Constraints to utilization of agricultural land by small farmers in Oyugis Division, South Nyanza District

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Abstract:
The agricultural sector plays an important role in the Kenyan economy. The sector is dualistic in nature with majority of farmers being small-scale farmers with land holdings of less than 12 hectares while a few farmers are large scale farmers with land hectarages above 50 ha. Small-scale agriculture is the main occupation of majority of farmers and it's role in the economy in terms of marketed output is over 50%. The development of this sector is therefore crucial to the overall development of agriculture in the country and to the whole economy. This study addresses itself to constraints which face the small-scale farmers in their attempts to increase their levels of land utilization Oyugis Division, South Nyanza, an area of medium to high agricultural potential. The study has established that stated government policy has favoured the development of small-holder agriculture for three main reasons. The sector is argued to be labour intensive and therefore offers more employment per unit hectarage compared to large scale farming. Secondly, it is argued that small-holder agriculture is more intensive than large-scale farming resulting in higher returns per hectarage. Lastly, small-holder agriculture is supported on the basis of equity in distribution of income. It is argued that since most of the farmers are small-holders, development of this sector , will result in redistribution of income or raising income levels of a large proportion of the country's population.