

PDF - FARMERS PERCEPTION OF THE GROWTH ENHANCEMENT SUPPORT SCHEME IN KOGI STATE NIGERIA - researchcub.infoABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to determine the farmers' perception of Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme in Kogi State. A total 120 copies of the questionnaires were administered to the schemes' participants purposely selected from 12 communities of six local government areas of the State. The local government areas are Lokoja, Kogi, Ajaokuta, Adavi, Bassa and Dekina. Data was collected on both demographic and farm characteristics of the respondents. Other areas include respondents' perceived perception of the GES scheme effectiveness, knowledge level of respondents, level of satisfaction on the scheme activities, the constraints to effective implementation of the scheme and the strategies for effective implementation of the scheme. Data collected was presented using descriptive statistics, meanscores, standard deviation, factor analysis and multiple regression models. The result of the analysis revealed that majority (78.3%) of the respondent were male and married and the farmers mean age was 42.4 years. The mean farming household size was 5 persons with Christian and Muslim religion being mainly practiced. About 89.2% of the respondents took farming as their major profession with the mean farming experience as 18.6 years. Majority (85.8%) of the respondents belong to social or religion organisations and have access to agriculture-related information. The major crops grown in the area include maize, cassava and rice. The respondents had a very high knowledge of the schemes' activities and the major source of information on the scheme activities was extension agents. On the farmers' perception of the GES, a good number of respondents have positive perception on the schemes' operational process and are equally satisfied with some implementation processes of the scheme. However, the major constraints to effective implementation of the scheme include untimely input provision, inability to pay for the mobile phones. Factor analysis also grouped these constraints into inputs, personnel and poverty-related constraints. The suggested strategies for effective implementation of the scheme include timely input provision and early registration of participants. The hypothesis shows that access to agriculture-related information ($t=-2.340;p=0.05$) had a significant relationship with rural farmers' knowledge. It was recommended that early inputs provisions is to be ensured since farming operations are timebound, the farm inputs are to be further subsidised in such a way that everyone will be able to pay for the subsidized inputs. Other suggestions are the provision of mobile phones, creation of more redemption centres along with construction of feeder roads in order to facilitate the effective operations of the scheme. Lastly, early registration of participants, recruitment of more staff along with women encouragement for participation is to be ensured.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page					i
Declaration					ii
Certification			iii		
Dedication	iv				
Acknowledgment		v			
Abstracts			vi		
Table of contents		vii			
List of tables			viii		
Acronyms					ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background Information	1
1.2	Problem statement	4
1.3	Purpose of the study	5
1.4	Hypothesis	5
1.5	Significance of the study	5

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW 7

2.1.	Farmers' perception and participation in agricultural programmes	7
2.2.	Concept of knowledge and its use	10
2.3.	Sources of agricultural information used by farmers	12
2.4.	Some agricultural development interventions in Nigeria and the prevailing constraints	18
2.5.	Strategies for boosting agricultural production	34
2.6.	Conceptual frame work	37

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 39

3.1	Study Area	39
3.2	Population and Sampling Procedure	40
3.3	Instrument for data collection	41
3.4	Measurements of variables	41
3.5	Data Analysis	45

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 47

4.1.1	The socioeconomic characteristics of respondents	47
4.1.2	Institutional characteristics of the respondents	52
4.2	Farmers perceived effectiveness of GES scheme	54
4.3.1	Farmers' knowledge of Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme	56
4.3.2	The farmers' knowledge level on GES scheme	58
4.4	Sources of Information on Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme	59
4.5	Farmers level of satisfaction in the schemes' implementation Process	60
4.6.	Perceived constraints to effective implementation of GES scheme	62
4.7	Strategies for effective implementation of the GES scheme	66
4.8	Test of Hypothesis	68

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION 71

5.1	Summary	71
5.2	Conclusion	72
5.3	Recommendation	73

REFERENCES 75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Population and sampling procedure	41
Table 2:	Percentage distribution of respondents by their socio-economic characteristics	51
Table 3:	Percentage distribution of respondents according to their	

Institutional characteristics	54
Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of farmers' perceived effectiveness of GES	56
Table 5: Percentage distribution of respondents knowledge score	58
Table 6: Farmers knowledge level on GES scheme	59
Table 7: Percentage distribution of respondents by information sources on GES	60
Table 8: Farmers' level of satisfaction in the implementation of the scheme	62
Table 9: Mean and standard deviation of perceived constraints to effective implementation of the scheme	64
Table 10: Varimax rotated constraints to effective implementation of the GES scheme	66
Table 11: Strategies for enhancing the effective Implementation of GES	68
Table 12: Socio-economic and Institutional characteristics influencing Farmers' GES knowledge	70

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1: The schema for the farmers' perception of the GES scheme in Kogi State	38
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ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY

ADP	Agricultural Development Project
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agenda
CDD	Community Driven Development
DFRRI	Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
DFEE	Division of Farmers' Education Extension
FCAs	Fadama Community Associations
FRUGs	Fadama Resource User Groups
FEAP	Family Economic Advancement Programme
FSS	Farm Settlement Scheme
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMRD	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIDC	International Institute for Communication and Development
LDPs	Local Development Plans
LGA	Local Government Area
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
NAFPP	National Accelerated Food Production Programme
NALDA	National Agricultural Land Development Authority

NBS	National Bureau of Statistic
NFDP	National Fadama Development Project
NPC	National Population Commission
OFN	Operation Feed the Nation
RBDA	RiverBasin Development Authority
RDP	Rural Development Project
USDA	United States Department ofAgriculture

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BackgroundInformation

TheNigerian economy has been strongly dependent on agriculture for many years,before the discovery of oil in 1956. Agricultural enterprises such as cocoa,groundnut, oil palm and cotton production accounted for a large chunk offoreign exchange earnings in Nigeria. The south-western zone of the country wasrenowned mainly for its cocoa production and the South East together withSouth-South zones were renowned for oil palm production, while the Northernpart of the country was renowned for its groundnut and cotton production.Nigeria was also one of the largest exporters of oil palm and cocoa until thediscovery of crude oil, which resulted in the partial neglect of theagricultural sector. Even with the decline in output, the sector has continuedto contribute about 40% to Nigeria’s GDP.(Nigeria Economic Outlook Report2010-2011 period, in National Bureau of Statistic (NBS), 2012).

Agriculture ispredominantly practised in the rural areas of the country. Most farmers inthose areas could not embark on mechanized agriculture because of the high rateof poverty that is prevalent in those areas coupled with the land tenure systemstill being practised in most places; hence, the need for farmers in ruralareas to have access to farm inputs such as fertilisers in order to ensure thatsoil fertility is maintained. Resources required to enhance high agriculturalproductivity are the provision of seeds and information on best farmingpractice. In view of this, in July 2012 the Federal Government of Nigeriaintroduced the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme and this was designed todeliver government subsidised farm inputs directly to farmers via GSM phones.The GES scheme, according to Adesina (2012), is powered by e-Wallet, anelectronic distribution channel, which provides an efficient and transparesystem for the purchase and distribution of agricultural inputs based on avoucher system. The scheme guarantees registered farmers e-Wallet vouchers withwhich they can collect fertilisers, seeds and other agricultural inputs fromagro-dealers at half the cost, the other half being borne by the federalgovernment and state government in equal proportions. As part of the GESScheme, the federal ministry of agriculture announced that the ministry wouldequip millions of farmers in the rural areas with mobile phones (Adesina,2013). Adesina (2013) further stressed that the project would link farmersdirectly to government and vice-versa so that Government would be able tomonitor the progress of farmers as well as disseminate valuable information tothem.

According toCross River State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (2012), the GESscheme is one of the many critical components of the federal government’sAgricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). It was designed for the specificpurpose of providing affordable agricultural inputs like fertilizers and hybridseeds to farmers in order to increase yields per hectare and make themcomparable to world standard. GES scheme which is an innovative scheme seeks toremove the difficulties usually associated with the distribution of fertilizerand hybrid seeds in the country, as in the past farmers complained ofdiversion,

exorbitant cost and adulteration of various inputs which had ultimately led to low productivity, increased poverty, unemployment and lack of interest in farming.

The scheme, according to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMRD) (2012), represents a policy and pragmatic shift within the existing fertilizer market stabilization programme and puts the resource-constrained farmer at the centre through the provision of series of incentives to encourage the critical actors in the fertilizer value chain to work together to improve productivity, household food security and income of the farmer. According to Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMRD) (2012), the goals of GES include to:

target 5 million farmers in each year for four (4) years that will receive GES in their mobile phones directly, totalling 20 million at the end of the 4 years;

provide support directly to farmers to enable them procure agricultural inputs at affordable prices and at the right time and place,

increase productivity of farmers across the length and breadth of the country through increased use of fertilizer i.e. 50kg/ha from 13kg/ha; and

change the role of Government from direct procurement and distribution of fertilizer to a facilitator of procurement, regulator of fertilizer quality and catalyst of active private sector participation in the fertilizer value chain.

The scheme's approach is to target beneficiaries through the use of electronic system, and by encouraging the engagement of the private sector in the distribution and delivery of fertilizers and other critical inputs directly to farmers. The objectives of the GES scheme include to: (a) provide affordable agricultural inputs like fertilizer, hybrid seeds and agro-chemicals to farmers; (b) remove the usual complexities associated with fertilizer distribution; (c) encourage critical actors in the fertilizer value chain to work together to improve productivity; (d) enhance farmers' income and promote food security; and (e) shifting the provision of subsidized fertilizer away from a general public to only identified genuine small holder farmers (FMARD, 2012).

In various states of the country, the programme commenced in July 2012 after the farmers were sensitized and registered prior to the commencement of the scheme. Thirty five states of the country had already keyed into the programme for implementation except Zamfara had already keyed into the programme with various farm inputs being redeemed to registered farmers at designated redemption centres (FMARD, 2013).

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