

Assessing Kola Farmer's Participation in Group Organizations in Osun and Edo States of Nigeria

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Abstract: An assessment of Agricultural problems in Nigeria may suggest that farmer's Associations are not living to expectations. In kola production, farmers find it difficult to access relevant inputs via group formation to increase production. The study assessed Kola farmer's participation in group organizations in Osun and Edo States. Data were collected from seventy respondents using structured questionnaire and through purposive random sampling. It was analyzed with descriptive statistics and chi-square. The average age of respondents was 52 years. 35.7 percent of the members and non-members of farmer's groups had many years of farming experience of 21-30 years in kola production. 42.9% of them belonged to cooperative societies. The main reason for not joining association in respect of kola production is that many (40%) of the respondents did not derive benefit from group formation. The major constraint encountered by group membership in producing kola in the study areas is inadequate loan for members amounting to 47.1%. A significant relationship exists between respondents' education and farm size and reasons for not participating in group associations ($\chi^2=25.351$, 21.375 $p<0.05$). It is recommended that the literate farmers and cooperative society where membership is of a reasonable proportion be empowered through well managed self help finances. Relevant stakeholders from private and public enterprises could assist farmer's associations by providing them with revolving loans and credit facilities.

Key words: Farmers • Organizations • Kola production • Respondents and personal characteristics

INTRODUCTION

Kola is an important socio-economic and cultural commodity crop in Nigeria. The tree is evergreen and grows to a moderate height from 25m-30m and belongs to tropical genus of the family Sterculiaceae. Two major species: *Cola nitida* L (*Gbanja*) or *Goro* and *Cola acuminata* L (*Abata*) are widely cultivated in Nigeria [1]. The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) Ibadan developed products such as kola wine, chocolate from kola, liquid detergent and organic fertilizer from kola nut pod husks [2, 3]. Kola-nuts are widely consumed in West and central Africa as a masticator to counter fatigue, suppress thirst and hunger and are believed to enhance intellectual capacity. There is a company at Iseyin in Oyo State which currently produces Kola-nut wine known as Dee Champagne and Sparkling wine which, are being exported overseas and served in Nigerian Embassies abroad. Kola-nut is offered in birth and naming

ceremonies as acknowledgment of concern to visitors. The current annual production of kola nut in Nigeria ranges from 85,000 to 127,000 metric tonnes [4].

In the Kola sub-sector, most farmers are not well organized into farmer's groups which could assist them in raising fund for members in farming activities, getting access to inputs, credit and marketing their produce. Many farmers in recent times are nonchalant in joining existing organizations where their resources are supposed to be pooled together to solve a common problem and achieve the organizational goal. Retrospectively, an assessment of Agricultural problems in Nigeria may suggest that farmer's Associations especially cooperative movement are not living to expectations. This may have been associated with lack of integrity in the membership ranks which had destroyed mutual confidence in the societies without which farmers could access agricultural credit [5]. The existing amount of literature on the contributions of local groups in planning, monitoring and

evaluation of projects qualify them as basic social institutions for agricultural rural development. Some farmers in cooperative associations in Oyo State Nigeria were found to function well as agents, medium and target of change for agricultural extension in their domains. On the contrary, Abdullah *et al.* [6] observe that the basic activities of farmer's organizations (Fos) in Duadawa and Tafoki Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kastina State show that most of them are in their amorphous stage of development and have not done much in fulfilling their missions of increasing members' access to farm inputs and technical services or embarking on a sound income generating activities.

Despite the proliferations of farmers associations in Nigeria, our peasant farmers including kola producers are still faced with unfavourable production environment. Farmer's groups such as cooperative society for instance, are essentially aimed at improving the socio-economic variables of its members [7]. Irrespective of the importance of these groups to farmer's welfare, membership size has not been encouraging. However, some authorities reported that it is because such farmer's groups could not make significant impact on the lives of its members [8].

It is against this backdrop that the study focused on these objectives.

Objective

The major objective is to assess Kola farmer's participation in group organizations in Osun and Edo States. The specific objectives are to;

- Describe the personal characteristics of kola farmers.
- Examine the membership and non-membership of kola farmer's organizations; and
- Determine the constraints encountered by members of farmer's organizations in producing kola.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested in null form in the study is.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between some selected personal characteristics of kola farmers and the reasons for non-membership of group organizations in Osun and Edo states.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Osun and Edo State. Osun State occupies a land mass of approximately 8,602 square kilometers carved out of the old Oyo State. The state is bounded on the west by Oyo State, Ondo and

Ekiti States in the east, Kwara State in the north and Ogun State in the south. Agriculture is the traditional occupation of the people of the state. Edo State is bounded on the north and the east by Kogi State, on the west by Ondo State and on the south by Delta State. Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people. With the exception of Rubber in Edo, Cocoa, oil palm and Kola are some of the cash crops produced in the two States.

Sampling Procedure: A total of seventy respondents were interviewed through purposive random sampling in the two states. Fifty farmers (respondents) from Ife South and Atakomosa West Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Osun State were sampled while twenty respondents were from Ovia South LGA of Edo State. The reason for this is that Osun State produces more kola than Edo State. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the personal characteristics of respondents, membership and non-membership of kola farmer's organizations, reasons why farmers do not belong to group organizations, constraints encountered by members of farmer's organizations in producing kola and the main activity of farmer's groups by members in the study areas. Chi-square was used to determine the relationship between variables in the tested hypothesis at 0.05 probability level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Characteristics of Respondents:

Results from Table 1 shows that average age of respondents from Osun and Edo State was 52 years. Many of them (38.6%) were between 40-49 years, indicating that they were still within the active group in kola production. Most (75.7%) of the farmers were male and minority (24.3%) were female. Majority of the farmers (94.2%) were married while others were single (2.9%) and divorced 2.9%. Ekong [9] also found that the large proportion of married respondents could be an essential factor facilitating household farming activities. Close to half of the respondents (44.3%) had no formal education, (15%) had secondary and (10%) had tertiary education respectively. With good level of literacy, there is opportunity for the farmers to understand the workings of their associations and maximally benefit from membership of the group. 35.7 percent of the members and non-members of farmer's groups had many years of farming experience of 21-30 years in kola production. This gives an indication of the practical skill and knowledge the respondents must have acquired in kola farming activities in the study area.

Table 1: Kola farmer's personal characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age (years)			
30-39	7	10	51.87
40-49	27	38.6	
50-59	14	20	
60-69	17	24.3	
> 70	5	7.1	
Sex			
Male	53	75.7	
Female	17	24.3	
Marital status			
Married	66	94.2	
Single	2	2.9	
Divorced	2	2.9	
Educational status			
No formal Education	31	44.3	
Primary	21	30	
Secondary	11	15.7	
Tertiary	7	10	
Farming Experience (years)			23.92
< 10	4	5.7	
20-Oct	25	35.7	
21-30	30	42.8	
31-40	8	11.4	
> 40	3	4.2	

Source: Field survey, 2009.

Table 2: Type of farmer and farm size planted to kola

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Type of farmer		
Medium scale	3	4.2
Small scale	67	95.7
Farm size (ha)		
0.1-0.8	16	22.9
0.9-1.6	33	47.1
1.7-2.4	14	20
> 2.4	7	10

Source: Field survey, 2009

Table 3: Farmer's Organizations in Kola production

Farmer's organizations	Member	Non-member
Belonging to any Association	37(52.9)	33(47.1)
Types of Association		
Kolanut Association of Nigeria (KOLAN)	4(5.70)	66(94.3)
Ordinary member	4(5.70)	66(94.3)
Cooperative society	30(42.9)	40(57.1)
Ordinary member	22(31.4)	40(57.1)
Executive member	8(11.4)	66(94.3)
All farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)	4(5.70)	66(94.3)
Ordinary member	3(4.3)	66(94.3)
Executive member	1(1.4)	-
Traders Association	8(11.4)	62(88.6)
Ordinary member	6(8.6)	62(88.6)
Executive member	2(2.9)	62(88.6)
Township Union meeting	16(22.9)	54(77.1)
Ordinary member	11(15.7)	54(77.1)
Executive member	5(7.1)	-

Source: Field survey, 2009 Figures in parentheses are in percentages

Type of Farmer and Farm Size Planted to Kola:

In Table 2, small scale farmers (95.7%) were more than the medium scale producers. This finding is in consonance with the research work of Ojo and Ehinmowo [10] that a larger proportion of kola producers operate on a small-scale. Many of the farmers (47.1%) cultivated less than 2 hectares (0.9-1.6ha) of kola in Osun and Edo States. The implication is that small holder farmers were predominant in kola production.

Farmer's Organizations in Kola Production:

Table 3 shows that more than half (52.9%) of the respondents from the two states: Osun and Edo States claimed to be members of different organizations apart from kola related groups. The type of associations they belonged to were cooperative societies (42.9%) with some (31.4%) ordinary members. The next was those who belonged to Township union meeting (22.9%) having (15.7%) of ordinary members while more of the respondents (77.1%) were not members. Few members (11.4%) belonged to Traders Association with 8.6% of them ordinary members without any position. The non-membership also formed the majority having 88.6%. Kolanut association of Nigeria (KOLAN) and All Farmer's Association of Nigeria (AFAN) witnessed low patronage of members' participation of 5.7% respectively. Again, majority (94.3%) were non-members. The result in Table 3 indicated that many of the respondents were not members of Farmer's Associations even though general membership figures was high but their membership participation was seen mainly in cooperative society. Kolanut Association, which supposed to champion more of kola business and activities for members, had poor participation. This situation calls for intervention from philanthropic individuals, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private and public agencies to assist in supporting farmers groups.

The main reason why some respondents fail to join association in respect of kola production is that (40%) of them did not derive benefit from group formation. It means that farmer's organizations need to be adequately strengthened to assist farmers with needed inputs for farming activities (Figure 1).

In addition, the main activity of farmer's groups identified in kola production in the study areas is farming and credit which amounted to 27.1% (Figure 2). The respondents were interested in pooling their resources for farming activities and credit purposes.

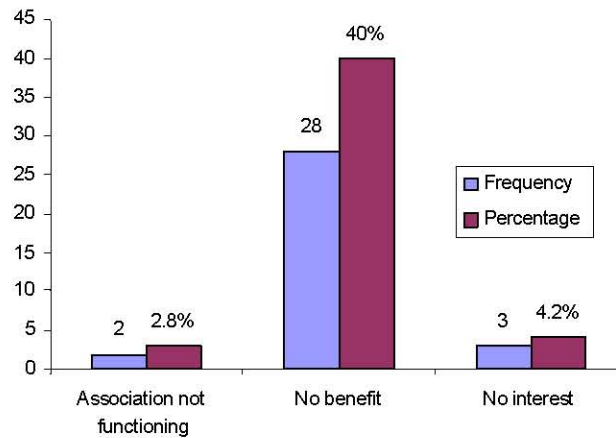


Fig. 1: Reasons for not belonging to farmers' organizations
Source: Field survey, 2009

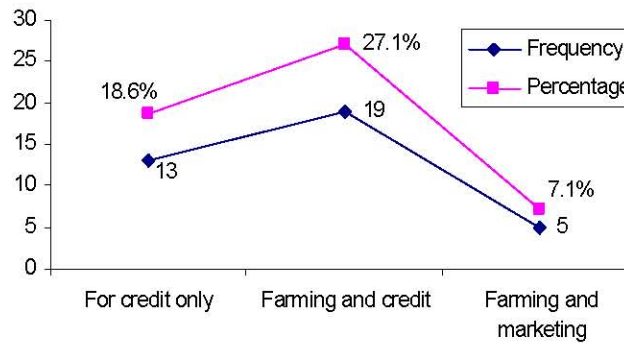


Fig. 2: Main activity of Farmers' organizations
Source: Field survey, 2009

Table 4: Constraints

Constraints	Not a constraint	Minor	Major
i Dishonesty among officers	11(15.7)	16(22.9)	10(14.3)
ii Inadequate information within members	11(15.7)	23(32.9)	3(4.30)
iii Diversion of group fund	13(18.6)	20(28.6)	4(5.70)
iv Political party interest	17(24.3)	14(20.0)	6(8.60)
v Lack of loan for members	-	-	37(47.1)

Source: Field survey, 2009

Figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 5: Chi-square analysis showing reasons of non-membership in group associations and selected Kola farmer's personal characteristics

Personal characteristics	χ^2 Value	d.f.	P Value
Education	25.351	12	0.0132**
Marital status	3.567	8	0.8939
Age group	11.224	16	0.7954
Farm size (ha)	21.375	12	0.0451**
Farming experience (Years)	6.764	16	0.9775

Source: Field survey, 2009; ** Significant; $p < 0.05$

Constraints Encountered by Members of Farmer's Organizations in Producing Kola: In Table 4, the major constraint faced by group membership in producing kola in Osun and Edo state is lack of

loan for members amounting to 47.1%. This is a limiting factor because farmers require loan or financial assistance to facilitate their production practices.

Relationship Between Respondents' Reasons for Non-membership in Group Associations and Selected Kola Farmer's Personal Characteristics:

Table 5 shows the relationship between respondents' reasons for non-membership in group associations and selected Kola farmer's personal characteristics in Osun and Edo states. The table revealed that a significant relationship exists between respondents' education and farm size and reasons for not participating in group associations ($\chi^2=25.351$, 21.375 $p<0.05$). It means that these variables are likely to play major role in group formation in respect of kola production.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that farm sizes of both members and non-members of farmer's associations were less than two hectares. More than half of the respondents claimed to belong to different farmer's associations but cooperative society was the popular group having appreciable members. The non-membership in groups' organizations were however not encouraging due to no benefit from them in Osun and Edo states in terms of kola production. The participation from one or more groups was largely constrained by paucity of loan for members. It is evident from the study that the main activity of the groups identified was farming and credit in kola production. The educational status and farm sizes of respondents proved to be important factors in participation of farmers in group associations. The more the educational level of members, the better their participation. This could assist in facilitating inputs provision for members and optimal running of the associations. The smaller the farm sizes, the lesser would be their involvement in group affairs. With cooperation, the practice of small sized farm holdings could be developed to larger ones for better performance among members.

It is recommended that the literate farmers and cooperative society where membership is of a reasonable proportion be empowered through well managed self help finances. Relevant stakeholders from private and public enterprises could assist farmer's associations by providing them with revolving loans and credit facilities. This would encourage better membership involvement and enhance kola production among farmers in the study areas. However, any loan provided to farmer's associations should be repaid so as to motivate the donors in helping other farmers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors appreciate the Executive Director/Chief Executive and management of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) Ibadan for the support in executing this research work.

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