CROP FARMER'S ASSESSMENT OF OSUN STATE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (OSSADEP) IN IWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study assessed the activities of OSSADEP in Iwo Local Government Area (LGA) of Osun state. A total of 90 crop farmers that have benefitted and/ still benefitting from the services of OSSADEP were selected through a 2 staged simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected through an interview guide and the information collected was analyzed through descriptive statistical analysis. The result of the study shows that the crop farmers have benefitted from the organisation mainly in terms of input availability, fertilizers, regular extension services and helping to solve the farmers to solve their problems. But they still face constraints of low yield , pests and diseases. On assessing the organisation the mean value reveals that the programme has been relevant to their community, help to increase income and yield while the organisation has performed poorly on areas of quick disbursement of input and bringing new technologies to the farmers. the study therefore concludes that the crops farmers have benefitted from OSSADEP activities but are still faced with some constraints but the assessment of the farmers have shown that the organisation has fared well but need to improve on their weak areas. It therefore recommends that OSSADEP should sustain their activities but improve on the timely disbursements of inputs at the right time and quantity.

Keywords: Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), assessment, crop farmers, Osun state

Introduction

Food production decisions in Nigeria are made mainly by rural farmers who face a number of challenges. These challenges have social and economic implications on the farming households and the entire economy (Fakoya, Agbonlahor and Dipeolu, 2007 [1]). While Agriculture produces food for subsistence, provide base for employment and income generation for majority of the population, it plays an important role in sustaining the basic livelihood of the people. (Michael, 2007[2]).

Issues and problems of rural development and food security have always received attention from many administration therefore the formulation, adoption and implementation of different policies and programme. However most of the programmmes were implemented without a transparent framework to structure action which contribute to the setback of all attempt that has been made in the past at the rural level while also continuity is not ensured by the successive government. Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined among the different stakeholders hence there appears to be duplication of efforts and less optimal resource allocation and utilisation.

In a bid to ensure improved agricultural activities in the face of failure of several agricultural policies and programmmes held in the past, the Nigerian Agricultural development projects (ADPs) was conceived and started as an enclave in Gombe, Gusau, Funtua, Bida, Ekiti-Akoko, Lafia, Ayangba, Ilorin and Oyo North in the mid 1970s using integrated rural development programme approach and the Training and Visit extension system with funding from the World Bank, Federal and State government (Adebayo and Idowu, 2000[3]). With the success recorded a multistate ADP was implemented such that at the end of the second phase in the 90s all states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) had been covered. Agricultural development projects were established in order to boost agricultural development and food security status of Nigeria.

Osun State Agricultural Development Projects (OSSADEP) was established in 1992 with three administrative zones with the objectives of contributing to improvement of national food security through increasing food production on an economically and environmentally sustaining manner. It also aim to reduce year to year variability in agricultural production and improve people's access to food by enabling rural poor to increase their level of production, which increases their income level and utmost on the standard of living (Remi, 2012[4]). OSSADEP is divided into six departments which are management and administration, research and extension services, planning, monitoring and evaluation, finance and accounts, commercial services and engineering services. The mandate of OSSADEP include provision of extension services, supply of modern inputs, facilitation of acquisition of water management devices and other technologies, linking farmers and farmers group with agricultural financial agencies or credit institutions, strengthening linkages between agricultural research institutions and farmers, bringing farmers and farming problems to the notice of research institution for solution, provision of necessary infrastructure, appropriate guidance for agricultural activities of schools under the state government school agricultural programme. (www. ossadep.com assessed on the 12th of February 2014.)

Many of these aspects of the programme have been formulated and implemented and there is a need for assessment in order to identify weak areas for improvement, strength for sustenance, opportunities to be tapped into and threats to be tackled. It is against this background that this study was conducted with the following objectives; (1) Describe the personal characteristics of the crop farmers. (2) Identify benefits derived by the farmers from the organizations activities. (3) Assess OSSADEP activities in the area. (4) Identify constraints affecting their farming activities.

Methodology

OSSADEP has 3 administrative zones where Iwo LGA falls under the Iwo Zonal office located at Oke-Odo. The area enjoys a tropical climate with prominent wet and dry seasons. The reining season generally occur between April and October while dry season occur between November and March. It is one of the thirty local government areas in Osun state. Most of the people in the area engage in farming activities most especially animal rearing and crop production in small and medium scale. It is mostly agrarian and rural in nature. It is dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group and a major producer of oil palm.

Study Population;

This include all crop farmers that have participated and/ are still participating in OSSADEP activities in Iwo LGA.

Sampling Frame;

A list of crop farmers who have participated and/ still participating in services of OSSADEP was provided by the OSSADEP zonal office which was used as the sampling frame from where the respondents were selected.

Sampling technique and size;

A two-staged simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Nine villages were randomly selected from the over 200 villages in Iwo LGA, 10 farmers were then simple randomly selected from each of the selected villages. To make a total of 90 crop farmers. these farmers have accessed OSSADEP activities prior to the study.

Data collection and analysis;

Information was elicited from the respondents through a carefully developed interview guide. Information collected was subjected to descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages and mean.

Measurement of variables

The dependent variable was the farmers assessment of OSSADEP activities. It was measured using a four-point rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. For positive statement, strongly agree was rated as 4 points, agree as 3 point, disagree as 2 points and strongly disagree as one point. While for negative statement the score was reversed as strongly agree was allotted one point, agree as 2 points, disagree as 3 points, and strongly agree 4 points. The mean point of each statement was calculated and a cut-off point of 1.5 was used to categorized their assessment. Thus statement with mean value between 1.00 and 2.50 were categorized as low, negative, poor and those between 2.51 and 4.00 were categorized as high, favourable and efficient.

The independent variables measured includes the personal characteristics of the farmers which include sex, age, marital status, household size, benefits derived from OSSADEP and constraints faced in their farming activities in their interactions with OSSADEP.

Table 1; Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	82	91.1
Female	08	08.9
Age ($\bar{x}$ = 49.4)		
21 – 30	05	05.6
31 – 40	07	07.8
41 – 50	54	60.0
51 – 60	21	23.3
Above 60	03	03.3
Marital Status		
Single	02	02.2
Married	82	91.2
Divorced	04	04.4
Widowed	02	02.2
Educational Attainment		
No Formal Education	29	32.2
Primary Education	27	30.0
Secondary Education	16	17.8
Ordinary National Diploma (OND)	09	10.0
Higher National Diploma (HND)	09	10.0
Household Size		
1 – 4	17	18.8
5 – 8	41	45.6
9 – 12	24	26.7
Above 12	08	08.9
Religion		
Islam	61	67.7
Christianity	27	30.1
Traditional	02	02.2
Year of joining OSSADEP		
1992 – 2002	30	33.3
2003 – 2013	60	66.7

Source; Field Survey 2013

Table 2; benefits derived from OSSADEP programmes by the crop farmers

Variables*	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Improved Seeds	69	76.7
Extension Services	51	56.7
Agrochemical supply (Herbicides)	69	76.7
Micro credit linkage	08	08.9
Fertilizer	81	90.0
Hiring of tractors	22	24.4
Solving of problems	78	86.7

Source; Field Survey 2013 * = Multiple responses

Table 3; Problems of farmers

Variables*	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Pests and Diseases	85	94.4
Low yield	87	96.7
Lack of capital	64	71.1
Inadequate input	72	80.0
Lack of market	39	43.3
Lack of processing facilities	36	40.0
Irregular visit	64	71.1

Source; Field Survey 2013 * = Multiple responses

Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

The result of the study shows that 91.1% of the farmers are male with 60% of them between the ages of 41 and 50 years old. Also the mean year of the farmers age is 49 years while majority (91.2%) are married with a fairly large household size of an average of 8 with 45.6% of the respondents having between 5 and 8 household members. On their educational attainment, the results as shown in table 1 below reveals that 32.2% do not have any form of formal education while 30% and 17.8% possess primary and secondary education respectively. The results in table 1 below also shows that many (66.7%) of the respondents are Muslims while 66.7% started enjoying OSSADEP benefits between the year 2003 and 2013. The results of the personal characteristics implies that the area has an ageing farming population with large household and low educational attainment. These features of the farmers are typical characteristics of the rural population in Nigeria.

Benefits Derived by the Crop Farmers from OSSADEP Activities

The farmers revealed that they have benefitted from OSSADEP in their farming activities. Table 2 shows that 90% of the farmers claimed that they have benefited more from OSSADEP in terms of making fertilizer available. They also claimed to have benefitted from improved seeds (76.7%), Regular extension services (56.7%), Agrochemical supply (76.0%), linkage to microcredit (8.9%), solving of farmer's problems (86.7%) and hiring of tractors (24.4%). This shows that the organisation has contributed to the activities of the farmers and the improvement of the farmers productivity.

Constraints faced by respondents

On the constraints faced by the farmers, the finding of the study shows that challenges of low yield (96.7%), pest and diseases (94.4%), inadequate input (80%) and lack of capital (71.1%) are the major constraints faced by the farmers. other constraints faced include lack of market (43.3%) and lack of processing facilities (40.0%). This implies that the ADP still need to work more on the issue of pest infestation and disease occurrence in order to make their presence felt more. Also, problems associated with low yield, inadequate inputs, market and processing facilities need to be addressed by the ADP in order to improve the living standard of the farmers. This is in agreement with constraints perceived by rural women in the study conducted by Adamu *et al* [5]

Assessment of the organisation

On the farmers assessment of the organisation, about 40% of the respondent agree that there is late disbursement of farming inputs while 35.6% agree that the state ADP has provided good irrigation facilities. Also, 66.7% of the respondents complained of the rigid system of administration of the ADP. On the changes in production after accessing OSSADEP activities the result showed that 50% and 35.6% strongly agree and agree that there have been changes in their yield. Further in calculating the mean, the finding of the study shows that relevance of the programme in the community has the highest mean value ($\bar{x}$ = 3.53) followed by the increase in income ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38) and increase in the produce of the farmers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31). But the guarantee of food security ($\bar{x}$ = 1.87), provision of new technology ($\bar{x}$ = 2.00) and late disbursement of input ($\bar{x}$ = 2.16) are the assessment indicators with the least scores. This implies that the organisation has been doing poorly on the disbursement of input, provision of new technology and guarantee of food security has not been achieved by OSSADEP through its activities.

Table 4; Farmers assessment of OSSADEP activities

Variables	SA		A		D		SD		$\bar{x}$	Rank
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)		
Late disbursement of input	24	26.7	40	44.4	14	15.6	12	13.3	2.16	Low
Good irrigation facilities	18	20.0	32	35.6	20	22.2	20	22.2	2.53	High
Rigid system of administration	10	11.1	15	16.7	39	43.3	26	28.9	2.90	High
After OSSADEP my produce remains the same	0	00.0	13	14.4	32	35.6	45	50.0	3.36	High
After OSSADEP, farm size increased	20	22.2	26	28.9	35	38.9	9	10.0	2.63	High
After OSSADEP, no increase in income	0	00.0	1	1.1	54	60	35	38.9	3.38	High
OSSADEP has been able to influence my farming activities	32	35.6	48	53.3	10	11.1	0	00.0	3.24	High
OSSADEP is not relevant in the community	0	00.0	0		42	46.7	48	53.3	3.53	High
OSSADEP complementing the community development	24	26.7	33	36.7	20	22.2	13	14.4	2.76	High
OSSADEP has increase agricultural production level in community	27	30	32	35.6	17	18.9	14	15.6	2.80	High
Food security has not been guarantee	47	52.2	25	27.8	1	1.1	17	18.9	1.87	Low
OSSADEP has brought about provision of job	7	7.8	13	14.4	43	47.8	27	30	2.00	Low
Higher level of information	10	11.1	42	46.7	26	28.9	17	18.9	2.60	High

Source; Field Survey 2013

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the outcome of the study, it can be concluded that the crop farmers have benefitted from the activities of OSSADEP mainly in the areas of input supply like seeds, fertilizer and herbicides, provision of extension services and solving of problems which farmers face. The constraints faced by farmers are still the issues of pests and diseases, low yield and inadequacy of inputs. Although the organization is trying to reduce many of these constraints faced, much still need to be done in order to improve the farming activities of the farmers. Also, it can be concluded that from the mean assessment, the organisation has been able to improve the yield , income and level of information available to the farmers.

The study therefore recommends that OSSADEP should sustain their activities but improve on the timely disbursement of input by making them available at the needed quantity and time. Also, the organisation should develop packages in line with the needs of the farmers so that they would benefit more from the activities of the organisation.

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