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Assessment of Knowledge Utilisation and Challenges of *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò* Radio Programme among Famers and Stakeholders in Ogun State

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Abstract

Food security remains a main challenge in Nigeria, mostly in rural farming communities where insecurity, poverty, poor infrastructure, and limited access to technology hamper agricultural productivity. This study assessed the influence of *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò*, an agricultural development radio programme broadcast on Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC), on food security in Ogun State. Anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory of the media, the research adopted a qualitative design using Key Informant Interviews (KII), In-depth Interviews (IDI), and Group Interviews (GI) with farmers, extension officers, and agricultural experts. Findings showed that rural farmers benefited significantly from the programme by gaining knowledge on improved farming practices, crop varieties, livestock rearing, and marketing strategies. However, challenges such as inadequate financing, weak market access, ecological differences, land policies, insecurity, poor radio signals, and cultural resistance to change limited the full utilisation of knowledge gained. Despite these constraints, farmers reported improved yields, diversification into various agricultural practices, and better awareness of modern techniques. The study concludes that radio remains an indispensable medium for rural agricultural extension and development communication. Strengthening institutional support, improving farmer-market linkages, and enhancing rural infrastructure are recommended to maximise the impact of agricultural radio programmes on food security in Nigeria.

Keywords: Food Security, Farmers, Agriculture, Communication, *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò*

Introduction

Food security is a complex and controversial concept, influenced by human and physical security issues like wars and physical challenges in developing African countries. These challenges include ethno-religious conflicts, herders/farmers conflicts, kidnappings, and ritual killings. Developed countries like Britain and the US have different experiences with war and its effects on food security (Akintoye, 2010).

Food security aims to reduce poverty, hunger, and diseases, but success varies due to socio-political and economic factors. Rural farmers face security challenges and lack necessary infrastructure, contradicting the Agriculture Policy Programme's emphasis on cooperation and synergy. Globally, security is all about safety and it simply implies a condition desired by everyone for life fulfilment (Tekena, 2012). The traditional school of thought comments on it by emphasising the acquisition of military hardware to prosecute wars and defend territorial integrity, while the contemporary school of thought perceives security from the angle of socio-economic provision and services by the government; the provision of food, among other needs, to mitigate poverty. In Ogun State, Nigeria, security challenges such as herders/farmers conflict and kidnapping affect the rural communities. This precarious situation is buttressed by media reports and statement by the State Police Command and makes rural farming communities vulnerable to crimes. Crimes negatively impact the objectives of food security; food being one of the "basic needs" of humanity for a total wellbeing (Akintoye, 2010).

Communication is necessary and is strategic to disseminate information about food security at the grassroots. The role of Development Communication is imperative by emphasising the well-being of rural communities. It is also known as positive journalism which is weaved around the ideal of peace and humanitarian security through effective communication approach. In this connection, Moemeka (2012: 143) asserts that with the television, "demonstrations and examples can be followed, to advantage, when such is given by the

communicator or animator. The newspaper, on its part, seems not particularly useful in rural communities where there is mass illiteracy. But the radio is “a medium which all experts would seem to accept.” Specifically, Moemeka (2012: 170) asserts.

Radio communication is crucial for disseminating information about food security among rural farmers, increasing productivity and fulfilling food security obligations. However, poor communication handling has led to outmigration due to crime waves and environmental insecurity, declining farming activities, increased unemployment, and job losses in the food and agriculture value chain. Official data shows a decline in farmers in 2020.

To the guarantee food security and general economic transformation at the grassroots, the medium of radio is strategic as a foremost traditional tool for grassroots communication. Effective use and adaptation in development programmes on radio tend to elicit required responses from the target audience. In this respect, the radio language is flexible and impacts the rural farmers by mobilising them to increase productivity for food security. Moemeka (2012: 147) affirms that:

The mass media (radio) is capable of instigating actions. They can influence response, even without the free will of respondent. To buttress this assertion, Olayiwola (2013) opines that the mass media are very crucial to informative and educative enterprise. The mass media help to discover the truth however splintered that truth may be in plurality of voices while at the same time, they raise conflict to the plane of discussion. Mass media can also be involved in a conspiracy of silence.

Media pluralism and participation assist to generate and disseminate divergent opinions and views. In particular, masses should be heard on matters that affect them. According to Moemeka (2012: 147), the masses are frequently isolated because of their illiteracy. Rural populace should benefit from the media about agriculture. This is where the Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation, OGBC radio services in collaborates with Ogun State Agricultural Development Agency (OGADEP) to transmit the programme *Àgbẹ Afokoşorò* beginning from 1987.

Despite numerous policies, Nigeria’s agricultural sector suffers from low implementation and inadequate support systems (FMARD, 2018; World Bank, 2020). Scholars highlight that without aligning agricultural communication with policy implementation, farmers will continue to struggle with adoption (Oguntoyinbo, 2014; Smit, 2016). Development communication therefore provides a framework for integrating media, government, and farmer perspectives. Radio serves not only as a channel of information but also as a platform for participatory engagement and accountability (Olayiwola, 2013; Akinfeleye, 2019).

Extant literature suggests that radio-based agricultural programmes can significantly improve knowledge and practices among farmers, but adoption is constrained by systemic challenges, including finance, infrastructure, ecological differences, insecurity, and cultural practices. These insights provide the basis for assessing how *Àgbẹ Afokoşorò* contributes to food security in Ogun State.

Research Objectives

1. assess the extent of utilisation of the knowledge created by *Àgbẹ Afokoşorò* agricultural development radio programme by rural farmers to promote food security in the state; and

2. interrogate the challenges faced by farmers in the utilisation of knowledge gained from *Àgbè Afokoşorò* agricultural development radio programme in enhancing food security in rural communities in Ogun State.

Literature Review

Challenges Confronting Food Security in Nigeria

Food security in Nigeria remains precarious due to multiple interrelated challenges. Studies identify persistent constraints such as inadequate financing, poor access to modern technology, low extension coverage, and weak infrastructure (Udoka et al., 2016; FAO, 2019; Adenle, 2020). Farmers in rural areas are disproportionately affected by insecurity, including herder–farmer conflicts and kidnapping, which disrupt production cycles (Okoli & Atelhe, 2018; Eze, 2022). Additionally, ecological variations influence farmers' adoption of new technologies, while cultural resistance to innovation and entrenched traditional practices slow the pace of change (Mubarak et al., 2016; Ojo et al., 2021).

Financing remains a recurrent challenge. Agricultural credit allocation has consistently declined, with commercial bank lending to agriculture dropping from 10.8% of total lending in 1985 to below 4% in 2019 (Udoka et al., 2016; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2020). This lack of capital prevents farmers from scaling production or adopting improved varieties. Similarly, weak marketing structures and poor transportation networks hinder farmers' ability to sell their produce profitably, leading to post-harvest losses (Olomola, 2018; Alawode & Adewusi, 2021).

Radio and Agricultural Development

Radio has long been recognised as a key medium for agricultural extension and rural development because of its affordability, linguistic flexibility, and wide reach (Moemeka, 2012; Asemah, Anum & Edegoh, 2013). Recent scholarship confirms its continuing relevance, particularly in empowering smallholder farmers with practical knowledge (Johnson & Rajadurai, 2020; Oduaran & Okorie, 2018). Agricultural radio programmes improve awareness of improved seed varieties, pest control, post-harvest management, and marketing strategies (Mogambi & Ochola, 2015; Ayedun et al., 2022).

Community radio, in particular, facilitates participatory communication, giving rural farmers a platform to voice concerns while learning from experts (Tufté, 2017; Nyirenda-Jere & Kazembe, 2020). In Nigeria, agricultural development programmes like *Àgbè Afokoşorò* have played an important role in bridging information gaps between research institutions, extension agencies, and farmers.

Radio for Development Programme

Programming is a radio station's menu, offering various programme typologies, typically in three belts: morning, afternoon, and evening. Public and commercial broadcasters now offer 24-hour transmission. Programming segments are schedules for target audiences, including women, men, young, and old. OGBC's programme schedule includes News, Current Affairs, Education, Health, Agriculture, Entertainment, Culture, and Sports. Programming is a body of ideas conceived and put together to meet an objective.

The radio enhances the chances of getting developmental messages across to a very wide segment of the population (Oso, 2003). The audience is researched to determine the appropriateness of the programme. Worthy of note, Morrissy and Warr (1997: 162) affirm two types of radio programme: the speech-based, which includes fiction and non-fiction and music-based ones. The non-fiction programmes are news, current affairs, magazine and educational programmes such as *Agbe Afokororo*.

Using radio to contribute to development programme, in particular as a broadcast medium, Moemeka (2012:227) asserts that target audience participation is positively related to the effectiveness of rural radio broadcast programmes advocating health (likewise any other) behaviour change. The radio, in carrying out one of its duties in developing the rural areas, does what is called 'development communication'. According to Akosa (2012), development communication is the use of all forms of communication in reporting, publicising and promoting development at all levels of society. It implies communicating development messages to the audience of the mass media (radio).

Thus, radio places the self-determined needs of the masses at the centre of development communication. In this study, rural development implies progressive economic change to improve the conditions of the rural areas. Nigeria is a developing country with more than 250 different ethnic groups. Therefore, radio as a development tool, is expected to facilitate development, significantly in rural areas, given the following roles and attributes (OGBC Magazine, 2008):

1. Provision of participatory information and communication of the masses towards economic advancement.
2. Promotion of economic knowledge, understanding and wisdom in the society.
3. Promotion of employment opportunities for the people.
4. Acceleration of the accomplishment of the economic development programmes or policies of the Nigerian government.
5. Helping in the national integration for national economic progress in line with the policies or constitution of the government.
6. Helping in marketing government development programmes or policies to the masses in the society in order to encourage their adequate participation for collaborative societal development.
7. Teaching and encouraging the use of modern strategies and technology in agriculture.
8. Encouraging the establishment of small industries.
9. Help in mass business/multi skill development.
10. Encouragement of self-development and self-reliance of individuals than on the society and government.
11. Social motivation/ mobilisation of citizenry for proper participation in the nation's economic development process.
12. Promotion of right attitudinal and behavioural changes in citizens especially in the economic development process.
13. Setting role models for the masses to emulate.
14. Ensuring responsiveness, responsibility and accountability of the government to the electorates.
15. Enhancing effective resource management, etc. (OGBC 30th Anniversary brochure).

From literature, Development communication is a multi-communication approach aimed at informing, empowering, educating, and motivating people to improve living standards and achieve sustainable development through knowledge acquisition and skills acquisition (Moemeka, 2012).

Development communication involves people owning and taking control of their development, respecting their culture and traditional wisdom (Akosa, 2012). . Effective development requires consent and involvement from beneficiaries. Radio discussion programmes focus on development, involving experts and moderators to discuss economic, social, and political issues.

Radio has various types of programs, including interviews, documentaries, and magazine programs. Interviews are personality-based, while documentary formats combine human voice, script, music, and sound effects. Magazine programs offer a mix of content, improving community quality of life. Similarly, Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013) discussed the place of radio in national development and described radio as ‘a system of communication’ where people interact and communicate their feelings on health, economic and socio-political issues. In the words of Moge kwu (1990) as cited by Asemah *et al.* (2013): Rural radio plays a crucial role in promoting change in rural communities, but Nigerian leaders often use Western mass media for development. To improve rural stations and programs, it is essential to involve people in the traditional system and create programs that cater to their needs.

Theoretical framework

Social Responsibility Theory of the Media

This study is anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory of the Media, which posits that the media functions as a watchdog, informer, and educator, accountable to society for the promotion of democratic values and development (Siebert *et al.*, 1956; McQuail, 2010). Within the context of agricultural communication, the theory underscores the duty of radio to provide accurate, accessible, and relevant information to farmers in order to support food security and sustainable livelihoods.

Since food security is a matter of public interest, the programme aligns with the social responsibility mandate of the media by ensuring that farmers are equipped with practical agricultural knowledge that can improve productivity and enhance livelihoods (Olayiwola, 2013; Akinfeleye, 2019). Thus, the theory helps explain the role of the media as a channel of development communication, particularly in bridging the knowledge gap between research institutions and rural farmers.

Diffusion and Innovation Theory

However, to capture the dynamics of how farmers interact with agricultural radio programmes, the study also draws insights from Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003). This theory explains how innovations such as improved seed varieties or new farming practices spread within a community, influenced by factors such as relative advantage, compatibility with existing practices, complexity, trialability, and observability. Farmers’ decisions to adopt practices promoted on Àgbẹ Afokoşorò can therefore be understood through this lens.

Applied to this study, innovations like improved seed varieties, modern fish farming techniques, or pest-control practices promoted on Àgbẹ Afokoşorò represent the “new ideas,” while the farmers constitute the potential adopters. For instance, farmers who perceive these innovations as offering clear advantages over traditional methods are more likely to adopt them, whereas those facing financial or ecological barriers may delay or reject adoption (Udoka *et al.*, 2016; Ojo, Adebayo, & Oyedele, 2012).

Methodology

Research design

The research design adopted was qualitative method which entails interview such as Key informant interview (KII), In-depth Interview (IDI) and group interview (GI). The interviews were divided into two segments according to the research objectives. The study was carried out in thirteen (13) rural communities across Ogun State with rural family farmers under OGADEP's agriculture extension services. The first segment concentrated on farmers' utilisation of knowledge they gained from the programme, while the second segment focused on the challenges of the utilisation of the knowledge gained

Sample size and Sampling Techniques

First, six Key Informant Interviewees were purposively selected based on their positions and expertise in the agricultural and information fields, especially on food security. The KIIs from OGADEP were with the Director of Extension Services and the Head of Communication Unit. The KII also included that with the IITA Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager and Programme Consultant. It also included that of the Ogun State Commissioner for Information and Strategy and the Permanent Secretary in the Ogun State Ministry of Agriculture.

Secondly, The IDI interviewees were purposively selected and were with the lead farmers and relevant officers in OGADEP who were members of the production crew of *Àgbè Afokoşorò* as well as Subject Matter Specialists. The selection was from each of the thirteen circles, purposively selected in the study.

Lastly, the twenty-four respondents for the GIs were selected through random sampling of farmers in the circles at their respective meetings. The selection was based on equal representation of eight farmers from the communities, in each of the three local governments, in the study area. A total of three GIs was conducted. The interviews provided details about questions and immediate answers, while clarifying issues in a face-to-face communication in a flexible manner and shed light on shared motives and feelings by the respondents

Research Instrument and Method of Data analysis

Data obtained from the interviews were analysed using the explanation building (narratives) and thematic approaches to bring out the salient points that were relative to the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis and Discussion

A. Extent of Utilisation of the Knowledge created by *Àgbè Afokoşorò* Agricultural Development Radio Programme by Rural Farmers to Promote Food Security in the State

This section discusses the extent that farmers utilise the knowledge provided by *Àgbè Afokoşorò* agricultural development radio programme to promote food security in the state. It is important for farmers to utilise the knowledge which was provided by the programme. It does not make sense for farmers to be taught on improved varieties, technologies and right techniques and they fail to use them to double their yields because of logistics and transportation impediments. The IITA Consultant, through KII, alluded: "Mobility is very important. The concept of state agricultural development programme is something that nobody should allow to go down". The assertion has placed premium on the radio programme and its objective to enhance food security.

The unanimity in farmers' confessions of the programme's benefits was confirmed. Respondents were unanimous they gained knowledge and awareness about innovative agricultural practices, but they had issues with effectively utilising these knowledge due to variations in climate, which was unfavourable.

The extent of utilisation of knowledge and awareness was ascertained. There were submissions that farmers could easily switch from one farming activity to the other, thereby practising more than one form of agriculture because they gained from *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò*. Meanwhile, most respondents opined that the programme inspired them.

One of the respondents, Mr Samson Iteoma, asserted, “I really enjoyed it because it serves as an inspiration to me to push forward in my area of chosen career, which is fishery”. However, he soon developed interest in animal rearing, saying “when I first started to rear goats, I just left them free, but along the line, because I listened to the programme, and got information on how we can handle their shelter, how their foods should be, I then saw it was necessary to rear them in the right way. Like last night, I had to run about, asking what the time was, so as to listen to the programme”.

Farmers benefited from listening to the programme, as their produce yield better. Confirming this, Mr Suraj Adekeye, another respondent said, “It gives us a lot of knowledge on how one can improve what he is planting so that there won’t be shortage. So, when they carry out the programme, it reawakens many to prevent mistakes”. However, respondents agreed in the GI that it was difficult to sell their produce, even with improved technologies. In one voice they said “What we observe about marketing our produce as farmers is that, we don’t get help to sell. That is the area we have problem with, in particular. We employ assistants, they work with us, and we put the harvest together to come and sell them. That is exactly where we are troubled”. A respondent from Ijale-Papa was visibly worried and agitated. To illustrate, he said, “*At times, when we sell the produce, the money we spend on farming, we never recover it. So, we don’t see any help*”.

The occasional losses were also as a result of other factors, including surplus production without considering the available market outlets. Responding to the research question, the IITA’s Consultant, lamented the restrictions to the markets. He blamed it on what he referred to as “Structure of urban markets”. He advocated that commodity boards should be established at both the federal and state levels. He iterated,

We need off-takers of farmers produce, we need assurance that when farmers get their produce to the urban markets, they will sell. Now, if farmers bring materials (produce) to the urban market, for instance, *Ofada* rice and by the time they get to the urban market they find out that they are already there at cheaper cost, you know the implication
(IDI, Ijale-Papa Respondent, 2022).

This problem of mobilising produce from rural communities by farmers was a general one. Respondents attempted solutions such as special markets, resuscitation of farm settlement schemes. In his opinion, the IITA Consultant said “If you want to develop special markets, you have to develop them round the farm settlement schemes and make sure that we entice the youths to also buy into our farm settlements”. IG respondents unanimously agreed that in farming most of their products were harvested at the same time, within a certain period. So, the market itself will be flooded with those products, thereby reducing the price. Farmers complained about access to the markets to sell their produce. Nonetheless, they said the radio programme greatly assisted them.

“When we have market (produce) to sell, and we want to sell, they used to provide us the numbers to call, and how we can connect with buyers. I had done that many times and “God has enabled me,” according to a respondent in GI. He further said “If such enlightenment can continue on the programme, it will further assist the farmers”. In addition, was the problem about transportation to major urban markets. It was a recurrent issue. In a passionate and appealing tone, a respondent in GI stated: “Transportation is always a little bit difficult for us in the rural area, most especially during the period that roads are a little bit bad. So, the high cost of transportation normally reduces the profit we would have made”. He averred “If most of those crops are not disposed immediately, it will be counter-productive on the farmer’s part because once a farmer has engaged in farm labour, and has adhered to all farming instructions, and the product started deteriorating, he won’t be happy, so, he will decide to give it away at ridiculous prices”.

Farmers’ recorded losses on products, and suffered more losses in cassava, a staple crop. Responding, a farmer in the GI session in Sawonjo averred that “Cassava brings losses to farmers a lot, except programmes like this (*Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorọ*) which is on-going; and they also give us advice that if you do this and that (sic). It’s on the cassava that we have most losses” even as knowledge is utilised in many ways to improve farming. A respondent, for example, said, “When you use the matured cassava stem and not looking at the size, it is good. In past years, I usually looked at the size, but it was later in the course of this programme that I understood that it is not the size that matters but it is the real maturity of the produce. Ever since I have been using mature sock, I have been getting results”.

Another said, “One important lesson that I saw in it (programme) is that, when one clears the land at the beginning of the year, it is important to spray the seedlings with chemicals. The reason is that, it matures well. So, if you observe well, if someone does not act early and before the rains, the yield will not be good, and the seedlings will not have the benefit of maturing well. I have held on to this, and every time we commence a new year, I quickly do everything I need to do as regards farming on the farm”. In one of the episodes, they made us know that the palm trees we depended on, especially those we planted about forty years ago, many of them are not the modern ones. They said they could help us to order (get) the modern ones from Benin (Benin Republic), where there are varieties”.

Respondents in GI at Imodi-Ijebu were unanimous that, “They (programme) want us to move forward, that we do it (farming) in a way that it becomes a business. That is the knowledge we get from the radio (sic). Those trainings are not for; I want to farm two acres, 10 acres. They want us to acquire knowledge and know it. When we start to farm on fifty acres, hundred acres, then it becomes business”.

The application of the various varieties of knowledge on improved technologies varies from one community to another. Many factors are responsible. Respondents to the GI at Sawonjo, unequivocally, said, “Before they introduced TME (419) Cassava specie, they will carry out a test on the land. The farmer will accept that such land will be suitable for cultivation before allowing the agents to bring the stems”. Going forward they observed: “They did the test, but not all our lands were subjected to the test. Here in Igbogila, our lands are suitable for cultivation. It is possible for the lands in other places not to be suitable. That’s the difference there”. In addition, the respondents lamented,

We plant things (Cassava) in our area. We can sell them during the year but the buyers are mainly from our community. That’s the first, and the second is that the TME (419) is sweet in the mouth of animals than men. It’s easier for animals to quickly consume it. If one gets to the farm now, you will only find

the stem standing but without cassava tubers under them. I know you (researcher) have snapped photographs of Cassava farm but you have just taken an empty shot. There is nothing in the ground. (GI, with Imodi-Ijebu Respondents, 2022).

The programme provided farmers with valuable knowledge on various aspects of farming, including seedling procurement, land text, machinery hiring, climate change, farm preparation, harvesting, and marketing. Farmers were connected to off-takers to prevent post-harvest losses and had access to companies for purchase. Some farmers processed TME cassava and learned to prevent rodents and maintain their farms using appropriate chemicals and pesticides. Some farmers demonstrated their ability to measure the right amount of chemicals for specific crops.

Findings reveal that farmers actively utilised knowledge gained from the programme, particularly in areas of crop production, animal husbandry, and farm management. Respondents reported adopting improved cassava and maize varieties, better land preparation techniques, and modern methods of livestock rearing. For example, a farmer explained that after learning about cashew production from a guest expert, he applied the knowledge and observed improved yields. Similarly, fish farmers reported integrating shelter and feeding techniques discussed on the programme.

These findings resonate with prior studies that emphasise the role of radio in enhancing farmers' technical knowledge and boosting productivity (Johnson & Rajadurai, 2020; Ayedun et al., 2022). They also align with Mogambi and Ochola (2015), who argue that participatory radio empowers communities to adapt practices to their local contexts. However, consistent with Ojo et al. (2012), farmers in Ogun State reported that while knowledge acquisition was high, utilisation was uneven due to ecological and infrastructural constraints.

B. Challenges faced by Farmers in the Utilisation of Knowledge gained from *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò* Agricultural Development Radio Programme in Enhancing Food Security in Rural Communities in Ogun State

This section discussed the challenges faced by farmers in the utilisation of knowledge gained from the *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò* agricultural development radio programme in enhancing food security in rural communities of Ogun State. Food security in rural areas is a challenging task due to state-imposed poverty, inconsistent marketing policies, reduced purchasing power, and economic conflicts limiting GDP.

There were some factors that inhibited utilisation of knowledge by farmers after they listened to the programme but *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò* was popular among most rural farmers interviewed. Stemming from this statement, a respondent during a GI said, "I do enjoy the programme a lot". His reason was that, "There was a day an expert was invited to the programme to give a talk on this cashew of a thing (sic). When this man explained why failure, normally occurs whenever we are doing agric. production (farming) (sic), I was able to learn a lot. So, all what I have learnt, I have now put it into practice". But the respondent was emphatic, like many others that,

The most critical challenge is the disappointment by rain because all the knowledge, if we follow them and there is no rain. That's one challenge. Secondly, if they give us education and we leave there and Fulani come to the farm with the cows. That's a challenge. I had a farm last year, I planted Cassava. I harvested just a little portion for processing for my children into *Garri*, by the time I returned there, may be after 6 or 7 days, I didn't meet any Cassava stem standing. All, more than halve acre. The cattle

eat the farm (Cassava). I planted maize also last year and ten days to the harvest of the maize, they took cows there to it. They eat the maize; they eat up everything to the extent that there was not a single maize pod standing. Imagine if I had borrowed the money to farm (IDI, Farmers, Ijale Papa, and February, 2022).

More problematic was that farmers compulsorily had to register with even local market associations before they were allowed to sell their produce after investing energy, time and money. Both *de facto* and *de jure* officials including *Iyalojas* and *Babalojas* were found of intimidating rural farmers who were forced, at times, to sell at give-away prices, after hours of delaying them through prolonged conversations and negotiations about where to place their produce, what revenue to pay, and regulated the days rural farmers were to come to the market. Therefore, the situation was repressive and a constant threat to the farmers ability to freely sell their produce to earn income and make monetary gains. This had negatively affected their capacity to also feed regularly on nutritional diets even as farmers since they also had to buy some other needs to live healthy.

The situation unfortunately had discouraged some farmers from listening to the programme. It can be inferred that some of the challenges include: the radio programme's inaccessibility to some farmers hinders knowledge utilisation and participation in communication. Ecological differences affect the adoption of technologies across farming communities. Insufficient financing and access to inputs limit access to improved technologies. Insecurity, farm encroachment, illiteracy, and traditional beliefs restrict farmers to old practices. Government policies on land acquisition limit access to farming lands in some communities. Weather and climatic variations also hinder farming calendars and technology adoption. Farmers primarily focus on root crops for marketing, denying them opportunities in vegetables.

Nevertheless, the OGADEP's Director of Extension Services, reiterated "the farmers are now harvesting between twenty-five and forty tones of Cassava, per hectare. This has improved their rate of income generation, even the industries have more raw materials that they can use, and as we can evidently see, more industries are springing up, using cassava as their raw material within the state".

Respondents unanimously agreed that ecological factors were imperative in their attempt at knowledge utilisation. Feedbacks from farmers to researchers were communicated through extension workers. The Director of Extension Services at OGAGEP stated further, "So, from the feedback, the research institute will know what to do, especially about either improving on the technology or introducing another one. This could be another variety or another package that they believe will suit that ecology". The ecological problem is one of the many challenges confronting the utilisation of knowledge provided to farmers through the programme,

Manpower in a sense is a problem. Somebody just retired and we are having just two of us. So, to work effectively is kind of getting harder for us for now. Manpower; there are no enough hands. As we are talking now, as at today, the budget for Ogun state has not been approved There is no fund and we are running our programme. It means we currently owe for the first quarter, if not for the mutual agreement or understanding between OGADEP and OGBC, the radio programme would have been stopped (KII with, Director of Extension Services, OGADEP HQ. Abeokuta, February, 2022).

With the aforementioned, the quality of the programme might be compromised in which case, previous editions might be repeated The failure of this programme would be unethical, more so, from a government agency. The respondent further claimed, "In the olden days, farmers are very hard to deal with. They will not adopt such

things (improved technologies) easily, but recently, may be because of technological innovations and access, as well as education; farmers are now willing to embrace these innovations. In fact, youths are now willing to come into agriculture and they are ready to (sic)". When probed further about farmers' accessibility to the programme, he asserted: *"That's what we expect our extension agents to be doing. The group meetings and all those stuffs; I'm not an Agriculturist, I'm a mass communicator. It's their own duty to visit these farmers at their villages, educate them on improved way of doing things on proven technologies"*.

The time allotted to the programme on radio was short. This significantly constrained interactions between OGADEP and farmers. A KII respondent reacted saying, "Farmers are quite knowledgeable, we too learn from them. There are some indigenous technologies that farmers know we get this from our interactions with them on particular issues. We come back from farm very late and by the time we rest a little, the programme will finish. We like them to give us more time to talk to them (Experts on the programme), too.

Much as feedback was necessary to improve the quality of the programme, suffice to state that the rural farmers were difficult to convince to adopt new technologies because they were used to old practices even though some were susceptible to change. For illustration, many of them argued to defend their age long traditional belief system dispositions to farming, including feeding habit on mostly carbohydrates. Findings reveal that feeding on nutritious diets is about attitude. This varies from one family farmer to another. The truth is that when we talk about how to raise awareness for everyone to eat nutritious food, we are looking at the possibility of people combining their food with fruits and vegetables. To buttress this argument, the IITA Consultant stated,

The farmers of today that am aware of, some of them are well informed that they need to feed on their produce but the problem is the need for extra income, a need for they are looking for money to be able to take care of other things in their household and that's why if they do not get it, they are willing to sell whatever they have (KII, IITA Consultant, January 2023).

A GI respondent to the research question elucidated on the issue of wrong application of input, thus:

There was a time I was involved in the use of fertiliser in growing yam, cassava, and even vegetables. An average farmer or peasant farmer would tell you that *"won niti won ba fi ajilegbinkoniyo"*. When literally translated, it is 'if we use fertilizer, the vegetables will not grow well. According to him, another farmer reacted negatively to the use of fertilizer on yams. He said "I cannot do that; my yam would do this, it will not last before it gets spoilt and I cannot eat it for a long time" (GI Respondent, 2022).

IDI respondent and presenter of *Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò* said,

What farmers are doing in the field will kind of influence what we (*Àgbẹ̀ Afokoşorò*) are going to push to them. We can't be telling farmers or kind of teaching them how to harvest when actually, they are preparing the land for agricultural purposes. So, right now, on the field what they are doing is clearing the land, preparing the land for on-season farming (rainy period) activities. We have on season and off-season which is dry season farming. Most of our farmers, they plant with the rains not irrigation like the northern part of Nigeria where they can use irrigation. We depend on the rain here, that's why they call it *'Ogbinoju Odun'*. (IDI Respondent, 2022)

Regardless of the challenges to utilise knowledge farmers gained from the programme and IDI respondents unanimously said, "We are rushing to make sure that the land is cleared; we want to plant our crop; we just have to burn it (bushes) but if we do not burn it, according to what they (*Agbe Afokororo*) have said, it serves our

farms as a manure to crops”. According to them, “We don’t have any option other than burning, because if you don’t burn it, it will delay our planting”. On the use of chemicals, the respondents lamented thus: “When we get to where we can get the chemicals, we begin to look here and there and when we get it there are lots of money, they demand from us before we can buy”.

Meanwhile, farm management was a major challenge and respondents admitted that a lot more should be done to persuade some rural farmers who were finding it difficult to embrace new technologies as a result of old traditional practices and cultural beliefs. Bush burning to some was a norm while the use of chemicals was a complete rejection. A few embarked on large scale farming without recourse to the farm management practices at their own peril.

A respondent to the KII interview and a subject matter specialist averred that the programme “is not just directed at making them farm, but also on how to maximise profit”. He spoke further,

They should not be farming for farming alone; they should see it as a business because nowadays most farmers are now into series of farming activities that improve their quality of life. Some of them are riding on Lexus Jeep, Corolla; so, the essence of the programme is to uplift the farmers so that they will improve their livelihood even as rural farmers and help them to educate their children
(KII with SMS, February, 2022).

Still on the challenges facing farmers, the respondent identified poverty as another challenge. He however said the solution was with the farmer. Like most respondents, he explained thus, “Well, farmers can make more money depending on the crops they cultivate. Any farmer that engages in cash or tree crop will definitely have more money; it will take years but it will fetch them money”. In his illustration: “If it is arable crops they do, they will not be able to get money, because arable crops are determined by weather. Our community is not engaging in irrigation, we would have been able to produce crops all season. But as far as cash crop is concerned, every year you go there, pluck your something and you sell and you get money”. The respondent confidently affirmed: “As far as cash crop is concerned, marketing is not a problem. The market is there already. Even in the rural areas, we have buyers all around going to rural communities and buying produce from one farmer to another. They (farmers in this category) don’t have marketing problem”. He joined other respondents to suggest that government could assist the farmers about how to get appropriate prices. “They (government) can regulate the market for them (farmers).

The respondents explain that farmers face challenges in knowledge utilisation due to lack of capital, but government provides extension agents to guide them. Issues include financing, land preparation, procurement of inputs, planting, farm maintenance, harvesting, transportation, marketing, and pricing, despite physical insecurity and herdsmen encroachments on farmlands.

Farmers face challenges in adopting agricultural technologies due to ecological differences across communities. Despite the Àgbè Afokoşorò program providing education, they face high costs for inputs and land preparation. Cooperative farmers' associations struggle to purchase necessary equipment due to high costs and maintenance.

Another challenge was the weak radio signals and interferences as well as interceptions by a few other radio stations in remote communities. Such were the experience shared mostly by respondents in border communities with neighbouring states like Lagos and Oyo as well as Benin Republic. Farmers and off-takers often fail to fulfill agreements due to poor harvests, causing farmers to struggle to obtain loans or credit from designated banks. Banks like the Agriculture Development Bank (ADB) change policies, limiting farmers to small farm sizes and forcing them to produce for subsistence and local market consumption. They also struggle to sell perishable crops in urban centers, leading to losses. The climate and its unfavourable impact on farming also limit knowledge utilisation, leading to seedling delays.

Farmers in Nigeria struggled with inadequate planning, poor nutrition, and a lack of knowledge about farming. They often failed to evaluate their performance, leading to significant losses and low income capacity. The Ogun State Agro Service Corporation did not prioritise rural farmers, and farm encroachment by Fulani herders disengaged some farmers. Dry season farming was difficult, and the young population was disenchanted and out-migrated due to insecurity and lack of infrastructure. The elderly were also weak, making it difficult to adopt new technologies.

Despite its benefits, farmers encountered several obstacles in applying the knowledge gained from the programme. Prominent among these were inadequate financing, poor market access, transportation bottlenecks, insecurity, and cultural resistance to change. For instance, respondents lamented their inability to access sufficient credit from the Bank of Agriculture, with loans capped at ₦150,000—an amount they considered inadequate for large-scale farming. Others reported post-harvest losses due to market saturation and lack of off-takers.

These findings mirror Udoka et al. (2016) on financing as a critical barrier and align with Olomola (2018), who highlighted structural weaknesses in Nigeria's agricultural markets. Farmers' complaints about Fulani encroachment and insecurity further corroborate Eze (2022), who found that insecurity significantly disrupts farming activities in rural Nigeria. Weak radio signals in border communities also hindered access, echoing Oduaran and Okorie (2018) on the limitations of communication reach.

In general, the analysis highlights a paradox: while Àgbè Afokoşorò has successfully transferred knowledge, systemic challenges restrict farmers' ability to fully utilise it. This finding advances existing literature by showing that agricultural radio must be complemented by policy and infrastructural reforms if its benefits are to translate into sustainable food security.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Àgbè Afokoşorò agricultural development radio programme has contributed significantly to enhancing food security in Ogun State's rural farming communities by disseminating vital agricultural knowledge. Farmers acknowledged the programme as a reliable source of information on improved farming methods, livestock rearing, cassava and maize production, and post-harvest management. Beyond knowledge transfer, the programme inspired farmers to diversify into various forms of agriculture, thereby improving their livelihoods.

Nonetheless, the research uncovered multiple challenges impeding the full benefits of the programme. These include inadequate access to credit facilities, high input costs, ecological variations that affect technology adoption, persistent insecurity such as herders-farmers conflicts, land tenure restrictions, transportation bottlenecks, and weak market structures. Furthermore, cultural beliefs, traditional farming practices, and poor radio signal reception in remote communities also limit utilisation.

Despite these obstacles, the programme remains a vital tool of development communication, providing rural farmers with a platform for learning and empowerment. It demonstrates the continuing relevance of radio in agricultural extension, particularly in low-literacy and resource-constrained settings. To achieve sustainable food security, agricultural radio programmes must be complemented by enabling policies, institutional support, and infrastructure that ensure farmers can translate acquired knowledge into practice.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this study, it is therefore recommended that there is a need to **strengthen farmer access to finance** through effective agricultural credit schemes and improved rural banking policies. Also, there is a need to **develop structured market linkages** such as commodity boards, cooperatives, and contract farming to address marketing bottlenecks and post-harvest losses. Also, there is a need to **enhance rural infrastructure**, particularly roads and transportation, to facilitate access to markets and reduce production costs. Media organisations and regulatory bodies should **expand radio coverage and improve signals**, especially in border communities, to ensure inclusivity in programme access. The media should **encourage participatory programming**, where farmers' voices and local knowledge are integrated into radio content for relevance. Finally, it is recommended that the media and agricultural organisation should **promote nutrition awareness campaigns** alongside farming information to improve dietary practices among rural households.

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