

## **Role of Agricultural Extension Services in Assisting Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies in Anaocha L.G.A. in Anambra State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** The study was undertaken to investigate role of Agricultural Extension Service in Assisting Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative societies in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State. To achieve this, the researcher reviewed the literature in line with the five research questions formulated. Data is collected using copies of a structured questionnaire which is distributed to 120 respondents in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State who were the targeted population. Frequency distribution, mean percentages and likert scale was used to analyze the data. Findings indicated that greater proportion of the cooperators were male (60%), matured (55.8%), full time farmers (65.8%) and (36.6% and 27.5%) falls within no education and primary school education. Majority of the cooperators benefited in the area of crop resistant varieties as technology transferred to them (50%) and accepted the use of audio visuals, method demonstration and result demonstration as good strategy for disseminating farm information. Majority of the cooperators have never been visited (53.3%) and accepted poor marketing planting material and lack of funds as problems experienced in carrying out activities. On the part of the extension agent all were male (100%), majority were matured (60%), have unsatisfactory relationship with cooperators (60%), do not have the knowledge of cooperators (60%) and NCE holders (60%). Difficulty in relating to cooperators due customs and tradition, poor transportation facilities, reluctance of the cooperator to accept new technology and poor evaluation process were accepted by extension agents as possible problem in extension work. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: there should be a dedication and honesty on the part of the cooperators, constant education should be embarked on by cooperators, women should be encouraged to join cooperative societies, coordination should exist between extension staff and cooperators, proper monitoring and evaluation should be encouraged through extension staff by government. More extension agents should be recruited by government so as to meet thecooperators at the grassroots levels.

**Key words:** Agricultural Extension • Cooperative societies • Anambra State • Customs and Tradition

### **INTRODUCTION**

Agriculture refers to the processes involved in the controlled production of plant and animal materials which are used by man. From the definition above, we may assume that production of food is solely for man's survival. Agriculture need to be man transformed, not only for man's survival, but also, for the improvement of the farming system in order to produce sufficient high

commodities for export that will help in increase of the socioeconomic condition of the rural people and pulling them out of the vicious cycle of poverty [1].

In Nigeria, farming are mostly performed by individual farmers who use obsolete technology for their farming practices and are unskilled themselves [2].

Successive government has engaged their attention to the development of the Nigeria agriculture. Many agricultural programmes and schemes have been

launched. International donor, governments and non-governmental organizations as well as private farmers and farmer's cooperatives had invested in the development of Nigeria agriculture [3]. And the establishment of agricultural research institutes at different sector to enhance productivity.

Agriculture is the mainstay of National Economy [4]. It is a process as old as mankind himself. It derives its name from the Greek word "Ager" meaning field or land and "cultural" meaning cultivation [5]. Therefore, it means the cultivation of land in order to produce crops and raise animals.

Farmers spend most of their manpower and energy in the endless quest for food but the farming conditions of the producers (the rural farmer's) have been made worse by the nature of their farming implement and tools. To this effect, most people always work to the edge of poverty earning a living as he know best with primitive implemente [6]. Malthus as quoted by [7]. argued that a stage would come when food supply would not match population growth. Although modern economist has proved Malthus theory wrong especially in Europe and other advanced countries due to development in technical knowledge and mechanization of agriculture coupled with change in social attitude as regards to the size of family, food supply has never exceed the population size.

However, Malthus theory cannot be said to be anything less than true as the developing countries like Nigeria, Zambia and Niger Republic are concerned.

The question now is: how can Nigeria's subsistence farming method be transformed? How can we produce what will be enough for the overgrowing population? Must we allow the trend of low yield to continue?

However, to solve the individual farmers' problem and society at large, the government has opened up an agency in the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Services. This agency is responsible for extending scientific knowledge, improving the skills and changing the attitude of the rural farmers and also increasing their income and enhancing their living standard by their own efforts, using their own resources and manpower, materials.

With assistance from government but the ministry responsible for the execution of this idea did not live unto expectation. Hence, other agencies such as farmers' agricultural cooperatives were organized by the extension service to serve as a link, through which individual farming members could be helped to accept improved technology on sustained basis.

Farmers' agricultural cooperatives serve the farmers interest in their specific objectives such as processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, transportation, etc as well as the interest of the community and the country at large by developing qualities of leadership and organization among their members. They reduce the gap that exists between the government and the farmers. Problems among individual farmers are best solved by the group, i.e. cooperatives. This study is designed to examine roles of the agricultural extension services in assisting farmers' multi-purpose cooperative society in Aniocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

**Objectives of the Study:** The general objective is to examine the role of agricultural extension service in assisting farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies. The specific objectives are to:

- Determine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (extension agent and the cooperators);
- Identify the technologies transferred to the cooperators in the study area;
- Identify extension strategies of disseminating agricultural information to cooperative;
- Determine the link between the extension agents and farmers multi-purpose cooperative societies in the area and frequency of contacts;
- Identify the problems of the respondents in the course of discharging their duties;
- Make recommendations based on the findings.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Area of the Study:** The area of this study is Anaocha South Central Nigeria in Anambra State. This local government is among the (21) twenty one local government areas that make up Anambra State in agricultural zone. The local government is made up of ten (10) communities. They are: Aguluzibo, Agulu, Nneni, Ichida, Adazi-Ani, Adazi-Enu, Adazi-Nnukwu, Akwaeze, Nri, Obeledu.

The study area is located at latitude 6°12'0"N and longitude 7°04'E. It covers a land area of 171.62 square kilometers and also it has common boundaries in North by Akwa Local Government Area, in the South by Idemili Local Government Area, in the North by Aguata South Local Government Area, in the East and Njikoka Local Government Area in the West. According to the National Population Census NPC 2006 in Anaocha Local Government Area, the estimated population of the local

government area is 284,215. The temperature range from 29°C to 34°C with a rainfall of 35cm to 165cm per annum having its peak period in July to August.

The vegetation zone is derived from Savannah, the (hitherto) particular deciduous rainforest which has been reduced as a result of man's activities. The main occupation of the inhabitants is farming with few traders and government workers. The major crops grown in the area are root crops and tubers, palm fruits and vegetables. Animal reared include: sheep, goat and poultry.

**Sampling Techniques:** There are about 60 (sixty) multi-purpose cooperative societies in Anaocha Local Government Area. Anaocha Local Government Area is made up of ten (10) autonomous communities and within these communities are 60 (sixty) multi-purpose cooperative societies in Anaocha Local Government Area. A multi-stage sampling techniques were used in this study area, five (5) communities was randomly selected. These communities include Adazi-Ani, Akwaeze, Nri, Agulu, Agulizigbo. Then out of the selected five (5) communities twenty four (24) cooperative societies and five (5) farmers were selected from each community making the sample number to be hundred and twenty (120) respondents were used for the interview in Anaocha.

**Data Collection:** Data collections were used for this study from both primary and secondary of information. Primary data were collected by the use of structured questionnaire. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect information from the cooperators and the extension workers. Those cooperators (farmers) who were unable to fill the questionnaire were interviewed by the researcher and their responses were recorded accordingly while the secondary sources of information were collected from the cooperative unit of the local government area, journals, magazines, books, other relevant literature and past researchers.

**Data Analysis Procedure:** The data were analyzed using the following statistical tools, frequency tools, mean, percentages and Likert Scale.

Objective 1 and 2 were analyzed using frequency table, means and percentages while objective 3 and 5 were analyzed using Likert Scale. Thus, for each item/problem a five point will be available. These include, strongly disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree strongly and agree. The point between neither agree or disagree and

source response for each item were determined by finding the mean of the nominal value assigned to the opinion using the formula.

**Likert Type of Scale Analysis:** This is a scale for measuring attitude. This scale falls under the criteria – group instrument whereby items are collected and analyzed against a criterion [8]. Each item has a weight attached to it or a score attached to it. A person's score on the final attitude scale is simply the sum of the weight of the alternative he has checked. Weights are usually assigned so that high score indicates favourable attitudes [8] The identified attitude will be weighted as:

- Strongly Agree (SA) -5
- Agree (A)-4
- Undecided (UD)-3
- Disagree (DA) -2
- Strongly Disagree (SD)-1

The mean will be computed as follows: Mean  $(\bar{X}) = \frac{\sum x}{N}$

Where

- $\bar{x}$  = Mean
- $\Sigma$  = Summation of
- X = Nominal value of responses
- N = Number of items

$$= \frac{5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{5} \frac{15}{5} = 3.0$$

Using this as upper limit any item with a mean score of 3.00 or above will be regarded as a good source and the one below 3.0 will be regarded as not a good source.

The mean score (Xs) of each item will be completed by multiplying the frequency of each response pattern with it's appropriate nominal value and dividing with number of respondents to the item. It can be summarized as follows:

$$\bar{XS} = \frac{\sum FN}{Nr}$$

Where

- $\bar{XS}$  = Mean score
- $\Sigma$  = Summation
- F = Frequency of each response mode
- N = Likert nominal value
- Nr = Number of respondents to an item

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic analysis of farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies.

The Table 1 above shows the sex distribution of the farmers' cooperators. 60% of the farmers were male while 40% were female. This implies that most of the members of the cooperatives in the local government area are male with less female and those female who made up the farming population in the area were not currently involved in cooperative societies, a situation which calls for attention probably by government to make women more interested in joining cooperative societies.

The above table shows the marital status of the farmers' cooperators (18.3%) of the farmers were single that is unmarried, 49.2% were married, 23.3% are widowed and 9.2% of them were divorced. The table shows that most members of the cooperators were married.

The table above shows the educational background of the farmers. 36.6% of the farmers never received any form of education, 27.5% had primary education, while 14.2% of the farmers received Nigeria certificate of education or ordinary national diploma (OND) or higher national diploma and 5% of the farmers received the bachelor degree with the above information, 36.6% and 27.5% of non-education and primary education respectively indicates that most of the farmers cooperators are literate or half-educated. However, since extension teaching requires reading ability on the part of the people (farmers), they need to be educated because; the higher the level of illiteracy among farmers' cooperators in the area, the more problem occur in the organization and adoption of new technology.

From the table 4 above, 11.7% of farmers were less than 25 years, 55.8% fall within the range of (26-50) while 32.5% fall in the age range of (51-75). This implies that the cooperators are in the productive stage (26-50 years) and this would help increase food production.

From the sample of 98 farmers (that is out of the 120 farmers cooperators, 22 are still single) 30.6% falls between 1 and 59.2% fall within 5 and 8 while 10.2% farmers falls within 9, 12 and above. This shows that a good number of the married cooperatives have a family size of 5-8.

The above table shows the extent of farming operation of the respondents. From the table, 65.8% of the farmers were full time farmers, while 34.2% of them were part time farmers. These part time farmers engage in teaching, tailoring, carpentry and this indicates that majority of the cooperators in the area are full time farmers.

Table 1: Distribution of Farmers (respondents) according to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	72	60
Female	48	40
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	22	18.3
Married	59	49.2
Widowed	28	23.3
Divorced	11	9.2
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Background / Level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No education	44	36.6
Primary education	33	27.5
Bachelor's degree	15	5
NCE/OND/HND	17	14.2
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents according to Age

Age (year)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 25	14	11.7
26-50	67	55.8
51-75	39	32.5
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Family Size

Family Size	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-4	30	30.6
5-8	58	59.2
9, 12 and above	10	10.2
Total	98	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 6: Extend of Farming Activities

Extent of Farming Activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Full time	79	65.8
Part time	41	34.2
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 7: Distribution of Farmers Based on the Type of Farming Activities

Farming Activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Crop production only	63	52.6
Livestock production only	14	11.7
Production of both crop and livestock	43	35.8
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The table above shows the farming activities of the farmers' cooperators, 52.5% of the farmers produce crops only, 11.7% are livestock farmers while 35.8% of them produce both crops and livestock. The types of crop grown include oil palm, cocoyam, fruits, yam, cassava and vegetables; while the animals reared include: poultry, sheep and goats.

The above table indicates that 59.2% of the farmers cultivated an average of less than 1 hectare of land 32.5% while 8.3% of the farmers cultivated between 4 and 6 hectares of land before joining cooperative societies. On the other hand, after joining the cooperative societies, 38.3% cultivated on less than 1 hectare, 50% cultivated between 1 and 3 hectares while 11.7% of the farmers cultivated between 4-6 hectares, that is to say that there has been improvement on the scale of production on joining the farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies by these famers.

The above table shows the average income levels of farmers before joining cooperative societies. The income represents the total farming earnings from both crops and livestock per annum. It was shown that 35% of farmers earn less than N15,000, N37.5% of them earned between N16,000-25,000, 20% earned between N26,000- N35,000 while 7.5% earned N36,000 and above before joining the cooperative societies.

From the table above, 65.8% of the respondents joined the cooperatives in order to obtain loan for agriculture, while 21.7% obtained loan to train their children/relation in school and 12.5% joined cooperative in order to obtain essential commodities at a cheaper rate. This clearly shows that since a lot of the cooperators are interested in agriculture, encouragement and incentives are needed to make the profession more attractive and rewarding.

The above table shows the distribution of respondents as to acquisition of loan from farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies. 20% of the farmers obtained N20,000, 18.3% obtain N40,000, 15% obtain N50,000- N 60,000, 11.7% obtain above N 60,000 while 32% obtained none.

The table above shows the distribution of the farmers when they normally receive loan. 40% of the farmers got the loan before planting season, 51.7% get their own during planting season while 8.3% got their own after planting season. This implies that they would not be able to purchase the required inputs in time for farming operation, since some of the farmers get the loan later and others after planting season. To this effect, those responsible for giving out loans should endeavour to do it on time so that farmers can utilize it well for production.

Table 8: Distribution of Farmers Based on the Hectares of Land Cultivated before and after Joining the Cooperatives

Hectare Cultivated	Before Membership		After Membership	
	No. of Farmers (%)		No. of Farmers (%)	
Less than 1 ha	71	56.2	46	38.3
1-3 ha	39	32.5	60	50
4-6ha	10	8.3	14	11.7
Total	120	100	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 9: Distribution of Farmers Based on the Average Annual Income before and after Joining the Farmers' Cooperative Societies

Income Level N/Years	Before Membership		After Membership	
	No. of Farmers (%)		No. of Farmers (%)	
Less than 15,000	42	35	18	15
16,00-25,000	45	37.5	29	24.2
26,00-35,000	24	20	48	40
More than 36,000	9	7.5	25	20.8
Total	120	100	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents according to Reason for Joining the Farmers' Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To obtain loan for agriculture	79	65.8
To obtain loan to train my children in school	26	21.7
To receive essential commodity at a cheaper rate	15	12.5
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 11: Distribution of Respondents according to the Amount of Loan Granted to them from Farmers' Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies

Amount Granted to Farmers (N)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5,000-20,000	24	20
30,000-40,000	22	18.3
50,000-60,000	18	15
60,000 and above	14	11.7
Cooperators that get no loan	42	32
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 12: Distribution of Respondents as at when they Normally Receive the Loans

When Loan is Received	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Before planting season	48	40
During planting season	52	51.7
After planting season	20	8.3
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 13 shows the distribution of farmers as the type of technology transferred to them. 8.3% of the farmers benefited in the area of fertilizer placement, 16.7% in improved pesticides and herbicides, 50% in the area of crop that are resistant, 8.3% each in the area of improved livestock and use of machineries while 4.2% are those that benefited in all the area and also those that never benefited at all.

The above table was analyzed using the following statistical tools and Likert Scale, items 2, 3 and 5 score well showing its acceptance while item 1, 4 and 6 scored below the acceptance level hence indicating disagreement to their corresponding item by the respondents. In other words, use of audio visuals, method demonstration, result demonstration are good strategies for disseminating farm information while the use of television, radio, farm and home visits were not good strategies for disseminating farm information due to lack of social amenities like electricity, illiteracy and lack of time to visit all the farmers at homes and in their farms.

From the table above, 12.5% of the respondents know their extension worker through relations/friends, 16.7% know them through the Ministry of Agriculture, 15% through cooperative societies and 55% do not know them at all. This shows that a greater percentage does not know the extension agents. Government should employ more extension agents so that they can reach those farmers at the grass root level.

From the table above, 15.8% of the respondents were visited before planting season by extension workers, 19.2% were visited during planting season, 11.7% were visited after planting season, while 53.5% have never been visited by the extension workers. This implies that lots of respondents are yet to benefit the extension services; a situation which calls for the attention of extension agents and the government as well.

The table above shows that 25% of the respondents use tractors hired by their cooperative societies, while 75% use local implements such as hoe and cutlasses. This implies that a lot of cooperators still use traditional system of farming, which does not in any way help in raising agriculture from its present low level operations.

In the above Table items 1, 2, 4 and 5 scored well above the acceptance level, therefore were agreed by the cooperators as problems that can affect farming activities while items 3 and 6 scored below the acceptance score showing its level of disagreement, that is, cooperators showed that those two items were not problem in the course of discharging or performing their farming activities.

**Part II: Analysis of Extension Workers:** The table above shows that all the extension workers are male implying that there are no female extension worker to take research findings to female cooperators in the area who constitute a greater percentage of the following populace.

Table 13: Distribution of Respondents as to the type of Technology they were Aware of

Technology	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fertilizer placement	10	8.3
Use of improve pesticides and herbicides	20	16.7
Use of crop resistant varieties	60	50
Improve new genetics breeds of livestock and management	10	8.3
Use of machineries	10	8.3
All of the above	5	4.2
None of the above	5	4.2
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 14: Mean Distribution of Cooperation on the Strategy for Disseminating Farm Information

Item	SA	A	SD	D	NA/D	XS	Decision
Use of Radio	-	2	1	1	5	1.8	Not effective
Use of audio visuals	6	4	3	2	4	3.8	Effective
Method demonstrations	5	4	3	3	2	3.9	Effective
Television	-	-	2	3	5	1.4	Not effective
Result demonstration	3	2	1	3	6	3.0	Effective
Farm and home visits	-	-	2	3	5	2.1	Not effective

Source: Field Survey, 2012

**Note:** Meaning of the abbreviation used in the above table

Abbreviations	Meaning
SA	Strongly Agree
A	Agree
SD	Strongly Disagree
D	Disagree
NA/D	Neither Agree nor Disagree
XS	Mean Score

Table 15: Distribution of Farmers as to their Knowledge of the Extension Workers

Source	Frequency	Percentage(%)
I know them through a farmer relations/friends	15	112.5
I know them through the Ministry of Agric.	20	16.7
I know them through my cooperative society	30	25
I do not know them	55	45.8
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 16: Distribution of Cooperatives as to Source of Linkage/Time of visit between the Extension Staff and the F.M.P.C.S.

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Before plant season	19	15.8
During planting season	23	19.2
After planting season	14	11.7
I have never been visited	64	53.3
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 17: Distribution of Cooperators according to the Type of Implement used in Land Preparation

Types of Implement Used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tractor hired by my cooperative society	30	25
Use of local implement like cutlass, hoes, etc.	90	75
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 18: Mean Distribution of Farmers as to what areas they experience problem in the course of their farming activities

Item/Problem	SA	A	SD	D	NA/D	XS	Decision
Poor marketing channel produce	10	4	2	1	2	3.7	Effective
Visit to extension agent during plant season	5	3	2	2	4	3.2	Effective
Difficulty in obtaining loan	-	2	1	1	4	1.6	Not effective
Difficulty in obtaining or late arrival of planting materials	6	2	3	2	3	3.2	Effective
Insufficient funds to finance agricultural projects	9	5	1	2	2	3.7	Effective
Uncaring attitude of cooperative societies	-	2	1	1	1	1.8	Not effective

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 19: Distribution of Extension Agents according to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	10	100
Female	-	-
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 20: Percentage Age Distribution of Extension Agents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30	2	20
31-40	6	60
41-50	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 21: Distribution of the Respondents according to Highest Level of Education Attained

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
OND	2	20
NCE	6	60
HND/PGD	1	10
Any other	1	10
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 22: Distribution of Extension Agents according to Specialization

Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Animal science	3	30
General agriculture	3	30
Crop science	4	40
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 23: Distribution of Extension Agents according to Working Experience

Working Experience (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2-5	5	50
6 – 10	3	30
11 and above	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 24: Distribution of Respondents as to their knowledge of cooperators (responses as to membership of F.M.P.C.S)

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 25: Distribution of Respondents as to relationship with cooperators

Relationship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfactory	4	40
Very unsatisfactory	6	60
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The table above indicates that 20% of extension agents were within the age range of 21-30, 60% of the extension agents was within the age range of 31-40 while 20% falls within the range of 41-50. This shows that majority of the extension agent were between the age of 31-40 years.

Table 21 indicates that 20% of the extension agents hold Ordinary National Diploma (OND), 60% have the National Certificate in Education, 10% hold first degree. This implies that majority of the extension agents are deficient in some areas of agriculture and therefore professionally incapacitated to carry out extension work. This is in agreement with [9]who stated that agricultural training at OND and NCE level do not emphasis extension administration and recommended that HND should be the minimum entry qualification of the extension agents.

Table 22 shows that 30% of the extension agents specialized in animal science, 30% in general agriculture and 40% in crop science.

The table above shows the distribution of the extension agent as to their working experience, 50% of the extension agents have the working experience between 2-5 years, 30% falls between 6-10 years and 20% 11 years and above. This implies that there is no specialist in agricultural extension service despite the fact that 20% served above 11 years.

From the Table above, 40% of extension respondents belonged to cooperative that is by visiting the farmers' cooperative society, while 60% did not visit them. The implication is that they were not opportune to visit the cooperators due to mobility problem.

From the table above 40% of the respondents had unsatisfactory relationship with cooperators, while 60% had very unsatisfactory relationship. This is due to the fact that extension workers are few and they are not mobile to reach all the cooperators at the right time. Therefore, more favourable atmosphere has to create for a cordial extension worker/cooperators relationship for successful execution of agricultural programmes.

The above table shows that 40% of the respondents were of the view that cooperators were not interested in agric. But only interested in getting loans from F.M.P.C.S, 20% were of the view that cooperators were not interested in loans and 40% were both interested in loans and

Table 26: Opinions of the Extension Agents as to Cooperators aim over F.M.P.C.S.

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not interested in agric. but interested in obtaining loans through F.M.P.C.S	4	40
Not interested in obtaining loans through F.M.P.C.S but in agric	2	20
Interested in agric and as well as loan through F.M.P.C.S	4	40
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 27: Responses as to the conduct of extension workers and cooperators meetings

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 28: Distribution of Respondents as to aims of extension workers/cooperator meeting

Aims	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To teach cooperators new skills in agriculture	6	60
To introduce new planting material	2	20
To introduce the use of arm chemicals	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 28: Distribution of Extension Agent as to their responses about the attitude of cooperators towards agricultural extension services in the area

Attitude of Cooperators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Uncooperative with extension agents	1	10
Unwilling to adopt new research findings	2	20
Very rigid to their traditional method for farming	5	50
Very ready and willing to accept and adopt new scientific idea and practices	-	-
If properly taught to them	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 30: Mean Distribution of Extension Workers as to their response in the area they have problems

Item/Problem	SA	A	SD	D	NA/D	XS	Decision
Difficult in relating to cooperators due to customs and tradition	10	4	5	-	2	3.8	Effective
Poor transportation facilities	3	4	-	5	3	3.0	Effective
Reluctance to accept new technology due to difference in knowledge and pattern of social interaction	4	6	-	-	6	3.2	Effective
Illiteracy on the part of cooperators	-	2	-	4	4	2.0	Not effective
Inability of the government to supply planting material	-	-	4	2	4	2.0	Not effective
Poor evaluation process as a result of lack of extension workers cooperators	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forum and inadequate directive from ADP	8	8	-	4	-	4.0	Effective

Source: Field Survey, 2012

agriculture. This 60% of farmers' cooperators are full time farmers. So we say that extension workers should always be available to promote their agricultural activities in order to convince cooperators toward gaining interest in agriculture.

From the table above, 40% of extension respondents belonged to cooperative that is by visiting the farmers' cooperative society, while 60% did not visit them. The implication is that they were not opportune to visit the cooperators due to mobility problem.

From the table above, 40% of the respondents had unsatisfactory relationship with cooperators, while 60% had very unsatisfactory relationship. This is due to the fact that extension workers are few and they are not mobile to reach all the cooperators at the right time. Therefore, more favourable atmosphere has to be created for a cordial extension worker/cooperator relationship for successful execution of agricultural programmes.

The above Table shows that 40% of the respondents were of the view that cooperators were not interested in agric but only interested in getting loans through F.M.P.C.S, 20% were of the view that cooperators were not interested in loans and 40% were both interested in loans and agriculture. This 60% of farmers' cooperators are full time farmers, so we say that extension workers should always be available to promote their agricultural activities in order to convince cooperators toward gaining more interest in agriculture.

From the table above 40% of the respondents have conducted extension worker/cooperators meeting while 60% had never done so. This shows that 60% of the extension agents have no knowledge of the activities of the cooperatives as a society in their station and thus have never helped the cooperators in planning and implementing their farming programmes.

The table above shows 60% of extension agents who conducted meeting did so to teach cooperators new skill in agriculture, 20% were inducing new planting materials while 20% introduced the use of farm chemicals.

From the Table above, 10% of the cooperators do not cooperate with the extension agents, 20% of the cooperators are not to accept new research findings, 50% are not ready to change their traditional method of farming while 20% are willing to accept new scientific ideas if properly taught. The agricultural extension service should come to the aid of these cooperators, persuade them to adopt new technologies that will increase productivity and in turn raise their living standard.

In the table above items 1,2, 3 and 6 scored well above the acceptance level. The findings revealed that customs and traditional, poor transportation facilities, reluctance to accept new technology due to difference in knowledge system and values, poor evaluation process affects extension work while they disagreed that illiteracy and the inability of government to supply planting materials is not a hindrance to their performance in extension work.

**Summary:** The cooperative organization as a fusion of some tradition at farm family units has made a very little impact to agricultural production in the study area due to problems facing the cooperators in term of administration, difficulty in obtaining loans for agriculture outside their cooperative societies, lack of agricultural implement, machineries and other material for modern agriculture. The study also revealed that most members of the cooperatives societies were male as women are the participating labour force in agricultural production in the study area. It also showed the lack of female extension staff to convince the female farmers into joining cooperative societies. Poor marketing arrangement and unfavourable market price luring away cooperators was also noticed in the course of this research.

Finally, the lack of cooperation among cooperators, irregular extension works/cooperators meeting, inadequate directives from ADP, lack of proper programme planning by extension workers or cooperator were also discovered as part of their problems. During the research, it was also noticed that cooperators receive information on improved agricultural practices through their friends/relation and cooperative societies and that information is not gotten from ADP due to inadequate extension personnel to cover all the cooperative societies in the area at right time and that is why most cooperators do not know or have the knowledge of extension workers in the area.

### CONCLUSION

The study area has concerned itself with role of agricultural extension services in assisting farmers' multi-purpose cooperative society in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

In the course of this study, the major roles expected of extension workers in farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies has been identified and highlighted. For efficient management and productivity in agriculture

there is need for the proper functioning of the extension service and for them to be immense value to cooperators, recommended agricultural practices should be properly taught and followed up by the supply or the link to the supply of necessary materials and machineries for the achievements of such practices at the appropriate time. Productivity among cooperators will not improve, if allowed to continue the use of the primitive method of farming.

Cooperators on their own part should embark on continuous learning. There is also need to review the present lending policies of cooperative banks and other commercial banks in favour of cooperators and they also need to be educated on the wise use of the loans on agriculture, this can be achieved by organizing extension service/cooperators meeting at intervals.

Government in liaison with the Ministry should institute programmes charged with the responsibility of training official of the Ministry charged with cooperatives matters so as to provide a wide range of services needed to the farmers cooperative society in the area and officials on their own part are expected to own loyalty and moral responsibility to any of the farmers cooperative. They are deployed to serve so that farmers' and the governments' aim of improving productivity and livelihood of farmers in the rural areas and the general populace will be fully achieved.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Having examined role of agricultural extension service in assisting farmers' multi-purpose cooperative societies in enhancing the production capacity of its members and agricultural development in general, the task becomes what should be done in order that farmers' multi-purpose cooperators societies be made to play the role in enhancing agricultural production, most especially in the study area. Based on that the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations:

First education of member on cooperative principles, practices, importance and responsibilities should not only be maintained but also stepped up.

Secondly, the level of cooperative organization and management requires considerable improvement, by recruiting their own competent staff, train them and retrain them. This calls for more dedication and honesty on the part of cooperative officials.

Thirdly, cooperators should be encouraged to go into marketing and price negotiation of their produce.

Fourthly, a farm input procurement and distribution policy need to be articulated with cognizance of the role of cooperative societies. Within this framework, the cooperative societies need to be recognized and put into viable and well managed bodies that could take up the task of efficient management and distribution of all farm inputs.

Fifthly, women farmers should be encouraged not only to become members but to participate meaningfully in cooperative societies, since they are the actual people involved in food production in the area.

Sixthly, there should be increased coordination between the cooperatives division and the extension division. Such coordination would facilitate free flow of technical information from extension agents to the cooperators, programmes and project that fall within the management will go a long way to help if implemented.

Government should work out efficient machinery such that the cooperative activities could be integrated into the agricultural development project in the country. This will help the cooperatives take part in agricultural programmes, planning, evaluation, monitoring and execution in one regular and continuous basis.

However, in addition, government should provide transport facilities for the extension agents mostly at the local government level in order to enable them reach more cooperators because it was noticed that lack of mobility made it impossible for extension agents to cover many areas and that was why some cooperators reported that they have no idea of extension workers. The deployment of more extension worker to the local government will also be of great importance.

More stringent measures should be adopted by government to ensure that commercial banks are mandated to give out loans to cooperative societies in our rural areas. There is need for change of policy of cooperative bank to make sectoral allocations of at least 50% of their resources for financing cooperative schemes and project.

Finally, government should give greater attention to the use of cooperatives for agricultural development by adequate funding and effective marketing machinery, incentive and subsidies. With all these cooperative should be able to make greater impact on agriculture in the local government area. There is also need for the promotion of an efficient and comprehension of extension service so that cooperative societies will achieve their goals with respect to food production for the people in the area and Nigeria at large.

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