Assessing Levels of Participation among Farmers in IFAD/FGN/NDDC/Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme in Abia and Cross River States, Nigeria

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Abstract

Levels of participation among farmers in IFAD/FGN/NDDC/Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme in Abia and Cross River States were studied and assessed in 2012. Purposive and multistage random sampling techniques were used in the selection of Local Government Areas, participating communities, farmer groups and participating farmers. The sample size was 240 participating farmers (120 Abia and 120 Cross River IFAD participating farmers). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages and mean counts. The result indicated that both IFAD participating farmers were actively involved in the programme technologies, Abia IFAD farmers; crop (M= 4.7), livestock (M= 3.8), fisheries (M= 3.7) and apiary (M= 3.4) technologies of the programme and Cross River IFAD farmers; crop (M= 4.7), fisheries (M= 3.9), livestock (M= 3.6) and apiary (M= 3.2). Negative perception of farmers on past programmes, bad road network, non-payment of counterpart funds by the state government and late arrival of farm inputs were identified problems hindering participation of farmers in the programme. Policies aimed at timely supply of farm inputs since farming is time bound, provision of rural infrastructures and prompt payment of counterpart funds by federal, state and local governments were advocated for poverty reduction in the rural areas.

Key words: Assessing, Participation, Technologies, IFAD, Farmers

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, international development agencies galvanizes and integrates the efforts of research and extension in collaboration with input agencies in identification of a major agricultural production constraints and development of sustainable technically feasible, economically viable and socio-culturally acceptable production technologies which are meant to meet the felt needs of beneficiary farmers in the projects (Unamma, 2004). As a result, synergic linkages expectably exist among the donor agencies farmer input system, which are very necessary for efficient and productive transfer of agricultural technologies (Ekwe et al., 2009). Ivanoic (2009) showed that the rural areas are unable to protect their production and also the government is neglecting to protect these activities, thereby eluding participation. This has lead to weak knowledge based subsistence agricultural production systems, inadequate agricultural inputs and poor market infrastructure, weak backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other sectors, increased food insecurity, natural resources and environmental degradation, poor management of water resources and low irrigation infrastructure (ECA, 2006b). In recent times however, there is a growing realization that, development of the rural areas can increase the capacity and productivity of the economy and enhance sustainable growth and development especially
in the Niger Delta Regions (Nwaobiala, 2010). Farmers’ participation in community-based programmes is not a new phenomenon, especially in Nigeria. The foregoing explains the increasing emphasis by the World Bank on a new development approach known as “Community – Based/ Driven Development (CB/DD). The corner stone of community-based development initiatives is the active involvement of members of a defined community and groups in some aspects of the project design and implementation. In fact, community based development is regarded as the fastest growing mechanism for challenging development assistance (World Bank, 2007).

The word participation has been widely used and promoted in development programmes. It could be defined as an active process which people take initial lives and action that is stipulated by their own thinking and deliberation and which they can effectively influence (FAO, 2006). Participation with regard to community based projects include peoples involvement in decision making process, in implementing programmes, their sharing of benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes (Oakely, 2002). Farmers’ participation is considered necessary to get community support for agricultural development projects (Cole, 2007). Aref (2010) identified lack of effective and strong government institutions as some barriers to participation by farmers. Farmers’ participation is an important factor for sustainable agriculture in rural areas. Farmers’ participation issues are the areas of concern at national and local levels (Subedi, 2008). Without participation, there are obviously no partnerships, no developments and no programme (Aref et al., 2010). Therefore lack of participation in the decision to implement an agricultural policy can lead to failure in the agricultural development. Active participation is often constrained by lack of information and knowledge. Knowledge of the decision making process is important if farmers are to take active part in agricultural planning (Cole, 2007). The World Bank recognized lack of participation in donor sponsored programmes as a reason to the failure of many development and poverty reduction strategies in developing countries (World Bank, 2012). Most of these programmes centre on community development approach rather than agricultural oriented strategies which have marginalized resource poor farmers thus causing them to be eluded from active participation in the programmes (Nwaobiala, 2013). However, various agricultural development agencies established in sub-Sahara Africa that were meant to reduce poverty has failed to achieve its set goals because of lack of stakeholders (farmers) involvement in the agricultural policy formulation. Such issues will be incapable of being successfully resolved, unless all parties are fully involved in working out solutions on their implementation and monitoring of results (Oyedele, 2008, Dolan and Opondo, 2005). Currently, the World Bank is promoting a new initiative known as International Fund for Agricultural Development-Niger Delta Development Commission/Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme in conjunction with the Federal Republic of Nigeria which started in 2005. The programme responds to a request by the Federal Government for assistance to alleviate rural poverty in the Niger Delta. The principles and goals of this programme are improving the standard of living and quality of life for at least 400,000 rural people in the Niger Delta States (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State) with emphasis on women and youth through participation (IFAD, 2002; CBNRMP, 2002).

As a contribution to addressing the gaps mentioned, this study was conducted to access farmers’ participation in IFAD/ FGNI/ NDDC/ Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme Technologies (crops, livestock, fisheries and apiary) in Abia and Cross River States, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:
1. describe selected socio-economic characteristics of participating farmers in Abia and Cross River States, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the levels of farmers participation on each technology component of the programme (crops, livestock, fisheries and apiary) in Abia Cross River States, Nigeria.
3. identify problems hindering effective participation of farmers in the programme.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Abia and Cross River States of Nigeria. Purposive and multistage random sampling techniques were used in the research. The two states were purposively chosen because they are among the Niger Delta States of the country, and among the pilot states of the programme. Multistage random sampling technique was used in the selection of local government areas (programme areas) participating communities, farmer groups and participating farmers. First, three (3) local government areas were randomly selected from the two states; (Abia- Umuahia North, Arochukwu and Ugwunagbo) and (Cross River- Yala, Yakurr and Obubra) which gave a total of six (6) local government areas. Second, two (2) communities each were randomly selected from the six local government areas: Abia (Umuahia North – Okwoyi and Mbom), Arochukwu - Atani Abam and Obiene Utitu, Ugwunagbo- Ettiti Akanu Ngwa and Asa Amaise; Cross River (Yala – Okpoma and Okuku /Itega Okpudu, Yakurr – Asiga and Ekori, Obubra–Nyamoyong and
Table 1. Percentage and Mean Distribution of Selected Socio-economic Characteristics of IFAD Farmers in Abia and Cross River State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Abia IFAD Farmers</th>
<th>Cross River IFAD Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (%)</td>
<td>57.67 (Males)</td>
<td>64.17 (Males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Size (Hectares)</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming Experience (Years)</td>
<td>14.40</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Farm Income (Naira)</td>
<td>201,441.00</td>
<td>198,650.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey Data, 2012

APIAPUM) totalling twelve (12) participating communities. Furthermore, from the selected participating communities, two farmer groups each were randomly selected which gave a total of twenty four (24) farmer groups. Finally, ten participating farmers each were randomly selected from the selected farmer groups and this gave a sample size of two hundred and forty (240) participating farmers. Data for the analysis were obtained from a well structured questionnaire. Data were collected on farmers’ socioeconomic characteristics, participation in programme technologies and poverty levels of the IFAD participating farmers. Participation in the programme technologies measured comprising crops, livestock, fisheries and apiary amongst farmers in both states as Occasionally, Seldom, Never and were scored as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Midpoint of 3.0 and above was regarded as participation and below, no participation. Any identified problem of farmers hindering effective participation in the programme from 40% and above was regarded a problem and below, no problem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean and percentage socio-economic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1. The result reveals that 64.17% and 57.57% of Cross River and Abia State IFAD farmers were males. This result disagrees with the findings of (Diao et al., 2007) as they identified women farmers as major producers of arable crops in sub Saharan Africa such as Nigeria. The mean farm size of the respondents showed Abia IFAD farmers had 3.70 hectares, while Cross River IFAD farmers farmed on 2.90 hectares. The small size farm holdings were attributed to the area because most of the lands are sea locked. Abia IFAD farmers had a mean farming experience of 14.40 years with 11 years farming experience and a mean annual farm income of N201, 441.00, while Cross River IFAD farmers acquired 11 years farming experience with annual farm income of N198, 650.00. Farming experience has been shown to enhance participation and adoption of technologies by farmers especially in donor sponsored programmes in Nigeria (Nwaobiala and Onumadu, 2010).

Farmers Participation in Technology Components of the Programme in Abia and Cross River States

Arable Crop Technology

The distribution of farmers according the level of participation in arable crop technology component (yam, cassava, maize, egusi and telferia) of the programme in Abia and Cross River States is shown in Table 2. Results show that majority (86.6%) of the farmers in Abia always participated in crop technologies with IFAD Community-Based Total Raw Scores (ICBTRS) of 564 and mean of 4.7. Also, majority (83.33%) of participating farmers in Cross River State always participated in crop technology with IFAD Community-Based Total Raw Scores (ICBTRS) of 560 and a mean of 4.7. Since the midpoint score is less than the calculated, it means that participating farmers in both states actively participated in crop technologies of the programme. This result is not surprising because crop production (arable crops) is practiced by many farmers in developing countries, which serve as staple food and source of income for the rural poor farmers. Okande et al., (2005) opined that arable crop such as cassava is cultivated in Nigeria by more than 90% of rural farmers.

Livestock Technology

Data in Table 2 shows that a fairly good proportions (36.67%) and 35.83 percent of Abia and Cross River State farmers participated in livestock technology component of the programme respectively. The ICBTRS score of Abia farmers was
Table 2. Distribution of Farmers According to their Participation in IFAD/FGN/NDDC/ Community – Based Natural Resource Management Programme Technologies in Abia and Cross River States, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Problems</th>
<th>ABIA STATE</th>
<th>CROSS RIVER STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crops</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(86.6)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(36.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27.5)</td>
<td>(30.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro Forestry</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(17.5)</td>
<td>(28.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where,

TEP = Technology Packages
ICBTRS = IFAD Community Based Technology Raw Scores
Always 5, Often 4, Occasionally 3, Seldom 2, Never 1
Decision Rule = 3.0 and above is Participation
Decision rule = <3.0 is non Participation
Figures in Parenthesis are Percentages.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2012

Table 3. Distribution of the Problems of Farmers Participation in IFAD/FGN/NDDC/ Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme Technologies in Abia and Cross River State, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Problems</th>
<th>Abia Percentage</th>
<th>Abia Frequency</th>
<th>Cross River Percentage</th>
<th>Cross River Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Bottlenecks and Bureaucracy of Programme</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Arrival of Farm Inputs</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48.33*</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>53.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrquent Visits of Extension Officers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Training and Re–training of Participating Farmers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.83</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non- Payment of Counterpart Funds by State and LGA’s</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46.67*</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Perception of Farmers on Past Programmes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75*</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>78.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Road Network</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62.5*</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>59.12*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses recorded
40% and above are identified problems*

Source: Field Survey Data, 2012
with a mean of 3.8, while that of their counterparts in Cross River State recorded an ICBTRS (429) with mean (3.6). The mean scores for both farmers in the states were greater than 3.0, which imply that the farmers participated actively in the technology. Apantaku (2006) observed that farmer participation in livestock technology may be attributed to the protein needs of the farmers and their families.

**Fisheries Technology**

Table 2 shows that a few proportion (32.5%) and a fairly good proportion (35.83%) of Abia and Cross River State farmers, occasionally and often participated in fisheries technology components of the programme respectively. The ICBTRS score for Abia farmers was 448 with a mean of 3.8, while the Cross river state farmers had 270 ICBTRS score and mean of 3.7. This implies that the participating farmers in both states actively participated in the technology hence the mean scores were greater than 3.0. Akinbile et al., (2008) asserted that farmers' participation in poverty reduction programmes were encouraged by the farmers felt needs and field problems encountered during their production process.

**Agro forestry (Apiary) Technology**

The Table (2) indicates that a fairly good proportion (35%) and 32.5 percentage of Abia and Cross River State participating farmers occasionally participated in Apiary technology respectively. Furthermore, Abia State farmers recorded an ICBTRS of 410 and mean of 3.4, while Cross River State farmers had 399 (ICBTRS) and mean of 3.2. This shows that the farmers in the two States participated in the technology since the mean score were greater than 3.0. World Bank (2003) views participation of farmers in community based projects as a means of diversifying farmer's enterprise, thereby improving the standard of living of the rural people and transforming their socio – economic lives.

**Problems of Effective Participation by Participating Farmers in IFAD/NDDC Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme Technologies In Abia And Cross River States, Nigeria**

The problems militating against the active participation of farmers in the programme technology components in both States is shown in Table 3. This indicates that majority (75%) and 78.33 percent of the farmers in Abia and Cross River States respectively ascribed negative perception of farmers on past programmes as a major problem. This is followed by bad road network (62.5%) for Abia IFAD farmers and a good proportion (59.17%) of Cross River IFAD farmers. However, a fairly good proportion (46.67%) Abia State participating farmers and Cross River participating farmers (37.50%) averred that non-payment of counterpart funds by the state government hampered their participation in the programme. Ladele (2011) is of the view that non – participation of stake holders in Community-Based Programmes was attributed to discontinuity of such programmes due to non payment of counterpart funds by government at the state and local government levels. The Table also revealed that a fairly good proportion (48.33%) and 53.33 percent of Abia and Cross River States participating farmers respectively, indicate that late arrived of farm inputs from the programme affected their participation in the programme. This is because majority of the farmers depend solely on sourcing these improved varieties of crops, livestock and fingerlings from the programme.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has accessed farmers' participation in IFAD/FGN/NDDC/Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme in Cross River State. Since the programme has a complementary role in extension delivery in the state, exposure of technologies has led to effective participation of farmers. The study recommends that;

1. The programme should subsidize farm inputs such as fertilizer, improved seeds and herbicides and ensure timely supply of these inputs taking cognizance of the fact that farming is time bound.
2. Formation and sustenance of existing programme cooperatives were advocated. This will help intending farmers to benefit and be exposed to improved farming practices.
3. Government at federal, state and local government levels should ensure timely payment of their counterpart funds for sustainability of the programme.
4. Rural infrastructural facilities such as good feeder roads, electricity and pipe borne water, among others need to be provided by relevant agencies to curb youth rural-urban migration.
References


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