

LEVELS OF FARMERS' PARTICIPATION IN SUDAN SAVANNA CHALLENGE PROGRAMME IN BUNKURE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KANO STATE

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Abstract

This study assesses Levels of Farmers' Participation in Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected with the aid of Community Participation Questionnaire and was administered to 123 farmers in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State. Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used in the selection and data analysis was by the use of descriptive statistics. The findings of the study revealed that: farmers in Bunkure Local Government Area significantly participated in the planning, execution and subsequent utilization of knowledge. The findings of the study further revealed that factors like age, educational attainment, provision of improved technology, peer group influence and communication and social interaction influenced farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme. The major recommendations based on the findings of this study were that: The sponsors of the SSCP programme should ensure that sustainability mechanisms are put in place for farmers and other stakeholders continue to participate at the planning, execution and utilization stages, the level of female participation in such development programmes should be encouraged so as to remove a situation where someone feels he/she is marginalized.

Keywords: Farmers, factors, participation and challenge programme

Introduction

The central role of Agriculture in Africa's development has long been recognized by all stakeholders across national boundaries, but the fulfillment of this role is being frustrated by insufficient progress within the sector (FARA, 2009). As source of solution, researchers have generated many

technologies and products with high technical potentials, but with low impact on the broad based productivity of the smallholder farmers. This suggests that the cause of low returns to research efforts was deeper than perceived in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA); most importantly, this knowledge gap needs to be filled in order to achieve improved impact of agricultural research and development efforts. Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa's Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme which was initiated in 2004, aims to embed agricultural research into a broader innovation's system where knowledge from various sources can be integrated and put into use. This approach called 'Integrated Agricultural Research for Development' or IAR4D contrasts with more conventional linear approaches called 'Agricultural Research for Development', or ARD. The fundamental structure of IAR4D is an 'innovation platforms' or IP defined as an informal coalition, collaboration, or partnership of public and private scientists, extension workers, representative of farmers, farmer associations, private firms, NGOs, and government policy makers who communicate, cooperate and interact often across sectoral and ministerial lines motivated by the common belief that increased agricultural productivity can help improve the welfare of all members of the society (FARA, 2009).

Agriculture in developing countries faces a huge challenge. While agricultural production is dwindling, mostly due to low participation of the farming communities among other reasons, population is also on the increase. Perhaps, on this premise, Gardener and Haiweil, (2000), cited in Douthwaite, (2005) predicted further increase in population of developing countries from 5 billion to 8 billion in the next 50 years. The prediction suggests further that farmers need to double or triple their production during the period.

Since, the problem is more severe in Sub Saharan African countries including Nigeria, where the population is expected to grow by 132% by 2050 (Douthwaite, 2005) and where more than one third of children are already underweight, there would be greater need for farmers' participation particularly the youth, in agricultural production.

Community participation is a pre-condition for success of any developmental programme. Community participation means the voluntary involvement of community members in situation and actions which enhances their well -being. It depicts a process by which community is provided with opportunity to make inputs in matters concerning their well being and work actively with others to solve their problems (Shitu, 2008).

Shitu, (2008) opined that government programmes tend to fail partly because the benefiting communities are not sufficiently involved, thereby causing wastage of resources. Esenior, (1992) in Omoruyi,(2001) asserted that the top down approach to development issues which ignores the needs,

aspirations, rights and inputs of the local people is not only old fashion but also increasingly becoming unacceptable. The element of participation emphasizes the initiatives of the people as a means of stimulating the active participation of all community members in the work of development programmes/projects. This means that the stimulus needed for the success of development programme must come from the community itself, governmental authorities concerned or those able to assist them. According to Osuji, (1991 cited in Adekola, 2008) not every action of the community members can be considered as participation. He then identified some actions that could be referred to as participation. As cited in Adekola (2008), Osuji, asserted that the element of participation in a general conception include;

- ❖ Taking part in decision making to identify needs;
- ❖ Taking part in the mobilization of resources and planning of projects to be undertaken;
- ❖ Taking part in activities to implement and put the project in place;
- ❖ Taking part in monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The involvement of the community members in any of the above activities is considered as participation. It is pertinent to note that programme designers and executors have the right to determine what action of the people would amount to participation in a particular programme or project. This is importantly so, because various development programmes are designed to achieve different objectives. Thus what constitute participation in different programmes may differ from project to project and from time to time but most often still falls within the general elements as conceived by Osuji, (1991).

Oduaran, (1994) was of the opinion that community participation takes place at various levels in the process of development. The development programme/project normally involves planning including needs and resource identification and goal setting, execution, utilization and assessment of impacts. Since the levels of participation are many, concern has been shown over the stage at which we must encourage community participation.

Three lines of argument have been proposed. There are people who are in favour of involving the people only at the stage of planning. Some other people feel that involvement should come at the stage of execution and the third line of argument recommends that involvement should be encouraged only at the stage of utilization and assessment. The lines of arguments have been founded on experiences.

Oduaran, (1994) opines that it seems reasonable to encourage involvement at all stages for obvious reasons. Such involvement is much

more likely to make the people see the programmes/projects as their own project. Seeing the project as their own is probably going to encourage them to support it wholeheartedly. However, development scholars like Martin, Doorbos, Bruce, Stokes, Anyawu, among others have argued that involvement of people create in them a sense of belonging, acceptance and confidence. To Bruce, (1994, cited in Omoruyi, 2001) the reasons for involving people in development planning and implementation are ethical, functional, administrative, manipulative, educational, promotional and protective. Participation of community members can also create faith in common understanding among the people which enhance the possibility of success in the execution of programmes designed for better living in a rural community. This is the promotional role of community participation.

However, Omoruyi, (2001) has mentioned people like Robert Aleshire, and Harold Goldblatt, who have come out terribly against community participation in any development activity. They have argued that the involvement of too many people in decision making process can sometimes slow down action.

Statement of the Problem

A number of agricultural development programmes were initiated by government and non -governmental organizations to arrest the decline in agricultural productivity prominent of which is the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme. It is against this background that this study was carried out to assess the levels of farmers' participation in Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government area of Kano State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the levels of farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State.
2. To identify factors that influence farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What are the levels of farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State?
2. What are the factors that influence farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State?

Methodology

Survey research design was used in this study to assess the levels of farmers' participation in Sudan Savanna Challenge programme in Kano State. All lead farmers and seed producers involved in trial of new varieties and management practices in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State constitute the population of the study. The population of the study consists of 62 lead farmers' with 49 male and 13 female, 68 seed producers with 59 male and 9 females totaling 130. A total of 98 participants were used as sample for the study. The choice was in line with (Krejcie, Morgan 1970). Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the sample size of 123 subjects. The study used a questionnaire called Community Participation Questionnaire (CPQ) for the participants. The questionnaire items were close ended questions which targeted Sudan Savanna activities such as the subjects' level of involvement in the activities and factors that could possibly stimulate such participation. The instrument was validated by an Agricultural Extension Expert in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, BUK for possible adjustment on the content of the questionnaire and the nature of the questions asked in order to ensure its internal content consistency. Corrections were made before administering the questionnaire. The pre-testing method used was test and re-test method. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .67 for CPQ and the outcome revealed that the content of the questionnaire and the language used needs to be modified. The researcher employed the services of two research assistants who were adequately trained on the technical know-how of questionnaire administration. Research assistants made clarifications regarding the content of the questionnaire where possible. One week interval was given to the respondents to complete the questionnaire before collection. Study was analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of simple percentages and frequency counts.

Results

Research Question One: What are the levels of farmers' participation in Bunkure Local Government Area in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Kano State?

This question was answered using frequency counts and percentages. Categorization method was also employed where attending meeting, canvassing other farmers to attend meeting and determining of crop to be grown constitutes the roles of farmers at planning stage. Provision of land for demonstration, physical works, supervision, inputs supply, records keeping were categorized as farmers' role at execution stage while information sharing, practicing new technology and identification of problems and devising local measures to solve them were considered as farmers' role at utilization of knowledge stage.

Table 1 Respondents' Responses on Farmers' Levels of Participation

S/ N	VARIABLE	OPTION	BUNKURE LOCAL GOVT. AREA	
			f	%
1.	Roles at Planning stage	Attended meeting	50	51.02
		Canvassed other farmers	32	32.65
		Determined Crops	13	13.27
		Others	03	3.06
2.	Roles at Execution stage	Provided land for demonstration	49	50.00
		Did Physical works	21	21.43
		Supervised	24	24.49
		Supplied Inputs	03	3.06
		Others(kept record)	01	1.02
3.	Roles in Utilizations of Knowledge	Shared information with fellow farmers	71	72.45
		Practiced new Technology	21	21.43
		Identified problems and devised local measures	06	6.12

Data from Table 1 indicates three levels of farmers' participation in the programme (i.e. planning, execution and subsequent utilization of knowledge). In Bunkure Local Government Area 51.02% of the respondents attended meetings, 32.65% of the participants canvassed other farmers. As to determining the crops to be grown, 13.27% of the participants are engaged in this activity as their way of participation in the programme. 3.06% account for farmers who participated in the programme in some other ways. At the execution stage, the data from the table shows that 50.00% provided land for demonstration, 21.43% of the farmers did the physical works on the land, and 24.49% (24) are involved in supervising the land. More so, 3.06% supplied inputs and 1.02% of the participants classified as others were involved in keeping records of all the activities done on the farm.

At the utilization stage, the data established that 72.45% of the respondents shared information with fellow farmers while 21.43% of the respondents acquired ability to practice new technology. On identification of problems, 6.12% of the respondents are involved in identification and solving problems common to them through local measures.

Research Question Two

What are the factors that influence farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State?

To answer this question, frequency count, simple percentage and categorization of data was used and the results are as follows:

Table 2 Respondents' Responses on Factors Affecting Participation

S/ N	VARIABLE	OPTION	BUNKURE LOCAL GOVT. AREA	
			f	%
1.	Factors affecting community Participation in SSCP	Age	37	37.76
		Educational Attainment	41	41.84
		Improved Technology	16	16.33
		Peer group Influences	02	2.04
		Others (Occupation, Family/Household size, Patterns of communication and Social Interaction)	02	2.04
TOTAL			98	100

Table 2 above shows the factors that influence farmers' participation in the Sudan Savanna Challenge Programme in Bunkure Local Government Area of Kano State. The table indicates that 37.76% of the respondents considered age to be a factor that encourages participation of community members in the programme. The result further established that 41.84% of the respondents indicated that level of one's education can, to a large extent; determine the participation of community members in the programme, 16.33% of the respondents were of the view that provision of improved technology is what is encouraging farmers to participate in the programme. More so, 2.04. % of the respondents indicated the influence of peer group as a factor promoting participation of community members in the programme. However, another 2.04% of the respondents have identified other factors that encourage farmers' participation. They identified factors like occupational status, family/household size, and patterns of communication and social interaction.

Discussion of Results

From the data generated on the Table 1, it could be understood that majority of the participants in Bunkure Local Government Area are attending meeting regularly while those who played other roles are the minority. This was in line with an interview conducted with the IITA's researcher supervisor who re – affirmed that participatory approach was used in the programme to carry all the stakeholders along. According to him, innovation platform was initiated to create an enabling environment for the community members to participate. At the execution stage, those who provided land for demonstration are the majority while those who played other roles like a record keeping constitutes the minority. On the issue of utilization of knowledge acquired participants who had been engaged in sharing information with fellow farmers are the majority while the minority groups are those who identify problems and device local measures in solving them.

This was in line with a study conducted by Osuji, (1991) cited in Adekola, (2008) and Oduaran, (1994) on participation.

However, on the issue of factors that encourages farmers' participation, Table 2 above indicated that those who consider level of education one attained as the promoting factor are the majority. Whereas those who consider peer group influence and the pattern of information the participants received are the minority. This agreed with the findings of Yanguba (2004), Amegbeto et al, cited in Kamara (2010), Ensamu and Hassana (2001), Nnadi and Akwiwu (2008), Ekong, (2003), Asiabaka, (2002), and Omobolanle (2007) who in their various studies identified age, family or household size, education, occupation, peer group influence etc as factors that promotes farmers' participation in any developmental programme/project.

Conclusion

The study indicated the role played by the SSCP project in meeting its objective of increasing food security and improving farming technologies in the research area. The findings of the study indicated that really the participants were carried along throughout the life span of the project (from planning, execution and utilization of new technology). The study further revealed that factor such as age, educational attainment, improved technology, occupational status, family size, patterns of communication and social interaction influenced farmers' participation in the SSCP project.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. The sponsors of the SSCP programme should ensure that sustainability mechanisms are put in place for community members and other stakeholders to continue to participate at the planning, execution and utilization stages.
2. The level of female participation in such development programmes should be encouraged so as to remove a situation where someone feels he/she is marginalized.

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