

Perception of Women on Government- Oriented Programmes on Production Agriculture among Women-Farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States. Nigeria.

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Abstract: *The thrust of this study was to determine the effects on Government oriented programmes (GOP) such as Better Life, Family Support, the Family Economic Advancement Programmes and so on production agriculture among rural women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States. The study was a descriptive research design. A total of 320 rural women farmer were purposely sampled as the respondents for data collection. Means, standard deviation and Spearman rank correlation coefficient (r) were used to analyse the data for the study. The respondents agreed that GOP programmes have marked effects on the farmers' level of production (10 items out of 12) and that the programmes played significant roles in their life (13 out of 16 items). There was a strong relationship in the mean rating of adult and young women farmers on the effects of GOP on agricultural productivity among the respondents. It was recommended among others that government oriented programmes should be evaluated at local, state and national levels periodically, while the programmes should also be streamlined to have stable policy.*

I. Introduction

Production oriented agriculture can be defined as the effective management of both factors of production, like capital, land, labour and entrepreneurial skills; plants and animals for maximum production of food and raw materials for man, livestock and industrial uses. The practice of agriculture is one of the important activities of majority of women in Ekiti and Enugu States of Nigeria. The two states are noted for production of livestock, arable, and cash crops. Agriculture in the two states serves as sources of income, employment and means of living. Their farm products are useful in the industries in neighbouring cities.

Realizing the contributions of agriculture to the national economic development, government under various Head of State had been embarking on different agricultural programmes so as to develop and encourage production agriculture. For example, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) was introduced in 1976, while Green Revolution (GR) was launched in 1982 by Obasanjo and Shagari administrations respectively. Likewise, the River Basin Agriculture Development Authority (RBADA) National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) and the Family Support Programmes (FSP). These programmes were meant for the generality of Nigerian farmers, for mass food production and rural development among other reasons. Realizing the importance of women's contributions to the development of agriculture, the Better Life programmes (BLP), was launched by the Babangida administration, and specifically by the then nations First Lady, Maryam Babangida in 1987. According to Babangida (1991), the (BLP) was initiated to make women self-reliant and be able to contribute positively to agricultural development in the country. The main objectives of the Better Life Programmes were to:

1. Improve the standard of living of rural women.
2. Boost agricultural productivity.
3. Increase the number of small- scale agro-industries in Nigeria.

Other agriculture oriented programmes were the Vision 20: 2020 of the Abacha administration, Family Economic Advancement Programmes (FEAP) of the Abdulsalami era. Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), National State and Community Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy NEEDS, SEEDS, and CEEDS. 7-point Agenda and most recently Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Scheme (SURE) of the Jonathan administration. These programmes are meant to change the life of rural women farmers and other Nigerians.

According to Simon (1976), the formations of women's organization for agricultural development play important roles in promoting women opportunities for socio-economic development, improved way of living, adequate food, more money, better awareness, more knowledge and becoming a subject rather an object of social system. In 1992, Olumilua remarked that the involvement of women in food production will not only bring down the cost of food items but will encourage rural development, and enhance adequate food supply to

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Nigerians and improve the foreign exchange earnings base of the country. Nigerian women are generally credited with being energetic, industrious and enterprising. They constitute a significant agricultural workforce to be reckoned with in the economic development of the nation. This study therefore sought to determine the impact of the various government programmes on agricultural productivity among women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States of the country.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn and answered in the study.

1. What are the various government programmes which women- farmers have benefited from in Ekiti and Enugu States?
2. What are the impact of government programmes on agricultural productivity among women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States?
3. What are the roles and involvement of government programmes in agricultural productivity in Ekiti and Enugu States?

Hypothesis

The study answered the following hypothesis at p 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1 there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of young and adult women- farmers on the impact of government oriented programmes on agricultural productivity in Ekiti and Enugu States, Nigeria.

II. Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey research method. The population consisted of 200 adults and 120 young women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States of Nigeria. They were purposely sampled for the 32 local government areas of the 2 states. Ten (10) women farmers were purposely selected from each of the local government areas, making 320 respondents

Instrument for Data Collection

Three structured questionnaire containing 41 items were used to elicit information from the respondents on a 5 point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Agree. The instrument reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained using the Cronbach's alpha at 0.05 level of significant. The questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents. A return rate of 100% was recorded.

Data Analysis

The data generated was subjected to analysis using percentage, mean standard deviation and Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (r) were used to calculate the relationship between the opinion of adult and young women farmers. The hypotheses were tested at $P \geq 0.05$ level of significance.

Findings

Research Question 1

What are the various government programmes which women farmers have benefited from?

Table 1 Government Oriented Programmes in Ekiti and Enugu States..

S/N	I have benefitted from this government programmes	%YES	%NO	REMARKS
1	Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)	84.38	15.62	YES
2	Green Revolution (GR)	78.13	21.87	YES
3	River Basin Agric Development programmes(RBADP)	62.5	37.5	YES
4	Agric Development programmes (ADP)	77.19	22.01	YES
5	National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)	14.06	85.94	NO
6	Family Support Programmes (FSD)	80	20	YES
7	National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP)	70	30	YES
8	Millennium Development Goal (MDGs)	56.25	43.75	YES
9	NEED/ SEEDS/ CEED.	27.5	72.5	NO
10	Vision 20:2020	31.25	68.75	NO
11	Family Economic Advancement Programmes (FEAP)	46.75	56.25	NO
12	7- Point Agenda	43.75	56.25	NO
13	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programmes (SUREP)	6.21	93.79	NO

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The result in Table 1 shows that the respondents have benefitted from seven (7) out of the thirteen (13) government- oriented programmes (% YES \geq 50). They opined not to have benefitted from 6 out of the thirteen (13) government programmes, (% NO \leq 49).

Research Question 2.

What are the impact of government programmes on agricultural productivity among women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States?

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and ranking of the impact of government programmes (GOP) on agricultural productivity among Women in Ekiti and Enugu States.

Farmers N=320

S/N	Impact of government programmes on agricultural productivity.	X	SD	Ranking
1	Government- oriented Programmes should be continued	4.67	0.86	1
2	Sources of additional income for family activities.	4.28	0.86	2
3	Has improved output per family per area of farmland	4.19	0.76	3
4	Has change women’s agricultural life.	4.16	1.01	4
5	Has effect on farming system.	4.00	0.80	5
6	Provided information on how to preserve agricultural products.	3.95	0.89	6
7	Assisted in disseminating agricultural information.	3.84	0.89	7
8	Improved livestock management skills.	3.81	1.13	8
9	Improved arable crop production.	3.75	1.19	9
10	Has assisted in the improvement of modern agriculture skills.	3.69	1.03	10
11	Has helped to control livestock and crop pests and diseases.	3.34	0.85	11
12	Provided simple farm machine and tools.	3.23	0.87	12

Data contained in Table 2 reveals that the respondents ranked item 1-10 high $x \geq 3.49$ and item 11- 12 as low $x \leq 3.49$. They agreed most that government oriented programmes should continued ($x= 4.67$, $SD= 0.086$.)

Cut- off point for Agree = $X \geq 3.49$

Research Question 3`

What are the roles and involvement of government oriented programmes on agricultural productivity among women farmers in Ekiti and Enugu States?

Table 3- Means, standard deviation on the involvement and roles in government oriented programmes on agricultural productivity in Ekiti and Enugu States.

S/N	Roles of government oriented programmes	X	SD	Ranking
1	Improved the life of rural people.	4.76	0.46	1
2	Provided market for sale of agricultural products.	4.66	0.48	2
3	Provided loan in cash or kind to assist farm business.	4.62	0.49	3
4	Specifically encouraged garri processing.	4.41	0.58	4
5	Assisted in the establishment of some agricultural product in my locality.	4.42	0.54	5
6	Specifically encouraged rice production.	4.32	0.54	6
7	Provided women with processing materials.	4.31	0.565	7
8	Increased agricultural productivity.	4.29	0.60	8
9	Provided transportation of agricultural products.	4.15	0.61	9
10	Provided storage materials.	4.19	0.61	10
11	Provided improved seedlings and seeds.	4.41	0.62	11
12	Encouraged planting at the right time.	3.59	0.0	12
13	Encouraged adoption of agricultural programmes.	3.37	0.88	13
14	Provided the supplies of fertilizer.	2.29	0.99	14
15	Provided pest and diseases control chemical and know hows.	2.07	0.66	15
16	Encouraged the use of farm tools technology.	1.98	0.88	16

Table 3 reveals the government programmes have improved the life of the women farmers ($X=4.76$, $SD= 0.46$), provided market for sales of agricultural products ($X=4.68$, $SD= 0.48$) and provided loan in cash or kind to assist farming activities $X= 4.62$ $SD= 0.49$). The farmers opined that they have benefitted from 12 out of sixteen (16) benefits of government programmes.

Cut-off point for Agree = $X > 3.49$.

Ho1. There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of young and adult women farmers on impact of government oriented programmes on agricultural productivity in Ekiti and Enugu States.

Table 4: Relationship between adult and young women farmers on impact of government-oriented programmes on agricultural productivity in Ekiti and Enugu States, Nigeria.

Categories	N	X	SD	Df	r. cal	Remark
Young women farmer	120	4.05	0.56	119	2.79	Strong relationship
Adult women farmer	200	4.37	0.74	199		
				318		

Data contained in Table 4 reveals a strong relationship r-value of 2.79 is greater than the critical r-value of 1.29 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

III. Discussion of Findings

Results presented in Table 1 shows that the farmers have benefitted from 7 out of the thirteen (13) governments –oriented programmes. According to Adekoya (2010) successive government in Nigeria were not oblivious of the problems of farmers and the grinding poverty in Nigeria. They have attempted to deal with the scourge by establishing various agricultural oriented programmes such as the Operation Feed the Nation of the yester years and the current National Poverty Eradication Programme. The farmers might have benefitted from only few of the programmes because of the fact that in most cases the multidimensional nature of poverty and agricultural production are ignored, and such programmes usually focus on one item in a chain.

Results presented in Table 2 reveals that out of the twelve (12) items presented as impact of government oriented programmes on agricultural productivity, only ten (10) received a mean of 3.49 and above. The respondents agreed that the programmes have improved their output per area of farmland; hence, the programmes have changed their life. The finding is in consonant with Olumilua (1992) statement that involvement of women in food production will enhance rural development and encourage mass food production. Hence the women farmers agreed that government oriented programmes should continue.

From the results presented in Table 3 it was agreed that government oriented programmes have improved the life of the rural women and provided markets for their products. This is supported by Simon (1976) and in agreement with one of the goals of State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEED) that the formation of women organisation plays important roles in promoting women opportunities for socioeconomic development, improved way of living, adequate food and more knowledge.

The results from Table 4 show that there is a strong relationship between the opinion of adult and young women farmers in agriculture about the impact of government-oriented programme on agricultural productivity among women who are engaged in farming in Enugu and Ekiti States. The relatively low standard deviation of the two groups is an indication that the respondents' opinions are favourable to the programmes. According to Babangida, (1991) women oriented agricultural programmes was oriented to make women to be self reliant and contribute positively to agricultural development of the country. For example one of the main objectives of the Better Life Programme were to improve the standard of living of rural women, boost agricultural productivity and increase the number of small scale agro industries in the country. An inference from this is that the traditional focus of all government programmes are meant to improve the conditions of Nigerians and increase agricultural productivity among other reasons.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the results obtained in the study, the following conclusions were drawn: that government-oriented women programme for agriculture should continue. Both the adult and young women agreed that the programmes have drastically improved their methods of farming and ways of coping with rural life. It was discovered that the GOP provided good market for sales of agricultural products and encouraged the establishment of agriculture projects to enhance production agriculture among women in both Ekiti and Enugu States.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that

1. Government should provide and encourage rural women to attend adult literacy education programmes, training sections and workshop on agricultural practices at least to receive minimum education, so that the women can be literate and be able to increase their productivity and skills.
2. Fertilizers and agricultural chemicals should be made available for the women-farmers' use.
3. Government agricultural programmes should be subjected to periodic evaluation and replanning. The programmes should have stable policy, streamlined, be continuous and made rural- based.

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