

Role of Co-operative Organizations in Agricultural Development in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria

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This study examined the role of co-operative organizations in agricultural development in the Tai Local Government Area (LGA) in Rivers State, Nigeria. A total of 50 co-operative organizations members were sampled from 10 purposively selected co-operative organizations in Tai LGA. Methods and techniques of data collection were through the use of questionnaires. The information collected was analyzed using frequency, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Analysis of data collected revealed that co-operative formation in Tai has actually improved the farming system and standard of living of the people, especially the cooperators. The results showed that 50% of the respondents belonged to farmers' co-operative society, 26% were members of thrift and loan co-operative society and 14% belonged to producers' co-operative organization, constituting 90% of all co-operative membership surveyed. About 80% of the respondents

joined co-operative societies to improve their farm production and get access to farm inputs. Improved marketing facility was the most significant variable at 1% with a large effect on the co-operative member using t-test analysis. Other variables such as use of improved technology, minisett techniques of yam production and purchase of essential commodity had no significantly different means, therefore had small effect on co-operative benefits to member and non-member. Therefore, co-operative societies played vital roles in developing agriculture in Tai LGA and Rivers State in general.

Keywords: Co-operative organization roles, co-operative benefits, co-operative problems, agricultural development, Tai LGA, Rivers State Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Co-operatives are organizations formulated by various groups of individuals united by a common goal conceived to be naturally beneficial to them. It can also be seen as a business organization which is owned and controlled by the people (members) who use its products, suppliers and services. Although co-operatives may vary in type and membership size, they are formed to meet specific objectives of members and are structured to adapt to members over changing needs. The primary aim of these co-operatives is basically geared towards promoting economic, social and cultural interests of its members. The International Co-operatives Alliance (ICA, 2005) stated that a co-operative is an association of autonomous individuals bounded together voluntarily by

common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly – owned and democratically controlled enterprise. The concept of co-operatives originated in Europe in the 19th century and was fast spread to other industrialized countries. This concept was recorded as a self-help method aimed at poverty reduction (Hoyt, 1989). However in 1844, the Rochdale society of equitable pioneers limited had the greatest impact towards the determination of co-operatives rules and principles. It formulated a unique operating guideline with its objective being to address members' needs for better housing, employment, food, education and other social requirements. Erdman and Tinley, (1986) revealed that the evolution of co-operatives in Europe was

influenced by certain factors such as:

- (i) Economic condition, either influenced by war, depression, technology, natural economic policy or market places.
- (ii) Farmers organizations, including their leadership, their motivational capacity, their effectiveness in influencing public policy as determined by presidential interest by legislative actions both at the federal and state level and judicial interpretation.

However, co-operatives were introduced in Africa in the 1920's and officially in Nigeria in 1926. This took root during the colonial government of Sir Graeme Thomson (Adegboye, 1971). During this administration, the Ministry of Agriculture recognized the cocoa producers' co-operatives of Agege Planters Union and Egba Farmers Union in Abeokuta and Ibadan cities. They were then divided into marketing co-operatives in order to enable the sales of their products, and soon enough the success of these co-operatives was now spread across the other parts of the country.

Ever since the spread of co-operatives across Nigeria, different types co-operatives have been formed. They include:

- (a) Consumers co-operative society
- (b) Producers co-operative society
- (c) Farmers co-operative society
- (d) Marketing co-operative society
- (e) Thrift co-operative society

Agricultural co-operative like any other type of co-operative provides a platform for small holder farmers (members) to gain access to improved:

- (a) Natural resources such as land, water and seeds
- (b) Information on modern extension practices and machineries
- (c) Adequate finance
- (d) Efficient marketing skills and an enabled marketing structure

Co-operatives had existed as a business organization and had attracted the attention and interest of many authors over the years. Adegboye, (1971) traced the history of co-operative in West Africa to the colonial governments in the crown colony days. He pointed out that co-operatives membership was directed mainly towards marketing and thrift and savings societies. Keeffe, (1973) opined that for any co-operative organization to succeed, it must have ingredients such as purpose, policies and procedures for the existence of the society. Ijere, (1977) observed that co-operative is a learned process, so education is central to its success. The author further observed that knowledge was basic to intelligent decision and uninformed cooperators are the

least to understand and/or appreciate the economic and sociological significance of co-operative. Co-operatives, according to ILO, (1978) were associations of persons usually of limited means who had voluntarily joined together to achieve a common economic and through formation of democratically controlled business organizations making equitable contributions to the capital required.

Awotesu, (1980) in the quest to make green revolution programme a success urged farmers in Nigeria to form co-operative societies or organizations so as to receive government aids. Adegeye and Dittoh, (1982) reported that there was rapid expansion in the number of the produce marketing societies (which bought and sold cocoa, cotton, groundnut, oil palm and some other agricultural products) and thrift and credit societies in Nigeria. Mohamed, (2004) examined the role of agricultural co-operatives in agricultural development in Menoufiya governorate in Egypt and found out that 73% of the agricultural co-operatives had insufficient budget for achieving their aims, 71.2% had low capacity of mobilizing resources, 48.5% had low ability of employing their resources efficiently, 87.9% had limited contributions to agricultural development, while 69.7% had low organizational effectiveness in agricultural development. Maren, (2009) studied farmers organizations as a tool to improve small scale farmers welfare in Mozambique and revealed that membership among small scale farmers had positive effects on agricultural profit maximization, while the effect of co-operatives on value of plant production was not significant. David, (2013) examined the contribution of co-operatives to agricultural development in Awka North Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State in Nigeria. The results revealed that co-operative organizations in the LGA were engaged in crops, livestock and storage enterprises that provided credit facilities and supplied farm inputs to their principal contributions of the co-operatives to enhance agricultural production.

Adefila and Madaki, (2014) assessed farmers' co-operatives roles in agricultural development in Sabuwa Local government Area (LGA) of Katsina State in Nigeria. Authors observed that income generation, duration of co-operatives experiences, types of agricultural activities and quality of leadership were significantly correlated with the roles of the farmers' co-operatives in agricultural development at 5% confidence level, while membership enrolment in terms of population size was found to have a weak correlation. Siddique, (2015) examined the role of co-operative society in marketing agricultural products in Bangladesh. The study revealed that most of the farmers were illiterates, therefore had no ability to sell their products to the final consumers. Middlemen played marketing roles, so farmers did not get a fair price for their products. Therefore, the researcher suggested that a solid framework for co-operative societies operations would have minimized the role of middlemen in marketing

of agricultural products in Bangladesh. Manzano, (2015) contributed by examining the functions and features of Ugandan agricultural co-operatives and farmer organization that influenced SAPS services provided to co-operatives members and went on to analyze how to improve its impacts. The results showed that only 8.1% of the organizations aligned with better management of their natural resources and 6% only claimed that their main objective was related to environmental sustainability issues. This study also showed that there was significant level of correlation between the numbers of SAPS services provided by co-operative organizations with information access. Nnadozie et al., (2015) examined the Nigerian agricultural co-operatives and rural development in Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State in Nigeria. The authors found out that multipurpose, production, marketing, thrift and savings agricultural co-operative societies existed in the LGA. These co-operatives sourced their finance from monthly dues, levies, fines and others. The co-operatives in the area contributed to agricultural development in Ivo LGA by providing cash to small holder farmers, processing, marketing and group management. Co-operatives in many developing countries have shown that the farmers who are effectively organized can benefit from aggregate links to markets and services from accessing centralized services that can help them achieve higher yields and higher income through a collective voice in order to advocate their needs.

Co-operative societies are almost universal forms of organizations found practically in all countries and are used by people to improve food production. The universal organization despite its role still face some predominant problems, such as problems of land acquisition, capital/finance, managerial skill/ability by officers/leaders, lack of processing and storage facilities, standard market and price instability of farm produce in the area. Hence the problem of this study is to discuss the role of co-operatives in development of agriculture in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State in Nigeria. The desire to set up a co-operative organization is generally provoked by the feeling that, "two heads are better than one" coupled with the existing dynamic changes in marketing, grading and services such as assembling, packaging, storage and selling of produce, farmers and consumers have set up an alternative marketing agencies to those already available. Government sometime encourages formation of co-operative in order to counter the tendency in world monopoly or collusive market sharing in existing trade channel.

Hence, the significant of the study is to examine the impact of co-operatives in agricultural development of Tai LGA in Rivers State. Researches had been conducted in roles of co-operatives in agricultural development in the world and particularly Nigeria and they include the studies of Mohamed, (2004) in Egypt, Maren, (2009)

in Mozambique, Siddique, (2015) in Bangladesh and Manzano, (2015) in Uganda. In Nigeria the following studies are outstanding in recent times, David, (2013), Adefila and Madaki, (2014), and Nnadozie et al., (2015). However, none of these researches had covered this topic in Tai LGA of Rivers State of Nigeria. Hence, the need for the study. The beneficiaries of this research include the co-operative organizations, farmers, government and researchers.

The main objective of this research work is to examine the role of co-operative organizations in agricultural development in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State. The sub-objectives include:

- (i) To examine the actual role of co-operative organizations in agricultural development in Tai Local Government Area.
- (ii) To investigate the benefits of co-operatives organization existing in the area.
- (iii) To determine the problems facing the development of co-operative organizations in the area and its effect in agricultural development.

The hypothesis testing is as follows:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the mean value of co-operative members' benefits from their various organization and non-members benefits from the co-operative societies in Tai LGA.

H_1 : There is significant difference in mean value of co-operative members' benefits from their organization and non members' benefits from the co-operative societies in Tai LGA.

METHODOLOGY

Area of study

The area covered for the study is Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State. Tai Local Government Area is one of the twenty – three (23) Local Government areas of Rivers State. It was created in 1997 with its headquarter at Saakpenwa. Tai is also one out of the six clans of Ogoni tribe in Rivers State. It is bounded geographically in the North by the Ndoki's in Oyigbo Local government Area, in the south by Gokana while Eleme and Khana Local Government Areas share boundaries in the west and east respectively. Crops like cassava, yam, plantain, oil palm, maize, vegetables are produced in commercial quantities in the area. The LGA is very sustainable for tropical agricultural production all year round. Apart from farming which is the major occupation of the people of Tai, other occupations carried out side-by-side are hunting and fishing. Crude oil and gas are produced in abundance in the LGA.

Data collection

Data were collected through primary survey via oral and written interviews, questionnaires and personal discussions with members of the co-operative societies in Tai LGA. Bulks of data collected were through structural questionnaires administered to members of co-operative organizations in the LGA. The questionnaires were designed to collect information on types of co-operatives formed, basic functions of the co-operatives, their involvement in agricultural development, educational activities co-operative members were involved in, co-operative benefits to members and non-members etc. Tai was made up of 21 communities, which hosted 23 registered co-operative organizations. Some bigger communities had up to four (4) co-operative organizations while others had none. Ten (10) co-operative organizations were purposively sampled using purposive sampling techniques based on the fact that they had impacted on agricultural development in the communities they operated. These ten co-operatives societies were formed in the following seven Tai LGA communities: Koroma, Tai, Kpite, Nonwa, Korokoro, Botem and Ban-ogoi. From these 10 co-operatives, simple random sampling of five (5) members was drawn to give a total of fifty (50) respondents. All administered questionnaires were retrieved from the respective respondents.

Method of data analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, percentages, etc. Inferential statistics of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to compare the benefits received by co-operative members and its effects on agricultural development in the LGA as against non-co-operative members.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The types of co-operatives and reasons why farmers joined co-operatives in Tai LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria were presented in (Table 1). The table showed that there were basically five types of co-operative organizations, farmers patronized in the study area. The results also showed that 50% of the farmers interviewed belonged to the farmers' co-operative societies and that was the most popular co-operative organization in Tai LGA. This was followed by thrifts and loan co-operative society (26%) and producers' co-operative organization (14%). These three co-operative organizations constituted the bulk of membership (90%) patronage and popularity in Tai LGA in Rivers State. These results are similar to the observation of Adegboye, (1971), Adegeye and Dittoh,

(1982), David, (2013), Nnadozie et al., (2015). As for the reasons why the farmers joined the different types of co-operatives, the results in (Table 1) showed that 60% of the respondents wanted to increase their farm productivity, that is producing more food for their families and marketing to make more money, while 20% said they joined to receive assistance from government and other voluntary agencies that were responsible for agricultural development in the rural areas. Such assistance included loans, hiring machineries and equipments, fertilizers and other chemicals procurement, yam sets, seeds and seedlings. These two reasons were the major reasons most farmers (80%) in Tai LGA became members of the co-operative societies.

The co-operatives organizations were involved in agricultural development projects which included educating its members and owing demonstration farms for increased production and improved productivity as shown on (Table 2). The results in (Table 2) showed that 84% of the co-operative members surveyed agreed that they were involved in agricultural development, while 16% of respondents were not sure if their co-operatives were involved in agricultural development. About 40% of the respondents agreed that they were involved in educational programmes that could increase their productivity in improved varieties of crops, hybrid animals and birds. They were also educated in use of machinery, equipment and tools that could improve their farm operations (30%), while 20% learnt how they could source, apply and obtain loans from various sources available including from the commercial banks. About 10% of the respondents benefited from the demonstration methods of dry season irrigation system and draining their farms from excessive floods during the heavy rains. These results were similar to the observation of Ijere, (1977) and Siddique, (2015).

Table 2 also indicated the results of the outcome of co-operative demonstration farms to members as a way of improving agricultural production in Tai LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria. The results revealed that 78% of the farmers indicated that the co-operative demonstration farms enabled them to increase their food supply to their households and provided them with adequate financial support compared to the traditional methods that were in use prior to their membership status. About 14% of the respondents were able to improve on their raw materials supply and production to their customers. Therefore, 92% of the respondents believed that agricultural development occurred because they had more food, money and produced raw materials. Table 3 showed the types of problems co-operative organizations encountered and strategies to resolve them and improve the development of agriculture in Tai LGA. About 32% of the respondents said poor management and poor government supervision was the most pronounced problem of the co-operative in Tai LGA, followed by the problems of storage and processing facilities (28%) and 20% agreed that these

Table 1. Reasons why farmers joined different types of co-operatives in Tai LGA.

Membership of co-operative organizations	Respondents	Percentages	Ranking
Types of co-operatives			
Consumers co-operative society	3	6.00	4th
Producers co-operative society	7	14.00	3rd
Farmers co-operative society	25	50.00	1 st
Marketing co-operative society	2	4.00	5th
Thrift and loan co-operative society	13	26.00	2 nd
Total	50	100	-
Reasons for joining the co-operatives			
Increase in farm productivity.	30	60.00	1 st
Getting assistance in the form of loan machinery hiring, fertilizer and other farm inputs.	10	20.00	2 nd
Reducing the high cost of farm inputs in the market	1	2.00	6 th
Preventing the activities of middlemen	3	6.00	4 th
To buy essential commodities for household use cheaper	2	4.00	5th
To be educated in different types of agricultural production	4	8.00	3 rd
Total	50	100	-

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 2. Co-operatives involvement in agricultural development projects in Tai LGA.

Co-operatives involvement in agricultural development	Respondents	Percentage	Ranking
Involvement in agricultural development			
Yes	42	84.00	-
No	8	16.00	-
Total	50	100	-
Educational activities			
The use of machinery and equipment in farm operations	15	30.00	2 nd
Method of obtaining loan	10	20.00	3 rd
The production of improved varieties of crops, animals and birds.	20	40.00	1 st
Specific knowledge in dry season irrigation and drainage	5	10.00	4 th
Total	50	100	-
Benefits Cooperatives demonstration farms			
Improved agricultural mechanization	4	8.00	3 rd
Production of raw materials	7	14.00	2 nd
Plenty of food production and more money.	39	78.00	1 st
Total	50	100	-

Source: Field survey, 2016.

problems were followed by inadequate availability of credit/loan facilities for expansion of agriculture production. These factors accounted for 80% of the problems of the co-operative organizations in Tai LGA. These results conformed to the results of Mohamed, (2004).

Table 3 also showed the strategies to cope with the problems and development of agriculture in the study area during the period of survey in 2016. The results showed that 86% of the respondents agreed that adequate provision of planting materials, fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals, improved varieties of crops, animals and hybrid birds could lead to agricultural development (36%), government provision of loans / credits and subsidizing agricultural inputs could speed up agricultural development (30%), while 20% of the

respondents opined that availability of markets for easy disposal and sales of agricultural products could enhance the development of agriculture in Tai LGA of Rivers State. The results conform to Awotesu, (1980).

Table 4 focused on the benefits of co-operative organizations in Tai LGA to members and non-members within the LGA and farmers from the neighbouring LGAs. The results of (Table 4) revealed that about 60% of the respondents used the co-operative organizations to learn how to apply improved technology on their farms (hence improving their standard of living), 40% of the non-members category within the LGA used the co-operative societies to improve their farming techniques and positively affecting their living standard, while 41.67% also benefited among the non-members from outside the Tai LGA, that is farmers from neighbouring Local

Table 3. Problems encountered by co-operative societies and strategies to develop agriculture in Tai LGA.

Problems of co-operatives and strategies to develop agriculture	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Problems encountered			
Lack of adequate farmland	4	8.00	4 th
Inadequate availability of credit facilities for expansion	10	20.00	3 rd
Low membership	2	4.00	5 th
Problems of storage and processing facilities	14	28.00	2 nd
Poor management and poor government supervision	16	32.00	1 st
No educational programmes	4	8.00	4 th
Total	50	100	-
Strategies to develop agriculture			
Government providing loans/credit and subsidy	15	30.00	2 nd
Adequate supply of farm machinery, equipment and tools.	5	10.00	4 th
Adequate provision of planting materials, fertilizers and other chemicals, improved varieties of crops, animals and birds	18	36.00	1 st
Availability of markets for easy disposal and sales of products	10	20.00	3 rd
Education and provision of well informed guidance	2	4.00	5 th
Total	50	100	-

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4. Benefits of cooperative organizations to members and non-members in Tai LGA.

Benefits of cooperative organizations	Members in Tai LGA		Non-members in Tai LGA		Non-members in outside Tai LGA		Total	Mean
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
The use of improved technology in farming and increased standard of living	30	60.00	6	40.00	5	41.67	41	13.67
Improved marketing facilities	3	6.00	2	13.33	1	8.33	6	2.00
Knowledge of miniset technologies of yam production	7	14.00	5	33.34	4	33.33	16	5.33
Purchase of essential commodities at cheaper prices for household consumption	10	20.00	2	13.33	2	16.67	14	4.67
Total	50	100	15	100	12	100	77	-
Mean	12.50	-	3.75	-	3.00	-	-	6.42

Source: Field survey, 2016

Government Areas (LGAs). About 33% of the non-members from neighbouring LGAs and non-members within the LGA respectively benefited from the knowledge of miniset techniques of yam production, while only 14% claimed to have benefited from this benefit amongst the co-operative members in the LGA. Other benefits included the purchase of essential commodities at cheaper prices for their household consumption at the co-operative members' category (20%) and improved marketing system and facilities was the benefit for the non-members from within the LGA (13.33%) and neighbouring LGAs (8.33). Therefore, the co-operative societies had helped to increase agricultural development in Tai LGA of Rivers State in Nigeria and generally improved agricultural production in the state. The observation are similar to results of Maren, (2009) and Nnadozie, et al., (2015). The results of analysis of variance (ANOVA), on co-operative benefits in and outside Tai LGA are presented on (Table 5) based on statistical estimates on (Table 4). The results on (Table 5) revealed that the ANOVA (analysis of variance) analysis accepted the null hypothesis (H_0) that there was no significant difference in the mean value of co-operative members' benefits from their respective

organizations as pertaining to agricultural development compared with the mean values of the non-members within the LGA and non-members from neighbouring LGAs. Therefore, they have all contributed meaningfully to the agricultural development of the area generally. The results showed that $F_c = 2.16$ and $F_\alpha = 3.98$ (where $\alpha = 0.95$), indicating no significant difference in the mean value at 95% confidence level. ANOVA analysis results confirmed the descriptive result analysis of (Table 4) earlier observed. The ANOVA analysis result was similar to Maren, (2009) and Nnadozie et al. (2015) results, that co-operative organization enhanced agricultural development generally.

The mean and standard deviation of types of benefits derived from co-operative organizations by members and non-members within and outside Tai LGA results were presented on (Table 6) and used in t-test estimation, decision rule and Eta squared tests. The results on (Table 6) showed that only improved marketing facility was a statistically significant variable at 1% (-9.3761) confidence level, meaning it increased the development of agriculture in Tai LGA of Rivers state significantly. From the Eta squared value or 0.6468 (64.68%), only the improved marketing facilities had accounted for a large

Table 5. Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) on cooperative benefits in Tai LGA.

Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom (df)	Mean square	Fc.	F _{0.95}
Total	688.92	11			
Among-means (treatments)	223.17	2	111.59	2.16	3.98
Within samples (Errors)	465.74	9	51.75		

Source: Estimated from Table 4. F_c = calculated F – test. $F_{0.95}$ = F- value for $V_1 = 2$, $V_2 = 9$.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the mean value of co-operative members' benefits from their various organization and non-members benefits from the co-operative societies in Tai LGA.

H_1 : There is significant difference in mean value of co-operative members' benefits from their organization and non members' benefits from the co-operative societies in Tai LGA.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation of types of benefits from co-operative organization by members and non-members in Tai LGA.

Types of benefits derived	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	t-value	Eta squared value	Decision H_0
The use of improved technology in farming and increased standard of living	13.67	11.5567	1.0865	0.0242	Accept
Improved marketing facilities	2.00	0.8165	-9.3765***	0.6468	Reject
Knowledge of miniset techniques of yam production	5.67	1.2922	-1.0053	0.0206	Accept
Purchase of essential commodities of cheaper prices for household consumption	4.33	3.7867	-0.9600	0.0188	Accept

Source: Estimated from survey data in Table 4: ***= significant at 1%; Eta squared guidelines 0.01 = small effect; 0.06 = moderate effect; 0.14 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

effect in the variance of the means of the co-operative members benefits. The rest variables were statistically not significant at 5% level, meaning that the t-value calculated were less than t-value tabulated. Hence there were no significant differences between the mean value of the co-operative member and non-members' benefits from the organizations that operated in Tai LGA in 2016 using these three variables i.e use of improved technologies, minisett techniques of yam production and purchase of essential commodities. These variables had very small effects on the variances of the means of co-operative benefits to member and non members. The results showed that use of improved technology has small effect of 0.0242 (2.42%), minisett techniques of yam production had small effect of 0.0206 (2.06%) and purchase of essential commodities = 0.0188 (1.88%). These effects were regarded as small since they were less than 0.06 that is regarded as being moderate and 0.6468 was regarded as large effect because it was larger than 0.14 which was regarded as large (Cohen, 1988). The remaining three variables were not significant by the t-value estimation at 5% significant level therefore were not considered as variables (benefits) that could significantly improve the life and agricultural development among cooperators only in the survey area, since they seemed to have affected both members and non-members of co-operative organization positively. Hence the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted for the non-significant variables, while the null hypothesis (H_0) was

rejected for the significant variable. These results were in conformity with the results of Siddique, (2015).

Conclusion

It was deduced that by joining co-operative organizations, particularly farmers co-operative organization, a lot of food were produced and sold by members thus enhancing improved living standard of the people and providing them with high quality nutritious food. A careful observation based on the research findings revealed that co-operative farmers in Tai still exhibited some conservative attitude due to poor education and lack of government supervision and control. Besides, it was apparently clear that the formation of co-operative organization in the area had an invaluable contribution in the agricultural development of the people of the area. The formation of co-operative organizations in the area has led to increase productivity, availability of foods, co-operators obtain price which are more realistic when they pool their products and sell as a group than would otherwise be possible. The formation of co-operative organization has brought about a significant change in the standard of living of the farmers and agricultural development in Tai LGA of Rivers State Nigeria. The results of analysis of variance showed that co-operative organizations brought development into agriculture which benefited both farmers and non-

members in Tai LGA, while the most significant factors that boosted the agricultural development in the area were improved marketing facilities and knowledge in miniset techniques of yam production. Therefore, co-operative societies played positive roles in agricultural development in Tai LGA and environs.

Recommendations

Having done a thorough research into the role of co-operative organization in agricultural development in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State, the researchers deemed it necessary to make the following recommendations based on the outcome of the work.

- (i) Farmers should organize themselves into co-operatives so that problems they could not solve individually can be addressed properly as a group (Awotesu, 1980).
- (ii) Co-operators should be provided with adequate education on co-operative matters. They should be enlightened on the importance of co-operative and its role in agricultural development locally, state wise and nationally.
- (iii) Co-operative members should be encouraged to take up farming as their major occupations and significantly improve on their marketing ability to avoid wastes and hereby running into loss.
- (iv) Government and other voluntary organizations especially the multinational oil companies operating in the area should help in granting loans/subsidies to co-operative farmers when needed.

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