Title of Article: Gender Equity and Food Security: Lessons from Ozalla Community, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: There has been an increasing need to consider gender equity as a key element of development, especially in terms of the status of men and women. It has also become imperative to recognize women’s needs and contributions to society, most importantly in the sphere of agricultural and food security. Women’s role in food security cannot be over emphasized because about 80% of women in rural Nigeria are engaged in food crops production. This discrimination especially in terms of access to and ownership of land for agricultural purposes has generated ceaseless cases of quarrels, violence and enmity between siblings and family relations. Inspite of the enormous availability of land for agricultural purposes, food security still remains a challenge. Due to its patriarchal nature anchored on gerontocratic rule, statutory law in Ozalla community and across most rural communities in Nigeria is subservient to customary law which reinforces the discrimination and perpetual subjugation suffered by the women. This paper therefore examines the challenges faced by women in their quest to guarantee food security. A combination of methods both quantitative and qualitative was employed in the study. This involved data generated from 789 respondents for the survey research, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

KEY Words: Agricultural Production, Food Security, Gender Equity, Land Ownership, Patrilineal Community.