

Promoting Rural Livelihood through Cooperative Society in Lagos State: A Study of Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative Societies in Ojo L.G.A of Lagos State Nigeria

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Abstract

A livelihood is a set of economic activities which enables a person to meet their individual and household requirements. So as a bid to promote livelihood especially the rural livelihood, the study evaluate the roles of agricultural cooperative societies towards the promotion of rural livelihood in Lagos State of Nigeria. A sample size of 236 respondents was determined through non random sampling technique (purposive) from 12 registered multipurpose cooperative societies in the study area. Data gotten from the 236 respondents were analysed and findings from the result revealed that, there is strong evidence that cooperative economic activities promotes the rural livelihood of its members. Meanwhile, these cooperatives are been challenged with some limitations that hindered their optimum capacity in promoting livelihood. As such, the study recommends that the cooperative should diversify their investments and integrate more practicable economic activities that are capable of promoting rural livelihood. As result of this poverty within the rural communities could be alleviate.

Keywords: rural livelihood, cooperative society, Lagos state, farmer's multipurpose cooperative societies

Introduction

Promoting the livelihoods of the poor has become more urgent in the current economic climate. It calls for organizations such as cooperative societies to use their resources optimally to achieve maximum scale. According to Chikaire (2011), the primary reason to promote livelihoods is the belief in essential right of all human beings to equal opportunities and ensuring that poor households have a stable livelihood which will substantially increase their income over a period of time; also to asset ownership; self esteem, as well as sense of socio-economic inclusion. He further stated another reason for livelihood promotion is to promote economic growth.

Livelihood is a set of economic activities involving self employment and or wage employment by using one's endowment to generate adequate resources for meeting the requirements of self and household and this is usually carried out repeatedly; as such become a way of life. Ideally, a livelihood should keep a person meaningfully occupied in a sustainable manner with dignity (Wikipedia 2014). Therefore, livelihood goes far beyond generating income which is also much more than employment. Cooperative Society has long been recognized as a source of livelihood for the African poor rural household as well as engine for economic growth. The ability of a household to exchange or move surplus from a region of comparative advantage to a region with less potential within a country or across national borders is an important ingredient towards the growth of Cooperative Society and improvement of rural livelihood (Muchopa 2011).

According to Arua (2004), promotion of livelihood should be concentrated on human resources and people of grass root levels and they should be mobilized to work together voluntarily to gather scarce resources together within their disposal. In this context, cooperative, specifically agricultural cooperatives play a vital role in the promotion of livelihoods. People participate directly in Cooperative Society and they create and increase productivity, which are the major indicators for poverty reduction and promotion of livelihood in general. The cooperative league of the USA as cited in Chikaire (2011) asserted that a cooperative being a business that is owned by its members can operate the business to service themselves.

According to World Bank (2005), the pyramid comprises nearly 4billion or 6billion people in the world, who do not have the purchasing power to buy even the bare necessity of life, e.g. food, clothing and shelter. But, as they get steadier incomes through livelihood promotion, they become customers of

many goods and services, which then promote economic growth. Also, another reason for promoting livelihood is to ensure social and political stability, because when people are hungry and idle, there tends to be violence, crime and other social vices (Chikaire, 2011; Adeyemo, 2005; Adinya, 2008). Thus, we see that there are idealistic, utilitarian and plain self interest based arguments for livelihood promotion.

Statement of the Problem

Government at various level and non-governmental developmental agencies have tried their best to improve livelihood of the people, but despite this efforts people still lack hope to improve their livelihood (World bank 2010). One of the biggest challenges facing development practitioners and policy makers in the world today is how they can assist large numbers of people in the developing world to have a meaningful livelihood which can sustain then and ensures they can live with dignity and hope for future. Similarly, there are many studies conducted by various researchers in a bid to find means and strategy of improving people's livelihood (Muchopa 2011; Chikaire, 2011; Arua 2004; Adeyemo 2005; Adinya 2008 etc). But, no single study has been conducted in Ojo L.G.A of Lagos State especially on the role agricultural and cooperative society in the promotion of livelihood thus, this created a vacuum to be filled which this study is determined to fill the gap. Also, this study became necessary so as to identify the livelihood promotional activities of agricultural cooperatives in Ojo L.G.A and determine the extent these activities has positively promote the livelihood of the cooperative members in Ojo LGA of Lagos State, this is the focus of the study.

The Study Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine how farmers in a multipurpose cooperative society promote the livelihood of their members in Ojo L.G.A of Lagos State. The objectives of the study include to:

- (i) assess the extent to which the MCs livelihood promotional activities have enhanced the livelihood of members.
- (ii) identify the constraints that hinder MCs livelihood promotional activities and make recommendations that will strengthen MCs efforts in promoting the livelihood of their members.

Hypothesis of the Study

- H₀₁:** MCs in Ojo L.G.A do not significantly promote the livelihood of its members.
- H₀₂:** There are no significant constraints that hinder the agricultural cooperatives in promoting rural livelihood in Ojo L.G.A.

Literature Review

Cooperative Society and Rural Livelihood Promotion

Cooperatives Societies in Nigeria like their counterparts all over the world are formed to meet people's mutual needs. Cooperatives are considered useful mechanism to manage risks for members in Cooperative Society. Through cooperatives, farmers could pool their limited resources together to improve agricultural output and this will enhance socio-economic activities in the rural areas (Ebonyi and Jimoh, 2002).

Arua (2004) viewed cooperatives as an important tool of improving the living conditions of farmers. According to Bhuyan (2007), cooperatives are specially seen as significant tools for the creation of jobs and for the mobilization of resources for income generation. Levi (2005) asserted that cooperatives employed more than 100 million men and women worldwide. In Nigeria, cooperatives provide locally needed services, employment and input to farmers, cooperatives also provide opportunities to farmers to organize themselves into groups for the purpose of providing services which will facilitate output of members. According to Nweze (2002), cooperative societies serve as avenues for input distribution. Through their nation-wide structure, they have developed strong and reliable arrangements for the distribution of food crops, fertilizers, agro-chemicals, credits, seeds, and seedlings.

Bhuyan (2007), stressed that rural cooperatives played an important role in mobilizing and distributing credit to the farmers. He further stressed that cooperatives provide members with a wide range of services such as credit, health, recreational and housing facilities. Agricultural cooperatives are also useful in the dissemination of information about modern practice in Cooperative Society.

Hermida (2008) reported that cooperatives provide functional education to members in the areas of production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce. The education of cooperative members could be formal where members are trained in courses like accounting and farm management. They could also be trained informally through the attendance of national and international conference and seminars. The most important reasons for cooperative failure in Nigeria according to Borgens (2001) include; the shortage of trained managers, lack of understanding of the principle and approaches of cooperatives and inability of cooperative member to cope with the modern methods and tools of production. Malthus (1999) also identified some of the problems facing cooperatives in Nigeria to include; shortage of skilled

personnel, inadequate financing, excessive government control and lack of trust among members. Onje (2003) added that the problem of dishonesty among cooperative leaders is another factors retarding the growth of cooperative in Nigeria.

According to Borgens (2001), the participation of Cooperatives in marketing of agricultural produce are low as result of poor organizational structure, inadequate infrastructural facilities and administrative bottlenecks. Cooperative societies in Nigeria perform multipurpose functions. They are engaged in the production, processing, marketing, distribution and financing of agricultural products. The most popular agricultural cooperative societies available in Nigeria include; group farming cooperative, marketing cooperative, agricultural thrift and credit cooperatives, agricultural processing cooperative, consumer cooperatives, fishery cooperative and farmer's multipurpose cooperatives. Cooperative Society is mostly practiced in Nigeria by peasant farmers producing the bulk of food, fuel and fiber needs of the population. Rural farmers in Lagos state like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria are trapped in perpetual poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and mass drift from rural to urban area. Hence the needs for farmers to form cooperative societies to allow then pool their contribution towards poverty reduction and agricultural development of the state resource together for increased agricultural productivity.

According to Levi (2005) the existence of cooperatives had an impact in the generality of rural development defined in terms of availability and access to amenities that improve the basic conditions of life for the rural people. These include;

- Employment creation
- Rural market development
- Enhancement of rural income
- Improvement of access to social service etc.

Business goods and Farmers produces are marketed by cooperatives are gainfully employed because they can account for their earning during the market season. Agricultural cooperatives are critical to the general rural development because they provide employment accounts, book keeping and managers as part of direct employment. But those members earning better revenues through enhanced cooperative prices have usually invested in income earning projects such as piggery, chicken such enterprises outside the main stream agricultural marketing cooperative domain, increase income level of entrepreneur farmers, but also increase additional employment to the rural people and hold up the massive population that would have migrate to cities

in search of decent jobs.

As far as agricultural cooperatives are concerned, it is responsible for introducing the exchange economy in remote rural areas in Nigeria. Thus, it assists in developing modern markets in rural areas, where the cooperatives provide a ready market for farmers' and members. Cooperatives, maintains higher levels of income, making small farmers and members able to construct decent houses, see their children to school and provide health insurance to sustain rural livelihood (Chambo, 2007).

Methodology

The area of study was Ojo L.G.A of Lagos State. This area comprises of Otto, Ijanikin, Volvs,Iba, Igboelerin, Ojo Okoko, Iyanaisagh, Iyanaera, Iyanaiba, Alaba, Shibiri well as Daleko. Meanwhile, the headquarter of Ojo L.G.A is located in Ojo Adjacent Alaba International. Also the majority of inhabitants of this local government are known for electronics Business, and farming activities of which they are into selling of electronic products and produce vegetables food for the state.

The study population consist of all registered multipurpose cooperatives societies (MSC) in Ojo L.G.A of Lagos State. This constituted 31 members multipurpose cooperative societies, meanwhile, not all the 31 members MCS are functional but with the help of Divisional Cooperative Officer (DCO) in Ojo South L.G.A, we could only trace 12 active and functional MCS and these cooperatives has total membership strength of 236 members.

Since the study population was 12 members' multipurpose cooperative societies which were homogeneous, also according to Adefisoye (2010) since the complete enumeration (236 members) was not up one thousand (1,000), the researcher purposively selected the whole of 236 members as the study sample. Thus, a structured questionnaire was duly distributed to the 236 respondents, meanwhile, it was 174 questionnaires that was properly filled and returned.

The above socioeconomic characteristics table 1

Result and Discussion

Socioeconomic Profile of the respondents

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents Socioeconomic Profiles

Socioeconomic Profile	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (\bar{x})
Sex:					
Male	98	56.3	-	-	-
Female	76	43.7	-	-	-
Marital Status:					
Single	25	14.4	-	-	-
Married	86	49.4	-	-	-
Widower	18	10.4	-	-	-
Widow	34	19.5	-	-	-
Divorced	11	6.3	-	-	-
Years of Formal Education:	-	-	< 2 years	≥ 17 years	3.11 years
Occupation:					
Farmer	174	100*	-	-	-
Civil Servant	32	18.4*	-	-	-
Trader	102	58.6*	-	-	-
Artisan	83	47.7*	-	-	-
Retired	26	14.9*	-	-	-
Years Of Membership Experience:	-	-	< 1 year	> 20 years	10.5 years
Income Per Annum (₦):	-	-	< 100,000	> 5 Million	1,050,000
House Hold Size:	-	-	2	> 20	8.5

Source: Field Survey, 2017

revealed that male respondents are 56.3% while female respondents are 43.7%. Majority of these respondents are married (49.4%) with average age bracket of 41 years. Also, these respondent have at least 3 years of formal education, meanwhile most of the respondent are farmers (100%); petty traders (58.6%) and artisan

(47.7%) and they generate average income of N1,050,000 per annum. Moreso, the respondents have average size of 9 house hold members. Finally, the respondents have average 10½ years experience as a cooperative member.z
The above table 2 revealed the cooperative activities that promotes livelihood of its members. Meanwhile

Multipurpose societies (MCS) Livelihood Promotional Activities

Table 2: Distribution on the Livelihood Promotional Activities in FMCS

S/N	Livelihood Promotional Activities	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Variance	decision
a.	Marketing of Business and farmers produce	4.189	.80727	.652	Available
b.	Supply of goods and farm inputs (e.g. seed, fertilizers etc)	4.1667	.79072	.625	Available
c.	Storage facilities for members	4.0690	.72795	.527	Available
d.	Credit and loan delivery	4.2011	.61747	.381	Available
e.	Savings and deposits	3.8218	.78083	.610	Available
f.	Micro insurance services delivery	3.3506	1.09548	1.200	Available
g.	Consumers goods supply	3.6494	.98481	.969	Available
h.	Housing scheme services	2.333	.89529	.802	Not available
i.	Members education	3.6034	.93623	.877	Available
j.	Skill acquisition programmes and training	3.5690	.72396	.524	Available
k.	Collective farming	3.7701	1.03913	1.080	Available
l.	Community health cane services	2.7299	.79850	.638	Not available
m.	Transportation scheme (e.g KEKE high purchase)	3.0747	.89967	.809	Available
n.	Community development services	3.3793	.90906	.826	Available
o.	Intermediary services between government and ruralities	2.4943	.90437	.818	Available
Grand mean (\bar{x})		3.5933			Available

Source: Field Survey, 2017

that data was sourced from 5 point likert scale with threshold of 3.0 which indicated that any livelihood promotional activity that < 3.0 is not available in the studied cooperatives. While, any livelihood promotional that is 3.0 is available in the studied cooperatives. Therefore, the grand mean (3.5933) indicated that there is strong availability of livelihood promotional activities in cooperative and these

include, marketing of goods and farm produce (4.189); supply of farm inputs (4.667); credit delivery (4.0211); members education (3.6034); skill acquisition training (3.569) as well as collective selling of goods and farming (3.7701).

The Extent of Livelihood Promotional Activities on Cooperative Members

Table 3: Distribution of Extent of Cooperatives Promotional Activities on the Livelihood of their Members

S/N	Livelihood Promotional Effects	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Variance	decision
i.	Job opportunities	4.0230	.68808	.473	Effective
ii.	Improves social and economic inclusion	3.5287	.74242	.551	Effective
iii.	Increase agricultural productivity	4.1149	.62557	.391	Effective
iv.	Women and youth empowerment	4.0460	.84536	.715	Effective
v.	Improved literacy level	3.2586	.82365	.678	Effective
vi.	Community banking	3.6724	.73841	.545	Effective
vii.	Improved community health care	2.3793	.74090	.549	Ineffective
viii.	Private and informal sector development	3.6782	.61755	.381	Effective
ix.	Effective linkages	2.8276	.70844	.502	Ineffective
x.	Gender equality	3.7989	.67985	.462	Effective
xi.	Improved standard of living	4.2471	.71472	.511	Effective
xii.	Technology diffusion	3.6667	.81413	.663	Effective
xiii.	Sensitization and re-orientation on cooperative effects	3.6027	1.06159	1.127	Effective
xiv.	Infrastructural development	3.3506	1.14704	1.316	Effective
xv.	Environmental sustainability	2.7184	1.02906	1.059	Ineffective
Grand mean (\bar{x})		3.4068			Effective

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 above showed how activities of cooperatives has an effects on livelihood of its members. The result was from scale analysis of 5 point likert scale with mean of 3.0. That is any variable < 3.0 is ineffective while any variable 3.0 is effective. Thus, the grand mean (\bar{x}) (3.4068) revealed that the available cooperative activities has positive effects in promoting livelihood of its members. Some of these positive effects include; job opportunities (4.02); social and economic inclusion (3.52); increased agricultural productivity (4.04); improved members literacy lives (3.25); community banking (3.67) as

well as infrastructural development (3.35).

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: MCS in Ojo L.G.A has not significantly promote the livelihood of their members.

H₀₁: To a significant extent MCS in Ojo LGA has promote the livelihood of their members.

In order to affirm or reject the hypothesis formulated, table 2 and 3 was subjected to T – test and the result was showed in table 3.1,3.2 and 3.3 below.

T – test

Table 3.1: Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
Pair 1 . Activity effect	3.5601533	15	.53901546	.13917319
	3.5287	15	.13954	.13954

Table 3.2: Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Activity and effect	15	.684	.000

Table 3.3: Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences								
				95% confidence interval of the diff.				
Pair 1 activity and effect	Mean	St. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				.35875070	.4215853	.573	14	.000

Decision

This result of T – test above showed a strong significance. That is t value (.573) was found to be significant at 5% level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected while the alternated was accepted and the researcher concluded that to a significant extent MCS in Ojo LGA has promote the livelihood of its members.

Constraints that Limit the Livelihood Promotion Activities in Cooperative

Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents Responses Based on the Constraints that Limits the Promotion of Livelihood through Cooperative Activities

S/N	Constraints	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Decision
i.	Political and economic instability	3.9253	.69693	Limitation
ii.	-----	3.7989	.96757	Limitation
iii.	Inadequate fund	4.3218	.63600	Limitation
iv.	Lack of quality extension service delivery	3.7414	1.05721	Limitation
v.	Poor infrastructure	3.9655	.85272	Limitation
vi.	Conflict of interest among members	3.6322	1.07644	Limitation
vii.	Misconception on what cooperative is all about	2.9023	.97168	Not a limitation
viii.	Inactive members’ participation	3.8276	1.04474	Limitation
ix.	Gender inequality	2.6956	1.04482	Not a limitation
x.	Inadequate skill acquisition and empowerment programmes and training	3.9023	.96571	Limitation
xi.	Ineffective leadership and management of cooperative	2.7356	.96571	Not a limitation
Grand mean (\bar{x})		3.2461		Limitation

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table 6 above revealed the result of the constraint that limits the activities of cooperative in promoting rural livelihood in Ojo South L.G.A. The result was generated from 5 point likert scale with mean of 3.0, where any constraints < 3.0 was considered not to be a limitation, while any constraint 3.0 was considered to be a limitation. Therefore, the grand mean (3.246) showed that there are limitations confronting agricultural cooperative in promoting rural livelihoods in Ojo South L.G.A and some of these limitations include; political and economic instability (3.9253); inadequate fund (4.3218); lack of extension service delivery (3.7414); poor infrastructure (3.9655); conflict of interest among members of

cooperative (3.6322); inactive members' participation (3.8276); inadequate skill acquisition training and programmes (3.9023).

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant constraint that limits the cooperatives in promoting rural livelihoods in Ojo L.G.A.

H_{A2}: There is a significant constraint that limits the cooperatives in promoting rural livelihoods in Ojo L.G.A.

In order to affirm or reject if cooperatives are been faced with some constraints that limits their efforts, table 4 was subject to test with chi square (χ^2) and the result was displayed below in table 4.1

Decision

Chi square (χ^2)**Table 7**Summary table of χ^2 test statistics

	Constraints
Chi square	.649
df	14
Asymp. sig.	.008

The test statistics table reports the result of χ^2 test, which compares the expected and observed values. In this case, there is a significance as the P value (0.008) is (<) less than (0.05) at 5% level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted, that is, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is significant constraints that limits the efforts of agricultural cooperatives in promoting rural livelihood in Ojo South L.G.A.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rural dwellers who are characterized by low income, and low resources utilization find it difficult to pool their resources together in order to raise their income; productivity and substantially promote their livelihood. In such situation cooperative represent a strong and viable social and economic alternative as it offers the best platform for reaching the masses of rural dwellers, specifically farmers in achieving self actualization. Therefore, this study assessed how agricultural cooperative activities promotes rural livelihood in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State. And the result of the study revealed that:

- The respondents possessed very few years of formal education.
- Also revealed that, there is strong availability of cooperative activities that promotes rural livelihood in Ojo L.G.A.
- The study also revealed that these available activities in cooperative has a positive effects on the promotion of members' livelihood in Ojo L.G.A.
- From the result of the study it was revealed that despite the positive effects, the cooperatives are being faced with many constraints that limit the promotion of rural livelihood.

Therefore, in order to further facilitate and enhance the propensity of cooperative in the promotion of rural livelihood in Ojo L.G.A, the following

recommendations are made:

- Cooperative should provide education for their members and potential members. Such should be designed to strengthen and enhance the members with skills; knowledge as well as confidence necessary to use and participate in cooperative more effectively as well as making the members to be conscious of cooperative effect.
- The cooperative should integrate more practicable activities that will yield more positive effects in the promotion of their members' livelihood. This will not only promotes the livelihood of the members but it will equally trickle down to promote living conditions of individual members' household.
- They should not rest on the positive effects recorded in promoting rural livelihood rather they should strengthen it more in such a way that will have effect on the Lagos State economy especially GDP.
- In order for the cooperative to remove the constraints that limit their efforts, they should diversify their resources into more viable investment that will yield more returns such as earnings; infrastructure; this will also encourage members to be actively participating as well as enable members to acquire skills that will empower them which will eventually reduce rural – urban migration.

If the above recommendations are strategically and strictly implemented, there is possibility of eradicating poverty in rural areas and this will enable the government to achieve millennium development goals (MDGs) before the stipulated period.

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