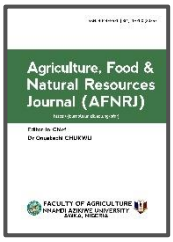
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Original Article

Contributions of Fadama NG-CARES programme on livelihoods of beneficiaries in Kwara State, Nigeria

OPEN ACCESS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak significantly affected the livelihoods of many rural people, mostly within the agricultural sector in Nigeria. The Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Programme, implemented as an extension of the National Fadama Development Project, aims to lessen these effects by providing immediate support to susceptible farmers. This study assesses the contributions of the Fadama NG-CARES programme to the livelihoods of rural households in Kwara State, Nigeria. The sampling procedures involved 3-stage random sampling of 180 beneficiaries. The data was collected through the use of a structured questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean score, and standard deviation. The result revealed that the mean age of the beneficiaries was 56.2 years, about 70.6% were male, about 68.9 % of the respondents had formal education, and the average annual income of the farmers was 370,138 Naira. The highest ranked contribution of Fadama NG-CARES programme to the farmers was the provision of food, nutrition, and safety extension services (mean = 3.06). About 76.7% of the respondents have a moderate level of contribution of the Fadama Ng-Cares Programme to the livelihoods of beneficiaries. The most severe constraint was the unpredictable rising cost of inputs (mean=3.13). The study recommends that there should be constant reviewing to identify gaps and expansion of the programme so as to accommodate more farmers that need such intervention, and there should be provision of financial support and resources to the beneficiaries.

KEYWORDS: *Beneficiaries, Contributions, Fadama, Farmers, Livelihoods, Ng-Cares programme*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health emergency that has a significant influence on the basic services and the means of earning incomes of the mostly economically weak countries and poor people all over the world (Arafat *et al.*, 2020; Ifabiyi 2022). In Nigeria, the pandemic led to the collapse of many small-scale industries and enterprises which further increased the poverty level and unemployment rate in the country. In the agricultural sector, COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected farmers and agricultural production. Ifabiyi (2022) reported that the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased incidence of food insecurity and poverty among the vulnerable groups which include rural farmers. The implication of disruption to the food production system would lead to food insecurity, high rates of poverty and loss of means of

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livelihoods mostly among the farmers and the vulnerable food value chain actors in the country. The occurrence of COVID-19 has an impact on the entire food supply chain, confirming in the most appalling way that we are all part of a food system that is interrelated and fragile. (World Farmers Organization, 2020; Obayelu *et al.*, 2021; Hammond *et al.*, 2022).

The Government of Nigeria made audacious measures to cushion the terrible effect of the COVID-19 pandemic through the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Programme (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2023). To mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security of the poor and vulnerable households and facilitate the safe functioning of food supply chains, the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Programme is an intervention that is constructed in continuation of National Fadama Programme. The NG-CARES programme seeks to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 disaster at the livelihoods of poor individuals, farmers, inclined households, groups and proprietors of micro and small enterprises.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by major changes and challenges in many dimensions of human lives (Mahona & Pacho, 2021). The struggle to match the COVID-19 pandemic was compounded by lack of information, loss of sources of livelihoods, poor rural infrastructures resources constraints (Bashuna & Addom, 2020; FAO, 2020). This infers that the poor farmers and rural households who are susceptible to poverty and food insecurity were severally affected.

Since the commencement of the NG-CARES programme which is a new initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria to support farmers in Kwara State Nigeria, there is dearth of information on contributions of the intervention to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. Also, it is essential to carry out a study on the contributions of NG-CARES programme to livelihoods of Beneficiaries which would favourably influence government policy towards beneficiaries and other actors. These are the gaps that this study seeks to breach.

This study aims to achieve three primary objectives: firstly, to identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area; secondly, to assess the contributions of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme on Livelihoods of beneficiaries in the study area; and thirdly, to examine the constraints limiting the participation of beneficiaries in the Fadama Ng-Cares Programme in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The research was carried out in Kwara State of Nigeria. The state is located at 4.3874051 longitude and 8.9668961 latitude. The total land area of Kwara State is 32,500 square Kilometers (NPC, 2006). The state is mainly an agrarian state. The Kwara State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) which is responsible for agricultural extension activities in the State has four agro-ecological zones. The population of this study included registered beneficiaries of Fadama NG-CARES in Kwara State.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A three-stage sampling technique was employed to select 180 respondents for the study. The 1st stage involved a random selection of 2 ADP zones (Zones C&D). The 2nd stage involved a random selection of 2 local government areas from each of the selected ADP Zones. The 3rd stage involved a random selection of 45 beneficiaries from each of the selected local government areas making a total of 180 respondents.

Method of Data Collection

Data were primarily collected using a structured questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives and relevant literature.

Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive statistic such as frequency count, percentage, mean score and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

The result in Table 1 revealed that the mean age of the beneficiaries was 56.2 years. This indicates that the respondents were within the active age bracket. This result agrees with the findings of Ifabiyi *et al*., (2022) who reported that the average age of farmers in Kwara State was 56.3 years. Majority (70.6%) of the farmers were male. The majority of the farmers being male could be due to the strenuous activities involved in farming. The result in Table 1 revealed that about 68.9 % of the respondents have formal education. This denotes that education is needed for farming operations. The average annual income of the farmers was 370,138 Naira. This indicates that the farmers are moderately economically stable, and that farming is a viable source of Livelihood in the study area. The mean household size was 5 persons. This shows that family labour could be a significant factor. All (100%) the respondents were members of associations. This uniform membership status indicates a high level of engagement, which is beneficial for the farmers in terms of access to information on improved farming techniques. The average farm size was 2 hectares. This infers that most respondents operate on a moderate scale, which may influence their ability to adopt improved technologies effectively.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group		
18-25	10	5.6
26-35	15	8.3
36-45	25	13.9
46-55	50	27.8
56 and above	80	44.4
Mean±Standard Dev.	**56.2 ±53.7**	
Gender		
Male	127	70.6
Female	53	29.4
Marital Status		
Single	5	2.8
Married	154	85.6
Separated	6	3.3
Widowed	13	7.2
Divorced	2	1.1
Education		
Formal education	124	68.9
No formal education	56	31.1
Annual Income (₦)		
Less than 300,000	20	11.1
300,001 – 600,000	80	44.4
600,001 – 900,000	45	25.0
Above 900,000	35	19.4
Mean±Standard Dev.	**370,138 ±367,456.89**	
Household Family Size		
Male and female		
1-4 members	98	54.4
5-8 members	59	32.8
9 and above members	23	12.8
Mean±Standard Dev.	**5 ±5.2**	
Membership		
Yes	180	100
No	0	0
Farm Size (Hectares)		
Less than 1	30	16.7
1-5	72	40.0
6-10	48	26.7
Above 11	30	16.7
Mean±Standard Dev.	**2 ±1.87**	

Contributions of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme on Livelihoods of Beneficiaries

The result in Table 2 indicated that the highest ranked contribution of Fadama NG-CARES programme to the beneficiaries was the provision of food nutrition and safety extension services (mean = 3.06). The provision of inputs and services for crop production (mean=3.01) was the second most important contribution of Fadama NG-CARES programme. Agri-preneurship training (mean=2.79) was the third most important contribution of Fadama NG-CARES programme. The result indicates that the provision of food nutrition and safety extension services, provision of inputs and services for crop production and Agri-preneurship training were the most important contributions of Fadama NG CARES programme to the farmers. This result denotes that these services are highly valued and regularly utilized by beneficiaries. This result is line with the findings of Ifabiyi *et al.*, (2014) who reported that access to inputs and access to credit facilities were the important contributions of dry season irrigation farming to the livelihoods of the farmers in North-Central Nigeria.

Contribution Level of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme on Livelihoods of the Beneficiaries

The result in Figure 1 shows that the majority (76.7%) of the respondents have moderate level of contribution of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme to the Livelihoods of farmers. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents experienced moderate positive effects. Also, about 20.6% of the farmers have high level of contribution. This further infers those agricultural interventions have meaningful contributions to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. This result agrees with Ifabiyi, Sanusi., Evwierhurhoma, & Ma'aji, (2024) who reported that agriculture contributes greatly to the livelihood of many people in developing countries of the world.

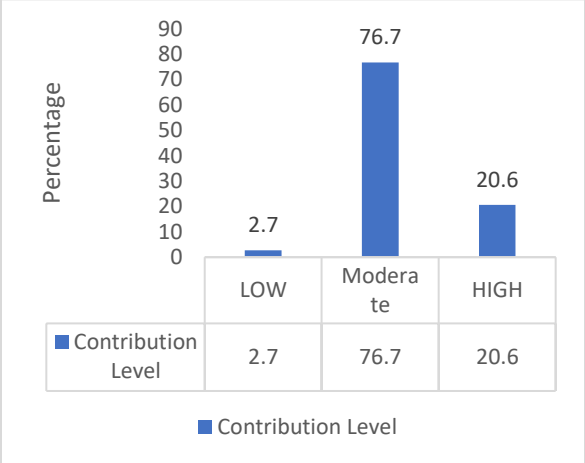


Figure 1: Contribution Level of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme on Livelihoods of farmers

Table 2: Contributions of Fadama Ng-Cares Programme on Livelihoods of Beneficiaries

s/n	Contributions of Fadama NG-CARES	Regularly (Freq %)	Often (Freq%)	Occasionally (Freq %)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Provision of Food nutrition and safety extension services	80 (44.4)	60 (33.3)	40 (22.2)	3.06	3.16	1st
2	Provision of agricultural inputs and services for crop production (such as subsidized improved seeds, fertilizers and agrochemicals).	70 (38.9)	65 (36.1)	45 (25.0)	2.96	3.01	2nd
3	Agri-preneurship training.	65 (36.1)	60 (33.3)	55 (30.6)	2.86	2.79	3rd
4	Fumigation and water treatment services.	60 (33.3)	55 (30.6)	65 (36.1)	2.74	2.71	4th
5	Provision of market information and linkages	55 (30.6)	60 (33.3)	65 (36.1)	2.71	2.83	5th
6	Access to extension/advisory services	50 (27.8)	65 (36.1)	65 (36.1)	2.70	2.69	6th

The Constraints Limiting the participation in Fadama NG-CARES

The result in Table 3 shows that the most severe constraint was unpredictable rising cost of inputs (mean=3.13). The second ranked constraint limiting participation in Fadama NG-CARES programme was the high cost of transportation (mean = 3.08) and the inadequate financial support (mean = 2.63) was the third ranked constraint. This result indicates that unpredictable rising cost of inputs, high cost of transportation and inadequate financial support were the main constraints limiting the participation of farmers in Fadama NG-CARES programme in the study area.

Table 3: Constraints Limiting the participation in Fadama NG-CARES Programme

s/n	Constraints Limiting Participation in Fadama NG-CARES	Highly Severe (Freq %)	Severe (Freq %)	Not severe (Freq %)	Mean score	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Unpredictable rising cost of inputs	60 (33.3)	75 (41.7)	45 (25.0)	3.13	2.23	1st
2	The high cost of transportation	50 (27.8)	100 (55.6)	30 (16.7)	3.08	2.96	2nd
3	Inadequate financial support	45 (25.0)	85 (47.2)	50 (27.8)	2.63	2.82	3rd
4	Unfavourable programme policies.	40 (22.2)	75 (41.7)	65 (36.1)	2.40	2.34	4th
5	Inadequate access to labour-saving equipment for production and processing	55 (30.6)	65 (36.1)	60 (33.3)	2.20	2.28	5th
6	Inadequate training on equipment supplied	70 (38.9)	55 (30.6)	55 (30.6)	1.95	1.88	6th

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concluded that the Fadama NG-CARES programme participants are characterized by agile farmers, male dominated participants with formal education, moderate economic stability, moderate household size and have social affiliations. The provision of food nutrition and safety extension services, provision of inputs and services for crop production, and Agri-preneurship training were the most important contributions of Fadama NG-CARES programme to the farmers. A significant portion of the respondents experienced moderate positive effects. The unpredictable rising cost of inputs, high cost of transportation and inadequate financial support were the main constraints limiting the participation of farmers in Fadama NG-CARES programme.

The study recommends that:

- There should be constant reviewing of the programme to identify gaps and expansion of the programme to accommodate more farmers that need such interventions.
- There should be provision of financial Support and Resources to the beneficiaries.
- The constraints such as unpredictable rising cost of inputs and high cost of transportation should be addressed by the government.

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Authors' Contributions

Author JOI prepared the manuscript, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results, OLA was involved in the statistical analysis, data interpretation, reviewing, and editing of the manuscript. ROS & ANA conducted literature review, data interpretation, and revised the final draft of the manuscript for submission.

Ethical Statement

Not applicable

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