

# Farmers' Attitude towards Government Initiative on Cocoa Rehabilitation Promotion in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Received January 15, 2013; Revised April 21, 2013; Accepted May 05, 2013

**Abstract** In an effort to enhance sustainable cocoa production, the Nigerian government embarked on initiative to revive the old glory of cocoa sub-sector. One of these initiatives is cocoa rehabilitation programme. This study was therefore conducted to assess the farmers' attitude towards cocoa rehabilitation programme in Nigeria. The study was carried out in Oyo state. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information from randomly selected respondents in the study area and the data from the information collected were analysed with the use of descriptive statistics as well as correlative coefficient. The results of the descriptive analysis showed that 54.7% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 56 years and above; 59.3% had one level of education or the other. Majority of the respondents were male while 72.7% of them had spent at least 10 years in cocoa farming. 89.3% of the respondents obtained information from farmer's organization while 44.0% obtained information from non-Governmental agencies. The analysis further showed that 64.0% of the respondents were aware of the initiative, while 81.3% are members of Cocoa Association of Nigeria [CAN] and 75.3% got their source of credit from co-operative societies. The results of the attitudinal test revealed that 55.4% of the respondents had favourable, 37.3% neutral while 7.3% were unfavourable to the initiative. The result of the correlation coefficient showed that age of the respondents, farming experience, educational background, sources of information and membership of organization significantly ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) affected their attitude toward cocoa rehabilitation programme.

**Keywords:** farmers' initiatives, promotion, rehabilitation, cocoa, farming

## 1. Introduction

Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) is one of the cash crops that occupy a key position in the world economy in terms of foreign exchange earnings. Though, the world cocoa production at present is at three million tonnes marked, yet the production was not evenly spread over the cocoa growing region [1].

Cocoa was introduced into Nigeria in 1874 from Fernando Po by Chief Squiss Ibaningo [2]. As at 1965 Nigeria was the second largest cocoa producer in the world with an annual output of about 270,000 tons [3], though due to the discovery and commercial exploration of crude oil since late 1960s, emphasis shifted from cocoa and this made the crop to account for less than 2% of Nigeria's export earnings. It is for this reason that government of Nigeria is always conscious of measures which would increase cocoa production and farmers income [4]. In an effort to achieve increased cocoa production in Nigeria, a number of initiatives were introduced toward increasing yields. Among such initiatives is the presidential initiative on cocoa rehabilitation and production sustainability pronounced by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1999. The major aim of this initiative was to revive the old glory of cocoa and make it an engine of Nigerian economy. Under the initiative, the fourteen cocoa producing states in Nigeria

are expected to work closely with Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) who has mandate to conduct research on genetic potentials and improvement on Cocoa. Also, the cocoa farmers who are expected to belong to Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN) or Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN) should rehabilitate their moribund cocoa trees with improved varieties developed by Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. However, rehabilitation techniques involve coppicing among others. Coppicing entails cutting down of the existing cocoa trees with the belief that another young branch would sprout up by the side. The question now is that are these farmers ready to cut their cocoa trees? What is their attitude towards this practice? It is therefore the aim of this study to find out these that is to assess the attitude of farmers towards cocoa rehabilitation techniques.

## 2. Methodology

The research work was carried out in Oyo state of Nigeria. Multistage random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The first stage was the random selection of five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state. These are Egbeda, Ona-Ara, Oluyole, Akinyele, and Iddo. The second stage involved the random selection of two communities from each of the five Local Government Areas to make a total of ten communities. The third stage was the random selection of fifteen cocoa farming

households from each of the communities to make a total of 150 respondents in the study area. Structured interview schedule was used to obtain information on the socio-economic characteristics and other useful data from the respondents. The instrument was tested for both content validity and reliability on two other Local Government areas around the study area. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the t-test method and reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. Frequency counts and percentage were used to describe the data collected while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship that exist between the attitude of farmers and their personal characteristics.

The dependent variable was farmer's attitude towards the initiative programme on cocoa rehabilitation promotion programme. Seventeen attitudinal statements were used in measuring farmer's attitude using a five point Likert-scale that ranged from Strongly Agreed (S/A) to Strongly Disagree (S/D) and scores ranging from 5-1 for positive and 1-5 for negative as the case may be.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The distribution of the respondent according to their socio-economic characteristic showed that 54.7% of the

respondents fell within the age range of 56 and 65years with the mean age of 55years as shown in Table 1. This implies that youth which are groups of more energetic are no more into cocoa production, but left in the hands of aged farmers that are less active to perform farm work and may find it difficult to embrace new programme that can positively affect their farming enterprises.

Most (59.3%) of the respondents had one form of education or the other, while 40.7% had no formal education. This is an indication that the respondents may not be enthusiastic about change as education is of course the unfailing engine of change and it is the chief instrument through which society socializes its members for bringing desirable changes [5]. This implies that agricultural information and technologies, if properly channelled may be useful for agricultural transformation among the peasant farmers. Majority (85.3%) of the respondents were males which is an indication that cocoa production was dominated by male farmers in the study areas. The mean farm size of 3.6ha indicated that the respondents were smallholders. This may have implication on farmers' better appreciation of the efforts introduced by the Federal Government to assist cocoa farmers in improving their standard of living. A larger percentage (72.7%) of the respondents had spent at least ten years in cocoa farming. Many years of farming experience might have exposed them to similar programmes in the past which can help their decision to participate in the programme introduced to them.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics [n=150]**

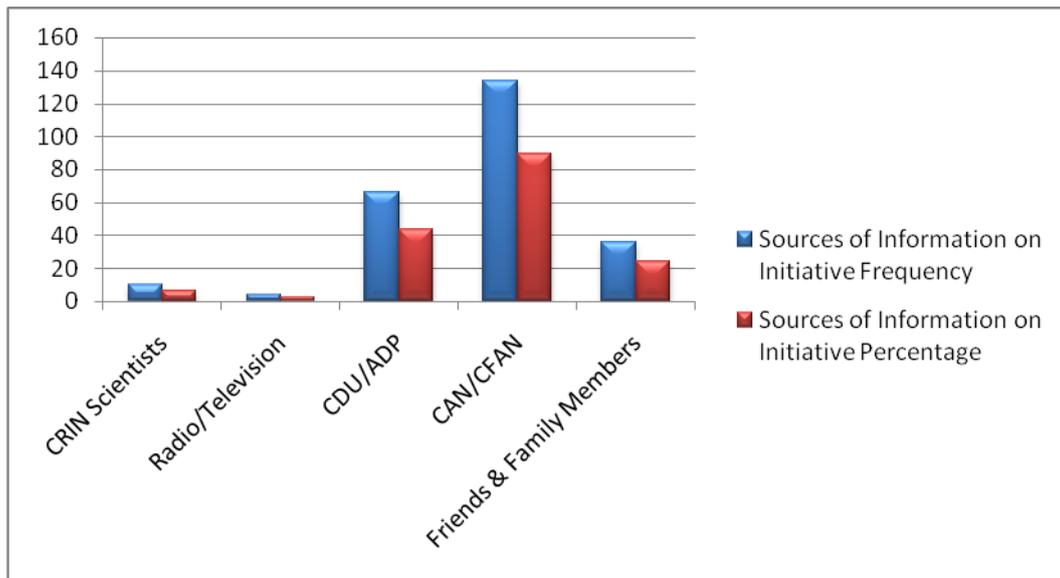
Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
<b>Age (years)</b>			55years
26-35	6	4	
36-45	10	6.7	
46-55	52	34.7	
56-65	55	36.6	
Above 65	27	18	
<b>Education</b>			
No formal Education	61	40.6	
Adult literacy School	22	14.7	
Primary Education	36	24	
Secondary Education	22	14.7	
Tertiary Education	9	6	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	128	85.3	
Female	22	14.7	
<b>Farm Size (Ha)</b>			3.6ha
Less than 2ha	5	3.3	
2.0-2.9	65	43.3	
3.0-3.9	51	34	
4.0-4.9	19	12.7	
5.0 and Above	10	6.7	
<b>Farming Experience (years)</b>			22years
1-10years	41	27.3	
11-20years	27	18	
21-30years	23	15.3	
Above 30years	59	39.4	
<b>Awareness of Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme</b>			
Aware	96	64	
Not aware	54	36	

Source: field survey 2006

#### 3.2. Source Information of Respondents

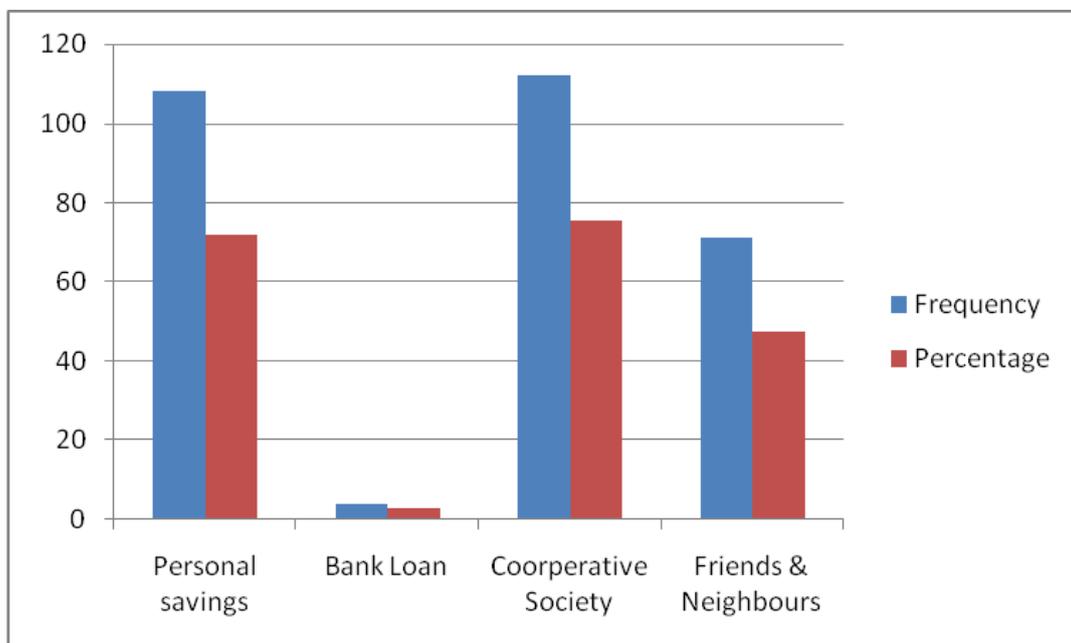
Majority (89.3%) of the respondents obtained information about the initiative through farmer's association such as Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria and Cocoa Association Nigeria as indicated in Figure 1.

Also, 44.0% of the respondents obtained information from governmental agencies such as Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). Very few of the respondents (2.7%) got information from media houses, while 6.7% of the respondents got information from Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria scientists.



Source: field survey 2006

Figure 1. Respondents' sources of information



Source: field survey 2006

Figure 2. Bar chart showing respondents distribution according to their sources of fund

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the respondents according to their sources of fund. A larger proportion (75.3%) of the respondent got their source of credit from co-operative society followed by personal saving (72.0%) while (47.3%) of the respondents sourced their credit through friends and neighbours. The implication is that farmers can make use of co-operative societies to obtain necessary agricultural input such as chemicals, sprayers and other farm implements to enhance good agronomic practices (GAP) on their farms.

### 3.3. Attitude towards the Rehabilitation Programme

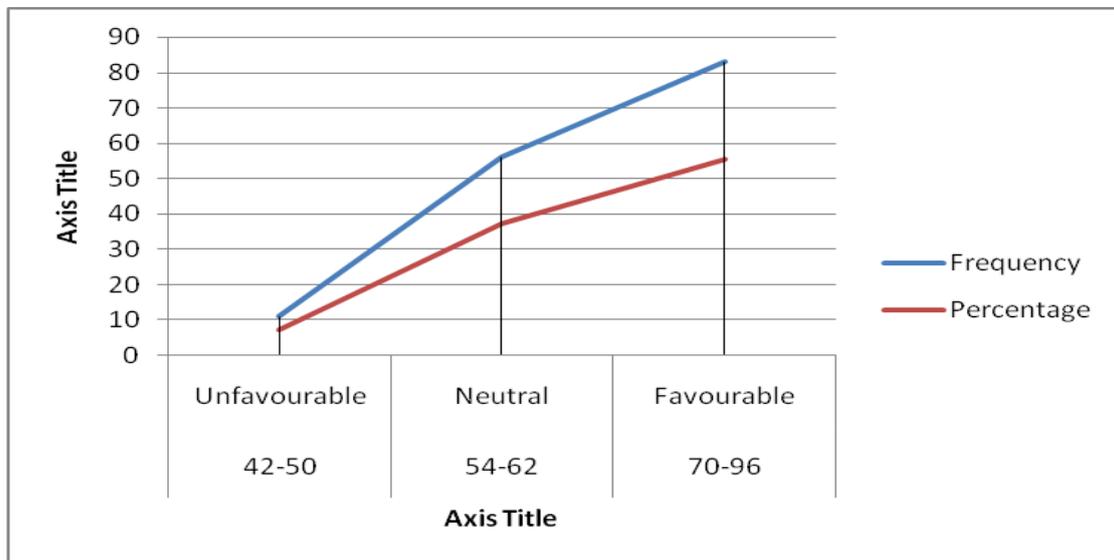
The results in Figure 3 revealed that majority (55.4%) of the farmers had favourable attitude (70-96) towards the initiative programme while just (7.3%) had unfavourable (42-50) attitude towards the programme. However,

(37.3%) showed neutral (54-62) attitude towards cocoa rehabilitation programme. The high proportion of farmers showing favourable attitude indicates the importance of cocoa improvement practices to the respondents it also confirms the importance of cocoa rehabilitation programme in the creation of job for the youths and improvement of farmers' livelihood. It also confirms the importance of farmers [6]. The high percentage of the respondents in the neutral group might probably be due to the fact that many government efforts on development policies and agriculture production initiatives such as structural adjustment programme to mention but a few, have not yield the desired result.

Table 2 showed the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their attitudes toward cocoa rehabilitation programme. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.534$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) observed between source of information and attitude of the

respondents towards the initiative indicates the importance of information in creating awareness on the benefit derivable from the new programme among the farmers and possibly gear them up to partake in the programme. The finding revealed that there was a strong positive

relationship between the respondents' farming experience and the farmers attitude ( $r = 0.491, p = 0.01$ ) implies that the more the farmers has some years of farming experience, their attitude scores also increases.



Source: field survey 2006

Figure 3. Distribution of farmers according to their attitudinal scores (n=150)

Education also showed a positive and significant [ $r=0.263^*$ ;  $p<0.05$ ] relationship with the attitude of farmers to the programme. This showed that educational background of the farmers increases the attitude of farmers towards cocoa improvement practice and production sustainability implying that educated people tends to be more responsible to new innovations [5]. The relatively high coefficient [ $r = 0.412$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] observed between the attitude of the farmers towards the programme and membership of agricultural association indicates a high membership of respondents in Cocoa Association of Nigeria and Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria. Majority of the respondents belong to these associations. Age [ $r = -0.263^*$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ] is significant and negatively related to farmers attitude to the initiative. This implies that individual attitude changes as age increases. Non-significant relationships that exist between farmers' attitude and sex indicate chances of both male and female to improve their cocoa output.

increase cocoa production and yield in an appreciable manner. However, in other to meet the set objectives of the programme, favourable attitude needs to be considered in order to promote the participation of interested farmers. The high favourable attitude of the respondents as shown in the study confirmed that cocoa farmers are ready to rehabilitate their farms in order to improve production. The idea will also assist them to eliminate low productive materials from their farms. Based on the findings, it is recommended that farmer' organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to participate in the programme in order to give necessary support to the farmers. Research Institutions and extension agents should increase awareness creation and give necessary information including training that will make programme sustainable.

Table 2. Relationship between socio-economic characteristic of the respondents and their attitude towards cocoa rehabilitation programme

Variables	Correlation coefficient
Age	-0.263*
Farming experience	0.491**
Educational background	0.263*
Sex	0.260
Source of information	0.534*
Membership of organisation	0.412*

Source: Field survey, 2006.

\*significant at 0.05 level

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

#### 4. Conclusion

Cocoa rehabilitation programme initiatives by The Federal Government of Nigeria is a calculable move to

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