Chapter 12

Economic Impact Assessment of the National Fadama Development Project on Rural Farming Communities in Niger State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The chapter tested the hypotheses that the National Fadama Development Project had no significant effect on the income of Fadama farmers and that there is no difference in the profit of sugar cane and rice, the two major crops cultivated in the project. Primary data were collected in 2007 through the use of questionnaire randomly administered to 150 farmers in Niger state who are Fadama beneficiaries. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test, and gross margin analysis. The results of the study showed that sugar cane gave the highest gross margin of N93,460 and rice with a gross margin of N 51,051 gave the highest return per Naira invested of 1.77. The study showed that the difference between the pre-
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project and post-project income was insignificant at 5%. Scarcity of production inputs and the attendant environmental degradation were the constraints experienced in the project. The chapter concludes that Fadama projects positively impacted on beneficiaries by sustainably increasing farm income. The chapter recommends that the National Fadama Development Project should make timely provision of subsidized production inputs.

INTRODUCTION

Fadama, a Hausa word adopted by World Bank, refers to the low lying swampy areas consisting of alluvial deposits and containing extensive exploitable aquifers. Fadama lands are among the world’s most productive ecosystem, rich in biodiversity of forest wildlife, fisheries, crops, livestock and water resources that are being competed for by fadama communities (Kutigi, 2005). Qureski (1989) defined it as alluvial lowlands formed by erosional and depositional actions of rivers and streams possessing fine texture and less acid which makes it a rich agricultural soil. In Nigeria, they are visible along the floodplains of Niger, Sokoto-Rima, Benue-Jemaari and Yobe rivers. They vary in width from a few hundred meters to as much as twenty hectares stretch and encompasses land and water resources that could be developed for irrigated agriculture (World Drop, 1993).

The development of the small-scale irrigation in the Fadamas using low-cost petrol driven pumps along with various types of driving technologies for tapping shallow ground water started on a pilot basis in the first state-wide Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) of Bauchi, Kano and Sokoto states in the early 1980s. Following the success of the initiatives, a component of small-scale irrigation development was incorporated into the design of Kaduna, Katsina and Borno state-wide ADPs. Despite the success of these early attempts, rapid spread of small-scale irrigation in the Fadamas has been hampered by several constraints among which are poor infrastructure in the Fadamas, low investment in technology development and extension for irrigated agriculture, weak financial intermediation, poor organized Fadama farmers and limited access to foreign exchange for importation of irrigation equipment. The National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) was designed to tackle these constraints and accelerate the pace of small scale fadama farmers.

The glut of agricultural products at harvest during the cropping season with the attendant low prices that discourage crop production. The Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources introduced irrigation schemes across the state. The schemes at Badeggi and Edoz higi covered an area of 830 hectares and 746 hectares respectively. Most of these efforts were characterized by poor management, low yield and maintenance problem. A need to look at the maintenance practices of
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