

# **GENDER AND RELATIVE ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY IN IMPROVED CASSAVA FARMS OF ABIA STATE, NIGERIA. A STOCHASTIC COST FRONTIER APPROACH.**

**Ume, S.I, Okoroafor, I.B., Nwaneri, T.C. and Onuh, N.C.**  
Federal College of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ivo L.G.A. Ebonyi State.  
Corresponding Author: umesmilesi@gmail.com

## **ABSTRACT**

*Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select 120 improved cassava farmers (60 males and 60 females). Stochastic frontier cost function was used to estimate the level of economic efficiency and its' determinants across gender, while descriptive statistics such as percentage response was used to capture farmers' socioeconomic characteristics, gender participation and constraints to improved cassava production in Abia State. The results showed that the mean economic efficiency of the female group (0.78) was higher than that of male group (0.75). The cost of production of improved cassava to both gender farmer groups were affected by price of fertilizer, price of cassava cutting, land rent and output. Educational level and extension contact were positive and significant at 5% for both gender farmer groups. Credit was negative but significant at 5% amongst female farmer groups. Gender participation in improved new cassava showed that those energy sapping operations were dominated by male folk while light operation farming activities such as weeding and fertilizer application was mostly done by women and children. Both gender farmer groups encountered problems of low access to credit, high cost of labour and high cost of planting material. The study calls for policies that will improve both farmer groups access: to credits, extension contact and education. Moreso, new entrant and experienced cassava farmer groups should be encouraged through making available subsidized planting materials and capital inputs.*

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