy with all stakeholders, including affected communities and vulnerable groups, as well as private investors. Against this background, the study addressed the following specific objectives to:

- i. Determine the socioeconomic and livelihood characteristics of the respondents;
- ii. Assess of the comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was carried out in South West Nigeria, South West Nigeria is one of the geopolitical zones of Nigeria, consisting of six (6) States (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo). It is a Yoruba region, land and Yoruba speaking area, with different dialects even within the same state. The weather conditions vary between the two distinct seasons in Nigeria, the rainy season (March to November) and the dry season (November to February). The area lies between longitude 2 31 and 6 00 East and latitude 6 21 and 8 37 N with a total land area of 77,818km.

Sampling Procedure

To ensure an even distribution of the sample, a two-stage sampling technique was employed for this study. The first stage involved purposive sampling of the three (3) prominent States in South West where government agricultural land acquisition is numerous (Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo states), while the second stage involved snow ball sampling (chain-referral sampling) of displaced rural farming households. Explicitly, 160 rural farming households whose traditional livelihoods were displaced by government for modern agricultural projects were selected in each of Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo states, thus making 480 displaced rural farming households for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The displaced rural farming households were interviewed on livelihood characteristics in terms of employment, post-resettlement income and assessment of comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive analysis and the Likert scale measures attitudes using five points. Likert five points scale measures attitudes using five points (anchors) where the third point in the middle represents neutrality (Chyung *et al.*, 2017).

For the Likert five points scale to be an interval scale, the distances between consecutive points on the scale must be the same, as shown in Figure 1. That is, the distance between Strongly Disagree and Disagree (the length of “a” in Figure 1) is the same as the distance between Disagree and Neutral (“b”), which is the same as the distance between Neutral and Agree (“c”), as well as the distance between Agree and Strongly Agree (“d”).



Figure 1: The distance between each point on the scale must be the same

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio Economic and Livelihood Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 revealed the representative of displaced rural farming households, whose traditional livelihoods were uprooted by government for modern and large-scale agricultural projects in South West Nigeria. The rural farming households' characteristics and their livelihood in terms of employment and income level is thus showed in Table 1.

According to Table 1, about 83% (majority) of the respondents were male while 17.08% were female. This means that farming in the study area was dominated by male farmers. The study also indicates that majority of the respondents were at their prime age within the age bracket of (41-50) and mean age of 44.93 years. The distribution according to marital status show that 72.08% of the respondents were married, this shows that the majority of the respondents were settled family people and have family responsibilities. The high preponderance of respondents' 37% and 33% was found to have some formal education up to primary school level and Secondary school level, respectively, and only 8% had college or university degrees. The mean years of formal education among the rural farming household head is 10.28 years of formal education. It was observed that majority of the respondents had household size between 4 and 6 members constituting 50.42% of the total respondents, while 34.17% of the respondent's household size lie between 7 and 9 people per household size. The average household size of the respondents is 5 per household.



Table 1: Socio-economic and Livelihood Characteristics of the Respondents (n = 480)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	398	82.92
	Female	82	17.08
Age	18-40	78	16.25
	41-50	182	37.92
	51-60	118	24.58
	>60	102	21.25
Marital status	Single	32	6.67
	Married	346	72.08
	Widowed/widower	66	13.75
	Separated/divorced	36	7.50
Educational attainment	No formal education	112	23.33
	Primary	176	36.67
	Secondary	156	32.50
	Tertiary	36	7.50
Household size	1-3	25	5.20
	4-6	242	50.42
	7-9	164	34.17
	>9	49	10.21
Employment before displacement	Farming only	398	82.92
	Farming and other jobs	82	17.08
Employment after displacement	Farming only	216	45.00
	Farming and other jobs	264	55.00
	< ₦15,000	50	10.51
Monthly household income before displacement	₦15,001 – ₦30,000	76	15.83
	₦30,001 – ₦45,000	152	31.67
	₦45,001 – ₦60,000	156	32.5
	> ₦60,000	46	9.49
	< ₦15,000	134	27.92
Monthly household Income after displacement	₦15,001 – ₦30,000	186	38.75
	₦30,001 - ₦45,000	76	15.83
	₦45,001 – ₦60,000	58	12.08
	> ₦60,000	26	5.42
Change in household income		172	
	Unchanged		36.01
	Increased	30	6.07
	Decreased	278	57.92
Satisfaction on compensation received	Satisfied	106	22.08
	Neutral	38	7.92
	Unsatisfied	336	70.00

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Our results further revealed that the displacement has a negative effect on farmers' livelihood. Before government acquired their land, about 83% of the households engaged only in farming, while 17.08% of the respondents engaged in farming and other jobs. After land acquisition and displacement by government, the percentage of households engaged only in farming drops drastically to 45%, while respondents engaged in farming and other jobs



increased from 17.08% to 55%. This revealed that government displacement through land acquisition has pushed many of the farmers to engaged in other jobs rather than relying only on farming activities.

There was a notable difference between the income earned by the farmers before and after displacement. Before government acquired their land and displaced the households, about 33% of the respondents earned between ₦45,001 and ₦60,000 monthly, 31.67% of the respondents earned between ₦30,001 and ₦45,000, 15.83% of the respondents earned between ₦15,001 and 30,000, 10.51% of the respondents earned below ₦15,000 and 9.49% of the respondents earned above ₦60,000.

After displacement of the household, about 58% (Table 1) of the respondents suffered a decline in income, especially the group earning between ₦45,001 and ₦60,000 which decreased from 32.50% to 12.08%. It was observed that the percentage of the household earning between ₦30,001 and ₦45,000 also fall drastically from 31.67% to 15.83%. The percentage of the household earning above ₦60,000 also drops from 9.49% to 5.42%. Our result indicate that government agricultural land acquisition has dispossessed members of the communities of their large income from agricultural activities being carried out on their parcels of land. The households view on compensation received from government were also sought from the interview, it was observed that 70% of the rural farming households were not satisfied about the compensation received by them.

Guiding Principles of Government Agricultural Land Acquisition in South West Nigeria

Table 2 shows the assessment of comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI in South West, Nigeria. In Table 2, it was revealed that about 31.46% (151) of the respondents strongly disagreed that there is well-documented rules and regulations guiding government agricultural land acquisition in South West Nigeria. About 36.04% (173) of the respondents agreed that there is adequate advocacy visit and awareness creation by government officials before the acquisition process begin. Likewise, it was also observed that 46.04% (221) of the respondents agreed that the government served “noticed of acquisition” before the process begin. Regarding the transparency in Government Agricultural Land Acquisition (GALA) process, it was found that 45.42% (218) of the respondents disagreed that there is transparency in the GALA process. In the same vein, 62.71% (301) of the respondents disagreed that agricultural land acquired by government contribute to social and economic growth and sustainable human development in the community.

The study confirmed that government did not encourage partnership with legitimate tenure holders as an alternative to the large-scale transfer of land, this view was supported by 69.38% of the respondent. Majority of the respondents (83.54%) disagreed that government ensure that displaced households/communities have the opportunity and responsibility to decide whether or not to make non-State land available for investments, based on informed choices. About 32.08% (154) of the respondents disagreed that government ensure consultation and negotiation with displaced households/communities (including those that are disadvantaged or vulnerable) before initiation of acquisition process. In terms of government officials offering timely grievance redress mechanism for aggrieved parties, 36.46% of our respondents disagreed to timely grievance redress by government officials. Our findings revealed that majority of the displaced households were not satisfy on compensation paid by the government, this was confirmed in our study as majority of our respondents (84.79%) strongly disagreed that “adequate and sufficiently compensation was provided to purchase replacement assets or equivalent value prior to taking of land or restriction access”.



Table 2: Assessment of comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI in South West Nigeria

S/N	Validated Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	There is a well-documented rules and regulations that guide Government Agricultural Land Acquisition (GALA) process in your State.	23	111	55	140	151
2	There is adequate advocacy visit and awareness creation by government officials before acquisition process begin.	98	173	28	127	54
3	Government served acquisition notice before acquisition process begins.	187	221	13	36	23
4	There is transparency in Government Agricultural Land Acquisition (GALA) process.	17	101	3	218	141
5	Agricultural land acquired by government contribute to social and economic growth and sustainable human development in the community.	31	77	8	301	63
6	Government encourage partnership with legitimate tenure holders as alternative to the large-scale transfer of land.	18	31	11	333	87
7	Government ensure that displaced households/communities have the opportunity and responsibility to decide whether or not to make non-State land available for investments, based on informed choices.	1	11	2	401	65
8	Government ensures consultation and negotiation with displaced households/communities (including those that are disadvantaged or vulnerable) before initiation of acquisition process.	57	104	66	154	99
9	Government officials offer timely grievance redress mechanism for aggrieved parties	106	39	80	175	80
10	Adequate and sufficiently compensation was provided to purchase replacement assets or equivalent value prior to taking of land or restriction access.	6	14	2	51	407

Source: Field Survey, 2020

About 60.21% (289) of the respondents also disagreed that supplemental livelihood improvement was provided to cushion the effect of income loss due to restriction access to their land. Likewise, 25.21% of the respondents also disagreed that government provide an opportunity for the displaced households to be offered an option for replacement of land. Table 2 also revealed that 48.13% (231) of the respondents strongly disagreed that displaced households and communities was properly informed about their right pertaining to involuntary resettlement. Majority of our respondents (62.71%) strongly disagreed that the GALA process in their community is consistent with basic principles of “due process”. About 50.21% (241) of the respondent agreed that agricultural land acquired by government usually resulted into communal conflict in their community.



Table 2: Assessment of comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI in South West Nigeria **Cont'd.**

S/N	Validated Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
11	Supplemental livelihood improvement was provided to cushion the effect of income loss due to restriction access to your land.	0	44	1	289	146
12	Government provides an opportunity for the displaced households to be offered an option for replacement of land.	106	111	41	121	101
13	Displaced households and communities were properly informed about their right pertaining to involuntary resettlement.	31	71	47	100	231
14	In your own opinion, do you think that the GALA process in your community follow a manner that is consistent with basic principles of "due process" (including provision of adequate advance notice and avoidance of executive force). Agricultural land acquired by government usually resulted into communal conflict, crime or violence in your community.	21	57	3	98	301
15	Agricultural land acquired by government support and promote the conservative, maintenance and rehabilitation of natural habitat.	103	241	0	99	37
16	Agricultural land acquired by government usually resulted into land degradation in your community	63	103	89	118	107
17	Paid unofficial fees to government official to get fair compensation	39	99	46	132	164
18	High bureaucracy of government officials during the acquisition process	109	279	0	77	15
19	Satisfy with the acquisition process	73	89	39	191	88
20		19	81	8	123	249

Source: Field Survey, 2020

It was observed that about 22.29% (107) of our respondent strongly disagreed that agricultural land acquired by government support and promote the conservative, maintenance and rehabilitation of natural habitat, while about 34.17% (164) of the respondents strongly disagreed that agricultural land acquired by government usually resulted into land degradation in their community. The findings (Table 2) of the study indicate that majority 58.13% (279) agreed to paid unofficial fees to government official to get fair compensation. This reflects that some of the affected or displaced households were found to be more vulnerable to paying unofficial fees as bribes to get fair compensation for their land that was acquired by government. However, with respect to high bureaucracy of government officials, majority (39.79%) disagreed that there is high bureaucracy of government officials during the acquisition process. In general, majority of the respondents was not satisfied with the acquisition process as indicated by their response, which showed that 51.88% (249) of the respondent disagreed that they were satisfy with the acquisition process.

The rules and regulations guiding ALAC process, compensation received by displaced households, livelihood improvement, option for replacement of land and overall satisfaction of the process was further disaggregated to State level for comparison purpose. Figure 2 presents respondents perception that there is a well-documented rules and regulations that guide Government Agricultural Land Acquisition (GALA) process in their State. Figure 2 clearly showed that Ogun State has the highest number of respondents that indicated Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A). This means that the rules and regulations that guide Government

Agricultural Land Acquisition is well documented in the State. It can be deduced from Figure 3 that substantial number of the respondents in each of the State confirmed that government did not pay adequate and sufficient compensation before government taking over of their land. The percentage of respondent that “strongly disagree and disagree” the assertion of adequate and sufficient compensation in Ogun, Oyo and Ondo State is 96, 90 and 86%, respectively. From Figure 4, it was observed that government in each of the three (3) States did not provide supplemental livelihood improvement to cushion the effect of income loss by the rural livelihood.

As presented in Figure 5, about 62% respondents (strongly agree and agree) of the displaced rural farming household in Ogun State confirmed that government provide an opportunity to be offered an option for replacement of land. However, majority of the respondents from Oyo State (52%) and Ondo state (62%) strongly disagree and disagree that government offered an option for replacement of their land. Overall, Figure 6 showed that majority of the respondents from each of the state were not satisfy with the acquisition process.

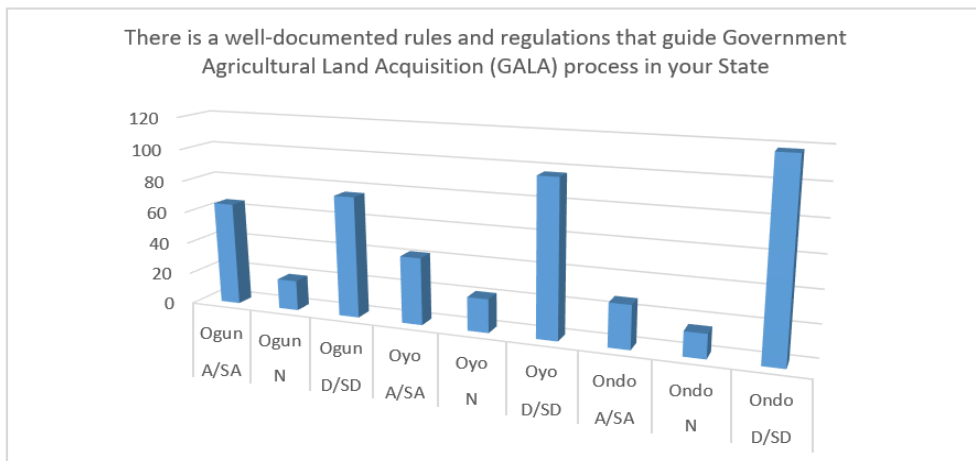


Figure 2: Respondent's perception that there is a well-documented rules and regulations that guide Government Agricultural Land Acquisition (GALA) process in your State

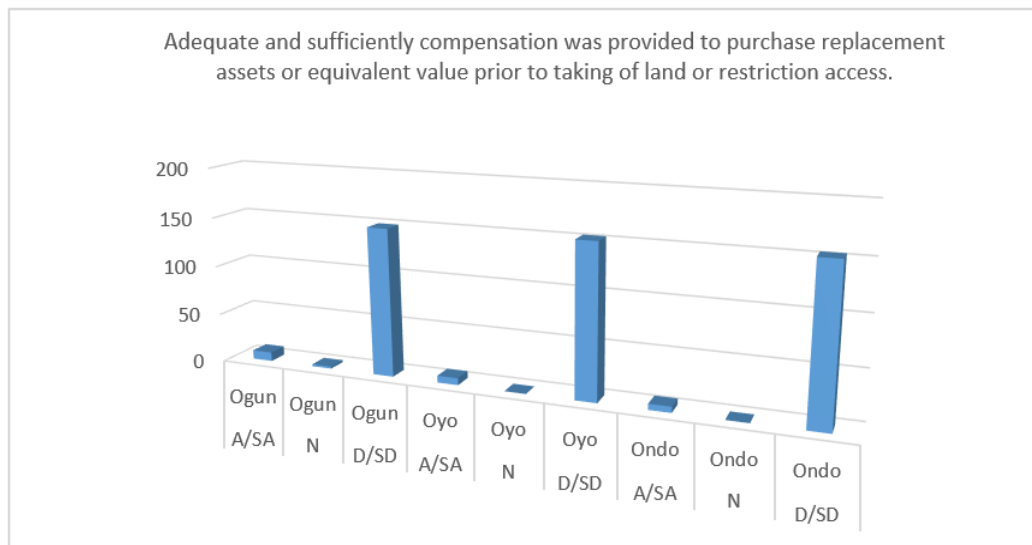


Figure 3: Respondent's perception that adequate and sufficiently compensation was provided to purchase replacement assets or equivalent value prior to taking of land or restriction access.

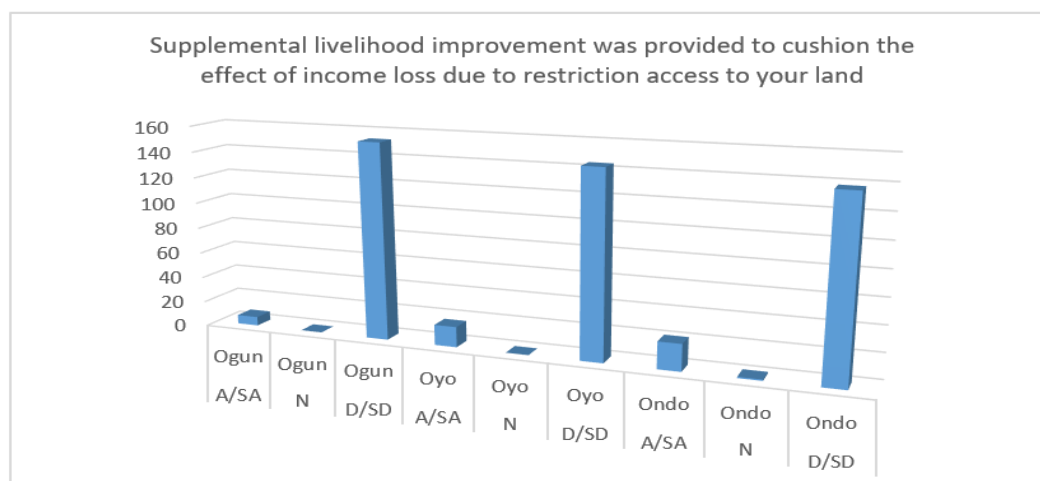


Figure 4: Respondent's perception that supplemental livelihood improvement was provided to cushion the effect of income loss due to restriction access to their land.

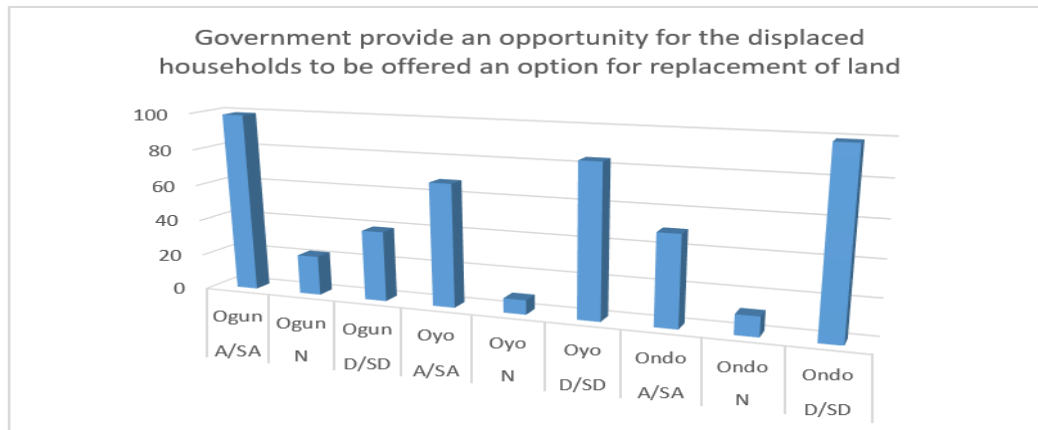


Figure 5: Respondent's perception that government provide an opportunity for the displaced households to be offered an option for replacement of land

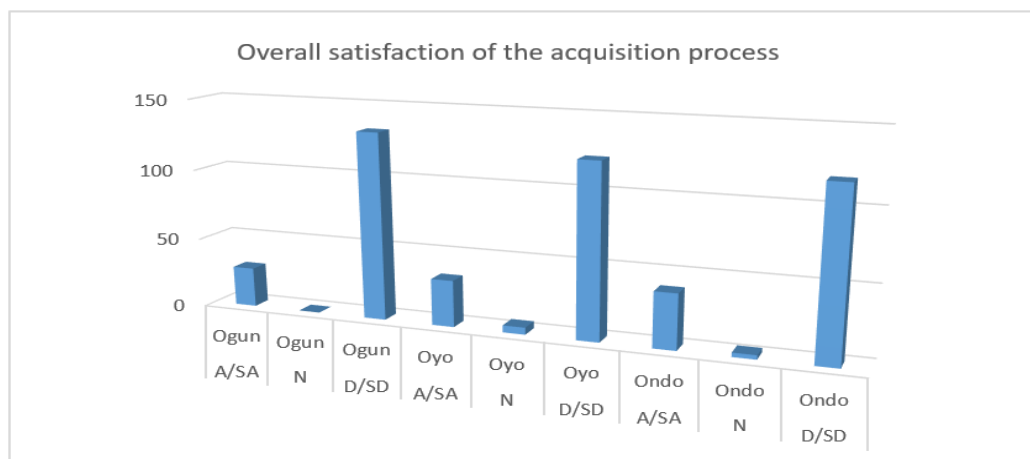


Figure 6: Respondent's perception with overall satisfaction of the acquisition

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land and a robust and inclusive engagement strategy with all stakeholders, including affected communities and vulnerable groups is not effective in South West, Nigeria. Finally, the study confirmed that agricultural land acquisition by the state government is not without risks for the rural farming households and the host communities. The households that are rendered unemployed and whose traditional livelihoods are uprooted by this action are left at the mercy of market forces, likewise the inadequate compensation of the affected land owners have resulted into a political and social fallout. The study therefore, recommends as follows:

1. Government should embrace comprehensive approach to the acquisition and allocation of land as stipulated by CFS-RAI (Committee on World Food Security - Responsible Agricultural Investment).
2. Government should recognize private individual, family, and community property and grant support to the existing social reality with regard to land rights.
3. Payment of fair compensation to the affected rural farming households whose land has been acquired by government.



4. Collection of unofficial fees by government official to get fair compensation should be abrogated.

REFERENCES

- Birner, R. and Okumo, A. (2011). *Challenges of Land Governance in Nigeria: Insights from a Case Study in Ondo State*. Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) Working Paper No. 22. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- CFS (2015). *Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems*. 41st Session of the Committee on World Food Security [Website] (available at www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/activities/rai). Accessed November 2016.
- Chyung, S. Y., Roberts, K., Swanson, I. and Hankinson, A. (2017). Evidence-Based Survey Design: The Use of a Midpoint on the Likert Scale. *Performance Improvement*, 56(10), 15-23.
- Fabian, D. Y. (2013). Agricultural Land Use Conflict between Landlords and Migrant Farmers in Ghana: An Examination of issues affecting Dagara Migrants in the Brong Ahafo Region. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(29): 1857-7881.
- FAO (2014). *Enabling legal environment for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems*. Food and Agriculture Organization; Legal Brief for Parliamentarians in Africa. No.5.
- Ghebru, H. and Okumo, A. (2016). *Land administration service delivery and its challenges in Nigeria: A case study of eight States*. NSSP Working Paper 39. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- Land Use Act (1978). *Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette*. No.14. Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, Lagos, Nigeria 65: Pp. 2-6.
- Lucain, N. T. (2017). *The Impact of Poor Land Governance on the Reduction of Rural Poverty in Cameroon*. Paper prepared for presentation at the “2017 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty” The World Bank - Washington DC, March 20-24, 2017.
- Nwoko, K. C. (2016). Land Ownership versus Development in the Era of Globalisation: A Trajectory of Conflict and Wealth Accumulation in Southern Nigeria. *Journal of African Transformation*, 1(2): 77-94.
- Obayelu, A. E., Arowolo, A. O. and Osinowo, O. H. (2017). Land Tenure, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria: The Implications on Food Production to Feed the Present and the Future. *Journal for the Advancement of Developing Economies*, 6(1): 1-17.
- Udoekanem, N. B., Adoga D. O. and Onwumere, V. O. (2014). Land Ownership in Nigeria: Historical Development, Current Issues and Future Expectations. *Journal of Environment and Earth Science*, 4(21): 182-188.