

CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
(IFAD) ON CASSAVA PRODUCTION IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined the contribution of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on cassava production in Benue state. The main objective of the study was to, explore the effect of IFAD programme on cassava farmers. Diffusion of innovation was adopted as theoretical framework. A sample size of four hundred (400) respondents participated in the study. Questionnaires was used as instrument of collection. The respondents comprising of IFAD beneficiaries on cassava production in Logo, Guma and Ogbadibo cluster were snow-balled for the study. The study found that before IFAD intervention, the rate of cassava production in Benue State was poor. IFAD contributed funds, fertilizer, increased market outlet and provide agro- chemical to cassava producers and this has improved farmers harvest as well as income realized from the sales of cassava products. A test of hypothesis shows a positive effect of IFAD programme on income of cassava producers hence P-value = 0.00, i.e. $P < 0.05$ values. Based on the findings, the study recommends that cassava farmers in Benue State should be properly educated on IFAD programme, timely provision of counterpart funds, linking of cassava farmers to the market, provision of new technology to process bi-products of cassava and security should be adequately provided to enhance peace in the affected areas and that the programme should also be extended to the entire Benue state but not just limiting to the five (5) selected local government areas.

Keywords; **International Fund for Agricultural Development, cassava production**

Introduction

Cassava is one of the world's most important food crops. Throughout the tropics, the plants roots and leaves serve as essential source of calories and income. Cassava otherwise called manihot esculenta crantz is grown in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Cassava is a root crop. There are two varieties of cassava, the sweet and the bitter varieties. The archaeological evidence points to the Amazon region in South America as the center of domestication of cassava (Olufunmilayo, 2017). According to Kehinde & Itodo (2017), in the 16th century, the Portuguese navigators took cassava from Brazil to the west coast of Africa and later to East Africa through Madagascar and Zanzibar. In the 20th century, cassava was introduced to many African countries by the colonial powers (Tshiuna, 1996).

In Africa statistics of cassava production in 2020: Democratic Republic of Congo 41,014,256 tonnes; Ghana 21,811,661 tonnes; Angola 8,781,827 tonnes; United Republic of Tanzania 7,549,879 tonnes; Cote d'Ivoire 6,443,565 tonnes; Malawi 5,858,745 tonnes; Mozambique 5,404,432 tonnes; Cameroon 4,858,329 tonnes; Uganda 4,207,870 tonnes (FAO, 2020).

The demand for cassava roots and products are high and fast rising. However, the current food production is far from being able to meet the food needs of the geometrically growing population in the sub-region (FAO, 2020). The production of cassava of Nigeria increased from 9.17 million tonnes in 1971 to 60 million tonnes in 2020 growing at an average annual rate of 4.25% following International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-supported initiatives in the country. Nigeria is the largest producer of cassava in the world, representing 19.4% of the global production.

However, Nigeria has a very low yield per hectare of 8.2MT compared to world's best practices of 33.8MT. The IFAD-initiated programme builds on the achievements of the earlier IFAD-supported Cassava Multiplication Programme. That programme contributed to a two-fold increase in cassava production in less than eight years and enhanced the potential role of cassava and other root crops in raising the country's food self-sufficiency level. The overall objectives of this programme are to enhance national food self-sufficiency and improve rural food security and the incomes of poor farmers. The description is composed by FAO digital data assistant. In the year 2020, cassava farm occupied an Area of about 7,737,846 Ha, and Yield 77,543 Hg/Ha (FAO, 2020).

In Benue State, Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT, 2019) explains that Benue is the top region by production of cassava in Nigeria. As of 2019, production of cassava in Benue was 3,548 1000 metric tons that accounts for 11.08% of Nigeria's production of cassava. The top 5 regions (others are Taraba, Kogi, Imo, and Cross River) account for 44.05% of it. Nigeria's total production of cassava was estimated at 39,515.4 1000 metric tons in 2018 (FAOSTAT, 2019).

Recent effort by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards reduction of poverty and improving the livelihood of rural people led to the implementation of the Community Based Rural Development Programme (CBRDP) in many African countries. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was found in 1977. IFAD is the International financial institution and specialized United Nations Agency based in Rome. (IFAD) invest in rural people, empowering their food security, the nutrition of their families and incomes (Anup 2010). (IFAD) aims at addressing constraints along the cassava value chain. Emphasis of IFAD is directed at supporting government and its development partners in laying a strong foundation and enabling environment for a much longer term strategy of value chain development (IFAD, 2017). Nigeria is one of the beneficiaries of IFAD financing in the whole of central Africa, other African countries that are beneficial of IFAD programme include; Cameroon, Ghana, and Benin Republic (IFAD, 2016).

IFAD intervention programme on Cassava was launched in Nigeria in January 2015, among states covered by IFAD in Nigeria includes; Niger, Ogun, Amambra, Ebonyi, Benue and Taraba. Programme development objectives include improving income and food security of poor rural households, engaged in production, processing and marketing of cassava and rice in the above mentioned states to enhance sustainable development (Taibat, Bello, Musa & Shehu, 2015).

In Benue State (IFAD) covers five local governments. These include Guma, Gwer, Logo, Okpokwu and Ogbadibo (IFAD, 2018). The programme recognizes the importance of minimizing the opportunity to link cassava smallholder farmers to markets, and ensuring complementarily of activities with a core mandate to focus its intervention on the agricultural sector particularly on cassava and rice production with emphasis on enhancing productivity and access to market (IFAD, 2016). IFAD aims at improving the living standard of cassava producers in Nigeria. Its therefore becomes imperative to examine the contributions of IFAD towards cassava production in Benue state.

Statement of the Problem

Cassava is a root crop with an important agricultural activity in most parts of the world. It is consumed by about 500 million Africans every day and it is also the second most important source of carbohydrates after maize. Nigeria produces more than 35% of world cassava production (William & Femi, 2004). The 2002 presidential initiative by Nigeria government on composite cassava flour and cassava initiative programme to improve cassava production and curtail rice and wheat import have all not improve cassava production in the state. Benue state higher rate of cassava production in the middle belt is attributed

to massive cultivation of the crops, not by large scale production almost every farming household in the state cultivate cassava.

IFAD rural development projects in Benue state capture cassava production and it links to the market as an essential part of their contribution towards reducing poverty among rural people and improving their livelihoods (Philip, 2016). However, the effect of IFAD intervention programme on cassava production in the state is unknown. There is indication that cassava farmers in the state are experiencing difficulties such as non-availability of credit facilities, inadequate processing equipment, lack of market and the problem of transportation cost as a result of cassava production.

Furthermore, even though IFAD programme was established to improve cassava production and establish good markets for farmers in order to better their living or improve their livelihood; the challenges and obstacles faced in the course of executing this project is still an issue that remains unknown.

A number of literatures had been advanced on IFAD programmes, for example Taibat, Bello, Musa & Shehu, (2015) write on Impact of IFAD/ Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) on Poverty Reduction among Rural Women in Kebbi state, Nigeria. Philip (2016) writes on IFAD/Olam memorandum of understanding to boost rice production in Benue state and Nigeria. However, despite this important role also played by IFAD to boost cassava production in the state, there is no empirical review to assess the effect of IFAD contribution towards cassava production in the study area. It is in line with this that the study is undertaking to fill this knowledge gap by assessing the effect of IFAD programme on cassava production in Benue State.

Study Hypotheses

The study was guide by the following hypotheses:

- 1. Ho:** There is no significant effect of IFAD programme on income of cassava producers in Benue state.

Literature Review and Theatrical framework

Contribution of IFAD on Cassava Production

Cassava: the world's third most important crop Cassava is an essential source of food and income throughout the tropics. According to Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database FAOSTAT (2018), about 600 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America depend on the plant for their survival, deriving calories and income from the roots and leaves. Cassava production in Africa has more than tripled since 1961 – from 33 million metric tonnes per year to 101 metric tonnes making the continent the largest producer. In countries like Ghana and Nigeria, wide adoption of high yielding varieties and improved pest management have been largely responsible for the sharp rise in production. IFAD has played a major role in boosting cassava production and continues to work with African countries to enable smallholders to increase their yields and their incomes. IFAD has set up a three-year support programme to catalyse the impact of its investment portfolio on cassava production in Africa. The programme aims to increase the impact of IFAD's work on rural livelihoods (FAO, 2018).

In Africa, FAOSTAT (2019), opine that cassava production has more than tripled since 1961 from 33 million tonnes per year to 101 million tonnes. In countries like Nigeria and Ghana, wide adoption of high-yielding varieties and better pest management have resulted in a sharp rise in production. Cassava is a year-round crop, with production levels that are steady but small. It is also a perishable and bulky product, which makes it very costly to transport without some initial processing. Poor subsistence farmers are the main growers of cassava, and women are largely responsible for the work of processing it to make gari, fufu, tapioca and other products The uses of cassava are expanding, as further processing can produce chips, pellets, flour, alcohol and starch. A wide range of industries use cassava in the production of livestock feed, textiles, confections, plywood and soft drinks. Many rural development efforts in Western and Central Africa have focused on how to improve poor farmers' yields.

According to FAO (2018), IFAD has invested a total amount of about US\$110.0 million in the cassava value chains in the four major producer countries in Western and Central Africa: Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. IFAD also launched a US\$1.3 million regional initiative on cassava processing and marketing that was financed through Italian Supplementary Funds. Under the initiative, IFAD set up a

number of partnerships with regional and national research institutions and the private sector, and has organized several learning events, such as study tours within and outside of the region, as well as workshops and training exercises.

According to IFAD (2016), the programme facilitates value addition and market linkages. The programme developed market between farmer groups and major off-takers. To ensure sustainability, the programme has established in each state, one commodity alliance and transaction forums between farmer's off-takers (buyers), input dealers and financial institutions to facilitate commodity supply outlets.

Access to inputs/technologies and extension services: IFAD strongly emphasizes farmers' access to improved technologies (seeds, fertilizer, agro-chemicals and machineries) and extension delivery to boost production, and meet the demand of the off-takers under the commodity alliance. Regarding inputs, as at the time of this mission a total of (48 for cassava) was supposed with 2,760 bags of fertilizers at the rate of two bags/ha in 2015. This was matched with an additional two bags/ha by each farmer to cultivate a total of 2,874/ha. About 3,378 farmers received support on seeds agrochemicals and fertilizers. In the 2016 cropping season, IFAD engaged the international fertilizer development centre (IFDC) and cellulite company to manage the input distribution and ensure transparent delivery by dealers, using the innovative e-wallet and warehouse receipt system of the federal ministry of agriculture and rural development (FMARD) and the matching grant scheme of IFAD. To reduce constraints faced by farmers to meet their required input, up to 60% of the farmer's access six bags of fertilizers, 50 bundles of improved cassava cutting and agrochemicals (IFAD, 2015).

Improved access to mechanization: IFAD is collaborating with the Nigerian Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) to demonstrate and facilitate the use of simple power tillers, ridged makers and cassava planters. In 2016 planting season, the programme piloted a youth agric entrepreneur scheme, which involves the ownership/operation of simple mechanization equipment and provision of mechanization services (land preparation, reaper harvesting, farm level threshing and winnowing, produce evacuation and delivery to homes/markets etc).

In Benue state, following the engagement of SPMU with the state government the government has procured and distributed tractors to all the LGAs for land preparing. The tractors are to be operated by selected entrepreneurs on cost recovery basis, using the IFAD model. IFAD plans to partner with the operators to market services available to its farmers, using the concept of 50% matching grant contribution. No training has been provided to youth on agrochemical handling and serves use. All these Efforts are gear towards improving the condition of rural cassava farmer in the selected states and local government of intervention by IFAD (IFAD, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of innovations Theory.

Diffusion refers to the dissemination of any physical element, idea, value, social practice, or attitude through and between populations (Rogers, 2003). Diffusion is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread (Roger, 2003). The concept of diffusion was first studied by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde in late 19th century and by German and Austrian anthropologists and geographers such as Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius. The study of diffusion of innovations took off in the subfield of rural sociology in the Midwestern United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Rogers (1962, 2003). Rogers argues that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among the participants in a social system. Rogers (2003) proposes four main elements that influence the spread of a new idea, these include;

Innovation; Innovation is a broad category, relative to the current knowledge of the analyzed unit. Any idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption could be considered an innovation available. In this regard, IFAD has introduced new practice in cassava production such as provision of new improve stem and other inputs which were not common to farmers in the benefitting communities.

Adopters are the minimal unit of analysis. In most studies, adopters are individuals, but can also be organizations (businesses, schools, hospitals, farmers and so on,), clusters within social networks, or

countries. The adopters in this regard are cassava farmers who are introduced to new method of cassava production by IFAD. Rogers (2003) pointed various stages of adopters which include;

Knowledge; the individual is first exposed to an innovation, but lacks information about the innovation. During this stage the individual has not yet been inspired to find out more information about the innovation. In this regard, IFAD brought new skills in cassava production by using modern machine and improve varieties to improve cassava production.

Persuasion; the individual is interested in the innovation and actively seeks related information/details. Like the case of IFAD in Benue state, the programme made use of existing extension to disseminate information across farmers in the state, these extension workers persuade cassava farmers to accept the innovation introduced by IFAD programme in the benefiting communities.

Decision; the individual takes the concept of the change and weighs the advantages/disadvantages of using the innovation and decides whether to adopt or reject the innovation. This stage is of most interest to the researcher, it helps to determine the acceptability of IFAD programme by farmers. It's posed to answer the rhetorical question of how has farmers accepted IFAD programme in the study area.

Implementation; the individual employs the innovation to a varying degree depending on the situation. During this stage the individual also determines the usefulness of the innovation and may search for further information about it.

Confirmation; the individual finalizes his/her decision to continue using the innovation. How has IFAD beneficiaries felt about the programme.

Communication channel Diffusion; takes place among people or organizations. Communication channels allow the transfer of information from one unit to the other. IFAD establish communication channel through it formation of Value chain programme which involve the Federal government of Nigeria, beneficiating state government, beneficiating local government and the beneficiating individuals in the affected areas.

Time; the passage of time is necessary for innovations to be adopted; they are rarely adopted instantaneously. IFAD intervention programme on cassava production commences in Nigeria in 2015 and shall last till 2020. It is a five years' development plan aims at assist rural women and youths who are involved in cassava production in programme intervening areas.

Diffusion of innovations theory stands very right to explain the relationship between IFAD and cassava production in Benue state, the extent in which cassava farmers are able to produce well depends on the how they are able to adopt or diffused new innovation from IFAD programme. Cassava farmers who have benefitted from IFAD programme are more likely to enjoy a sustainable livelihood than those who have only limited access to the programme.

Methods

The research was conducted in Ogbadibo, Logo and Guma; the three (3) local government areas which are beneficiaries of IFAD programme on cassava production across the three (3) geographical areas in Benue state. This study employed the cross-sectional survey design. The approach enables the researcher to study a group of people in the population, by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (population). According to IFAD (2021), Logo local government area has a total number of IFAD beneficiaries as 406; Guma has 424 while Ogbadibo has 1294 making the total of 2124 beneficiaries. The study adopted Taro Yamane (1967) formula for sample determination as stated thus: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$; and arrived at 400 respondents. Snow-balling sampling technique was employed to select only beneficiaries of IFAD programme on cassava production in the study area. Questionnaire were used as instrument of data collection. multiple Regression analysis was used to test the effect of IFAD programme on income of cassava farmers at 0.05 significance level.

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency N= 400	Percentage % = 100
Sex		
Male	243	60.8
Female	157	39
Total	400	100
Age		
30-39	82	20.5
40-49	190	47.5
50-59	101	25.3
60 and above	27	6
Total	400	100
Education		
No formal education	50	12.5
primary education	147	36.8
post-primary education	154	38.5
Tertiary education	49	12.2
Total	400	100
Marital Status		
Married	243	60.8
Single	123	30.8
Total	400	100
Religion		
Christianity	209	54.4
Islam	19	4.8
Traditional religion	124	30.3
Other religion specifies	48	10.5
Total	400	100
Income Level		
N50, 000 – N100,000	55	13.7
N101,000 – N200,000	82	20.5
N201, 000 – N300,000	100	25
N301,000 – N400,000	94	23.5
N401, 000 above	69	17.3
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

The data presented in the table above indicated that majority 60.8% (243) of the respondents were male and 39.3% (157) were female. This finding implies that there are more male cassava producers than female in the study area, which can be attributed to social constructs of farming of cash and food crops.

The age of the respondents shows as follows; 47.5% (190) were within the age bracket of 40-49 years, 25.3% (101) were within the age bracket of 50-59, 20.5% (82) were within the ages of 30-39 while 6.8% (27) were above 60 years of age.

The table also highlighted the education of the respondents; the data obtained indicated that 38.5% (154) of the respondents had post-primary education, 36.8% (147) had primary education, and 12.5% (50) of the respondents had no formal education, while 12.2% (49) had tertiary education. The finding reveals

that a higher percentage of the respondents had formal education, thus adopting the major innovations/technologies provided by the VCDP will be more effective.

Regarding the marital status of the respondents, the table above indicates that 60.8% (243) are married, 30.8% (123) are single, while 8.5% (34) are widowers. This result infer that married men and women were more involved in cassava cultivation and cassava products.

On religion, result shows that, 54.4% (209) of the respondents were Christians 4.8% (19) of the respondents were Islam, 30.3% (124) of the respondents were traditional worshipers while 10% (48) of the respondents belong to other religion. It is a clear indication that, Christian were more involved in the study.

On the income level of respondents shows that 13.7% (55) earn N50,000 – N100,000, 20.5% (82) earn N101,000 – 200,000, 25% (100) earn up to 201,000 – N300,000, 23.5% (94) earn N301, 000 – N400,000 while 17.3% (69) earn up to 401,000 and above.

Furthermore, on the occupation of the respondents, the above reveals that, 83.6% (321) of the respondents in the study area were farmers, 7.8% (30) of the respondents are civil servants another 7.8% (30) of the respondents are into business or trade while the rest 4.8% (19) of the respondents belong to other categories.

Table 2: Evaluating the contribution of IFAD on area cultivated, yield and income of Cassava production

Variable	Frequency N = 400	Percentage % = 100
Plots cultivated before IFAD		
½ hectare	165	41.3
1 hectare	149	37.3
2 hectares	58	14.4
3 hectares and above	28	7.0
Yield before IFAD		
5-10 baskets	82	20.5
11-15 baskets	211	52.8
16-20 baskets	76	19.0
above 20 baskets	31	7.8
Income before IFAD		
5000	60	15.0
10000	175	43.8
15000	130	32.5
above 15000	35	8.8
Plots cultivated after IFAD intervention		
½ hectare	80	20
1 hectare	100	25
2 hectares	120	30
3hectares and above	100	25
Yield after IFAD interventions		
16-20 baskets	33	8.3
21-25 baskets	226	56.5
26 and above	141	35.3
Income after IFAD interventions		
100-20000	30	7.5
21000-50000	83	20.8
51000-80000	161	40.3
above 80000	126	31.5

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Concerning the plots of cassava cultivated before the intervention of the IFAD, the data obtained indicate that, 41.3% (165) of the respondents cultivated 0.5 hectare of cassava compared to 20% (80) respondents after the IFAD intervention. This shows a decline of 20.3% in respondents who cultivated 0.5

hectares. Similarly, 37.3% (149) respondents cultivated 1 hectare of cassava before the intervention of the IFAD compared to 25% (100) after the intervention of the IFAD. This also shows that there was a decline in 12.3% of area cultivated. Respondents who cultivated 2 hectares before the intervention of the IFAD as indicated by the data collected was 14.4% (58) respondents which can be compared to 30% (120) respondents after the IFAD interventions, the findings show an increase of 15.6% in area cultivated, this infers that the intervention of IFAD have influenced a significant increase in the production of cassava in the study area.

The data obtained from the table above also highlights the yield of respondents before and after IFAD interventions. The findings indicate that 20.5% (82) harvested 5-10 baskets before IFAD interventions compared to 8.3% (33) respondents who harvested the same amount after the IFAD intervention. The findings indicate a decline 12.2% in the number respondents who harvested 5-10 baskets after the interventions of IFAD. Similarly, 52.8% (211) respondents harvested 11-15 baskets before the interventions of the IFAD and 56.4% (226) after the interventions. This finding indicates that there is an increase of 3.7% in the yield of cassava during the interventions of the IFAD.

In the same vein, before the IFAD interventions, the respondents 26.8% (107) indicate that they harvested 16 and more baskets of cassava, compared to 35.3% (141) after the interventions. This implies that there is also an increase in the number of baskets of cassava harvested after the intervention, this shows that the IFAD have brought about and increase in 8.5% of cassava yield which is more than 16 baskets.

The income of farmers as obtained from the table above indicated that before the IFAD interventions the highest income obtained by the 43.8% (175) respondents was 10,000 compared to 40.3% (161) of the respondents who obtained 51,000-80,000 from the sale of cassava products as a result of the IFAD interventions.

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of IFAD programme on income of cassava producers in Benue state.

Table 3; Linear Regression predicting the effect of IFAD programme on income of cassava producers in Benue state.

Model	Coefficients ^a					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.055	.309		3.417	.001
	Production and dissemination of improved planting material	.412	.097	.229	4.253	.000
	Strengthening of selected Farmers Organization	.404	.080	.273	5.042	.000
	Provision of training needs	.248	.087	.138	2.871	.004
	Promotion and dissemination of sustainable agricultural practices	-.027	.158	-.008	-.169	.866
	Access to fertilizer and agro-chemicals	.306	.092	.167	3.312	.001
	Providing matching grants	-.073	.083	-.044	-.880	.380

a. Dependent Variable: income

The coefficient table provides the results on the predicted IFAD programme effects on farmers' income. The strength of the relationship is given as *p*-value; $0.00 < 0.05$, this indicates a significant increase in cassava income as a result of production and dissemination of improved planting material, strengthening of selected Farmers Organization, provision of training needs, promotion and dissemination of sustainable agricultural practices and access to fertilizer and agro-chemicals.

However, the output also indicates that promotion and dissemination of sustainable agricultural practices is not statistically significant with a p -value; $.866 > 0.05$; providing matching grants was also not statistically significant with a p -value; $.380 > 0.05$.

Discussion of findings

The paper aim at assessing the contribution of IFAD programme on cassava production in Benue state, Nigeria. The study first finds the nature of the programme in the study area, and the findings indicate that, the programme structured as follow; from IFAD, Federal Government of Nigeria, the benefitting state, benefitting Local Government Area and the benefitting farmers. And the programme embarked upon include; production and dissemination of improved planting material, strengthening of selected farmer's organization, Provision of training needs, Promotion and dissemination of sustainable agricultural practices and access to fertilizer and agro-chemicals. The study also finds out that the programme contributed build of store for gari/fermented cassava sellers in the local market in the

In table 2 findings from the study shows the plots of cassava cultivated before the intervention of the IFAD, the data obtained indicate that, 41.3% of the respondents cultivated 0.5 hectare of cassava. After IFAD interventions, the findings show an increase of 15.6% in area cultivated, this infers that the intervention of IFAD have influenced a significant increase in the production of cassava in the study area. This finding is in line with (IFAD, 2016) who posits that significant progress has been made in land development (bush clearing, stumping, leveling and parceling) for cassava cultivation to aid cassava farmers in the benefitting areas.

The data obtained from the table above also highlights the yield of respondents before and after IFAD interventions. This finding indicates that there is an increase of 3.7% in the yield of cassava during the interventions of the IFAD. This finding also agrees with the finding of (Vanguard, 11 2017:8). Who wrote that IFAD developed 35 kilometer rural road in five intervening local government at the cost N551 38847942 where the project is being implemented to facilitate access to farm and this leads to improvement in the farm as well as evacuation of cassava produce to the market. IFAD empowered 400 Benue youths to boost agricultural activities in the state particularly on cassava production. Table two equally shows that income of cassava farmers has improved significantly as a result of the IFAD interventions programme on cassava production in the study area.

The coefficient table provides the results on the predicted IFAD programme effects on farmers' income. The strength of the relationship is given as p -value; $0.00 < 0.05$, this indicates a significant increase in cassava income as a result of IFAD programme on cassava production in the study area.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is obvious that the contribution of IFAD on cassava production has impacted positively on cassava farmers in Benue State. Before IFAD intervention programme on cassava production in Benue State, the area cultivated by beneficiaries was low. But with IFAD intervention programme the rate of cassava has increased tremendously, leading to improvement in the quality of life of the farmers as well. More funds are provided to the farmers to buy fertilizer and other inputs to boost cassava production. Also the programme seems to covers only small segment of Benue State, the programme should be extent to covered all Benue state with millions of populations.

Despite its success story, more is needed to be done to reduce the problems faced by IFAD such as prompt payment of counterpart funds by state, local government area of intervention as well as beneficiaries. There is also a need to provide alternative market for cassava bi products which is the right way to improve beneficiaries' income, at present the programme seems not to focus in this direction as a result farmers have not really been benefitting from the programme as should be. There is urgent need for government and traditional rulers' intervention in areas engulfed with the problem of crisis.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government as a matter of urgency should provide adequate security to the affected areas of IFAD intervention programme on cassava production. This can be achieved by deployment of security personnel and collaborating with traditional rulers to provide security in the communities paving way for peaceful existence in the farming areas and consequently boosting cassava production in the state.
- ii. IFAD may also provide market link to cassava farmers as it has been done with rice producers.
- iii. Government should established agro processing industries to help cassava farmers in the study area.
- iv. The IFAD should provide inputs and required support to farmers on time, and provide machinery for cultivation to reduce drudgery.
- v. The federal and state governments, nongovernmental organizations and the public should complement the efforts of the programme by providing sufficient and good planting materials.

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