

Use of Agricultural Science Teachers as a Means of Poverty Reduction Among Farmers in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Poverty as the root cause of hunger is a global reality. The influence of Extension officers in the farming areas in Ogun State has not been felt as expected due to the inadequacy of these professionals. To this end, the study focused its attention on the use of Agricultural Science Teachers as a means of poverty reduction through Agricultural information Dissemination to farmers in Ogun State. This step will boost the efforts of the Agricultural Extension officers in reducing poverty among farmers. The instrument used was the questionnaire and ten schools were randomly selected from the twenty-two schools, which constituted the population. Percentages, standard Deviation and Chi-square (χ^2) were used for the analysis of the Research Questions and hypotheses stated respectively. Some of the findings revealed that:

- (i) Agricultural Science Teachers Motivated the farmers to adopt innovations through their activities in schools.
- (ii) They passed agricultural information to parent farmers through their children from school. The hypothesis tested revealed that there was no significant relationship in the nature of agricultural information disseminated to farmers. ($\chi^2=21.67$, $P<0.05$). It was recommended among others that, efforts should be made by the Government and other Non-Governmental Organizations to support the efforts of the Agricultural Science Teachers in all ramifications in their move to reduce poverty level of the practising farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture in the first instance was practiced in the past as a kind of subsistence farming. Men were thrown upon their own resources in the presence of abundant, cheap and fertile soil. By clearing land, cultivating some of this and keeping livestock to live on natural grasses and by associating household industries with farming, men and farmers in general could hope to make a living in primitive fashion.

In West Africa, Governments of various countries are introducing policies, programme and regulations, which are aimed at ensuring higher productivity and income for those engaged in agriculture. Areas in which they are concerned among others include: Research and Extension, Subsidies, Agricultural Education etc.

The slow development in the agricultural sector could be partly traced to the Nations over-emphasis on petroleum as a major source of national income as well as the slow pace of information dissemination to practising farmers.

The various programmes adopted to restore agriculture to a better position have not been successful. This calls for the need to exploit a better avenue, which will directly develop the farmers. In order to enhance proper dissemination

of agricultural information and activities to the farmers in the rural areas, the government integrated rural development with agricultural development. In addition to the scope of work allocated to rural development authorities, they were also charged with the duties of carrying out government policies and proposals on agriculture and rural development programmes to check migration to the urban and taking agriculture to the grassroots.

The Encyclopedia of Education (1989), defined agricultural information as information that relates to impact, disseminate and share with them (farmers) the promotion of:

- (1) efficiency in agricultural production.
- (2) efficiency in marketing, distribution and utilization of agricultural products.
- (3) conservation, development and use of natural management.
- (4) efficiency in farm and home management
- (5) family living.
- (6) youth development.
- (7) leadership development.
- (8) community improvement and resource development and.
- (9) community involvement in public affairs.

Teachers may be useful tool in disseminating agricultural information to the farmers through

the students in the first instance and through other agricultural activities that may be organized by them. Pankowski (1975) opined that teachers must possess the following attributes which would enable them perform as expected: Ability to:

- (1) demonstrate competence in subject matter to be taught.
- (2) involve the learners in diagnosing their competencies.
- (3) select alternative for achieving the objectives based on learners needs and experience.
- (4) adapt the learning environment where possible to counteract the physiological factors of age.
- (5) provide a threat free, supportive and accepting learning environment and
- (6) arrange opportunities for the learners to interact in groups.

In the same vein, Olaitan, (1985); Daramola (1990); Bergvin (1978); highlighted the qualities of a good teacher of agriculture such as being a good vitality, hardworking and possessing of an attractive and cheerful appearance.

The teacher is an adult, above average in intelligence, trained for a number of years to know his subject matter and how to teach it for practical purposes of the children. He selects what to teach and he works to a timetable; he also brings into the classroom his view of his job, his prejudices, personal fears and affection.

Statement of the Problem : In recent years, the rate at which Nigerian population increases exceeds the rate of food production. In Nigeria, much attention has been diverted to the petroleum sector, which now cannot support the rapid increase in population. The most probable way of organising human and material resources in order to keep agriculture in Nigeria have not been achieved.

The various sources of agricultural information to the farmers have not achieved their ultimate goals and every source has its own limitations. This development calls for the need to buttress the existing avenues of disseminating information to the farmers. i.e the use of Agricultural Science Teachers in our Secondary schools to disseminate agricultural information to farmers. Therefore, there is the need to look into the area of using Agricultural Science Teachers as a source of agricultural information dissemination to farmers.

Based on this, the following questions were raised and addressed respectively:

- (1) What are the demographic characteristics of the agricultural Science. Teachers in Ijebu-Ode LGA of Ogun State?
- (2) What are the expected sources of information from the teachers to the farmers?
- (3) What are the expected roles of the teachers in information dissemination to the farmers?

Statement of Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship in the expected roles of the teachers and information dissemination to farmers in Ijebu Ode Local Area of Ogun state.
2. There is no significant relationship in the nature of agricultural information and information disseminated to farmers by the teachers of agriculture in Ijebu Ode Local Area of Ogun state.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study comprised of all the teachers teaching agricultural science in secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. Out of the eighteen public secondary schools available as at the time of carrying out the study, ten secondary schools were randomly selected and three agricultural science teachers were selected as respondents from each of the schools selected.

The instrument used was the questionnaire. The data collected were analysed with the use of percentages, means and standard deviation respectively and chi-square was used to analyse the hypotheses stated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the demographic characteristics of the agricultural science teachers, the result showed that 56.6 percent of the respondents were female teachers while 43.4 percent were male teachers. Also, 33.3 percent were between the ages of 20 and 30, 43.3 percent were between the ages of 30 and 40; 20 percent were between the ages 40 and 50 and 3.4 was above 50 years of age. With respect to their educational level; 16.6 percent of them had Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE); 23.3 percent had B.SC; 46.7 percent had B.Ed and 3.4 had M.SC. The above findings showed that the respondents would be able to furnish accurate information with respect to the expected roles of

agricultural science Teachers and other variables that were considered to the farmers.

Table 1 revealed that the respondents Agreed with five of the items on the expected sources of information from the teachers to the farmers while they disagreed with two of the item on the same issue.

They agreed with the following that:

1. Mass media were effective sources of agricultural information dissemination to farmers (SD=0.81).
2. Teachers should have a good knowledge in all areas of agricultural science (SD=0.61);
3. Field trips/excursion could be organized by the teachers to help farmers. (SD = 0.87):
4. Students could seek solutions to farmers (parents) problems from their teachers. (0.69) and that evening lesson's could be organized by the

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation computation on the sources of information from the teachers to the farmers.

S. No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	Mass media as an effective source of information	3.2	0.81
2.	Through teachers having good knowledge	3.3	0.61
3.	field trips/ excursion	2.9	0.87
4.	Bulleting & Newspaper	3.0	0.91
5.	Organising evening Lessons	2.9	0.96
6.	Best source of information to farmer is radio	2.1	0.81
7.	Teachers are not good source of agricultural information to farmers	2.2	0.89

teachers for the farmers in their environment. (SD = 0.96)

The respondents however disagreed with the fact that they were not good source of agricultural information to farmers.

On the expected roles of the agricultural science teachers, in information dissemination to farmers, the findings of the study revealed (Table 2) that teachers could be a source of agricultural information dissemination to farmers, (S.D=0.99); could have the ability to convince farmers towards innovation (SD=0.63); could encourage farmers to listen to evening programmes on agriculture on the radio (SD=0.72); could act as a link between farmers and the government (S.D=0.84); could be in close contact or relationship with the farmers.(0.67). could have small plots for demonstration (SD=0.86) and could investigate the needs of the farmers (S.D=0.78).

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the expected roles of the teachers in agricultural information dissemination to farmers

S. No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	Passing of information to farmers through the students	3.27	0.77
2.	Encouraging Farmers to listen to evening programme on agriculture on radio	3.43	0.72
3.	Motivating the farmers to adopt and use agricultural innovations through their activities	3.43	0.72
4.	Acting as a link between farmers and the government	3.30	0.84
5.	Be in close contact with the farmers	3.56	0.67
6.	Having small plots for demonstration	3.16	0.86
7.	Investigating the needs of the farmers	3.33	0.7

Hypothesis 1: The hypothesis, which is, stated in the null form states that there is no significant relationship in the expected roles of the teachers and information disseminated to farmers.

The result revealed that the C^2 calculated was greater than the C^2 tabulated ($C^2 = 24.67$ $p < 0.05$) implying that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: The hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship in the nature of agricultural information and information disseminated to farmers by the teachers of agriculture.

The result revealed that there was no significant relationship in the nature of agricultural information and information disseminated to farmers by the teachers of agriculture. This is evident in the chi-square (C^2) calculated of 21.67 $p < 0.05$. The result was corroborated by Saville (1985) when he maintained that individual farmers of different capacity, age and intelligence learnt the same way.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found out that teachers could be used as a link between the farmers and the government and that the teachers passed agricultural information to the farmers. Expected agricultural information to farmers should encourage farmers to practice new methods of farming and one of the expected roles of the teachers in the dissemination of agricultural information to farmers is

passing of such information to the farmers through the students. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: That

1. Efforts should be geared towards encouraging the farmers in the day-to-day activities of the farmers by organising field trips for them.
2. Teachers should be in close contact with the farmers through the students who are the farmers' children.
3. The extension agents and the agricultural science teachers should work hand in hand so as to make the dissemination of agricultural information effective even at the grass root level.

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