31

RESOURCE USE PRODUCTIVITY AMONG SMALL-SCALE FARMERS IN YOLA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study conducted in Yola Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria, has the overall objective of determining resource use productivity among the small-scale farmers. The findings of the study revealed that characteristics of the farmers such as age, level of education, farm size, sources of farm labour and of farm finance do not have significant relationship with resource use productivity. However, net annual income from farming was found to have a significant relationship with resource use productivity. Meanwhile, certain identified problems such as the non-availability of tractor hiring services and high cost of inputs have been found to militate against resource use productivity among small-scale farmers. It is however, suggested that government and policy makers should create favourable conditions that would enable farmers to make proper and efficient utilization of resources at their disposal.

KEYWORDS: Resource use, Small scale Farmers

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to revitalize and revamp the dwindling agricultural sector of the country's economy, successive governments in Nigeria have instituted various policies and programmes, with little or no perceptible degree of success; for instance, the launching of the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAPP) in 1972, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, the Green Revolution in 1980, and of course, the current Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) operational in each state of the federation(Idachaba,1986; Undiandeye, 1988). These designed policies and programmes were implemented in such a way that the small-scale farmers could benefit from them due to the important role they play in the Nigerian agricultural sector.

One of the critical factors responsible for the slow growth of the Nigerian agricultural sector in recent years is that appreciable percentage of the farmers in the country are small-scale who live in rural areas with little financial base. They are characterized by the traditional farming method, using local implements such as hoes, cutlasses, and they practise communal land tenure system, which in the rural sense limits farm expansion.

Therefore, in order to address, among other things, the low level of living and abject poverty evident in our country today, especially in the rural areas, there is urgent need to encourage small-scale farmers who form the bulk of the primary producers to make better use of available resources to improve their productivity, income and total well-being. This will ultimately have a positive multiplier effect on the economy of the country as a whole. Upton (1973) made similar suggestions.

According to Harding (1982), the resources at the disposal of a small-scale farmer are the land, labour, capital and management. The kind and quantities of resources used in primary production activities in the rural economy are characterized by old techniques and crudity or simplicity of forms that tend to give low output. This low output results in low food supply and subsequent food and nutritional problem, which is manifested in malnutrition, disease and consequent socio-political-economic discontent.

The role of agriculture in the general economic development of Nigeria, according to Adensimi (1982), depends to a large extent on the rate of productivity increases. If, therefore, agriculture is to succeed in this expected role, especially in the provision of food for its teeming population, increased productivity from resources committed to this sector is very much required.

The objectives of the study therefore are:

1. To investigate the extent to which resources have been used in boosting agricultural production among small-scale farmers in the study area.
2. To identify the factors affecting efficient resource use.
3. To discuss the implications of the findings for future action and use by agricultural agencies and agricultural policy makers.

METHODOLOGY

The small-scale farmers in Yola Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria were the focus of this study. The area was divided into two development areas (Njoboliyo and Namtari).

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Accordingly, from the two development areas, a total of ten villages were randomly selected for the purpose of this study. A list of all farmers was obtained from the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) headquarters of the Local Government. From each village, seven small-scale farmers were randomly selected thus bringing the total respondents of this study to seventy (70).

Data were collected from the seventy respondents through personal interview with an interview schedule. The chi-square test analysis was used in testing the relationship between resource use and some selected socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers at 0.05% level of significance.

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

To achieve the stipulated objectives of this study, a general hypothesis has been formulated which states that there is no significant relationship between resource use and socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers. Efficient and proper utilization of farm resources (land, labour, capital and management) not only ensures higher productivity to small-scale farmers but also brings about agricultural and hence economic development. Therefore, effort was made in this study to establish if there is a relationship between farmers' socio-economic characteristics and the resource use. The socio-economic characteristics considered in this regard include age, level of education, farm size, farm labour, source of finance as well as net annual income from farming.

Table 1 indicates that there was no significant relationship between age and resource use. The result implied that age did not have any significant effect on the use of resources in the farm enterprise. Data also revealed that 52.86% were in the age bracket of 21 – 40 years while 27.14% and 20% of them fell under the age bracket of 41 – 60 years and above 60 years respectively.

The data on the Table also show that there was no relationship between level of education of the respondents and resource use. Hence, it is indicated that the farmers were educated enough to read and write, and consequently to accept any new proven technology that will improve and increase their

Table 1: Relationship Between Selected Socio-economic Characteristics and Resource Use

Socio-economic Characteristics		No. of Farmers	Percentage %	χ^2	Level of Significance
Age	Less than 20 yrs	-	-		
	21 – 40 yrs	37	52.86	1.75	NS
	41 – 60 yrs	19	27.14		
	Above 60	14	20.00		
Level of Education	Primary School	8	11.43		
	Secondary School	22	31.43	2.442	NS
	Tertiary Education	11	15.71		
	Adult Education	19	27.14		
	None	10	14.28		
Farm Size	Less than 2 ha	24	34.28		
	2 – 4 ha	26	37.14	2.69	NS
	5 – 9 ha	8	11.43		
	10 ha and Above	12	17.14		
Source of farm Labour	Family Labour	31	44.28		
	Hired Labour	11	15.71	1.255	NS
	Both family & hired	28	40.00		
Source of Finance	Self-saving	48	68.57	0.9482	NS
	Credit	22	31.43		
Net Annual income from farming	Less than ₦3,000	22	31.43		
	₦3,001 – ₦4,000	8	11.43		
	₦4,001 – ₦5,000	20	28.57	70.061	S
	₦5,001 – ₦6,000	5	7.14		
	₦6,001 – ₦7,000	5	7.14		
	Above ₦7,000	10	14.28		

NS = Not significant at 0.05% level
S = Significant at 0.05% level

Table 2: Factors Affecting Resource Use Productivity Among Small-scale Farmers

S/No	Variables	No. of Farmers	%
1.	Non-availability of tractor hiring unit	40	57
2.	High cost of fertilizers	35	50
3.	Non-availability of fertilizers	30	42
4.	Inadequate credit facilities	28	40
5.	Low prices of farm produce	25	36
6.	Inadequate extension services	23	32
7.	High cost of agro-chemicals	16	23
8.	Problems of pests and diseases	12	17
9.	Non-availability of high yielding seed varieties	10	14
10.	Lack of proper storage and transport facilities	7	10
11.	Insufficient labour supply on the farm	6	8
12.	Insufficient rainfall	5	7

productivity. This stems from the fact that as much as 31.43% and 15.71% of the respondents had attended secondary schools and tertiary institutions respectively.

The Table similarly indicates that there was no significant relationship between farm size and resource use. The data also show that 34.28% of the farmers had a farm size of less than 2ha and 37.14% of them had 2.0 – 4.0ha of farm size. More so, 11.43% of the respondents had a farm size of 5.0 – 9.0ha while 17.14% had a farm size of 10.0ha and above. The conclusion here is that the farmers on a general note had enough farm land as would enable them employ all the resources needed for farm enterprise. Adeniyi (1988) had similar results.

This study equally attempted to find out whether any relationship existed between source of farm labour and resource use. The results as presented on the Table 1 show that no significant relationship existed between resource use and source of farm labour. This is probably because no mechanized labour was used. The data reveal that 44.28% of the farmers used family labour for the operation of their enterprise; 15.71% of them got their source of labour by hiring labour, while 40% of them used both family and hired labour for farm operation. Alamu (1984) observed that mechanized labour can increase farmer's productivity.

The data as presented on the Table however, show that 68.57% of the respondents got their finance from self-saving while 31.43% got theirs through credit sources, may be from credit institutions such as banks or from friends, neighbours and relations. The data equally indicate that there is no significant relationship between farmers' source of finance and resource use. The result indicates that regardless of which source the farmer obtains his finance, this does not in any way affect the resource use productivity. This result is in agreement with a study conducted by Nwagbo (1989) in which he found out that agricultural credit does not affect resource use productivity of small-scale farmers.

The Table shows that the net income from farming is significantly related to resource use. This could be as a result of the fact that farmers usually re-invest whatever income they earn from their farms in order to expand their farm enterprise, with resultant increase in their productivity.

Factors Affecting Resource Use Productivity Among Small-scale Farmers

Data on Table 2 show that farmers' resource use productivity was affected by so many factors. It has been observed in the study area, that most farmers had numerous problems that tend to mar their effective and efficient utilization of the available resources. It is discernible also from the Table that 57% had the problem of non-availability of tractors during land preparation, 50% had problem of high cost of fertilizers while 12% of the farmers said non-availability of fertilizers was one of the problems.

Inadequate credit facilities was another problem that tended to hinder about 40% of the respondents from making proper utilization of the available resources to increase productivity; 36% of the farmers complained about low prices of their farm produce when sent to the market; 32% of them cried of inadequate technical advice from the extension agents; 23% of the farmers had problem of high cost of agro-chemicals; 17% contended of having problem of pests and diseases affecting their farms; 14% complained of non-availability of high yielding seed varieties; 10% said they had always been faced with the problems of inadequate storage and transport facilities. However, 8% and 7% of the farmers said that their effective utilization of resources available to them had been hampered by insufficient labour supply on farm and insufficient rainfall, respectively.

All these problems in one way or the other affected farmers' resource use productivity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Small-scale farmers form the bulk of the nation's food producers. However, constrained by the subsistence nature of their farming system and other factors, they tend to produce little, thus, earn low income and thereby they continually grapple with poverty. Part of the reasons responsible for this situation is the small-scale farmers' poor or under utilization of the resources at their disposal.

The findings of this study support the view that socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale farmers such as age, level of education, farm size, farm labour and source of farm finance were not significantly

related to resource use productivity in the study area. However, small-scale farmers' net annual income from farming was found to have a significant relationship with resource use productivity. Therefore, it is instructive to say here that the small-scale farmers expand their farming enterprise as their level of income increases. With increased income, all things being equal, they would acquire more land, hire more labour and purchase more farm inputs which may include new and proven agricultural technologies such as fertilizers, tractors, new improved seed varieties and agro-chemicals. This would eventually improve their general standard of living.

The study in addition identified several obstacles that tend to affect the small-scale farmers' resource use and their general level of agricultural production. Prominent among such obstacles are non-availability of tractor hiring units, high cost of fertilizers, among others.

In conclusion however, it may not be out of place to state that for a meaningful agricultural development in the country as a whole, there is urgent need for government and policy makers to recognize the importance of small-scale farmers and their ability to make proper and efficient utilization of the resources available, given favourable conditions. Therefore, it behoves the authorities concerned to try as much as possible to create all necessary conducive atmosphere for farmers to really harness and use the needed farm resources, while at the same time minimizing or completely eliminating such obstacles that are known to conflict with the use of these resources.

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