

**Assessment of Farm Labour Groups among Igala and Ebira
Ethnic Groups in Kogi State, Nigeria**

**Ph. D. Thesis Submitted to the Department of Agricultural Extension,
Faculty of Agriculture,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria**

By

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(PG/Ph. D/10/52822)

***Supervisor:* Prof. E.M. Igbokwe**

September, 2015

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**Being a Thesis submitted to the Department of Agricultural Extension,
Faculty of Agriculture**

**University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy**

***Supervisor:* Prof. E.M. Igbokwe**

February, 2015

Declaration

I declare that the content of this thesis is my original work and no part of it has been lifted or quoted from other source(s) without full and adequate citation and without credit given to the original author(s) of the work cited or quoted. I also declare that this work has not been presented in any form for award or publication elsewhere.

Edoka, Hassim Mathew
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Date

Certification

This thesis titled “*Assessment of Farm Labour Groups among Igala and Ebira Ethnic Groups in Kogi State, Nigeria*” by Edoka, Hassim Mathew (PG/Ph. D/10/52822) meets the requirements for the award of the degree of Ph. D in Agricultural Extension (Rural Sociology).

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Dedication

To my beloved children; Edoka, Ojonojima Wisdom and Edoka, Enyo-Ojo

Acknowledgement

I am highly grateful to God Almighty for his guidance and protection all these years to see to the success of this programme. God is really there for those who fear and trust him. I am greatly indebted to my father, lecturer and supervisor ñ Prof. Igbokwe, E. M. for his love, patience and fatherly advice right from my Master's degree programme in this Department. His scholarly criticisms led to the quality of this work. May God in his infinite mercy protect and reward you in a million folds. I sincerely express my profound gratitude to my Pre-Ph. D Seminar Supervisors ñ Prof. Agwu, A. E and Dr. (Mrs.) Dimelu, M. U. I pray God to give you the strength to continue with your good work of building future leaders. I am equally proud and grateful to Prof. Madukwe, M. C, Prof. (Mrs.) Onwubuya, E. A, Prof. Anyanwu, A. C, Late Prof. Ajayi, A. R, Rev. Dr. Enwelu, I. A, Dr. (Mrs.) Iwuchukwu, J.C, Dr. (Mrs.) Chah, J. M, Dr. (Mrs.) Asadu, A. N, Dr. Akinnagbe, Oluwole Mathew, A, Mr. Olaolu, M. O, Mrs. Ayogu, C. J, Mrs. Irohibe, Ifeoma, Mrs. Nwobodo, Cynthia, Mrs. Ogbonna, Oyinyechi I. and Mrs. Ade for their skillful contributions to this thesis.

I must sincerely thank my hosts Mr. and Mrs. Eneje, C. N for taking good care of me throughout my series of trips to Nsukka. I pray God to give you the strength and protection all the days of your life. I really acknowledge the roles Prof. Orebiyi, J. S (FUTO), Late Prof. Otitolaiye, J.O, Prof. Ibitoye, S. J, Dr. Saliu, O. J and Dr. Audu, S. I.(KSU, Anyigba) played in my life. You all are sources of strength and encouragement. May the soul of Prof. Otis rest in peace ñ Amen.

To you my lovely wife (Mrs. Edeka, Grace) and my lovely children, I salute your courage and endurance over these years of my instability. You really missed my presence and care: I love you all.

I wish to acknowledge the advisory roles of my brothers and sisters: Edeka, J. U, Edeka, A. Y, Adejoh, J. H, Warrant Officer Adama, Raphael, Sanni, Raphael, Mrs. Ameloko, C. S, Alh. Adamu, Sanni, Alh. Amodu, Abdullahi, Amodu, J.U, Ahmed, Abubakar and a host of others. I actually recognize your gallant roles. Also to my Departmental friends: Dr. Adejoh, S. O, Dr. Adejo, P. E, Dr. Opaluwa, H. I, and Dr. Onuche, U. I cherish the academic advice we give to ourselves, I pray God to strengthen us and unite us stronger to face future challenges. The Head Teacher, Kogi State University Staff School, Anyigba ñ Mr. Otajele, S. D, I really thank you as you constitute a major source of my academic growth. And Mr. Ochimana, Moses (asst. Head Teacher: Academics) I appreciate your support too.

I must also thank my friends Hon. Okpanachi, O. S, Hon. Musa, Muhammed, Mr. Salifu, Abimaje, Hon. Zakari, Ohiemi, Mr. Ojih, James T, Alh. Abdullahi Eneche, Mr. Majali, A, Mr. Emeje, Kizito, Mr. Onoja, Roy, Mr. Onoja, S. T and all members of The League of Reliable, Imane, I love you all.

Abstract

The study assessed farm labour groups in Igala and Ebira ethnic groups of Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the characteristics of farmers' labour groups in the two ethnic groups; ascertained the perceived benefits of farmers' labour group; found out farmers' level of awareness and use of farm labour laws; determined group potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension; assessed the effectiveness of farmers' labour groups in carrying out farm and non-farm operations; and identified constraints to labour group formation and productivity. A total of 114 farm labour groups were randomly selected from the two ethnic groups (89 from Igala ethnic group and 25 from Ebira ethnic group). From each of the farmers' labour groups, 3 members were randomly selected making a total of 342 respondents for the study. Structured interview schedule was administered to the selected farmers for data collection. Data collected were analysed using percentage, mean score, standard deviation, student t-test, Chi-Square and factor analysis. Results showed that majority (92.2%) of members of farmers' labour groups from both ethnic groups were males with mean age of 52.2 years. The overall results showed that most (60.5%) of these farmers had farm sizes between 1-4 hectares. Majority (48.2%) of farmers' labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were formed before 1990, having a mean group size of 11 persons. Dearth of farm labour (86.3%); rural-urban migration (74.8%); and assisting one another and joint problem solving (44.7% respectively) were some of the major reasons for farmers' labour group formation by farmers from both ethnic groups. While promotion of deep interpersonal relationships ($M=3.84$ $SD=0.433$); assisting indigent members in times of needs ($M=3.37$ $SD=0.682$) and increased in income ($M=2.99$ $SD=0.815$) were some of the benefits of farmers' labour group. Migration of youth population ($M=2.74$ $SD=0.514$); scarcity of farm labour ($M=2.58$ $SD=0.547$) and old age of some members ($M=2.58$ $SD=0.623$) were some of the constraints to farmers' labour group formation and productivity. Farmers' groups from both ethnic groups were aware of freedom of association act ($M=3.34$ $SD=0.860$) and child labour act ($M=3.11$ $SD=0.860$). While knowledge-sharing ($M=2.86$ $SD=0.349$); conflict resolution ($M=2.45$ $SD=0.581$) and problem-solving ($M=2.48$ $SD=0.627$) were the major farmer-to-farmer extension potentials developed by farmers' labour groups from ethnic groups. Farmers' labour groups were effective in the areas of expansion of farmlands, saving of costs of farm labour and bulk procurement of farm inputs for members. And the null hypotheses tested revealed that slight difference existed in the perception of benefits of farm labour groups ($t=-2.134$; $P\leq 0.05$) among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups; also great differences existed in the perceived constraints to farmers' labour groups from the two ethnic groups. It was recommended that government and private institutions should intensify the process of urbanizing rural areas to stop the upsurge of rural-urban migration.

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Chapter One

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

In Nigeria and most developing nations of the world, agriculture plays a vital role in economic transformation and food security. A review of the nation's economic indices shows that the agriculture sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) was put at 60-65% in the sixties, 30-37% in the seventies, 36-37% in the eighties and 45% in the year 2000 (Mohammed, Achem, Omisore and Abdulquadiri, 2009). The contribution later dropped to 40.1% in 2001 (Central Bank of Nigeria CBN, 2011; Muhammed, *et al.*, 2009; Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) in Koyenikan, 2008). Presently, the contribution stands at 41.8% (Opaluwa, 2013). This decline could be attributed to factors such as migration of young and energetic youth to urban centers (Ekong, 2010), old age and health-related problems of rural farmers, limited/lack of farm labour, among others.

The bulk of the food consumed in most cities in Nigeria come from rural farmers who employ indigenous techniques and family labour for most of their farm operations. Rural people are mostly smallholder farmers whose farmlands are small and scattered. Smallholders make a contribution not only to agricultural productivity but also to overall economic growth, by providing labour, capital, food, foreign exchange, and a consumer good market (Biggs and Biggs, 2001).

The adoption of family labour does not really bring about the much needed economies of scale in food production. Before the advent of civilization, the extended family system played significant roles in the lives of the people. Members of the

extended family lived and worked together and reinforced each other against the difficulties they had to contend with, especially farm tasks.

Agriculture cannot play this dynamic and wealth-creating role (such as food production, employment creation, income generation etc.) without an enabling policy environment, adequate institutions, and sufficient, well-targeted public and private investment. The experience of recent decades has been disappointing in this regard in a number of countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), where investment has declined, rural poverty remains widespread and a very large share of the labour force is engaged in low-return agricultural work. Cuts in health and education budgets and in other public services, as well as the dismantling of publicly funded agricultural extension services during the structural adjustment processes of the 1980s and 1990s, undermined the foundation for bottom-up development for a generation. The effects are being felt today with a large number of poorly educated rural youth with few skills and poor job prospects and a smallholder agriculture sector that cannot thrive due to lack of steady farm labour and support in terms of policy, infrastructure, inputs and investment.

Wage labour which was later introduced was a means of getting quick returns to address other domestic needs such as food, clothing, payment of children school fees, among others. Increased income has led to the development of deep taste for western luxury goods in recent times. In consequence, urban areas began to attract young men in their large numbers since it is in the cities that better social services and jobs are to be found. This drift of the rural population to cities had begun with the resultant decline in rural farm labour force. Worthy of note too is the fact that, the Nigerian rural setting that provides the bulk of the food needs was neglected during the colonial era and has still not

yet witnessed any major transformation in the post independence era (Raphael, 2002). According to Daramola in Raphael (2002) and Opaluwa (2013), Nigeria's rural setting is made up of neglected rural majority who lack almost all the essential amenities such as health care, good access roads, electricity, modern markets, pipe-borne water, among others. Ojile (2010) notes that the state of infrastructure of an area is an indication of development of that area: and most rural areas in Nigeria lack these infrastructures. The absence of these infrastructures in rural areas can lead to low farm productivity. Nigeria Agriculture Digest (2013) contends that lack of adequate and functional infrastructure such as electricity and road network are major problems militating against effective agribusiness in Nigeria. The deficiencies in electricity supply for instance leads to low capacity utilization of production machineries, reduced output of products and high costs of production (Nigeria Agriculture Digest, 2013).

Increase in population worldwide has necessitated increase in food production. Nigeria as a nation is not only experiencing increase in population like other parts of the third world but rapid increase in population which is similar to what is obtained in many developing countries without a corresponding increase in the levels of food production (Mohammed, *et al*, 2009). The gap between food demand and domestic food production in sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria to be specific has widened considerably over the past decade to its present level of becoming an economic, social, political and human crisis (Ojetunji, 2003). Apart from poor or lack of infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian rural sector, lack of credit and readily available farm labour constitute major factors constraining economies of scale in food production. Statistics South Africa (2000) reports that farm labour is a major source of employment opportunity for the rural labour force in

South Africa. And data evinced that there has been a steady decline of 25.1% in farm labour supply in South Africa since 1996.

According to Ojetunji (2003), Sub-Saharan Africa can be described as a land-surplus rather than a labour-surplus case of development paradigm. The author further states that, in spite of the absolute labour scarcity (compared to Asia) the level of labour productivity in African agriculture is generally low, operating with simple (traditional and simple machinery) technologies under rain-fed production conditions. The characteristics of the rural areas in Nigeria coupled with the poor-resource base of rural farmers has led to the out-migration of rural people especially the young, energetic and educated men to urban areas where the so-called life-enhancement facilities abound. The implication therefore is that, farming activities are therefore left to the aged people who are not energetic enough to take food production to the level needed. According to wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour, the available labour force in Nigerian rural areas comprise mostly of old people to the exclusion of young men and women between the active working age, thus having a negative impact on agricultural productivity. Labour flow is not peculiar to African countries alone, but also to the Caribbean and Pacific countries (Francis, Agapi and Xinshen, 2000).

According to Francis, Agapi and Xinshen (2000), since the start of economic reforms in 1978 in China, China has experienced the largest labour flow from primary industries (farming) to other sectors of the economy. As China's economic development advances further, migration of rural labour to urban industrialized areas doubled. The size of landholdings in rural China is still small averaging between 1-3 hectares per household. As a result, productivity and income per agricultural worker becomes quite low. Large

income differentials between agricultural and non-agricultural employment provide strong incentives for labour to move to the non-agricultural sector (Francis, *et al*, 2000). This scenario is similar to most rural people in developing countries of Africa including Nigeria.

It is probably due to the dearth of farm labour as a result of exodus of young learned men to the urban centres that led to the multiplicity of labour groups and/organizations by smallholder farmers in Nigeria's rural sector especially in Kogi State. A group like farmers' labour group is an assemblage of two or more human beings with common identity who are bound together in a formal relationship, and whose members interact together to satisfy complementary needs (Francis, *et al*, 2000).

Farmers' labour group is the association of people who have voluntarily come together to achieve common objectives through the formation of a democratically controlled organization; making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of risks and benefits of the undertaking (World Bank, 1999; Ebony and Jimo, 2002). The need to form farm labour groups by rural farmers to provide needed farm labour is seen as a sure way of ensuring mass food production. According to Odebode and Arimi (2008) the importance of farmers' labour groups or organizations in agricultural development of a nation cannot be overemphasized when considering the roles they play in agricultural production. Apart from the ready availability of farm labour, farmers voluntarily come together with the intent of pooling their resources together for the accomplishment of farm tasks.

According to Aldrich and Marsden in Giddens (2010), people frequently band together to pursue activities that they could otherwise not readily accomplish by

themselves as individuals. A principal means for accomplishing group actions is the formation of group with an identifiable membership that engages in concerted collective actions to achieve a common purpose. Farmers' labour groups formed by smallholder farmers are examples of farmers' organizations found in rural areas to provide mainly farm labour to members. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2004) asserts that, 'group formation both fosters participation and enables the poor themselves to own their own development efforts' which improves targeting, sustainability, rural economic growth and revitalization.

Smallholder farmers in rural Nigeria face farm labour shortages and the need to find ways of dealing with this problem is therefore necessary for food security. The World Bank's Rural Strategy has defined smallholder farmers as those with a low asset base operating less than 2 hectares of cropland. On the basis of this, 85 per cent of the world's 525 million farms are smallholdings, and three-quarters (3/4) of these are made up of less than 1 hectare of land (World Bank, 2003). The small landholding is attributed to low farm mechanization and paucity of farm labour. Asia accounts for 87 per cent of the world's small farms, with China alone accounting for half (43.5%), and India accounting for 23 per cent. Farms of less than two hectares make up 95 per cent or more of all farms in Bangladesh, China and Viet Nam. Some 80 per cent of African farms are small-scale. Farms of less than 2 hectares make up 97 per cent of farms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 90 per cent in Egypt and 87 per cent in Ethiopia (World Bank, 2003). According to Orebiyi (2004), farms of less than 2 hectares constitute more than 70% of Nigeria's farms. Farmers' labour groups in Kogi state usually embark on other enterprising or non-farm activities for the benefit of members. (Edoka, 2011).

Farmersö labour groups are recently changing from their main role of supplying labour hands to their members to other non-farm activities such as organization of thrift and loans to assist needy members and non-members in cushioning their financial problems, building of houses for members, construction of rural market stalls, procurement of farm inputs for members and non-members, assisting members during marriage and burial ceremonies among others. This change in roles of farmersö labour groups is also seen among the Igala and Ebira ethnic groups of Kogi state, Nigeria. Sociological approaches to ethnicity place great emphasis on culture. They distinguish human groups primarily according to the distinctiveness of their lifestyles (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). Ethnic groups like Igala and Ebira often have a common origin respectively, and therefore share common ancestors and common racial characteristics though with some distinctions.

The Igalas and Ebiras are highly “*ethnified*” as they tend to adopt cultural characteristics which distinguish them as ethnic groups. According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2005), ethnic group or ethnicity is a collection of individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others to share common characteristics (such as religion, language, occupation, politics etc.) that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, and from which they develop their distinctive cultural behaviour. The idea of ethnicity implies that the culture of a group is different from that of another group. Farmers in these two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) differ in certain characteristics. Farm tools used by the Igala ethnic group differ from those used by the Ebira ethnic group: for instance, the Igalas use West African hoes that have wide blades and long wooden handle, while the Ebiras use hoes with very short wooden handle with small

blades. The Ebiras also prefer wide cutlasses which they tagged as “202”. The 202 name is derived from the inscription on the metal part of the cutlass. But the Igalas use both flat and curved cutlasses for their farm work. One major distinguishing features of these two ethnic groups as regards to farm operation is the sizes of mounds or heaps they made, it is small in the eastern (Igala ethnic group) and large and tall in the central (Ebira ethnic group). The bigger mounds in the central area of the state can accommodate 2 to 3 crops such as yam, water yam and cassava. In another development, marrying of several wives is common among Ebira ethnic group probably to have more hands for their farm labour. Another reason for this is that, majority of the Ebiras are Muslim, and Islam permit polygamy. This is not the case among Igalas, as majority of them are Christians and Christianity does not permit polygamy. Despite these differences, both ethnic groups are highly involved in the formation of farm labour groups to meet their farm labour needs.

In the words of Akande (2002), farmers come together to form farm labour groups or organizations through which they meet their farm and non-farm needs. A given farm labour group may consist of 5-20 farmers working together under mutual trust. Farmers working in group help to promote knowledge sharing, networking, joint problem-solving and peaceful co-existence amongst members.

1.2 Problem Statement

The agricultural sector of Nigeria according to Nnenna (2004) has high potentials for income generation and food security. However, over the years the potentials have not been fully harnessed due to small uneconomic production land units, predominance of traditional techniques of agricultural production, lack of credit facilities, excessive land

fragmentation leading to little or no mechanization and most importantly, peasant agriculture which is usually organized around family labour.

Given the low ratio of farm labour to land combined with the rural-urban out-migration, the food economy in Nigeria and Kogi state to be specific is confronted by a generally inelastic agricultural labour supply. Studies have shown that, shortage in farm labour supply results in low farm productivity which eventually culminates in poverty among rural farming communities in Africa (Gebremedhin and Switon, 2001). Low productivity due to shortage of farm labour during planting seasons in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups has greatly affected productivity and economies of scale. To cope with farm labour needs, rural farmers in Kogi state tend to form organizations (farm labour groups) in order to solve their farm and off-farm problems. According to Ini, Ubong and Akpan (2002), farmers' labour groups are formed to enable members achieve through joint efforts what they are unable to achieve singly by themselves. Farmers' labour groups operate on the basis of a specific set of principles (such as open membership, democratic control, service at cost, promotion of membership interest etc.), and they are seen as groups of persons who have voluntarily joined together to achieve common objectives through the formation of a democratically controlled organization, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risk and benefits of the undertaking.

Farmers in Kogi state, particularly those from Igala and Ebira ethnic groups suffer labour shortages during critical periods of their farm operations. This has led to low productivity recorded over the years in the two ethnic groups. The unavailability of farm labour has been found to have negative impact on planting precision, better weed

control, timely completion of harvesting and crop processing (Oluoye, Adebisi and Adejumo, 2007). Labour therefore is a major constraint in peasant production especially during early planting, weeding and harvesting (Gocowski and Oduwole, 2003). Francis (2011) reported that lack of adequate farm labour supply could be a barrier to adoption of a more sustainable farming system, especially given the ageing farm operators' deteriorating health through diseases and seasonal nature of farming. This poses a problem during peak season.

The need to meet this challenge has called for farmers to form labour groups. The labour situation has further pushed the farmers in Kogi State into a need to harmonize efforts to probably solve production problems. Labour used to be one of the cheapest factors of producing food in rural areas. This was when children and the many wives were mobilized to provide the needed labour in the farm. Today children are in their various schools of learning, and polygamy is gradually losing its popularity due to social change that made many individuals to give priority to other social amenities like housing, education among others to make life more meaningful. Educated children in the state (Kogi) migrate to the urban centres for white collar jobs thereby abandoning their parents' means of livelihood. In view of this, there is the need to replace family labour with hired labour, but the fund to meet this new dimension is also not available. The paucity of farm labour constitute a gap between farm productivity and farm labour demand, and the formation of farm labour group by farmers therefore assists in closing the gap. Rural farmers in Kogi state therefore, decide to come together to form groups which to meet their input and labour demands. How these farmers have been able to meet this challenge call for some questions. How are farmers' labour groups organized among

smallholder farmers? Are the farmers actually benefiting from this arrangement? What are the constraints faced by the farmers in forming farmers' labour groups? Are these rural farmers' labour groups protected by law? What potentials do these farmers' labour groups have for farmer-to-farmer extension? And how effective are these farmers' labour groups in carrying out their farm and non-farm operations.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess farm labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups in Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. describe farm labour groups among the two ethnic groups;
2. ascertain perceived benefits of farmers' labour organizations;
3. find out farmers level of awareness and use of labour laws;
4. determine group potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension;
5. assess effectiveness of farm labour groups in carrying out both farm and non-farm operations; and
6. identify constraints faced by farmers' labour groups.

1.4 Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of benefits of farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of constraints faced by farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups, and

H₀₃: There is no significant association between farmers' labour group and their involvement in farmer-to-farmer extension.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will be relevant to farmers and other stakeholders in farm business who may be in short supply of farm labour for their farm operations and productivity. This study will also help policy-makers to come out with clear-cut policies and intervention programmes that will help sustain rural labour groups as a major source of farm labour especially in the rural areas.

The importance this study cannot be overemphasized as it showcases group potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension thereby facilitating diffusion of innovation within a given social system. The extension agents can exploit these farmers' potentials in the cause of popularizing any innovative idea among rural farmers. The study also portrays the need for group spirit 'ówe ñfeelingô which a good extension worker can exploit for the attainment of set goals. The donor agencies can also benefit from this study as the quickest way to reach rural people is been spelt out herein.

The study will therefore serve as a baseline for researchers who want to go into farmers' labour groups or organizations in terms of creating conducive environment for smooth and sustainable farm operations. The study will help administrators in the identification of local leaders whom the extension workers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can go through to reach out to their target clientele. And the study showcases the need for a more bottom-up approach for purposes of involvement of farmers' ideas and initiatives. With this, farmers' interests in policy development and implementation will be taken care of (Royal Tropical Institute, 2006).

Chapter Two

2.0 Literature review

The necessary literature was reviewed based on the following sub-headings;

1. Smallholder farmers and the rural environment
2. Types of labour and labour groups
3. Formation of labour groups
4. Perceived benefits of labour groups
5. Constraints faced by farmers' labour groups
6. Labour law and rural labour groups
7. Farmer-to-farmer extension potentials of farmers' labour groups
8. Theoretical models of labour groups
9. Conceptual framework.

2.1 Smallholder farmers and the rural environment

The concept of rurality has variously been defined by different specialists in various fields of endeavour (Igbokwe, 2005). But for the purpose of this study we shall restrict ourselves to the definition based on the occupation of the majority of rural people. According to Ekong (2003), rural area is an area of settlement in which half or more than half of the adult male working population is engaged in farming. Estimates in 1991 indicated that 64% of Nigerian population dwells in the rural areas while 36% of the population dwells in the urban areas. But Ayichi (1995) and Nwosu (2005) assert that 80% of Nigerian population live in the rural areas relying on agriculture for their employment and yet spend high proportion of their income on food because of low production level.

Most Nigerian farmers work on small farms. These are variously referred to as smallholdings, family farms, subsistence farms or resource-poor farms. There is no common definition of what a small farm is. The size of the landholding is often cited, but the scale varies tremendously from one country to another, and in any case, nothing is said about the quality of the land, its productive use, or the natural, social, political or commercial environment in which it is found (World Bank, 2003). Sharp inequalities in the distribution of land remain a major source of extreme poverty. In Latin America, for example, the average farm size is 67 hectares, yet 58 percent of Peruvian farms and 49 per cent of Mexican farms are smaller than 2 hectares. In Ecuador, smallholders make up 43 per cent of all farmers yet they cultivate only 2 percent of the land. In Brazil, 20 per cent of farmers are smallholders (World Bank, 2003).

The Nigerian rural sector is characterized by poverty, neglect, and absence of, or inadequate infrastructural facilities despite the fact that the majority of the populace live in rural areas (Orebiyi, 2004). Their main occupation is farming which is predominantly on a small scale, subsistence in nature with average farm size of two hectares (2ha.) usually on scattered holdings. In most peasant economies like Nigeria, farming has become a way of life. Agricultural production is primarily geared towards the provision of food required by the farmer family although, income generation has increasingly become an added objective of peasant farmers in recent times (Titilayo in Umeh, 2002).

According to Akinbile and Omotara in Umeh (2002), majority of people involved in agricultural production in Nigeria are small scale farmers who cultivate small plots spread over a vast area of land. They utilize various production inputs such as land,

labour, capital and also manage their farms to generate income. The use of traditional production techniques which are characterized by lack of improved seed stock, modern farm inputs and tools has resulted in loss of food through low yields per unit land cultivated (Mohammed, *et al*, 2009). The problem of food crisis in Nigeria may be attributed to the inability of the country to develop indigenous mechanization technologies in areas such as agricultural production, processing and storage.

It is certain that, Nigerians can no longer depend upon manual labour and subsistence farming to sustain the population growth. According to Mohammed, *et al*. (2009), the traditional technology employed in agriculture holds the investments on land, productivity of labour, and capital below a profitable margin, thus hindering the full utilization of agricultural resources in Nigeria. This therefore, calls for mechanized agriculture as a major panacea for food security. The quest for agricultural mechanization led to the establishment of National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) by Nigerian government, with the aim of accelerating mechanization in the agricultural sector of Nigerian economy in order to increase the quantity and quality of agricultural products. This, is hope will put to an end the overdependence on human labour, and consistent food importation which had gulped several billions of Naira. There has been an increase in food importation over the years in Nigeria. According to Akuh (2000), the country's food import bill rose from 8.2% in 1989 to 20.5% in 1997. This current huge bill incurred on food importation is a potential threat to the economic and political stability of the country. For example, it is estimated that Nigeria imports about US\$300.00 million of assorted fruit juice annually when it has a potential to export about US\$4,500.00 million, if local production is

stimulated and encouraged (Guardian Newspaper, AGROCARE, July 7th 2002).

Tables 1a & b below show food importation in Nigeria from 1996-2006 and 2007-2012 respectively in order to meet the food need of the people.

Table 1a: Food importation into Nigeria from 1996-2006 ₦, Billion)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Imports</u>	<u>Food Imports</u>	<u>Food Imports as % of Total</u>
1996	562.627	82.706	14.7
1997	845.717	112.508	13.3
1998	837.419	111.549	13.3
1999	862.516	115.399	13.4
2000	985.022	128.077	13.3
2001	1371.409	180.575	13.2
2002	1512.695	165.577	10.9
2003	2080.235	235.834	11.3
2004	1987.045	218.055	10.9
2005	2479.323	233.180	9.4
2006	2528.086	237.681	9.4

Source: National Bureau of Statistics and CBN; 2006.

Table 1b: Food importation into Nigeria from 2007 – 2012 (₦ Billions)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Animal & vegetable products</u>	<u>Foodstuffs</u>	<u>Total import</u>
2007	1,705.75	931.10	2,636.85
2008	1,745.08	1,219.64	2,964.72
2009	1,792.92	1,193.95	2,986.87
2010	2,057.22	2,014.46	4,071.68
2011	3,112.19	2,897.86	6,010.05
2012	2,085.21	1,652.95	3,738.16

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2012

The problem of insufficiency in food production and agricultural produce which plunged Nigeria into the present food crisis has not abated. The array of measures already taken by government or being contemplated by professionals and other stakeholders may

provide little succor except they are well conceptualized (Mohammed, *et al*, 2009). Central among the various factors that restrict farmers' productivity is credit. It has been argued (Orebiyi, 2004) that credit can help in the generation of increases in farm production as well as productivity. Agricultural credit is an important element aimed at accelerating agricultural development especially in low income countries. Generally, in an economy that is predominantly rural both in settlement as well as occupational distribution, the problem of economic growth and development hinges largely on raising the productivity of the rural sector.

In view of the financial problems facing resource-poor smallholder farmers, government in the process of solving this (through its laudable economic policies and reforms) in December, 2006, decided to convert the moribund Community Banks in Nigeria (CBs) to Microfinance Institutions (MFIs). These MFIs were mandated to among others give credit to rural farmers at a concessionary interest rate and other lending conditions (Okafor and Amoo, 2010). However, rural farmers find it still difficult to access credits from most of these MFIs due to ignorance, illiteracy and lack of collaterals.

Farmers' low level of education constitutes a major problem in their quest for economies of scale. Most rural farmers are illiterates and see changes in their activities as aberration and misnomer. According to Adejoh, Onuche and Edoka (2010), educational level was found to be significant and positively related to the adoption of innovation. This implies that, education makes innovation easier to understand and adopt. The higher the educational level of a farmer, the more easily he can understand complex nature of innovations. Formal education has also helped farmers to obtain useful information from bulletins, agricultural newsletters, and other print media sources of information.

The Nigerian agricultural sector is also faced with threats associated with climate change in terms of desertification coupled with erratic pattern of rainfall (Nigeria Agriculture Digest, 2010). Very often, food production is subjected to factors beyond the control of man. For instance, in 2007, flooding devastated many farmlands ruining entire harvest in the south east Asia. In 2006, severe drought in northern Nigeria led to crop failure and animal fatality (Mohammed, *et al*, 2009). The menace of quella birds compounded food production in the northern parts of Nigeria. Also, the cassava mosaic disease (CMD) threatened the production of cassava along the West African coast until it was brought under control by the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan and National Root Crop Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Abia State. Uncontrolled grazing and livestock migration put tremendous pressure on the environment in some areas. Wild fire, increasing demands for fuel wood and timber, road expansion and oil extraction activities are also critical constraints to food production by farmers especially rural farmers in Nigeria.

According to Adetunji (2010), the major bottleneck to sustainable agriculture in Nigeria can be conveniently laid at the doorstep of policy inconsistency and/or policy summersault. Most agricultural intervention programmes lack political will of their initiators. There is need for the government at all levels to be more committed and consistent in policy formulation and implementation process. A nation as agrarian as Nigeria should seize the advantage of its natural endowments to develop agriculture, not only for the attainment of food security but also as a producer nation with high potentials for exports.

The realization of the first and most important aim of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be a wild goose chase if the essential infrastructures needed for agricultural growth are not put in place in rural areas. An agricultural infrastructure is the foundation for the transition of subsistence to commercial agriculture and rural poverty alleviation (Issa and Adebayo, 2009). The concept of infrastructure includes those structures outside the farm gates which affect the operations or activities within the farm, the authors continued. The transformation of traditional agriculture to a sophisticated one requires good roads, railways, seaports, electricity, bank facilities, schools, hospitals, portable water, research facilities, extension services among others. It is unfortunate that most of these facilities are lacking in the rural areas of Nigeria, thereby compounding farmers' production problems further.

2.2 Formation of labour group (structure and organization)

In Nigeria, most farmers operate at subsistence level, they have no access to credit facilities and other farm inputs to increase their farm productivities (Akande, 2002). The farmers therefore, have to come together to form farmers' organizations such as farmers' labour groups (social capital) through which they meet their basic needs. Echebiri and Mbanasor (2003) reported that, the decreasing availability of an energetic working force population to cope with the task of farm operations has led to the formation of farmers' labour groups in several African countries. According to (Adenuga, 2005), farmers' labour group is defined as the plurality of individuals who are interacting with one another in an interdependent manner with the purpose of attaining a common goal.

Farmersö labour groups group is a kind of organic association characterized by a loose structure in which the overall goals of the group take precedence over narrowly defined responsibilities (Giddens, 2010). Communication flows and directives are more diffuse, moving along many trajectories, not simply vertical ones. Everyone involved in the group is seen as possessing legitimate knowledge and input that can be drawn on in solving problems; decisions are not exclusive domain of people at the helms of affairs. This is in contrast to the mechanistic groups/organizations which are full of bureaucracy, with a hierarchical chain of command characterized with vertical flow of communication through clear channels. Here, each member is responsible for a particular task: work within such a system is anonymous, with people at the top and those at the bottom rarely in communication with one another, the author continued. String-Fellow, *et al* (1977) in Oladele and Afolayan (2005) asserts that internal cohesion and a strong member-driven agenda are central to group formation. The authors further posit that, small size, homogeneity, face-to-face contact and accountability facilitate internal cohesion. Accountability and homogeneity are said to be more important where the group's activity requires a commitment of financial resources to a shared enterprise.

Literature is replete with facts that show the need for rural development goals such as poverty reduction, effective management of natural resources and improved livelihoods to be built upon local organizations (Uphoff and Esman, 1997, Marsh, 2000, Gandhi, 2003, Adejobi, 2004). In addition to the traditional factors of production (land, labour, capital and entrepreneur), farmersö labour groups are vital in determining the growth path and success or otherwise of the developmental programmes.

The necessity to form farmers' labour group becomes more apparent due to the realization that government alone cannot ensure effective development of all the facets of the economy, and also the dearth of steady farm labour (Ini, *et al*, 2002). Ugal in Ini, *et al*, (2002) emphasizes that grass root organizations (like farmers' labour groups) possess essential ingredients that make for self-sustaining development in the rural communities and that they are the basic ingredients of grass root development. Apart from serving as source of labour, gang/group farming ensures adequate utilization of farm resources such as credit, water, fertilizer, and agro-inputs (Shobha, 2009).

According to Ifenkwe (2009), a group like farmers labour group is an organized system of two or more individuals who are inter-related in such a way that the system performs a function for them, sets out role relationship among its members and provide norms that regulate the functions of the group and each of the members. According to Robbins (2001), group formation comprises of five stages: forming stage (when two or more individuals with distinct attributes meet), the storming stage (characterized by much uncertainty about acceptability of interests and other attributes), norming stage (when interpersonal and close relationship is developed and rules and regulations are being spelt out for members), the performing stage (when the group becomes fully functional), and the adjourning stage (characterized by wrapping or winding up of group activities).

Ekong (2010) contended that, when a number of persons come together to share certain values and interests group participation is therefore central for the sustenance of the group. This according to the author is defined as the engagement in activities with others. Participation in most formal associations is measured in terms of: holding membership, regular attendance to meetings, contribution of money or payment of levies,

holding formal positions or offices in the association, serving in committees, and going out to actually work for the association.

Farmersö labour group is an informal organization that is made up of rural farmers who are almost homogenous in outlook (culturally, socially and economically). This homogeneity (homophily) reduces chances of exploitation, social distance and conflict, and facilitates communication among members. In order to ensure togetherness and the attainment of their set objectives, an organizational structure has to be outlined. The organizational structure of farmersö labour group in eastern Kogi State for instance is very simple. A given farmersö labour group in eastern Kogi State is headed by the chairman (*Agboji adakpo*). And directly below the chairman are about two to five sub-heads (*Ogas*). While among the Ebira ethnic group, a given farmersö labour group is made up of 2-10 farmers with a head and no sub-group. The number of people in farming groups varies from place to place and depends on the people who have felt the need to start the group. But an ideal number for an effective production group is between 15-20 people (Farm Radio Script, 2008).

Groups like farmersö labour groups exist because certain activities require the coordinated efforts of several individuals if they are effectively carried out (Oladele and Afolayan, 2005). Groups like farmersö labour groups are created in order to accomplish their defined task (such as farm labour supply). Groups also provide members with a degree of interpersonal support and must have some underlying cohesiveness among members. The former (common task) is referred to as “*content or task*” while the later (interpersonal support) as “*process*” (Oladele and Afolayan, 2005). The content refers to the task or subject matter upon which the group is working, while process is concerned

with what is happening among members while the group is working (i.e. Support of social needs of members).

A given farmers' labour group in Kogi State has about 2-5 sub-groups. And a sub-group is made up of 5-10 farmers headed by an *oga* (sub-head). Below the *ogas* are the rest of the farmers. The *Agboji-adakpo* and *Ogas* constitute the administrative organ of farmers' labour group. In most cases a cooperative and thrift loan scheme is organized to cater for farmers' financial need. The scheme is also headed by the chairman of the group with the sub-heads serving as members. In a related study carried out by Bzugu, Gwary and Tarfa (2008) in Mubi Local Government Area (LGA) of Adamawa State, Nigeria, 25% of the sampled members of community based organization like farmers' labour groups enhance farm technology adoption among members while 50% of the group assisted in information dissemination.

In Nigeria, there are formal and informal farmers' groups/organizations existing in the rural areas. While the formal organizations (mostly public owned) are not widely spread and mostly inefficient, the informal ones have privately or in partnership with the formal organizations implemented beneficial programmes for their members (Adejibi, 2004). Evidence abound that, most of these formal organizations have failed in fulfilling the mandates for which they were established (Adebayo, 2004). Local membership-based organizations such as rural farmers' labour groups have often filled the voids created by the failures of formal organizations (Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) 1998, Omonona, 2000, Adejibi, 2004).

The members of labour groups have equal vote and make decisions on how the group conducts its affairs. They must all contribute some sort of financial capital to get

the group going. They don't wait for outsiders to give them money to float their association – they contribute their own savings, though they accept willful donations from outside. These kinds of groups have rules that guide their work. The rules often cover membership, participation in group activities, leadership and governance, and sharing of resources. The rules are made by the members of the group, not by government workers. Farmers agree on penalties in case one of them breaks the rules. A unique feature of rural labour groups is that penalties are set and enforced internally by the group. The penalties vary from cutting off benefits and suspension to disqualification. In the traditional labour group movement in Kenya (the harambee groups), the driving factor for group formation was very much social, the need to have enough food and the need to have a cohesive community. Traditional labour groups were mainly formed around family lineage.

The roles of farmers' organizations such as farmers' labour groups in providing the necessary productive facilities for members vis-à-vis poverty alleviation among members have been widely reported (Marsh, 2000, Gandhi, 2003). Akande (2002) asserted that, organized farmers' organization offer a possible means of overcoming the difficulties facing typical small scale farmers. These are manifested through the pooling of fund for mutual lending, sharing of equipment, bulk buying, and the provision of framework within contract agreement. Corroborating Akande's view, Ekong (2003) opine further that, the effectiveness of any organization can be defined as the extent to which such organization realizes its goals or objectives. Organizational goal is the desired state of affairs, which the organization attempts to realize. Such desired state becomes an ideal and progress that measures the effectiveness of the organization.

According to Audu, Ibitoye and Umar (2010), the greatest challenge facing Nigerian farmers is how to increase production of crops and animals to feed the ever increasing population of people and industries, and this goal can be achieved through the formation of farmers' labour group and especially, cooperatives. These labour groups or farmers' cooperatives can be used as channels for passing inputs and technical information to farmers. This is because the groups/cooperative societies enable members to achieve through joint efforts what they are unable to achieve while working individually. According to Edoka (2011), gang farmers' association is assumed to be one of the ways that rural farmers can attain economies of scale, by voluntarily coming together with the aim of pooling their resources especially energy (labour) together for farm tasks. The gang or group farming is usually rotated among members instead of an individual working singly on his own farm. Group farming is greatly practiced by rural farmers in the eastern agro-ecological zone of Kogi State, Nigeria through the instrumentality of labour groups. The zone is predominantly inhabited by the Igala speaking people of the State who are known for farming activities as the major means of livelihood. Group farming is also practiced among the Ebira ethnic group to some extent to exchange labour.

Gang (group) farming (*Adakpo*) is a typical example of rural labour group which is usually made up of 5-20 able-bodied men, and is headed by a chairman (*Agboji-adakpo*). The administrative arm determines the dates/days of group farming, the benefiting member and the modalities for severing the rotation by a non-member. According to Idakpo (2011: personal communication), the rotation of group farming among the members of a labour group is done based on the sub-heads (*Ogas*). If the

rotation comes to any *Oga*, it is then left for the benefiting *Oga* to determine the person in his group to benefit. Inasmuch as farmers' labour groups help to attain joint tasks for mutual benefit of members, internal conflicts, poor leadership qualities, undercapitalization, the unpredictable nature of markets among others threaten the sustainability of farmers' labour groups in Nigeria. According to Grootaert (1998), the unpredictable nature of markets in which commodities are traded have enormous impact on the success of farmers' labour groups. Members' influence on the organization facilitates order and continuity of the organization, while market with its uncontrollable development can lead to disorder and discontinuity of the organization. For instance, a farmers' labour group or cooperative can be instrumental in negotiating higher prices for coffee and increasing production, higher exports do not translate into higher incomes for smallholder farmers because of depressed world market prices (Grootaert, 1998).

2.3 Types of labour groups

According to Echebiri and Mbanasor (2003), human labour is about the form of farm labour available to smallholder farmers in rural areas of Nigeria and most developing countries of the world. Human labour, especially rural labour group accounts for the domestic food supplies, and at present, there is no indication that farming activities in most Nigerian-rurals will be mechanized due to poverty and illiteracy. Rural labour group could be regarded as a social group (Ekong, 2003). These social groups differ widely in terms of their sizes, objectives and degree of interaction among members. In large villages, it may be difficult for an individual to know and interact with all members of the village. However, when situation arises, a consciousness of membership

or belonging can be stirred between persons coming from the same village through the recognition of a common village head, common village festivals, or common village problems (Ekong, 2003). These kinds of large groups where members do not know each other intimately differ from small groups like rural labour group where members are known by their names.

From the foregoing, two major categories of groups can be identified these are primary group and secondary group. The primary group like rural labour group is made up of few people who interact on an intimate, face-to-face basis. Interactions within primary groups are affective, diffused and relatively permanent. This is because members of rural labour groups are almost homogenous in nature. While the secondary group has larger members who do not necessarily come together or know each other intimately due to their heterogeneity. In such groups according to Ekong (2003) relationships are more impersonal and detached, as people tend to deal with each other on contractual basis and relationships tend to be regulated by established procedures and channeled towards specific, pre-determined ends.

Oladele (2008) identified three types of rural labour. These are; i). **family labour:** this is where wives, children and other dependants residing together constitute a labour group for farm works. Farmers in Nigeria go into polygamy so as to generate labour hands through their wives and children. Though, this is no longer fashionable today due to socio-economic factors. The type of labour normally associated with traditional food farming in Ghana is family labour where members of the family operate as a production unit to cultivate small scattered fields with simple tools such as hoes, cutlasses etc. (Benneh, 1988). ii). **Hired or paid labour:** in this situation human effort is employed to

work on another person's farm and receiving payment in return. Hired labour could be yearly as found in perennial crop production. It is based on cropping season for arable crops. A farmer may employ a person or a group of persons to perform a specific task in return for cash payment. The FAO-ILO issued a 91-page report in October 2005 that estimated 41% of the total 1.1 million strong global farm work force were hired farm workers (ILO, 2006). Wage or hired farm workers are among the poorest of the poor in most countries, earning lower than average wages, enjoying fewer work-related benefits, and often subject to risks that have been mitigated in non-farm jobs- from accidents to pesticides. Rural employers of labour generally exercise a great deal of power and discretion in recruiting workers. Smaller, resource-poor employers (such as small-scale farmers and small traders) frequently offer the worst pay and working conditions (Centre for Development Policy and Research: CDPR, 2010). In fact, the poorest rural workers are usually forced to perform casual, manual labour for richer local neighbours. This is demeaning labour that is distress-driven and stigmatized (CDPR, 2010). Local elites exercise highly personalized power relations, frequently portraying their low pay for wage workers in their homes, farms and businesses as a form of 'social assistance', thereby denying any issues of 'workers' rights'.

In eastern Kogi State a day's work ranges between 500- 1,000 depending on the nature of the work, but in the central the amount ranges between 800 - 1200. In Nigerian agriculture, hired labour is predominantly used (Ogunwale, 2005). It accounts for 88% of total labour used on farms (Ogunwale, 2005; Okuneye, 2000). Igbokwe (2011) further opine that rural labour could be grouped into farm family labour, mutual labour groups and hired labour (individual or group). The first refers to the participation

of every household member in farm work according to culturally defined roles. The second type involves a group of men, women, children or women who mutually work in rotation for each member of the group. A variant of this is the use of work groups to perform some tasks on invitation by a member or non-member. In this case the beneficiary may be a father or father-in-law of a group member the author continued. The group is normally entertained heavily at the end of the day with a feast. In most developing countries, the wages and incomes of agricultural workers are below urban wages, prompting rural-urban and international migration (Pigott, 2003). However, the very poor are often trapped in rural areas, working seasonally in commercial agriculture.

iii). **Contractual labour:** This is a situation where specific tasks are performed on the farm by labourers based on certain contractual agreement.

Doko and Choudhury (2006) further classified labour as; skilled labour; semi-skilled labour and unskilled labour. The first category is composed of people who are technically fit to carry out certain job tasks, they are educationally equipped and are sometimes called elites labour group. The second category consists of people who are fairly trained and may not have the technical ingenuity like the former, while the last category have no formal education but are physically fit to carry out certain tasks.

Rural labour can be also classified on the basis of services rendered (Doko and Choudhury, 2006). These are commercial and non-commercial rural labour groups. The commercial labour group is organized by few rural farmers to render commercial services such as sales of farm produce for members and non-members. While the later only render services to members without the intention of making profits, unlike the former. For instance, a would-be son-in-law engaging his labour mates to farm for his would-be

father-in-law. In the Kaleo area of northwestern Ghana for instance, the son-in-law is expected to perform this duty at least on four different occasions and for different activities (Benneh, 1988). Any son-in-law that refuses to perform these tasks may lose his wife out rightly, the author continued.

2.4 Perceived benefits of labour group

Farmers all over the world have tried to address their conditions of hunger and poverty by organizing themselves into farmers, producers, and various self-help groups and associations (Penunia, 2011). Farmers groups are independent, non-governmental, membership-based rural organizations of full or part-time self-employed smallholders and family farmers, small entrepreneurs and indigenous people. Though farmers labour groups are informal and are not covered by national legislation, perform certain vital roles for the growth of members and their social system at large. In the context of this work, a farmer group encompasses all forms of farm labour organizations - formal and informal, production and marketing also to farmer co-operatives and, farmers' savings and credit co-operative societies.

Farmers' labour groups exist because farmers have recognized the need and benefits of being organized for a particular purpose. Farmers' labour groups are created through the initiative of the farmers themselves or as the result of outside influences (Betrus and Willem, 2006). The latter is particularly true of farmer groups or organizations that were established in centrally planned economies, or as a means to transfer goods and services from the central to a lower level and thereby obtain lower transaction costs. Farmers' labour groups are membership-based, i.e. they are composed of, as well as run by,

farmers themselves. Most farmers' labour groups used to be strongly rooted in traditional societies; they manage the relationships of their members within the society and mainly focused on redistributing resources (access to land and labour), reducing risks (organized savings and credit associations) and securing the basic conditions for sustainable farming (managing natural resources). However, modern farmers' labour groups look both forward and outward; their main aim is to manage relationships with institutions outside the traditional society (Betrus and Willem, 2006).

Penunia (2011) asserts that farmers' labour groups are essential institutions for the empowerment, poverty alleviation and advancement of farmers and the rural poor. Politically, farmers groups strengthen the political power of farmers, by increasing the likelihood that their needs and opinions are heard by policy-makers and the public. Farmers developed through self organization often demonstrate self reliance and strong and lasting solidarity; although they are sometimes limited in scale and in the diversity of activities they can undertake (SARD, 2007).

Farmers' groups according to Ladele (1995) have a lot of advantages for agricultural extension service delivery. Some of these are: increased coverage of farming community leading to improved dissemination of extension messages and agricultural innovations among farmers; dealing with groups for extension work confers advantage of savings in time and reduction in costs per head; it allows for participation of more people; self employment due to skill acquisition and educational opportunities offered through adult educational and literacy programmes; provision of supportive services to complement education function of extension; it enhances the sustainability of development efforts by farmers if the groups are virile enough to be well involved in the

acquisition and delivery of essential agricultural support services such as credits, farm inputs, produce marketing, and transportation among others. According to Braxter (1987) in Oladele and Afolayan (2005), joint identification of local production constraints and identification of development priorities are other benefits of farmers' groups.

Farmers in a group can organize themselves into pressure groups to influence favourable government policy towards farmers and agricultural production (Agbarevo and Obinne, 2010). Agbarevo and Obinne (2010) gave some advantages of farmers' labour groups as; enjoyment of some levels of economies of scale, easy procurement of farm inputs through the group thrift arrangement with low interest, influencing government agricultural decisions, adult education mounted by extension becomes more effective through group of farmers among others. In many parts of Kenya, farmers organize small, voluntary work groups in which members help each other to accomplish heavy farm tasks such as ploughing, planting, and harvesting. These community labour-sharing groups may also be organized for other community work, such as building houses and preparing food during a wedding or funeral.

Economically, farmers labour groups can help farmers gain skills, access inputs, form enterprises, process and market their farm products more effectively to generate higher incomes. By forming groups, farmers can access information needed to produce, add value, market their commodities and develop effective linkages with input agencies such as financial service providers, as well as output markets. Farmers' labour groups can achieve economies of scale, thereby lowering costs and facilitating the processing and marketing of agricultural commodities for individual farmers. Marketing-oriented farmers groups can assist members purchase inputs and equipment, meet quality

standards and manage the drying, storage, grading, cleaning, processing, packaging, branding, collection and transportation of produce (Penunia, 2011). Organized farmers' labour groups have greater bargaining power than individuals and are better able to negotiate with buyers in order to increase their profits.

Small-scale farmers' income tends to fluctuate seasonally and this can easily tip them into poverty. By providing financial services, farmers' labour groups help to reduce the risk individual farmer face during seasonal shocks. They also help mobilize capital and contribute to the growth of the local economy (FAO, 1996). As conventional financial institutions rarely reach small farmers, they sometimes turn to money-lenders who offer a limited range of financial services, the cost of which may be high. Farmers in groups can play an instrumental role in reducing the cost of financial services to small farmers, either by providing credit and loans themselves thereby offering financial insurance to members or linking farmers to the formal financial sector (SARD, 2007).

In many parts of Kenya, farmers organize small, voluntary work groups in which members help each other to accomplish heavy farm tasks such as ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting, transporting, processing, storage and marketing. These community labour-sharing groups may also be organized for other community work, such as building houses and preparing food during a wedding or funeral. Community labour-sharing groups are also used as a coping strategy for families and communities which are short of labour because of the impact of HIV and AIDS or other illnesses such as malaria and tuberculosis (TB) (Kenyan Radio Script, 2008). Some development organizations try to build on these local organizations to carry out their agricultural extension work. In this kind of work, farmers' labour groups enable others to learn new ideas from those who

have already acquired the knowledge. The organized farmers' labour groups help each other with physical farm work such as ploughing, threshing, harvesting and so on. They also support each other with savings and loans to enable individual farmers to buy farm tools and inputs. The group also has a rotating loan fund that is built from the members' savings. Each member contributes towards the purchase of a specific item agreed on by the group. Or the money can be used towards construction of a farmer's house. Group members also educate each other and hire instructors to teach them new techniques so that they can become more productive and innovative. They may also combine resources to buy seed and inputs or to sell in large quantities for a better price than they could get alone. In the past, labour sharing not only included farming activities like ploughing and threshing, but also activities such as cutting grass and thatching a hut together for needy members (Kenyan Radio Script, 2008).

Membership organizations, including employers' and workers' organizations, cooperatives, business, farmer and producer groups and other civil society organizations, can work with local government authorities to structure and strengthen rural labour markets. The number of associations and organizations representing rural farms and enterprises appears to be growing. Between 1992 and 2002, the percentage of villages in Senegal with producer organizations rose from 8 to 65 percent, and in Burkina Faso from 21 to 91 per cent. Rural farm workers' unions are more often of a territorial than a subsectoral type and frequently include small producers alongside pure waged workers. The social partners provide a certain structure to an otherwise fluid rural labour market and serve, inter alia, to carry out wage and other negotiations relative to labour issues. Governance reforms that ensure freedom of association and thereby enable workers,

employers, farmers and other rural producers, to form representative organizations that can work for the interests of their members, are essential to tripartite efforts to improve rural labour market function (ILO, 2008).

The formation of farmers' labour groups in Uganda has been engineered, either, by externalities, such as the presence of donor funding through NGOs as intermediary beneficiaries, or, in some cases by farmers to solve challenges they face. In the latter cases, the idea of groups is copied from experiences of existing groups in the neighbourhood, friends or relatives that belong to such groups. Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), (Ugandan Farmers Group, undated) has established the following to be among the major reasons/objectives for starting farmers' labour groups:

- to access support from donors

- to access training in improved crop and animal husbandry practices

- to pull resources together and address their challenges

- to address food security issues and poverty

- to help one another in case of other needs apart from farm works (such as sicknesses, burial ceremonies and school fees requirements)

- to carry out collective procurement of inputs and marketing of produce

- moral uprightness (for youth farmer groups)

- to ease work for groups that carry out communal cultivation

- to lend money in "circles" or as the case of need may rise with members, and

- to make monthly savings

One needs to understand the reasons/objectives for the formation of a particular labour group in order to render it assistance, by donor agencies. It also seems that the quality of farmers' labour groups is associated with the founding reasons for the group. Groups founded on clumsy reasons like accessing money from donor agencies or by local politicians as stepping stones for political advancement, do not get firmly established and end up not achieving tangible results. The quality of a group highly depends on the relevance of the group's objectives to its members and the society, and the ability of the group to assert itself in the service of its members, especially through active participation in policy formulation and demanding from government its due share of the resources for investment and development budgets. Farmers are interested in institutions that can help them solve their current problems, which may include poverty, poor agricultural practices, improved social capital (cohesion), school fees and cultural ceremonies like burials (Ugandan Farmers Group, undated).

According to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) (2007), a functional farmers' labour group:

- Has a shared vision,
- Has mutual trust,
- Is capable of resolving internal conflicts,
- Sustains and shares learning internally,
- Has democratic management and the capability to follow its own internal rules, and
- Is inclusive.

Ekong (2003) also gave the following as reasons for forming or joining farmers' labour groups;

- to satisfy the need for affiliation (coming together to compare values and knowledge about life),
- helps to accomplish some tasks which the individual alone may not be able to accomplish,
- it is attractive: in other words, some people join groups because their friends , those they want to identify or associate with are there,
- group serves to enhance the individual's prestige. Some groups are prestigious, people therefore want to boost their prestige by joining groups,
- the group defines reality for the individual. In other words, by joining some groups one gets better informed about the world in which he lives,
- the group may also offer economic gains e.g. the cooperative society and *Esusu*, and
- some group membership may serve as stepping stone to some higher status or gains.

Working through small groups, farmers can reduce the cost of accessing inputs, production technologies, information and markets by *sharing* these costs amongst all members of the group. This means lower individual costs and these costs can be explained as:

- *Lower input costs:* by bulk purchasing of inputs through groups, farmers obtain bulk sale discounts from suppliers and can share transport costs.

- *Lower information costs:* through groups, farmers can link up with government extension services by sharing costs in accessing these services (e.g. travel costs to the nearest extension agency, buying a transistor radio, etc.)
- *Lower cost of financial services:* through groups, farmers can open group savings and/or credit accounts offered by financial institutions at reduced individual expense.
- *Reduced marketing and selling costs:* through groups, marketing farmers can share storage, processing, transport and selling costs. Lower costs per farmer mean higher profits (FAO, 1999).

The prominence given to farmers' labour groups and farmers' cooperative societies in Nigeria's third and fourth National Development Plans underscores the importance the Federal government of Nigeria attaches to them as instruments of social and economic development at the grassroots (Ifenkwe, 2009). Studies have shown that, membership of farmers' labour groups and cooperatives and other social organizations could have positive effect on diffusion and adoption of agricultural innovations in Nigeria (Tiamiyu, Idowu, and Misari, 2001). Members of these farmers' labour groups are recognized today as partners in development process, serving as vehicle for development, pulling resources together and gaining access into financial, commodity and capital markets (Oduola, 1997).

2.5 Constraints to effective performance of farmers' labour groups

Agriculture has been and is still the bedrock on which every successful and stable economy the world over is built. In Nigeria today, agriculture accounts for one third of

the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs about two third of the labour force (Oyeyinka, 2002). However, this important role agriculture has played in the Nigerian economy has declined tremendously. The decline has for a long time been blamed on the neglect of the rural sector, comprising mainly the small-scale farmers by successive administration in the country. As the role of agriculture in the economy decline, food importation increase, thus leading to the depression of the locally produced food, which has decreased farmers' expected income that could have been used to improve their farm productivity (Okunmadewa, 2003). This phenomenon led farmers to produce for their household use only, and as such they did not have marketable surpluses. When there are surpluses, it is usually too meager- to contribute enough income for household consumption and social obligations as well as re-investment in the farm. Since their income is small, most of these farmers resort to borrowing in order to fulfill their household economic demand and social obligations.

Productive employment provides a pathway out of poverty. In rural areas, the challenge is great due to the many decent work deficits faced by rural workers. These include low pay, poor-quality jobs that are unrecognized and unprotected by law, widespread underemployment, the absence of rights at work, inadequate social protection, and the lack of a representative voice (ILO, 2008). Efficient labour markets can contribute to raising the quantity and quality of employment; nonetheless, improving the functioning of rural labour markets remains a major challenge (ILO, 2008). Labour organization tends to be weak in rural areas, where traditional, even feudal labour relations persist, where rural workers enjoy lesser legal rights than other workers as well as in areas where seasonal and casual employment on small farms predominates. While

labour organization is much stronger when farms are large, employment is more permanent, and labour relations more formalized, as in plantations (ILO, 2008). Improving the functioning of rural labour markets is essential to the success of policies intended to promote pro-poor growth. Labour is often the only asset of the poor, and it is through the labour market that the poor participate in economic activity.

Rural labour markets are largely markets for unskilled labour where supply comes from workers with little formal education or training. The prevalence of casual labour and child labour contributes to low productivity, low wages and weak bargaining capacity. Where small family farms predominate, much of the supply of labour is from small farmers and their families who need to supplement the income obtained from their own holdings by hiring out their labour. The supply of labour is largely determined by how farmers value the returns to labour on their own farms compared to the wages they could earn by working for others. Where labour is abundant and population pressure on land is high, there is often involuntary unemployment, with workers being unable to find employment at the going wage rate. The prevalence of child labour in agriculture perpetuates a cycle where household income for both farmers and waged workers is insufficient to meet their economic needs.

Agriculture is subject to risks of weather and price volatility that tend to reduce the overall demand for labour and to influence the contractual arrangements under which farm production is carried out. Major oscillations in labour demand and labour productivity throughout the agricultural cycle result in seasonal employment patterns, seasonal migration, intra-year wage variations, widespread underemployment and the dominance of casual over permanent employment (ILO, 2008). The employment

relationships in rural labour markets are often complex and difficult to regulate, especially where much labour is supplied through labour contractors, subcontractors and gang masters.

Rural migration has a strong seasonal component. People are pulled into other rural areas during agricultural peak times when demand for labour is strong, whereas during the low season farmers may become temporary migrants to urban areas to take advantage of job opportunities there, often in the informal economy. Though, seasonal migration can be welfare enhancing. For instance, a recent study in Viet Nam found that seasonal migration resulted in an annual increase of about 5 per cent of household expenditure, and a 3 percentage point decrease in the poverty headcount. Nonetheless, seasonal migration comes at a cost. Migrant workers in agriculture often experience discriminatory treatment on the job and face strong disadvantages in terms of pay, social protection, housing and medical care. When families migrate for agricultural work, it is often only the male head of household who appears on the employer's payroll, despite the involvement of the spouse and children in the actual work. When parents migrate alone, families are broken up for months at a time with children left in the care of others (De Brawn and Harigaya, 2007). Historically, agriculture has been the largest employer of youth in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2005, young people accounted for an estimated 65 per cent of agricultural employment. However, low and precarious incomes and the lack of useful work experience are driving many to look for work in cities, despite the great disadvantages they face in urban labour markets (ILO, 2008).

The increasing absence of people within the active working age has been attributed to farm drudgery, absence of social infrastructure in the rural areas, poor farm incomes

and general low life expectancy in rural societies (Echebiri and Mbanasor, 2003). As a result, young people within the active working age and with the requisite education to cope with the challenges of modernizing food crop production are compelled to migrate to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities and improved standard of living (Adebayo, 1999). This trend has not helped rural productivity as it left farming in the hands of the old, illiterates and very few energetic young men who reside in the villages only due to unavoidable circumstances (Adebayo, 1999).

Rural labour groups often fall outside the scope of national labour laws. They are either explicitly excluded, fully or partially, from labour laws, or when covered by law, they are excluded in practice, due to their employment status (e.g. self-employed, smallholder farmers, casual and seasonal workers) or belong to vulnerable groups (e.g. migrant workers, indigenous peoples, lower castes), making them difficult to reach and particularly susceptible to abuse (ILO, 2006). In several countries legal and regulatory frameworks place barriers to the free and efficient operation of farmers' labour groups through complicated administrative and bureaucratic procedures (ILO, 2002, United Nations, 2003). Farmers' labour group often lack support and recognition or are discriminated against and excluded by the government and governments established laws, regulations and policies which have a direct bearing on the supply and demand for rural labour. Labour codes provide the legislative framework governing the employment relationship, conditions of work, including minimum wages, and prohibitions on certain types of employment and employment practices. Although labour codes are ubiquitous, their implementation in rural areas is usually limited, given that the bulk of work is self-employed or hired under informal arrangements that lie beyond the reach of most

governments. Policies on minimum wages and conditions of work and prohibitions on discrimination and on the use of child all tend to be underdeveloped or poorly implemented in rural areas (World Bank, 2008).

ILO's Recommendation 193 provides advice on the formulation of a supportive legal and regulatory framework for the promotion of farmers' labor groups and cooperatives, which includes simplifying administrative procedures and allowing easy, affordable and rapid registration, decentralizing administrative and legal procedures to regional or local levels, facilitating the development of autonomous financial services, and gathering statistics and disseminating information on the farmers' labour groups and cooperative movement (ILO, 2002). These recommendations are also applicable to other forms of farmers' organizations (FOs). Countries with restrictive, intrusive or discriminatory regulations on FOs, including Farmers' labour groups and cooperatives, should review and modify them (United Nations, 2003).

Farmers' labour groups are best promoted where legal and policy conditions favour such forms of cooperation and when the government confines its role to that of a facilitator rather than a controller. According to FAO (1999), government legal and policy perform certain roles in promoting rural farmers' labour groups. Some of these roles are;

- The legal and policy environment should encourage rural participation and the formation of informal self-help groups.
- Rural people should be allowed to organize their own group businesses and concerns.

- The government should encourage the development of rural communication systems that facilitate information exchange and networking.
- Assistance programmes should aim at developing group self-help capacities. Too much financial assistance can create dependencies.

Large farmers' organizations and federations, which have links to government and industries have the ability to influence policy making. However, such organizations are often dominated by the interests of a few, large, powerful farmers (FAO, 2005). Small producers, family farmers (small farmers' labour groups) and women farmers are sometimes excluded from such organizations, because of expensive membership fees and other reasons (FAO, 2005). Even when they are members, their needs and interests are often sidelined and not fully represented by the organizations' leaders, who are usually men, better educated, wealthier, and more able to advocate for the larger farmers in their constituency. Therefore, governments and development agencies should identify or create spaces in which representatives of small farmers' labour groups and women's organizations can directly represent their own needs and perspectives, so that these are taken into account and addressed more effectively in agricultural and rural policy making.

In every type of groups or organization, there is bound to be internal crisis, but the ability of the leadership to nip this in the bud shows how well organized the group is. Rural farmers' labour groups are sometimes beclouded with leadership tussles especially in sharing of profits. Illiteracy can also lead to the inability of the leaders to control such ensued crisis. Lack of trust in group leadership limits individual commitment to group activities (Akande, 2002).

Oladele and Afolayan (2005) gave the following as critical constraints to farmers' labour groups as: poor membership participation; low membership coverage which implies slow capital accumulation and low volume of business handled by members; overdependence on government and its agencies for support; negative government interventions; unfulfilled expectations, mismanagement of funds and frauds; lack of education among ranks and file of membership as most members are illiterates and; inadequate managerial and leadership skills among members.

Other problems facing farmers' labour groups are lack of collateral security which limits farmers' ability to obtain loans from banks and other financial institutions (Odebode and Arimi, 2008). This constrained them from purchasing the necessary farm inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds and animals and other agro-chemicals at the right time. Lack of access to agricultural extension agents could be a major problem to most rural labour groups. Odebode and Arimi (2008) attributed this to the low number of extension agents in the country, this then implies that agricultural innovations may not pass to these group of farmers on time. This may have serious negative implication on food security in Nigeria. The importance of agricultural extension activities for optimum agricultural productivity has been consistently harped (Banmeke and Balogun, 2011). Akinbile and Ndaghu (2005) posited that farmers' access to extension services has a tremendous impact on their production activities and potentials earnings from agriculture. Agricultural extension service delivery in Nigeria is besought with a number of challenges such as the non-recognition of the importance of extension services which has resulted in poor policy formulations and inadequate funding of extension activities. Also, extension approaches that have been utilized are often donor-imposed without due

recourse to the indigenous and local needs of the people in addition to the non-sustainability of the programmes with the withdrawal of donor funds.

Poor produce price is another vital problem facing rural farmersö groups. This could lead to produce wastage and lose of income. Associated with this problem is poor or lack of storage facilities. In most rural areas of Nigeria, there are no good storage facilities thereby leading to wastage of farm produce. This is true of perishable produce such as vegetables, fruits and produce that need to be refrigerated. This could be due to poor power supply in Nigeria, as majority of the cold rooms are not functioning properly.

Poor road networks and inadequate transportation facilities makes movement of farm produce from the rural areas to cities where good markets are difficult for members of farmersö labour groups in rural Nigeria. Farmersö perishable goods are therefore wasted and a colossal sum of money will be lost by these farmers.

Conclusively, gaps between peopleös decent work aspirations and their daily reality are particularly pronounced in poor rural communities. Decent work deficits are seen in the fact that incomes are lower and more unevenly distributed than in the rest of the economy. Low-skill, low-pay, low-quality jobs make it hard for the working poor to work themselves out of poverty. High levels of informality, ineffective labour markets and lack of investment in rural enterprise and job creation contribute to widespread underemployment and offer young school leavers too few viable options for their future well-being. Such decent work gaps are interconnected with lack of social protection, lack of rights, and lack of voice.

2.6 Labour laws and rural labour groups

According to ILO (2008), many rural workers, especially those in agriculture experience severe difficulties and gaps in protection as regards freedom of association, forced labour, child labour, discrimination, wages, working time, occupational safety and health and social safety and social security. For instance, 70% of child labour is found in agriculture and bonded labour is prevalent in some countries of the world (ILO, 2008). The ILO document further stated that the level of accidents and work-related illness in rural areas account for half the global total, with an average of 170,000 agricultural workers killed at work annually.

Rural workers especially smallholder farmers fall outside the scope of national labour laws. In a number of cases, they are explicitly excluded, either fully or partially from the relevant laws, or when they are covered under the law, they are excluded from protection in practice (ILO, 2008; SARD, 2007). Such exclusions may be attributed to their employment status such as self-employed, smallholder farmers, casual and seasonal workers or because they belong to vulnerable groups such as women, migrant farmers, indigenous people, lower castes etc. All these make them inferior and susceptible to abuse and relegation. Their situation may be worse if there is a weak or non-existence of labour inspection team.

According to ILO (2001), in terms of fatalities, injuries and work-related ill health, agriculture is one of the three most dangerous occupations. Work is arduous, hours are long and workers and their families are exposed to a wide range of hazards, including poorly designed and unsafe tools and equipment, toxic chemicals, and animal and plant disease. The ILO estimates that up to 170,000 agricultural workers are killed each year

and millions more are seriously injured in workplace accidents involving agricultural machinery, pesticides and other agrochemicals. In developing countries, in particular, the risk of serious injury is compounded by the lack of information available to rural workers on safe work practices and the lack of safety systems to prevent environmental spillover. The interaction of poor living and working conditions and the prevalence of endemic disease in many rural areas contribute to poor health, reduced work capacity, low productivity and shortened life expectancy, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. Improving safety and health is an integral part of social protection.

Approximately 3.4 billion people live in rural areas in the world, of which approximately 1 billion are employed in agriculture and 97 per cent live in developing countries. Poverty levels are often higher in rural areas. In addition, rural workers, in particular agricultural workers, are confronted with both legal and practical hurdles in attaining effective protection and decent work (ILO, 2008). International labour standards are essential to guide national legislation and policy and to help address labour protection gaps. They provide an internationally recognized framework for governments in the implementation of decent work principles in all areas of labour, including in rural areas. The supervisory system plays a key role in ensuring that real progress is made towards decent work for all, as a means of obtaining information on the application of international labour standards, in guaranteeing their effective implementation and by providing a dialogue and reference framework supporting the efforts of member States to implement international labour standards. The Global Reports, published annually as part of the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,

1998, also provide valuable information on the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work, including in rural areas.

Since its foundation in 1919, the ILO has been concerned with the protection of rural workers, especially in agriculture. In 1921, ten instruments were adopted to protect agricultural workers, covering freedom of association, minimum age, child labour, hours of work, social security, living conditions and vocational training. Since then, 19 new instruments have been adopted. The term 'rural workers' is defined, by Article 2 of the Rural Workers' Organizations Convention, 1975 (No. 141), as 'any person engaged in agriculture, handicrafts or a related occupation in a rural area, whether as a wage earner or, subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of this Article, as a self-employed person such as a tenant, sharecropper or small owner-occupier.' In addition to these specific instruments, many other ILO standards include rural workers in their scope of application (ILO, 2000).

Governments establish laws, regulations and policies which have a direct bearing on the supply and demand for rural labour. Labour codes provide the legislative framework governing the employment relationship, conditions of work, including minimum wages, and prohibitions on certain types of employment and employment practices. Although labour codes are ubiquitous, their implementation in rural areas is usually limited, given that the bulk of work is self-employed or hired under informal arrangements that lie beyond the reach of most governments. Policies on minimum wages and conditions of work and prohibitions on discrimination and on the use of child labour all tend to be underdeveloped or poorly implemented in rural areas (ILO, 2001).

Some of the labour laws that were stipulated to protect smallholder farmers are:

- freedom of association,
- freedom of joining and leaving farmers group,
- compensation in the events of farm injuries,
- compensation in the event of loss due to fire and draught,
- routine vaccination against pests and diseases,
- protection against unhealthy competition,
- prohibition of discrimination against poor rural labour force,
- * prohibition on the use of child labour for agricultural operations, etc (ILO, 2001;

ILO, 2000).

Some of the important Acts which are generally applied as farm labor laws in the United States of America are:

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA)

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA): This includes provisions addressing employment eligibility, employment verification, and nondiscrimination. Under INA, employers may hire only persons who may legally work in the United States and aliens authorized to work in the U.S. The employer must verify the identity and employment eligibility of anyone to be hired, which includes completing the Employment Eligibility.

Pursuant to the Act, employers must keep each I-9 on file for at least three years, or one year after employment ends, whichever is longer. Employers who fail to complete and/or retain the I-9 forms are subject to penalties. Moreover, the INA protects U.S. citizens

and aliens authorized to accept employment in the U.S. from discrimination in hiring or discharge on the basis of national origin and citizenship status. The Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices enforces the anti-discrimination provisions.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): Establishes standards for minimum wages and overtime pay. The FLSA requires employers of covered employees who are not otherwise exempted to pay these employees a minimum wage of not less than \$5.15 an hour as of September 1, 1997. Even though all employees engaged in agriculture are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, there are exemptions from the minimum wage provisions, the overtime pay provisions, or both for certain agricultural employees, because they are associated with the production of goods for interstate commerce.

The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA): Safeguards most migrant and seasonal agricultural workers in their interactions with farm labor contractors, agricultural employers, agricultural associations, and providers of migrant housing. However, some farm labor contractors, agricultural employers, agricultural associations, and providers of migrant housing are exempted from MSPA under limited circumstances

.

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA): This establishes a means for agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers to bring non-immigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal

nature. The employer must file an application with the Department of Labor stating that there are an insufficient number of workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available, and the employment of aliens will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers, before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) can approve an employer's petition for such workers.

Employment Standards Administration (ESA): This has responsibility for enforcing provisions of worker contracts. Employers who wish to hire foreign workers to temporarily perform services or labor or to receive training need to also file an I-129 petition with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS). The I-129 is mainly used for non-immigrant categories. Therefore, in most cases, workers who enter the United States under this petition must depart the U.S. when their maximum period of stay has been reached. Moreover, Form I-129 may be used to petition for an extension of stay or change of status for certain non-immigrants (farmers.uslegal.com/farm-labor-laws/).

The Nigerian Labour Act Chapter 198 of 1990 states the following provisions to protect rural and/or other farmers:

- prohibition of forced labour
- compensation and provision Act (in the event of loss to fire, draught, etc)
- normal hour of work provision Act
- provision of food and dwelling place
- prohibition of use of underage labour (i.e. children less than 18 years of age)
- prohibition of discrimination against rural labour force

- freedom of association
- prohibition against exploitation of rural labour force (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990).

Rural farmers in Kogi state are mostly not protected by labour laws as no effort is currently made either by the government or non-governmental organizations to protect them from farm hazards. Ironically, most of these farmers may not be aware of these labour laws.

2.6 Group potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension

With the failure of the Training and Visit (T & V) extension approach (Nagel, 1997; Adedzwa, 2006) priority has been shifted to encouraging increased community and farmer participation in identifying common problems and solutions in an equal partnership with other stakeholders in agriculture such as researchers and extension workers. Many donor agencies and analysts called for a new extension paradigm that focuses on decentralization, demand-driven and increased farmer participation. In this context, the extension worker will only serve as a facilitator by guiding and encouraging farmers in group to take joint initiatives (such as development of local innovations, exploitation of emerging opportunities, negotiation with authorities and many other processes) (Katz, 2002). The foregoing positioned farmers as independent, strategic actors capable of expertise (indigenous knowledge), knowledge generation and exchange and local group process (Roling, 1994). Farmers' learning in this process (Onwubuya, 2005) can be inferred from their changed behaviour which depends on experience, practice and performance.

In the words of Agbarevo and Obinne (2010), farmers' group/association or farmer-based extension model is farmer-driven extension delivery, in that local farmer group themselves serve as vehicle for knowledge sharing and diffusion of new ideas to

members and the entire social system at large. They may at times, employ the services of extension agents to conduct extension education programmes in line with the needs of the group. It is a self-help approach to extension delivery as farmers ensure that their major problems are addressed. The more innovative farmers can educate others trailing behind them the relevance of the new ideas vis-a-vis the former ones. Farmers draw their action plan, emphasizing which activities can be performed by the organization, and which actions need external assistance. Farmersö clubs have internalized the self-help philosophy and have initiated various ventures for their betterment based on available resources.

Farmer association or farmer-based extension model is farmer-driven extension delivery in that localized farmersö groups employ the services of extension agents to conduct extension education programmes in line with their specific needs of the group (Agbarevo and Obinne, 2010). Farmer-group extension is a self-help approach to extension delivery by local or rural farmer associations to make sure that their specific problems and needs are addressed. It has been observed that some packages of extension recommendations pushed down to farmers for adoption under the top-down approach were rejected by farmers because the farmers considered them irrelevant to their needs (Titilola, 1990). Farmersö group extension has therefore become one of the ways of making extension service delivery very relevant to the farmers' needs.

In some countries like Taiwan, much of extension work is driven by farmersö associations at provincial, county and township levels with a total membership of ninety percent of the farmers. Extension education is done by extension agents employed by the farmersö association (Axim and Throat in Agbarevo and Obinne, 2010). The farmersö

associations have strong links with research and related services, and their farms are highly modernized. The authors further reported that rural farmers' groups in Taiwan are predominately composed of small-scale farmers who can not purchase extension services on their own.

Extension needs to go beyond technology transfer to developing skills and knowledge of farm families for sustainable agriculture and rural development (Van de Fliert and Braun, 1999). There should be paradigm shift from the Training and Visit (T&V) which involves technology transfer and emphasizes individual contact to more participatory approach involving rural farmers. There will be the need to adopt group approach to extension to ensure effective use of limited resources; personnel, time and fund. The group approach will ensure participation, ownership, inclusion and empowerment. More farmers will be reached and all gender categories could be catered for through participatory community planning (PCP) (Koyenikan, 2008). Extension will need to build on traditional communication systems and involve farmers themselves in the process of extension. As people invest in collaborative group approaches, they develop a better sense of their own worth.

There have been some recent innovations in introducing elements of farmer participation and group approaches into extension. Differences in impact between individual and group approaches have been well documented in both Nepal and Kenya. In western Nepal, Sen (1993) compared the rate of adoption of new technologies when extension worked with individuals and when farmers' group worked and shared ideas on a given innovation. With groups, better communication between farmers led to more

adoption. When the individual approach was resumed after the experiment, adoption rates fell rapidly in succeeding years.

Besides the formal, national research and extension organizations of the public sector, private enterprises and farmers' groups are now often increasingly involved in research and extension (e.g. farmers collaborating in planning and implementation of trials and demonstrations, representing farmers on boards, advisory councils, technical committees, etc.). Changes in stakeholder involvement in research and extension also illustrate the changing attitudes towards managing knowledge and information for agricultural development (Royal Tropical Institute, 2006). In this concept of promoting innovation through user involvement, farmers' labour groups are instrumental in achieving economies of scale for adapting and disseminating new knowledge and information among members and the entire community. Within this context of restructuring process, it becomes generally accepted that agricultural innovation requires a much more dynamic and complex interaction between stakeholders: roles can shift among participating actors, sources for acquiring and generating knowledge are diverse, and there will be therefore a multiple networks for disseminating knowledge.

The relevance of group extension in some developing countries led to the formation of farmers' field school (FFS). The FFS are schools without walls involving farmers gathering together on a weekly basis throughout a cropping season to analyze the progress of their crops, learn about the biotic interactions between soils, plants and insects, and bring the knowledge together to make a locally responsive field management decision (Overseas Development Institute ODI, 1996). One crucial reason for the

establishment of FFS is that farmers (in groups) can recapture their rights and abilities to learn, speak and make their own decisions- while being able to back-up their positions with scientific evidence which they themselves own and control. Van de Fliert and Braun (1999) assert that FFS was developed to make farmers have critical thinking, discover things themselves and solve problems on their own fields. Roling (1995) indicated that FFS/group extension has proven to lead to farmers' enthusiasm, self-confidence and considerable reduction in farmers' level of illiteracy.

Learning in the field, through FFS has proved its worth in Madagascar as a participatory approach for implementing new farming systems. Groups of 20 ñ 25 farmers assisted by a trainer meet once in a week in a field to observe, discuss and share experiences (Michael, 2013). The field becomes a laboratory that complements theoretical training. In Toamasina province of Madagascar, FFS have led to the implementation of the System of Rice Intensification, which enables farmers to achieve rice yields of 5 to 10 ton/ha compared to 800 kg previously (Michael, 2013).

Farmer-to-farmer extension is greatly enhanced in farmers' groups as farmers feel that they are co-partners with the extension agents. Farmer-to-farmer approach to extension service delivery is an attempt to get away from the centralized extension practices which is characterized with top-down approach. The FFS/group extension approach is a decentralized educational process and *in situ* discovery and learning by farmers represents a radical departure from established practice (ODI, 1996). A study conducted by Ajayi and Okafor (2006) in Ondo State of Nigeria revealed that FFS/group extension approach ranked first (M= 3.92), small plot assessment technique (SPAT) (M=

3.12) ranked 2nd, Farming System Research and Extension (FSRE) (M= 2.64) ranked 3rd while T & V (M= 2.44) ranked 4th in the order. Ajayi and Okafor (2006) attributed the poor ranking of T&V to the top-down nature of the approach and lack of feedback and collaboration among stakeholders in the innovation system.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Agriculture is increasingly adopting a community-oriented approach to soil and water conservation. This is steadily replacing the former individual approach of the T&V system. Where extension staff interacts closely with communities in developing joint action plans, and local people freely form groups or elect members to a local catchments committee, then the impact on agricultural growth is immediate and sustained. Strong local groups mobilize the interest of the wider community and sustain action well beyond the period of direct contact with external agents. Recent studies comparing the impact of group extension approach with the individual T&V approach have shown that, for a wide range of indicators, farmers' livelihoods were more improved where groups approach was implemented (Pretty, Thompson and Kiara, 1994).

It is more important to recognize that local people are always involved in active learning, in (re)inventing technologies, in adapting their farming systems and livelihood strategies. Understanding and supporting these processes of agricultural innovation and experimentation have become an important focus in facilitating more sustainable agriculture with its strong locality-specific nature (Pretty, *et al*, 1994). Farmers' group extension model has the advantage of making extension delivery participatory. Other benefits are that of ensuring relevance of extension recommendations to farmers' needs; improving the quality of extension services rendered, decentralizing extension to meet the

local and unique needs of farmers' group, encouraging group extension as a solution to the problem of high farmer/extension agents ratio in developing countries, technology transfer among others (Agbarevo and Obinne, 2010).

2.7 Theoretical models for labour groups

Okeibunor and Anugwom (2003) assert that there are several theoretical models for studying individuals and group behaviour in the cause of social interaction. Behaviour in this context is seen in terms of an identifiable and measurable response to external or internal, recognizable and measurable stimuli. The response can be modified by reward or various forms of discouragement ñ a process known as 'conditioning' (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2005). Each of these theories has built-in assumptions. Garvin in Norlin (1991) identified social exchange theory as a good model for studying individual/group behaviour. The author opine that from the beginning of social work, the group has been an area of professional concern, as social groups are seen as building blocks for more complex forms of social organization (i.e. formal organization). Social exchange theory is primarily concerned with the social exchanges that take place between individuals or groups (Oko, 2006). Social exchange theory has its conceptual foundations in the needs that humans have for one another with exchange being the medium through which need satisfaction occurs. Because of the recurring nature of many human needs (for example: survival, safety, and social needs), individuals have an incentive to stabilize and perpetuate those exchange arrangements that are deemed mutually satisfying, useful, or otherwise necessary. This process of stabilizing and providing continuity to these relationships results in social organization or group. The more valuable the sentiment or

activity the group members exchange with one another, the greater the average frequency of interaction of the members (Back in Oko, 2013). Rural labour group which is based on labour exchange arrangement among members to meet up their farm labour need is vividly explained by exchange theory, as the rural labour group is based on reciprocity of human labour.

Another theory that explains group behavior/formation is symbolic interaction theory (symbolic interactionism). Norlin (1991) and Oko (2013) assert that symbolic interaction theory which is originated by an American sociologist- George Herbert Mead accounts for social interaction and the development of social organization through exchange of meanings as symbols. Symbol is a sign for which a shared meaning exists within a system such as farmers' labour group. Typical symbols include among others, words, gestures, marks, and body posturing. For effective formation and functioning of rural farmers' labour groups, members of such group must share certain signs or symbols which distinguish them from non-members. Symbolic interactionism believes that social realities emerge from social interaction of people and emphasizes the ability of people to create and manipulate symbols. Individuals interact in terms of such shared meanings to symbols especially the meaning they attribute to each other's actions and the situation in terms of which interaction takes place (Parker, Brown, and Smith in Okeibunor and Anugwom, 2003). According to Mead in Haralambos and Robin (1982), human thought, experience and conduct are essentially social, and they interact in terms of symbols. Social life can only proceed if meanings of symbols are shared by members of society.

Dittrich and Carrel in Okeibunor and Anugwom (2003) posit that equity theory also explains group/organizational behaviour. Equity theory which is majorly useful in the

study of industrial sociology can be applied to other sociological studies such as rural labour group as practiced by rural farmers in eastern and central Kogi State, Nigeria. The equity theory is built on the assumption that social beings have an inherent tendency towards comparing their situations with those of significant others, i.e. other people who they see as similar in most respects to themselves. People usually use such evaluations to measure their benefits from the social group or organization. The theory believes that, equality should underline groups and that people with equal contributions or stakes should benefit equally. Inequality breeds dissatisfaction and may lead to internal crisis and the eventual disengagement. For the smooth development of rural labour group, equity should be upheld, though with the homogenic nature of most Nigerian rural settings, the issue of inequality is almost ruled out.

Systems theory was also adopted by Norbert in 1948 to study group behavior, as reported by Holbeche (2006). System theory also known as management science is characterized by the use of quantitative tools and computer models to understand the complex relationships among organizational and contextual variables and in some ways has close ties with scientific approach. Within systems theory, organizations are assumed to be rational institutions. People in positions of authority set goals and the key questions for them are best to design and manage an organization so as to achieve set goals (Holbeche, 2006). A system is an organized collection of parts interacting in certain ways to achieve set goals. Any change in any part of the system will produce different effects. Though this model studies complex group/organizational behavior, it is not applicable to most small groups such as rural farmers' labour group. The use of scientific tools such as

computer is still alien to most rural groups/organizations as found in eastern and central Kogi State of Nigeria.

Bargaining model is another model used by social scientists to study group behaviour. The approach is used to explain why people conform-- men conform because it pays them to do so. Group membership provides various services for each other and those who control numerous outcomes for members will have the greatest power in the group: thus where leadership is not super-imposed by some external body, those people are likely to be leaders and potential wielders of influence (Onigu and Ogionwo, 2006). Organized farmers like farmers' labour group have greater bargaining power than individuals and are better able to negotiate with other more powerful market players to ultimately increase the profits that accrue to farmers rather than intermediaries and buyers (Birchall, 2004).

Incentive theory is also useful in studying individuals/group behaviour. According to Modupe (2012), this approach (incentive theory) sees attitude formation in terms of the need the attitude satisfies for the individual or group. The theory states that individual or group will adopt the attitude that maximizes gain. In applying this to rural labour groups, members seek for economies of scale in their farm business, farming in group is seen to be the only way to achieve this and hence the need to develop positive attitude towards group ideals and peaceful coexistence.

According to Mullins (1996), action centred leadership theory could be used to study group behaviour. This theory explains leadership behavior in a group as a behavior that depends upon meeting three areas of needs within the group, that is, the need to achieve the common task, the need for team maintenance and the individual needs of group

members. These three needs are overlapping yet essential to achieve the objectives of the group, define group task, plan the work, allocate resources, organize duties and responsibilities, control quality, check performance and review progress. The greater the overlap among these needs the better and more functional the group/organization is likely to be (Saliu and Ojandage, 2008).

Out of all these theories/models, exchange theory which is predicated on the assumption that human beings, in their interaction, are calculative and that their responses will be influenced by the expected gains or benefits from the encounter (Nwosu, 2013) is adopted in this study. This is because rural labour group is based on rotational exchange of labour by smallholder farmers in order to meet their labour needs.

2.7 Conceptual framework

The study adapted social exchange theory which has its conceptual foundation in the needs that humans have for one another with exchange being the medium through which need satisfaction occurs (Oko, 2006). The conceptual framework for the study is shown in Figure 1. The Framework shows the relationship between labour group structure, reasons for the formation of labour group, factors that militate against labour group, and factors that facilitate its functioning and the benefits of labour group to members and the society at large. Block A shows the organizational structure of labour group which indicates some administrative indices such as definition and roles for various positions, goal setting, setting of rules and regulations, information management, conflict resolution among others. Block B shows the reasons for labour group formation such as shortage of farm labour, need for economies of scale, rural-urban migration etc. Block C portrays the

factors that militate against the functioning of labour group. Some of these are bad leadership, lack of fund, poor produce price, poor access to extension services, poor state of infrastructure etc. And Block D shows the various factors that facilitate the smooth functioning of labour groups. Some of these are good produce price, optimum climatic conditions, availability of fund, good governance, favourable government agricultural policies etc. While the benefits of group labour are shown in Block E. Some of these benefits are; joint-problem solving, joint purchase of farm inputs, rotational farming etc.

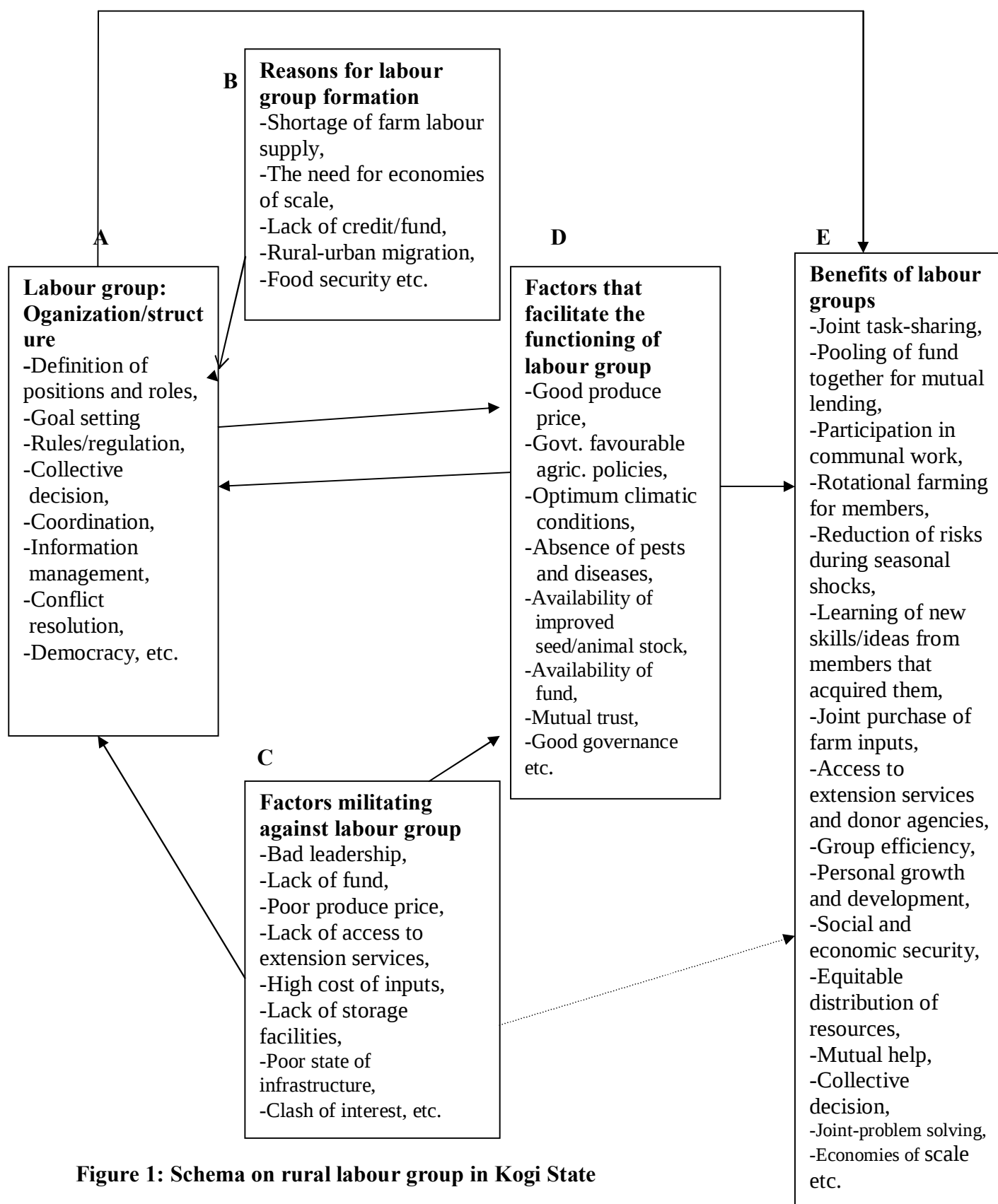


Figure 1: Schema on rural labour group in Kogi State

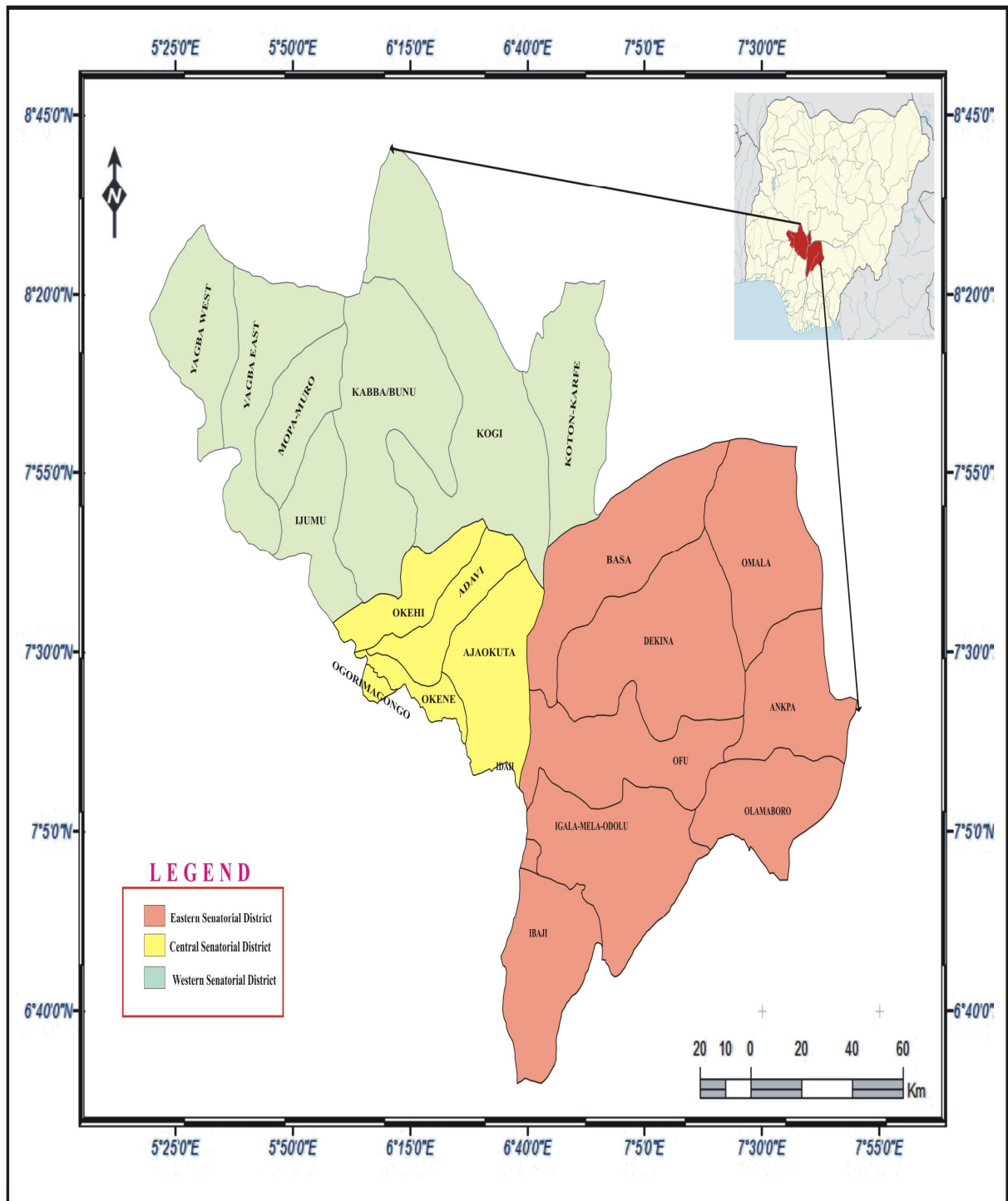
Chapter Three

3.0 Methodology

3.1 The Study area

The study was carried out in Kogi State, Nigeria. The area is located between latitudes $7^{\circ} 30' \text{N}$ and $6^{\circ} 42' \text{E}$ and longitudes $7^{\circ} 30' \text{N}$ and $6^{\circ} 40' \text{E}$, and has a land area of 29,833sq/km, with a total population of about 3.3 million (National Population Commission NPC, 2006). The state is made up of four agricultural zones namely; Zone A: Aiyetro Gbedde, Zone B: Anyigba, Zone C: Koton-Karfe and Zone D: Alloma and twenty one local government areas (LGAs) namely; Adavi, Ajaokuta, Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Idah, Igalamela/Odolu, Ijumu, Kabba/Bunu, Kogi, Lokoja, Mopa-Muro, Ofu, Ogori-Magongo, Okehi, Okene, Olamaboro, Omalla, Yagba East and Yagba West. For administrative purposes, the state is divided into three senatorial districts such as the eastern senatorial district which is comprised of Igala ethnic group, central senatorial district that is made up of the Ebira ethnic group and the western senatorial district which is made of the Yoruba ethnic group. The state is bounded in the west by River Niger and Niger state, in the east by Enugu state, in the south by Anambra state and in the north by Federal Capital Territory, Benue and Nassarawa states. The major languages of the people are Igala, Ebira and Yoruba. There are other minor languages like Bassa, Nupe, Kakanda, Oworo, Eggan among others. Majority of the people are farmers growing food crops such as maize, yam, cassava, millet, rice, sweet potato and beans, and cash crops such as citrus, oil palm, kolanut, cashew and cocoa, among others. Fish farming is

predominantly carried out in some LGAs such as Ibaji, Idah ,Koton-Karfe, Bassa, Lokoja and Ofu due to their proximity to the River Niger.



Source: GIS Lab, Department of Geography & Planning, KSU, 2013

KOGI STATE SHOWING THE THREE SENATORIAL DISTRICTS

Figure 2: Map of Kogi State showing the three ethnic groups (Igala, Ebira and Yoruba)

3.2 Population and sampling procedure

The population of the study was all the rural farm labour groups in the Igala ethnic group (eastern) and Ebira ethnic group (central) of the state. The Igala ethnic group is made up of 9 LGAs while the Ebira ethnic group has 5 LGAs, making a total of 14 LGAs. All the LGAs were used for the study. There were about 175 identified farmersö labour groups within Igala ethnic group, while a total of 50 farmersö groups were identified by the researcher among Ebira ethnic group thereby giving a total of 225 farmersö labour groups. From each of the LGAs 50% of the total number of farmersö labour groups were drawn from a list compiled by the researcher. A total of 89 labour groups were used from the Igala ethnic group while a total of 25 farmersö labour groups were drawn from the Ebira ethnic group, hence a total of 114 farmersö labour groups were used for the study. Three members including the chairman (who were committed and hold leadership positions) of each labour group were purposively selected and interviewed thereby giving a total of 342 respondents from 114 farmersö labour groups.

Table 3.1: Sampling frame

LGAs in Igala ethnic group (eastern)	No. of labor groups	No. of sampled labor groups	LGAs in Ebira ethnic groups (central)	No. of labor groups	No. of sampled labor groups
Ankpa	22	11	Adavi	8	4
Bassa	14	7	Ajaokuta	15	7
Dekina	24	12	Ogori/Mag.	8	4
Ibaji	16	8	Okehi	7	4
Idah	22	11	Okene	12	6
Igalamela/Odolu	17	9			
Ofu	19	10			
Olamaboro	20	10			
Omalla	21	11			
Sub-total	175	89		50	25
Grand Total of labour groups =114					

3.3 Method of data collection

Data for the study were collected using interview schedule and personal observation. The interview schedule was administered to three members of each group including the chairman by the researcher with the assistance of some trained assistants. For purposes of validity, the interview schedule was validated by lecturers in the Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and other experts in the field of rural sociology before their administration on the selected respondents.

3.4 Measurement of variables

The socioeconomic variables of the respondents were collected as follows: sex (male or female), age (years), marital status (married, single, divorced, widowed), years spent to acquire formal education (years), household size (number), farm size (hectares), size of herds (number), farming experience (years), source of farmland (inherited, borrowed, rented etc.), annual income () and major crop grown.

Objective 1: Characteristics such as religion, marriage, implement used for farm operations, major crops grown, mode of entry, level of formality, routine activities, social control, among others. Other categorizations included level of formality, routine features and others. To ascertain the level of formality and routine activities, farmers were asked questions as: does your group meet regularly? How often do you meet? etc. A yes or no answer was used to measure the level of formality of farmers' groups. Farmers were asked if there was any change in roles (e.g. if they perform any other enterprising or non-production activities) such as institution of thrift and loan schemes, processing of farm produce, procurement of farm inputs for sales to members and non-members, construction of rural market stalls, marketing of farm produce for members and non-members among others. All these were measured by ticking 'yes' or 'no' options with nominal values of 1 and 0 for yes and no, respectively.

Factors that led to the formation of farmers' labour groups such as dearth of farm labour, economies of scale, etc. were identified. Farmers were made to state their farm size, yield per annum, sources of labour etc. Information on the administrative structure (such as chairman, secretary and treasurer) and the mode of entry/acceptance (such as initiation, invitation, payment of membership fee or inheritance, meetings etc.) were sought. Also

information on the expected roles or functions of the executive of farmers' labour group such as setting of goals, coordination, information management, conflict resolution, collective decision-making, etc. were collected from the farmers.

Objective 2: Benefits such as; enhancement of one's prestige, helps to accomplish some farm tasks, helps to satisfy the need for affiliation, helps to offer economic gains, serves as a stepping stone to some higher status, to make monthly saving, help to pull resources together to address one's challenges, to access support from donor agencies, to carry out collective procurement of farm inputs and marketing farm produce, economies of scale, group efficiency, joint-problem solving, social and economic security etc. A 4 point Likert type scale with options 'strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD) with a nominal value of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively were used to identify the benefits of labour group. The values were added to have 10, and divided by 4 to have a mean of 2.5. This then portends that items mean scores higher or equal to 2.5 was regarded as beneficial while mean scores below were regarded as not beneficial.

Perceived effectiveness of farm labour groups (such as easy access to credit, expansion of farmlands, bulk procurement of farm inputs, access to needed agro-information etc.) were sought from the farmers. A 4- point likert type scale was used with options 'highly effective = 4, moderately effective = 3, effective = 2 and not effective = 1, with values 4, 3, 2 and 1. The sum of these was divided by 4 to have a mean score of 2.5, and mean score higher or equal to 2.5 was taken as effective.

Objective 3: In operationalizing this objective, constraining factors to the effective functioning/productivity of farmers' labour groups were measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which a list of factors affect their productivity. Some of these

constraining factors were: bad leadership, lack of credit, poor produce price, lack of market information, poor state of infrastructure, clash of interest etc. A 3-point likert-type scale was used, ranging from very serious=3, serious=2, and not serious= 1. The mean seriousness of a given factor was obtained by summing together 1+2+3= 6. The sum (6) was then divided by 3 to get a mean of 2.0. Any mean score higher or equal to 2.0 was regarded as serious factor(s), while items/factors with mean score less than 2.0 was regarded as not serious. Also factor analysis was used to group the constraints. Farmers were asked questions relating to job hazards, the nature of hazards (e.g. burns, wounds, snake/insect bites, matching on thorns, e.t.c.). A yes or no response was sought to measure farmers' opinions on these.

Objective 4: Farmers were asked to state if government was aware of their existence, whether the groups were protected with relevant labour laws such as freedom of association, compensation in the event of farm injuries, loss of produce due to draught, insurance, forced labour, use of underage labour, prohibition against discrimination, among others. A 4- point Likert type scale of *to a great extent, to some extent, to a little extent and to no extent* with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively attached was adopted. The values were summed to have 10 and then divided by 4 to have a mean score of 2.5. Variable with mean score higher or equals to 2.5 was taken to mean either to a great extent or to some extent.

Objective 5: Farmers' perception on participatory extension services were sought such as: awareness of innovative ideas, sources of innovations, farmer-to-farmer networking/collaboration, information sharing among the group and the community at large, roles of extension agents and members of labour groups in innovation adoption,

groups involvement in taking innovation decisions, group involvement in the design of farm technologies among others. A 3-point Likert type scale with options such as: *óto a great extent, to a little extent and to no extentô* with values of 3, 2 and 1 were sought after the presentation of the above options to the farmers. The values were summed to have 6, which was divided by 3 to have a mean score of 2.0. Variable with mean score higher or equals to 2.0 was regarded as to a great extent while mean score less than 2.0 was taken as to no extent.

Objective 6: To measure this objective, respondents were required to indicate by ticking from a list of expected roles provided to them such as: saving of time, easy access to credits, expansion of farm land, easy access to agro-information, bulk purchase of farm inputs, among others. A three point Likert type scale of highly effective=3; effective= 2 and not effective= 1 were used. These values were summed to have 6 which was divided by 3 to have a mean of 2.0. Variable with mean values equals or above 2.0 was taken as effective and vice versa.

3.5 Data Analysis

Objectives 1- 6 were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage and mean scores, while objective 3 was further subjected to exploratory factor analysis to isolate constraints. A loading value 0.40 and above were considered as having high loadings was used in naming the factors, and variables that loaded high in more than a factor were dropped. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using t-test while hypotheses 3 was tested using Chi-Square. The statistical product and service solution (SPSS) version 16 was used for analysis.

Chapter Four

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Sex

Majority (91.0%) of the farmers were males (Table 1). This implies that, male farmers dominate farmers' labour groups among the two ethnic groups. Opaluwa (2014) reports that 89.5% of farmers in Kogi State were males. This is also in tandem with Ekunwe, Orewa and Emokaro (2008) who report that male farmers dominate yam production in Edo and Kogi States.

Age

Table 1 also shows that majority (43.8%) of the members of farmers' labour groups among the Igala were within the age range of 42-51 years, as against (32.0%) among the Ebira within the age bracket of 52-61 years. The overall mean age of the farmers in both ethnic groups was 51.2 years. This portends that, majority of the farmers are fairly old and may not have the needed strength for mass food production individually. This could probably be the reason for the formation of labour groups to meet their farm labour needs.

Years spent in formal education

Majority (48.0%) of the farmers within Igala ethnic group had 7-12 years of formal education, while 43.8% of their Ebira counterparts spent same numbers of years to acquire formal education. While 28.2% of farmers in Ebira ethnic group had no formal education, only 14.0% of their counterparts in Igala ethnic group had no formal education. The overall mean number of years spent in formal education by both ethnic groups was 7.4 years. This implies that members of farmers' labour groups in both ethnic

groups were fairly literate and can therefore read and write. Hormik (1999) asserts that, basic education whether obtained in school or out of school makes a lot of contributions to farm productivity, as better educated farmers are easier to deal with and have greater access to external agro-information sources and are prone to adopt farm innovations as quickly as possible. But Kanwar (1998) reports that education has unclear effect on farm labour supply. The reason adduced is that educated members of the household normally tend to downgrade farm labour for white collar jobs.

Household size

Slightly over half (50.5%) of the farmers in Igala ethnic group and (56.0%) of Ebira ethnic group had household sizes between the range of 7-11 people, while 31.5% and 40.0% in Igala and Ebira ethnic groups had between 2-6 persons respectively. None of these farmers had more than 16 persons in their households. The overall mean household size for the two ethnic groups was eight persons. This implies that, members of farmers' labour groups in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups have large household sizes. According to Villano and Fleming (2004), more adult members in a household translates to the availability of more labour for carrying out farming activities thus making the production process efficient. Onyemauwa, Odii, Omenyonu and Osugiri (2006) assert that larger household sizes reduce labour constraints thereby leading to increase in productivity and income of the farm household. In contrast, Orebiyi, Eze, Henri-Ukoha, Akubude, *et al.* (2011) contend that, despite the fact that large household size could be advantageous for farm families, it may be disadvantageous as more people means high demands for food, clothing, health, children's school fees among others. Thus, the need for labour groups in order to obviate this shortcoming.

Farm size

Table 1 equally revealed that majority (60.7% and 60.0%) of farmers from both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) had farm sizes of between 1-4 hectares respectively. While 34.8% of the farmers in Igala ethnic group and 40.0% of farmers in Ebira ethnic group had farm sizes of between 5-8 hectares, and the various mean farm sizes for the two ethnic groups were: Igala (4.1 ha.) and Ebira (3.8 ha.) respectively. The overall mean farm size for the two groups was 4 hectares. The implication of this finding is that members of farmers' labour groups in the two ethnic groups had fairly large farm size which is a pointer that they are willing to accept new farm practices for mass food production. Opaluwa (2014) reports that farmers in Kogi State have a mean farm size of 3.6 hectares. Ajayi and Okunlola (2006) also reported that, farmers with large farm holdings are more likely to invest in their farm enterprise than those with smaller holdings as the former have more gain if they do so.

Farming experience

According to Table 1, majority (51.7%) of farmers in Igala ethnic group had between 28-37 years of farming experience, as against 28.0% among Ebira ethnic group. The overall mean year for farming experience was 38 years. This implies that, farmers in both ethnic groups have long experiences in farming. According to Iwuchukwu, Agwu and Ajibo (2013), majority (36.5%) of farmers in Enugu State had between 21-30 years of farming experience. And long years of farming experience could serve as an advantage for increases in output in various farming and related activities when meaningfully deployed the authors further asserted. Long years of farm experience is vital because

farm management skills of farmers improve with long experience in farm operations. This, according to (Idrisa, Ogunbameru and Madukwe, 2012) depicts good signal for adoption of improved technologies as experienced farmers tend to understand the importance of technologies in farming.

Animal rearing

Table 1 also shows majority (86.5%) of farmers in Igala land reared animals, while majority (76.9%) of farmers in Ebira land also kept animals. The table further shows that majority (51.7%) of Igala kept goats as their major animal reared, while majority (48.0%) of farmers in Ebira ethnic group kept poultry. According to the table, rearing of pigs is almost non-existent in both ethnic groups. The table also revealed that 24.0% of Ebiras and 13.5% of Igalas did not rear any animal at all. Majority (30.3%) of farmers in Igala ethnic group and 20.8% of Ebira extract had animal sizes of between 6-10 and 20 and above respectively.

Tologbonse, Iyiola-Tunji, Issa, Jaliya,*et al.* (2011) report that 50.0% of farmers in rural Nigeria kept goats, while about 30.0% of these farmers kept both goats and sheep. The authors further opined that about 93.0% of farmers in south-east agro-ecological zone practiced intensive system of rearing sheep and goats. According to Agwu and Ajayi (1996), in order to ensure adequate supply of protein to the rapidly growing population of Nigeria, the output of animal products has to be increased: and that the greatest opportunity of harnessing increased production of animal protein lies with exploration of small ruminants of which goat belongs. The authors further reported that majority (55.0%) of farmers in Nsukka local government area kept between 1-5 goats.

Extension visit

Results presented in Table 1 shows that, majority (43.8% and 52.0%) of members of both ethnic groups had no extension contact at all, though 28.6% and 28.0% of both ethnic groups had one number of extension contact respectively. While 24.2% of Igala farmers and 20.0% of Ebira farmers had 2 number of extension contacts respectively. The mean number of extension contact was about 1. This implies that extension contact in both ethnic groups is low. Okoro (2012) reports that, there was poor extension visit in south-east Nigeria. Poor extension visits could stem from poor funding of extension service and/or lack of qualified extension personnel (Egbule, 2013). According to Oni, Obi, Okorie and Jordan (2002), extension services help farmers to reinforce the message and enhance the accuracy of recommended implementations of technologies.

Estimated annual income

According to Table 1, greater proportion (62.9% and 72.0%) of farmers in Igala and Ebira ethnic groups had estimated annual income of between ₦ 80,000.00- ₦ 180,000.00. Mean annual income for farmers in Igala land was ₦192,258.43, as against ₦ 152,840.00 of Ebira farmers. The overall mean annual income for both ethnic groups was ₦ 183,614.04. This finding implies that farmers in the two ethnic groups earn reasonable amount of money from their farming activities, though farmers of Igala extract earns more than their Ebira counterparts. This could translate into improvement in the socio-economic status of farmers. The higher the income level of farmers, the less they are disposed to fear of taking farm risks (in respect to adoption of new ideas) (Adejoh, 2014). Imarhiagbe (2014) reports that the mean annual income of rubber farmers in Edo and Delta States was ₦653,333.30. Nwalieji and Nenna (2013) also reports that the mean

annual income of youth in agriculture in Anambra State was ~~N~~175,017.17. This shows that farmers will have enough money to purchase farm inputs for greater productivity.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics

Characteristics	Ethnic group				Overall(n=144) %	
	Igala(n=89)		Ebira(n=25)			
	%		%			
		M		M		M
Sex						
Male	91.0		92.0		92.2	
Female	9.0		8.0		8.8	
Age (Years)						
32- 41	11.2	51.2	20.0	51.5	13.2	51.2
42- 51	43.8		24.0		39.5	
52 -61	31.5		32.0		31.5	
62 -71	13.5		20.0		14.9	
Above 70 years	00.0		4.0		0.9	
Number of years spent in school						
0	14.0	7.6	28.2	6.5	20.2	7.4
1-6	32.5		24.0		30.7	
7-12	48.0		43.8		44.7	
13-18	5.5		4.0		4.4	
Household size						
1-5	31.5	8	40.0	7	33.3	8
6-10	50.5		56.0		51.8	
11-15	18.0		4.0		14.9	
Above 15	00.0		00.0		00.0	
Farm size (Ha)						
1-4	60.7	4	60.0	3.8	60.5	4
5-8	34.8		40.0		36.0	
9-12	4.5		0.0		3.5	
Farming experience (Years)						
18-27	7.9	36.8	24.0	36.8	11.4	38
28-37	51.7		28.0		46.5	
38-47	29.2		28.0		28.9	
48-57	10.1		16.0		11.4	
58-67	1.1		4.0		1.8	
Animal rearing						
No	13.5		24.0		15.8	
Yes	86.5		76.0		84.2	
Type of animals reared(n=77)						
Goat	51.7		24.0		45.6	
Sheep	2.2		0.0		1.8	
Cattle	2.2		4.0		2.6	
Poultry	29.0		48.0		33.3	
Pigs	1.1		0.0		0.9	
Stock size(n=77)						
1-5	5.6	3	4.0	3	5.3	
6-10	30.3		20.0		28.1	
11-15	22.5		12.0		20.2	
16-20	15.7		12.0		14.9	
Above 20	12.4		28.0		15.8	
Extension visits						
None	43.8	0.8	52.0	0.7	49.1	0.8
Once	28.6		28.0		28.1	
Twice	24.2		20.0		20.2	
Trice	3.4		0.0		2.6	
Estimated annual income (₦)						
80,000-180,000	62.9	192,258.43	72.0	152,840.00	64.9	183,614.04
180,001-280,000	28.1		28.0		28.1	
280,001-380,000	5.6		0.0		4.4	
380,001-480,000	2.2		0.0		1.7	
Above 480,000	1.1		0.0		0.9	

Source: Field Survey, 2014

4.2 Sources of farmlands and major crops grown

Majority (77.5% and 76.0%) of respondents from both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) inherited their farmlands. Though 15.7% and 12.0% of these farmers from both ethnic groups bought their farmlands, while community lands (4.0%) were used by farmers in Igala land, this was not so (0.0%) in Ebira land. This implies that farmers in both ethnic groups use their fore-fathers farmlands for most of their farm operations. In a related study carried out by Oyeleye, Ayodele and Ajibade (2014) in Oyo State, Nigeria, majority (91.2%) of farmers in Oyo State inherited their farmlands for most of their farm operations. Egbodion and Erie (2011) report that majority (44.6%) of farmers in Edo State inherited their farmlands from their fore-parents. Ibitoye (2010) also found out that, 72.0% of farmers in Yagba area of Kogi State acquired their farmlands through inheritance. And Famoriyo (2009) asserts that, the inheritance system is a major source of access to farmlands in Nigeria. Imarhiagbe (2014) reports that 39.2% of small-scale rubber farmers in Edo and Delta States inherited their farmlands.

The table further revealed that, greater proportion (61.8% and 95.0%) of farmers in both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) grow cassava respectively. Yam (19.1%) and melon (11.2%) were also grown by farmers in Igala ethnic group. Cassava was the major crop planted by both ethnic groups as shown by the overall percentage (69.3%). The greater involvement in cassava production by these farmers could be adduced to the ease in its production, and most importantly, cassava is the major staple crop in both ethnic groups. Iwuchukwu, *et al.* (2013) report that, 100% of farmers in Enugu State diversified into maize and cassava production. In a related study, Asadu, Egbujor, Chah and Ifejika (2013) report that, 86.7% of farmers in Imo State planted cassava as their major crop. It is

estimated that, 250 million people in sub-Saharan Africa derive half of their daily calories from cassava (Food and Agriculture Organization: FAO, 2005).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by sources of farmlands and major crops grown

Sources of farmland *	<u>Ethnic group</u>		Overall(n=114)
	Igala(n=89)	Ebira(n=25)	
	%	%	%
Inherited	77.5	76.0	77.2
Borrowed	5.6	8.0	6.1
Rented	1.1	0.0	0.9
Bought	15.7	12.0	14.9
Community land	4.0	0.0	0.9
Major crop(s) grown			
Yam	19.2	1.1	14.9
Cassava	62.8	95.0	69.7
Beans	3.4	0.0	2.8
Mellon	11.3	4.0	9.8
Guinea corn	1.1	0.0	0.9
Groundnut	1.1	1.1	0.9
Beniseed	1.1	1.1	0.9

Source: Field survey, 2014 * = Multiple responses

4.3 Description of farmers' labour groups

Year of formation

Table 3 reveals that majority (42.7%) of members of farmers' labour groups among the Igala ethnic group were formed before 1990, while 68.0% of their Ebira counterparts were formed before 1990. About 36.0% of farmers' labour groups in Igala land were formed between 1990 and 1999. The overall percentage of 48.2% indicated

that most farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups were formed before 1990. This then implies that the organization of farmers into labour groups had been in existence for several years, and this could probably be the major way of sourcing for farm labour in order to improve scale of production.

Size of group

Majority (53.9%) of farmers' labour groups in Igala ethnic group had group size ranging from 10 to 14 farmers. Most (68.0%) of farmers' labour groups in Ebira ethnic group and 27.0% of their Igala counterparts had group sizes of between 5-9 members.

The overall percentage (50.9%) shows that the two ethnic groups had between 10-14 members (group size) respectively, while the mean group size was 11 people. About 2.2% of farmers' labour groups in Igala ethnic group had membership size of 20-24 people while none of the groups in Ebira land had up to 15-24 members. This implies that farmers' labour groups from both ethnic groups had fairly large members, and the larger the size of a group the larger the farm holdings of members as more farm labour will be available for members' farm. Oladele. *et al* (2011) assert that, large farmers' groups can lead to wider dissemination of agricultural innovations within a given community. According to Farm Radio Script (2008), an ideal number of farmers' labour group for an effective farm production is between 15-20 people, though this varies from place to place.

Sub-group

All (100%) farmers' labour groups in Ebira land had no sub-group while 68.5% of those in Igala land had sub-groups. In another development, most (44.9%) of farmers' labour groups in Igala land had a sub-group of 2. About 23.5% of these farmers' labour

groups in Igala ethnic group had up to 3-4 sub-groups. The mean number of group was one.

Sales of group labour and amount

Data presented in Table 3 also reveal that both farmers in the two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) some times sold their labour (70.8% and 96.0% respectively) to members or no-members. Farmersö labour groups in both ethnic groups (40 4%) sold their group labour at the cost that ranges between ~~₦~~5,001- ~~₦~~ 10,000 per 4 hours per day. But 21.1% of farmers, labour groups in both ethnic groups sold their labour between ~~₦~~ 10,001- ~~₦~~15,000 per day. The mean amount collected for both ethnic groups was ~~₦~~ 5, 228.65 per 4 hours per day. Farmers may decide to sell their labour to have enough money to purchase their farm and other domestic needs as it is, in most cases difficult for them to access credits from financial institutions. In some cases, farmersö groups may decide to farm for their traditional leaders for no cost but to show some levels of loyalty, and the group leaders normally serve as go-between. The traditional ruler shows some gratifications by providing foods and drinks for the group after farm operations. In another situation, a member of farmersö group may decide to invite his colleagues to farm for his would-be-in-law (Benneh, 1988).

Table 3: Respondents distribution based on farm labour groups and related characteristics

<u>Ethnic group</u>				
Characteristic	Igala(n=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	Overall(n=114) %	Mean
Year of formation				
Before 1990	42.7	68.0	48.2	11
1990-1999	36.0	16.0	31.6	
2000-2009	20.2	12.0	18.4	
2010 till date	1.1	4.0	1.8	
Group size				
5-9	27.0	60.0	34.4	11
10-14	53.9	40.0	50.9	
15-19	16.9	0.0	13.2	
20-24	2.2	0.0	1.8	
Sub-group				
No	31.5	100	46.5	11
Yes	68.5	0.0	53.5	
Number of sub-group (n=61)				
2	44.9	0.0	35.2	11
3	21.3	0.0	16.7	
4	2.2	0.0	1.8	
Sales of group labour				
No	29.2	4.0	23.7	11
Yes	70.8	96.0	76.3	
Amount collected for group labour sold (₦)(4 Hrs)				
1,000- 5,000	2.2	0.0	1.8	5,228.65
5001- 10,000	41.6	36.0	40.4	
10,001-15,000	15.7	40.0	21.1	
15,001-20,000	12.4	12.0	12.3	
20.0001-25,000	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Source: Field survey, 2014

4.4 Reasons for farmers' labour group formation

Table 4 shows that dearth of farm labour (83.1% and 100%) was given as one major reason by both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups, respectively. Other reasons given by both farmers in the two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) were rural-urban migration (74.6% and 68.0%), to assist one another in time of need (53.3% and 12.0% respectively), joint

problem-solving (48.3% and 32.0%), among others. The overall result shows that dearth of farm labour (86.3%), and rural-urban migration (74.8%) were the major reasons for the formation of farmers' labour groups in the two ethnic groups. Ini, Ubong, Asa and Akpan (2002) assert that, the need to form farmers' labour groups is more apparent due to the steady decline/dearth of farm labour in most rural Nigeria. Rural-urban migration tends to deplete the agriculture labour force as it is the able-bodied young men who usually move (Ekong, 2010). With no commensurate substitution of capital in place of the displaced labour, agricultural productivity tends to fall in the source region which is the rural area. According to Adegeye and Dittoh in Chukwu and Achimugun (2010), governments in Nigeria have succeeded in creating dangerous dichotomy between the urban and rural areas due to development approaches that are urban-oriented. Hence, there exists a wide gap between these two points in the settlement continuum in terms of the level of economic development, quality of life, access to opportunities among others. These could probably be the pull factors that force younger farmers away from their rural abodes.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by reasons for farmers' labour group formation

Reason *	<u>Ethnic group</u>		Overall (n=114)
	Igala(n=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	
Dearth of farm labour	83.1	100	86.3
Economies of scale	29.2	40.0	31.6
Rural-urban migration	76.4	68.0	74.8
Pooling of money for lending in circles	13.5	4.0	11.4
Access support from donor organizations	13.5	4.0	11.4
Assist one another in times of need	53.3	12.0	44.7
Collective procurement of farm inputs	29.2	8.0	24.8
Joint problem-solving	48.3	32.0	44.7
Enhances farmers' prestige	4.5	4.0	4.4

Source: Field survey, 2014*** Multiple responses**

4.5 Organizational structure and roles of farmers' labour group

All (100%) farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups operated on informal basis, though all (100%) farmers' labour groups had organizational structure. While all (100%) farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) had their chairman (head); 64.0% and 80.0% of the farmers' groups in both ethnic regions had no secretary as opposed to 36.0% (Igala ethnic group) and 20.0% (of Ebira ethnic group) who had secretary, while all (100%) farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups had a treasurer. It is a known fact that the executives of any organization oversee all the operations and enforcement of compliance to organizational rules/regulations. Majority (58.4% and

72.0%) of farmersö labour groups in both ethnic regions (Igala and Ebira) chose their leaders by appointment, while 40.4% (among the Igala) and 28.0% (among the Ebira) chose their leaders by conducting election.

The table also shows various roles played by the executives of farmersö labour groups in the study area. Majority (96.0% each) of farmersö labour groups in both ethnic groups opined that conflict resolution was the major role played by the executives. Other roles played were coordination of group activities (76.4% and 88.0%), among others. Facilitation of group activities constituted 59.6% and 48.0% by leaders in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. Generally, the overall roles played by the executives of farmersö labour groups in the two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) were conflict resolutions (96.5%), coordination of group activities (78.9%) and leading group members in decision-making process (72.8%).

Conflict exists where two or more parties with perceived incompatible goals seek to undermine each other goal achieving capabilities (Rahim, 2002). And conflict arises from human instincts, competition for resources and power. Conflicts may arise in farmersö labour groups during the process of appointing or selecting their key leaders. This might lead to decrease in farm productivity or degradation of relationships. Good leaders can manage conflict situation by adopting strategies that could limit the negative aspects of conflict as well as increasing the positive aspects such as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising (Rahim, 2002), Coordination is an attempt to synchronize the efforts of two or more individuals or organizations like farmersö labour groups (Nor and Madukwe, 2002). With the high involvement of members in decision-making (72.8%) conflict situations in farmersö labour groups are always ruled out.

Table 5: Distribution of farmers' labour groups by organizational structure and roles

	Ethnic group		Overall(n=114) %
	Igala(n=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	
Type of labour group			
Formal	0.0	0.0	
Informal	100	100	
Executive			
No	0.0	0.0	
Yes	100	100	
Type of official*	Yes	Yes	
Chairman/head	100	100	
Secretary	36.0	20.0	
Treasurer	100	100	
Procedure for choosing leaders			
Election	40.4	28.0	37.7
Appointment	58.4	72.0	61.4
Imposition	1.1	0.0	0.9
Roles*			
Conflict resolution	96.6	96.0	96.5
Setting of group goals	51.7	48.0	50.9
Coordination of group activities	76.4	88.0	78.9
Information management	24.7	20.0	23.7
Collective decision-making	69.7	84.0	72.8
Facilitation of group activities	59.6	48.0	57.0
Adequate representation	51.7	40.0	49.1

Source: Field survey, 2014 ***Multiple responses**

4.6 Group composition and participation

Majority (86.5% and 92.0%) of farmers' labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were males, while 13.5% and 8.0% were female members, respectively.

This implies that majority of members of farmersö labour groups in both regions were males (Table 6). Invitation (100%) was the major mode of entry into farmersö labour group in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. The overall results show that, invitation (100%) was the major mode of entry into farmersö labour groups in both ethnic groups.

Table 6 equally indicates that 99.1% (overall) of the two ethnic groups had a constitution to guide their activities. While the overall result (86.0%) also indicates that farmersö labour groups in both ethnic groups had unwritten constitution. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the farmers are aged and not quite literate enough to keep records of their activities. Salau, Saingbe and Garba (2013) report that, a greater proportion (39.0%) of smallholder farmers in Nasarawa State had only primary education as their highest qualification.

Also all (100%) farmersö labour groups across the two ethnic groups held meetings. A greater majority (51.7% and 56.0%) of farmersö labour groups in the two regions held their meetings fortnightly, 24.7% and 8.0% of the labour groups in Igala and Ebira ethnic groups held their meetings weekly. About 8% of farmersö groups in Igala ethnic group and 20.0% of Ebira farmersö group held meetings monthly, 1.1% of farmersö group in Igala land do not hold meeting at all, while none (0.0%) of the farmersö groups in both ethnic groups had annual meetings. The overall result (52.6%) shows that both farmersö labour groups from the two ethnic regions held their meetings fortnightly. Members of farmersö labour groups usually meet at their leadersö residences fortnightly or otherwise as a mark of honour to address group challenges such as internal crisis/quarrel among members, payment of agreed sum for purchase of farm inputs, among others. Farmersö groups in most cases prefer to hold their meetings on Sundays which is seen as a work-

free day. According to Afolayan (2011), the purpose of group meeting is to take decisions, actions and get the business of the group done.

The table further shows that several punitive measures were meted on erring member(s) by both farmersö groups in the two ethnic groups. Some of these were: payment of fines (33.3%), cutting off benefits (28.9%), and suspension (23.7%) among others. Punishment is a corrective measure to ensure that members of the group conform with the guiding rules.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to group composition and participation

Composition	<u>Ethnic group</u>		overall (n=114)
	Igala(=89)	Ebira(n=25)	
	%	%	%
Men only	86.5	92.0	87.7
Women only	0.0	0.0	0.0
Men and women	13.5	8.0	12.3
Mode of entrance			
Inheritance	0.0	0.0	0.0
Invitation	100	100	100
Group constitution/laws			
No	1.1	0.0	0.9
Yes	98.9	100	99.1
Type of constitution			
Unwritten	83.1	96.0	86.0
Written	16.9	4.0	14.0
Meeting			
No	0.0	0.0	0.0
Yes	100	100	100
Time of meeting			
Weekly	24.7	8.0	21.1
Forthnightly	51.7	56.0	52.6
Quarterly	14.6	16.0	14.9
Monthly	7.9	20.0	10.5
No meeting at all	1.1	0.0	0.9
Control measures for violation			
Cutting off benefits	29.2	28.0	28.9
Suspension	19.1	40.0	23.7
Expulsion	15.7	8.0	14.0
Ostracizing	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fine	36.0	24.0	33.3

Source: Field survey, 2014

4.7 Assistance and type of assistance received from government and donor agencies

Slightly over half (55.1% and 60.0%) of farmersö labour groups in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups respectively, received one form of assistance or the other from government and other donor organizations. Some of the assistance received (both ethnic groups) were farm inputs (70.2%), advisory services (65.8%), and extension services (36.0%). Farm inputs such as improved seed and animal stocks, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides among others are critical to farmersö labour group productivity as they can lead to economies of scale. Improved seed stock and other farm inputs are precursors for food security (Musa, Owolabi and Umar, 2013). This implies that farmersö groups in both ethnic groups receive one form of assistance from extension agents and other service providers to improve their farm operations.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to assistance received from government and donor organizations

	Igala(n=89)	Ebira(n=25)	<u>Ethnic group</u>	
			Overall (n=114)	%
		%	%	
Assistance(n=114)				
No		44.9	40.0	43.9
Yes		55.1	60.0	56.1
Type of assistance (n=49)				
Extension services		39.3	24.0	36.0
Farm inputs		73.0	60.0	70.2
Advisory services		62.9	76.0	65.8

Source: Field survey, 2014

4.8 Sources of fund

Majority (78.7% and 76.0%) of farmersö labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic nationalities respectively sourced their fund from sales of their group labour;

61.8% and 64.0% of farmersö groups reported that they sourced funds from contributions made by their members, while 59.6% and 44.0% of both farmersö labour groups from Igala and Ebira respectively sourced their fund from joint investment (Table 8). Other sources that were not majorly patronized by farmersö labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were free donations from non-members (23.6% and 8.0% for Igala and Ebira respectively), sales of farm produce (18.0% and 12.0%) and cash from non-governmental organizations and government (5.6% and 0.0%).

The overall result shows that greater proportion (78.1%) of both farmersö groups in the two ethnic groups sourced funds from sales of group labour, 62.3% of the respondents sourced their funds from contributions made by members periodically, while 56.1% of them sourced their money from joint investment. This implies that farmers groups in both ethnic groups patronize informal sources of fund instead of formal sources. The high interest rates and lack of collaterals could probably be the major reasons for lack of patronage of formal sources of credit such as banks. In agreement with this finding, Edoa, Adejoh and Ochimana (2011) report that the major (35.0%) source of fund for farm operations by smallholder farmers in Ankpa local government area of Kogi State was donations from friends and relations. Because of the high interest rates charged by institutionalized sources of credits, smallholder farmers tend to look inward to patronize non-institutionalized sources of credits such as friends, relatives, among others to finance their farm operations. Audu (2013) reports that, relatives and friends are very popular sources of credit for small-scale agricultural production because they are devoid of stringent conditions. Loans from these sources are easily accessible because of the blood relationship that exists between the borrowers and the lenders, the author continued.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by sources of fund

Source*	<u>Ethnic group</u>		Overall (n=114) %
	Igala(=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	
Contributions by members	61.8	64.0	62.3
Donations from non-members	23.6	8.0	20.2
Sales of farm produce	18.0	12.0	16.7
Joint investment	59.6	44.0	56.1
NGOs/government	5.6	0.0	4.4
Sales of group labour	78.7	76.0	78.1

Source: Field survey, 2014***Multiple responses**

4.9 Changing/enterprising roles of farmers' labour group

Data presented in Table 9 reveals the various changing or enterprising roles performed by farmers' labour groups in the two ethnic groups aside their traditional role of supplying farm labour to members. Majority (81.6%) of the groups in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were involved in bulk purchase of farm inputs such as improved seed stocks, fertilizers, and agro-chemicals among others; 77.2% in both ethnic groups were involved in construction of rural market stalls and building of local houses for needy members. Institution of thrift and loans (71.9%) and construction of rural roads (50.0%) were other changing roles carried out by members of farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups. Members in eastern (Igala) region of Kogi State equally embarked on processing of farm produce (11.2%) for members and provision of rural water (1.1%), but these roles were not found among groups in the central (Ebira) ethnic group. This implies that farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups perform other life-enhancement roles

that can improve the socioeconomic status of members and the society at large in addition to their traditional role of supplying farm labour to members and non-members, institution of thrift and loans, among others.

Organization of thrift and loans by members of farmers' labour groups is an informal source of credit for farmer's farm and off-farm operations (Nweze, 2001). Ibitoye (2012) corroborated further that, such fund acquired was used on farm operations such as labour hiring (79.9%), purchase of farmlands (14.1%) and purchase of farm inputs (5.7%) among others in Yagba area (Yagba-east and west) of Kogi State, Nigeria. Members of farmers' labour groups in both ethnic groups of Kogi State organize thrift and loans scheme which members access in times of financial difficulties. This will surely save them from the problem of collaterals as always requested by formal financial institutions such as commercial banks before loans are granted.

Table 9: Distribution of farmers' labour groups according to their changing/enterprising roles

Changing/enterprising role*	<u>Ethnic group</u>		Overall (n=114) %
	Igala(n=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	
Institution of thrift and loans	69.7	80.0	71.9
Bulk procurement of farm inputs	88.8	56.0	81.6
Construction of rural market stalls	71.9	96.0	77.2
Marketing of farm produce	7.9	12.0	8.8
Provision of rural water	1.1	0.0	0.9
Construction of rural roads	52.8	40.0	50.0
Building of local houses for members	75.3	84.0	77.2
Processing of farm produce	11.2	0.0	8.8
Source: Field survey, 2014		* Multiple responses	

4.10 Sources of agro-information

Data in Table 10 reveal that majority (75.3%) of farmers' labour groups found among Igala ethnic group sourced most of their agricultural information from radio; 61.8% from Igala land also sourced agro-information from their peer groups and neighbours, while 53.9% got their farm information from traditional leaders. Farmers' labour groups among Igala ethnic group also sourced their agro-information from extension agents (46.1%). On the other hand, all (100%) members of farmers' labour groups among Ebira ethnic group sourced their agro-information from radio. Other sources of agro-information available to farmers' labour groups among Ebira ethnic

group were peer groups and neighbours, farmersö cooperatives and community leaders (40.0% each).

The major sources of agro-information used by both ethnic groups were radio (80.7%), peer groups and neighbours (57.0%), community leaders (50.9%) and farmersö cooperatives (43.9%). The findings reveal that the use of internet and academic Journal (0.0% respectively) were still alien to members of farmersö labour groups in both ethnic groups. The preference of radio by labour groups in the two ethnic groups could be attributed to the ease of its operation and most importantly, most agro-information/programmes are usually aired in local languages (Igala and Ebira). Rural farmers prefer radio as it is most often not dependent on electric power but dry cell batteries which can be used for its operation even in remotest villages. According to Adejoh (2014), majority (85.63%) of rural farmers groups in Kogi State prefer the use of radio to seek most of their agricultural information. This is in contrast to the findings of Nwabeze, Erie, Ifejika, Ayanda, *et al.* (2012) who reported that most (97.0%) of artisanal farmers in Delta State sourced their agro-information from friends.

Table 10: Distribution of farmers' labour groups by sources of agro-information

Source of agro-information*	<u>Ethnic group</u>		Overall(n=114) %
	Igala (n=89) %	Ebira(n=25) %	
Community leaders	53.9	40.0	50.9
Radio	75.3	100	80.7
Television programmes	24.7	16.0	22.8
Newspapers	9.0	8.0	8.8
NGOs	7.9	0.0	6.1
Farmersö cooperatives	44.9	40.0	43.9
Peer groups/neighbours	61.8	40.0	57.0
Religious organizations	12.4	4.0	10.5
Extension agents	46.1	8.0	37.7
Ministry of Agriculture	14.6	0.0	11.4
Internet	0.0	0.0	0.0
Academic Journal	0.0	0.0	0.0
Posters/billboards	18.0	4.0	14.9

Source: Field survey, 2014*** Multiple responses**

4.11 Benefits of farmers' labour groups

The results in Table 11 show that promotion of deep interpersonal relationships (M= 3.84; SD=0.433), access to pool of farm labour (M= 3.72; SD= 0.541) and assistance to indigent members in times of needs (M= 3.37; SD= 0.682) were the major benefits derived from belonging to farmersö labour groups in the two ethnic nationalities. Other

benefits were increased income of members ($M= 2.99$; $SD=0.815$), serves as a platform for acquisition and adoption of agricultural innovations ($M= 2.76$; $SD=0.905$), access to credits ($M=2.75$; $SD= 0.723$), access to agricultural information ($M= 2.76$; $SD= 0.905$) and lending money in circles to members ($M= 2.50$; $SD= 0.720$).

Members of farmers' labour groups in the two ethnic groups derived lots of benefits from their various organizations as indicated by high mean scores of all the variables. According to Agbarevo and Obinne (2010), farmers' group fosters "*we-feelings*" and the spirit of togetherness among members. This tends to eventually remove the spirit of disaffection, and conflict situations among members. The Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Association (DENIVA) (undated) asserts that farmers help one another especially the indigent members in times of need such as sickness, burial ceremonies, and school fees requirements among others. Tiamiyu, Idowu and Misari (2001) contend that membership of farmers' labour groups and cooperatives and other social organizations could have positive effects on diffusion and adoption of agricultural innovations in Nigeria.

Data presented in Table 11 also shows the benefits of farmers' labour groups as perceived by each ethnic group (Igala and Ebira). According to the table, promotion of deep interpersonal relationships ($M=3.81$ $SD= 0.474$ and $M= 3.96$ $SD= 0.200$), access to pool of farm labour ($M= 3.66$ $SD= 0.583$ and $M= 3.92$ $SD=0.277$) and assistance to indigent members ($M= 3.33$ $SD= 0.653$ and $M= 3.52$ $SD= 0.770$) were the major benefits derived from farmers' labour group formation by both farmers in the two ethnic groups. Other benefits derived by the two ethnic groups were increased income of farmers ($M= 3.03$ $SD= 0.838$ and $M= 2.88$ $SD= 0.726$), access to credits ($M= 2.69$ $SD= 0.748$ and $M=$

3.00 SD= 0.577) and as platform for innovation adoption (M= 2.78 SD=0.938 and M= 2.72 SD= 0.792). Though farmers' labour groups in Igala ethnic group also saw access to agro-information (M=2.62 SD=0.746), access to external supports (M= 2.51 SD= 0.868) and lending money in circles to members (M=2.51 SD= 0.0.725) as other vital benefits derived from farmers' labour group formation. While farmers' labour groups from the Igala and Ebira ethnic groups do not see sufficiency in food production and security (M= 2.10 SD=0.880 and M=1.76 SD=0.77) as vital benefit. While development of leadership abilities (M= 2.17; M= 2.40) and enhancement of community labour sharing (M= 2.26; M= 2.48) were not perceived as major benefits by both farmers' labour groups from Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. This then implies that farmers' labour group formation has lots of benefits for members as it can bring about deep interpersonal relationship which can facilitate information sharing, mutual trust and assistance to members in times of need.

Table 11: Mean distribution of farmers' labour groups according to perceived benefits (n= 114)

Benefit	<u>Ethnic group</u>				<u>Overall(n=114)</u>	
	Igala(=89)		Ebira (n=25)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Access to credits from financial institutions	2.69*	0.748	3.00*	0.577	2.75*	0.723
Promotion of deep interpersonal relationships	3.81*	0.474	3.96*	0.200	3.84*	0.433
Access to pool of farm labour	3.66*	0.583	3.92*	0.277	3.72*	0.541
Promotion of savings culture	2.36	0.727	2.62*	0.647	2.42	0.716
Sufficiency in food production & security	2.10	0.880	1.76	0.779	2.03	0.867
Assisting indigent members in times of needs	3.33*	0.653	3.52*	0.770	3.37*	0.682
Development of leadership abilities	2.17	0.843	2.40	0.764	2.22	0.828
Increased income	3.02*	0.839	2.88*	0.726	2.99*	0.815
Platform for innovation adoption	2.78*	0.938	2.72*	0.792	2.76*	0.905
Access to agro-information	2.62*	0.746	2.36	0.757	2.56*	0.753
Enhance community labour-sharing	2.26	0.776	2.48	0.714	2.31	0.766
Access to external supports	2.51*	0.868	2.40	0.764	2.48	0.844
Lending money in circle to members	2.51*	0.725	2.48	0.714	2.50*	0.720

Source: Field survey, 2014

*Major benefits

4.12 Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perceived benefits of farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups.

The test of hypothesis one which states that, there is no significant difference in the perceived benefits of farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups was tested using t-test at 5% level of significance. According to data presented in Table

12, there was a slight difference in the perception of benefits derived from farmers' labour groups by members from Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. The difference existed only in access to pool of farm labour ($t=-2.134$; $P\hat{O}0.05$). This implies that members of farmers' labour groups from both ethnic groups perceived surplus farm labour as the major benefit derived from farmers' labour group formation. This could be inferred from the high mean scores of 3.66 and 3.92 respectively. Access to surplus farm labour can lead to economies of scale and income. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted in this regard.

Table 12: T-test of difference in the perception of benefits of farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups

Benefit	Ethnic group				t-value	Sig.
	Igala		Ebira			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Access to financial institutions	2.69	0.748	3.00	0.577	-1.945	0.054
Promotion of deep interpersonal relationships	3.81	0.474	3.96	0.200	-1.551	0.124
Access to pool of farm labour	3.66	0.583	3.92	0.277	-2.134	0.035*
Promotion of savings culture	2.36	0.727	2.62	0.649	-1.623	0.107
Sufficiency in food production and security	2.10	0.880	1.76	0.779	1.754	0.082
Assisting indigent members	3.33	0.653	3.52	0.770	-1.261	0.210
Development of leadership abilities	2.17	0.843	2.40	0.764	-1.238	0.218
Increased income	3.02	0.839	2.88	0.726	0.771	0.442
Platform for adoption of innovation	2.78	0.938	2.72	0.792	0.269	0.789
Access to agro-information	2.62	0.746	2.36	0.757	1.522	0.131
Enhance labour-sharing among members	2.26	0.776	2.48	0.714	-1.282	0.282
Access to external support	2.51	0.868	2.40	0.764	0.551	0.583
Lending money in circles	2.51	0.725	2.48	0.714	0,157	0.876

Source: Field survey, 2014

*Significant @ 5% level of probability

4.13 Constraints to farmers' labour group formation and productivity

Respondents' perceived constraints to their effective formation and productivity are shown in Table 13. Migration of youth population ($M= 2.71$ $SD=0.548$), high cost of farm labour ($M= 2.61$ $SD=0.588$), old age of some members and scarcity of farm labour ($M= 2.58$ $SD= 0.623$ and $M= 2.58$; $SD= 0.547$ respectively) constituted major constraints to farmers' labour group activities in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. This implies that migration of able-bodied men and women to urban centers greatly have negative effects on farm labour supply as revealed by these findings, this will surely affect farm productivity as rural farmers may not have the needed fund to hire labour. Ekong (2010) asserts that migration from rural to urban greatly deplete agriculture labour force as able-bodied people are involved.

Other constraints as perceived by the respondents from both ethnicities were problem of land ownership ($M= 2.37$ $SD= 0.707$), low level of education and low extension contacts ($M= 2.44$ $SD= 0.550$ and $M= 2.44$ $SD= 0.533$), high poverty level ($M= 2.26$ $SD=0.533$), and lack of government support ($M= 2.07$ $SD=0.704$) among others. The finding equally revealed that farmers' labour groups had little or no extension contact, this then shows that the farmers may not have access to some innovative practices that can better their agricultural operations. Iwuchukwu, Udoeye and Onwubuya (2013) report that 77.5% of pineapple farmers in Enugu State had no contact with extension agents in 2011. This will translate to poor diffusion of innovation, and hence, poor yield.

Farmers from both ethnic groups do not see some constraints such as exclusion from national labour laws ($M= 1.33$ $SD= 0.558$), lack of involvement in decision-making ($M=$

1.85 SD= 0.586), constant internal crisis (M=1.05 SD= 0.292), corruption/embezzlement (M= 1.06 SD=0.277) among a host of others as serious. Table 12 also shows how each of these ethnic groups perceived constraints to farmers' labour group effectiveness. Common constraints among the two ethnic groups were low level of education of members (M= 2.39 and 2.62), low extension contact (M=2.36 and 2.75), old age of some members (M= 2.49 and 2.92), migration of youth population (M=2.71 and 2.88), high poverty level of members (M= 2.25 and 2.32) and problem of land ownership (M=2.28 and 2.68) among others respectively.

However, there were some constraints that were peculiar to each ethnic group as seen in the table. For instance, lack of access to agro-information (M=2.08) and poor storage facilities (M=2.20) were seen as constraints among farmers' labour groups within Igala ethnic origin, while these were not so among farmers in Ebira ethnic group as proved by mean scores of M=1.52 respectively. Also, lack of government support (M=2.38) was identified as a constraint among Ebira farmers' labour groups, while this was not so (M=1.99) among farmers' groups in Igala land. From the foregoing, it therefore implies that each ethnic group has its own production peculiarities, though there are some common constraints that cut across the two ethnic groups.

According to Egbodion and Erie (2011), the declining trend in agricultural production in the face of steady growing population is aggravated by short falls in the supply of agro-chemicals (farm inputs), mass illiteracy, fast ageing farming population, rural-urban migration among others. Sangotebe, Odebode and Onikoye (2012) report that a large proportion (52.2%) of farmers in Oke-Ogun area of south-western Nigeria see high cost of farm inputs as a severe constraint to their farm operations. Onuk, Luka and

Hannatu (2013) also found out that 86.7% of women farmers in Nasarawa State have problem with farm inputs, other farm constraints identified by the respondents were problem of land (100%), low extension contacts (76.7%) among others.

Quinton (2012) also contends that, smallholder farmers in Africa lacks access to farm inputs, finance and material resources, as well as technical knowledge and markets. The author further stated that, small-scale farmers throughout the continent lack the managerial competencies necessary to succeed in the highly competitive farming industry.

Table 13: Mean distribution of constraints to operation of farmers' labour groups (n-114)

Constraint	Igala(n=89)		Ethnic group Ebira(n=25)		Overall (n=114)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Exclusion from national labour laws	1.34	0.583	1.29	0.464	1.33	0.558
Lack of government support	1.99	0.699	2.38*	0.647	2.07*	0.704
Lack of involvement in decision-making	1.87	0.548	1.79	0.721	1.85	0.586
Constant internal crisis	1.07	0.330	1.00	0.000	1.05	0.294
Poor health status of members	1.96	0.646	1.96	0.624	1.96	0.648
Low extension contact	2.36*	0.528	2.75*	0.442	2.44*	0.533
Old age of some members	2.49*	0.659	2.92*	0.282	2.58*	0.623
Corruption(embezzlement of fund)	1.08	0.310	1.00	0.000	1.08	0.277
Religious differences	1.07	0.294	1.00	0.000	1.05	0.262
Migration of youth population	2.71*	0.548	2.88*	0.338	2.74*	0.514
Pests and diseases	1.63	0.681	1.25	0.532	1.55	0.668
Imposition of taxes by local authorities	1.43	0.638	1.20	0.500	1.38	0.615
Bad weather conditions	1.49	0.567	1.12	0.332	1.41	0.545
High poverty level of members	2.25*	0.528	2.32*	0.557	2.26*	0.533
Poor state of infrastructure	2.20*	0.643	2.12*	0.440	2.18*	0.603
Low productivity	1.66	0.706	1.48	0.510	1.62	0.670
Problem of land ownership	2.28*	0.723	2.68*	0.557	2.37*	0.707
Low prestige accorded farmers	1.74	0.747	1.20	0.577	1.62	0.745
Lack of commitment of some members	1.18	0.490	1.00	0.000	1.14	0.439
Lack of access to agro-information	2.08*	0.661	1.52	0.714	1.96	0.709
Poor storage facilities	2.04*	0.562	1.52	0.714	1.93	0.634
Scarcity of farm labour	2.56*	0.563	2.64*	0.490	2.58*	0.547
High cost of farm labour	2.56*	0.583	2.76*	0.436	2.61*	0.588
Scarcity of farm inputs	1.34	0.499	1.20	0.408	1.31	0.482
High cost of farm inputs	2.38*	0.533	2.36*	0.490	2.38*	0.522

Source: Field survey, 2014

*Major constraints

4.14 Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference in the perception of constraints faced by farmers' labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups

Results presented in Table 14 shows the differences in the perception of constraints faced by the two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira). The results indicated that there were significant differences in constraints faced by the two ethnic groups. These differences existed in constraints such as lack of government support ($t=-2.439$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), low extension contacts ($t=-3.321$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), old age of some members ($t=-3.055$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), pests and diseases ($t=2.527$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), problem of land ownership ($t=-2.553$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), low prestige accorded farmers ($t=3.352$; $P\hat{O}0.05$), lack of access to agro-information ($t=3.669$; $P\hat{O}0.05$) and scarcity of farm labour ($t=3.878$; $P\hat{O}0.05$).

These results further revealed that farmers' labour groups in the Igala ethnic group perceived more of the constraints than their Ebira counterparts. These were lack of access to agro-information ($M=2.08$ $SD=0.661$) and scarcity of farm labour ($M=2.04$ $SD=0.562$). This is evident by their higher mean scores compared to their counterparts. The null hypothesis is rejected in this context.

Table 14: Test of differences in the perception of constraints to farmers' labour group formation and productivity

Constraint	Ethnic group				t-value	Sig.
	Igala (n=89)		Ebira(n=25)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Exclusion from national labour laws	1.34	0.583	1.29	0.464	0.252	0.725
Lack of government supports	1.99	0.699	2.38	0.647	-2.439	0.015*
Lack of involvement in decision-making	1.87	0.548	1.79	0.721	0.544	0.588
Constant internal crisis	1.07	0.330	1.00	0.000	0.997	0.067
Low level of education	2.39	0.536	2.62	0.576	-1.852	0.067
Low extension contact	2.38	0.528	2.75	0.442	-3.321	0.001*
Poor health status of some members	1.96	0.656	1.96	0.624	0.022	0.983
Old age of some members	2.49	0.659	2.92	0.282	-3.055	0.000*
Corruption (embezzlement of fund)	1.08	0.310	1.00	0.000	1.239	0.218
Religious differences	1.07	0.294	1.00	0.000	1.120	0.265
Migration of youth population	2.71	0.548	2.88	0.338	-1.421	0.158
Pests and diseases	1.63	0.681	1.25	0.532	2.527	0.013*
Imposition of taxes by local authorities	1.43	0.638	1.20	0.500	1.642	0.103
Bad weather conditions	1.49	0.567	1.12	0.332	3.150	0.002*
High poverty level of farmers	2.25	0.528	2.32	0.557	0.602	0.549
Poor state of infrastructure	2.20	0.643	2.12	0.440	0.601	0.549
Low productivity	1.66	0.704	1.48	0.510	1.208	0.230
Problem of land ownership	2.28	0.723	2.68	0.557	-2.553	0.012*
Low prestige accorded farmers	1.74	0.747	1.20	0.577	3.352	0.001*
Lack commitment of some members	1.18	0.490	1.00	0.000	1.829	0.070
Lack of access to agro-information	2.08	0.661	1.52	0.714	3.669	0.000*
Scarcity of farm labour	2.04	0.562	1.52	0.714	3.878	0.000*
Poor storage facilities	2.56	0.563	2.64	0.490	-0.630	0.530
Scarcity of farm inputs	1.34	0.499	1.20	0.408	1.260	0.210
High cost of farm inputs	3.38	0.533	2.38	0.490	0.186	0.853

Source: Field survey, 2014

*Significant @ P ≤ 0.05

4.15 Factor analysis of constraints to farmers' labour group formation and productivity

Table 15 shows the varimax rotated factor analysis of factors affecting farmers' labour groups in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups. According to the table, four factors were delineated based on the item loadings as constraints to farmers' labour groups, these

were: farming environment factor; members' personality factor; membership exclusion factor; and government support factor.

Specific factors that loaded high in factor one were migration of youth population (-0.478), pests and diseases (0.628), imposition of taxes by local authorities (0.661), bad weather conditions (0.474), low prestige accorded farmers (0.405), poor storage facilities (0.475) and high cost of farm labour (-0.499). Ekong (2010) asserts that, the out migration of the skilled and educated from the rural areas deprived those areas of the human capital needed for productive purposes. Duru (2010) corroborated that, rural-urban migrants often consider the rural-urban imbalance of economic opportunities between the source and destination regions as the major pushing and pulling factor. A survey of senior secondary school students carried out by Ilenlo and Onemolease (2011) in Esan LGA of Edo State revealed that only 7.6% of the sampled students agreed to take a career in agriculture/farming, while majority (92.4%) opted out for non-farming jobs such as banking, civil service jobs among others. While factors that loaded high in factor two were constant internal crisis (0.761), corruption (0.878), religious differences (0.466) and lack of commitment by some members (0.558). Anonguku, Age, and Aduku-Dale (2010) report that, 58% of farmers in Makurdi local government area of Benue State agreed that communal crisis can disrupt social activities such as land preparation, weeding, harvesting among others. And factors that loaded high in factor three were exclusion from national labour laws (0.527), poor health status of farmers (0.638), high poverty level of members (0.499) and lack/limited access to agricultural information (0.590). ILO (2008) reported that, rural farmers fall outside the scope of national labour laws, in a number of cases, they are excluded either fully or partially from relevant labour

laws. Research focusing on agriculture has revealed the negative effect of ill-health especially on the welfare of agricultural households-which affect overall economic development. For instance, Asenso-Okyere, Chiang, Thangata and Andam (2011) report that the effects of ill-health on farm households include three broad impacts: absenteeism from farm work due to morbidity (and eventual death): diversion of family time to caring for the sick: and the loss of savings and assets in the course of dealing with disease and its consequences. Onuche, Opaluwa and Edoka (2014) also reported that 46.7% of rural households in Kogi State lost between 1 to 5 farming days on account of illness of a member on one extreme, while on the other extreme, 6.7% of them lost over 20 farming days due to illness of a member. While lack of government support (0.412), low extension contact (0.402), poor state of infrastructure (0.438), problem of land ownership (0.612) and high cost of farm inputs (0.538) were the factors that loaded high in factor four. Amalu (1998) opined that the nation's extension system is dysfunctional due to limited number of extension agents in some states for instance, there are as few as 4 to 8 extension staff per local government area hence giving an extension agent to farm family ratio of 1 to 4,000-10,000. And the effectiveness of this number of extension staff in most states is seriously limited by lack of transport and enough funds for paying transport allowances and other logistics.

Table 15: Varimax rotated factor analysis of constraints to farmers' labour groups (n=114)

Constraints	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Exclusion from national labour laws	-0.021	0.222	0.527	0.088
Lack of government supports	-0.008	-0.064	0.145	0.412
Lack of involvement in decision-making	0.111	0.040	0.332	0.341
Constant internal crisis	0.115	0.761	-0.075	-0.087
Low level of education	-0.399	-0.278	-0.189	0.054
Low extension contact	-0.252	-0.098	-0.274	0.402
Poor health status of members	0.034	-0.108	0.638	0.106
Old age of some members	-0.302	-0.353	-0.106	0.058
Corruption(embezzlement)	0.010	0.878	-0.010	0.147
Religious differences	-0.164	0.466	0.266	0.106
Migration of youth population	-0.478	-0.313	0.022	0.150
Pests and diseases	0.628	-0.036	-0.005	0.339
Imposition of taxes by local authorities	0.661	-0.212	-0.209	0.068
Bad weather conditions	0.474	-0.154	-0.001	0.116
High poverty level of members	0.214	0.077	-0.499	0.216
Poor state of infrastructure	0.162	0.012	0.040	0.438
Low productivity	0.421	0.411	-0.274	0.125
Problem of land ownership	-0.232	0.213	-0.348	0.612
Low prestige accorded farmers	0.405	0.098	0.255	0.377
Lack of commitment of some members	-0.036	0.558	0.081	-0.165
Lack/limited access to agro-information	0.343	0.176	0.590	0.192
Poor storage facilities	0.475	0.006	0.293	0.088
Scarcity of farm labour	-0.279	-0.305	0.012	0.171
High cost of farm labour	-0.499	-0.254	0.113	0.260
Scarcity of farm inputs	0.286	0.122	0.178	-0.087
High cost of farm inputs	0.021	-0.148	0.049	0.538

Factor 1: Farming environment factor

Factor 2: Members' personality factor

Factor 3: Membership exclusion factor

Factor 4: Government support factor

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization (loading at 0.40 and above)

Bold type is used to highlight high factor loading.

4.16 Awareness and use of farm labour laws

According Table 16, freedom of association ($M=3.34$ $SD=0.860$) and child labour act ($M=3.11$ $SD=0.860$) were the major farm labour laws that farmers from both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) were aware of and used. From the data presented in the table, these farmers were not all aware of prohibition of forced labour act ($M= 2.23$ $SD=0.990$), occupational safety and health act ($M=1.13$ $SD=0.340$), seasonal agricultural worker protection act ($M=1.15$ $SD=0.358$) and compensation and provision act ($M=1.17$ $SD=0.374$). But they were fairly aware of normal hour of work provision act ($M=1.21$ $SD=0.470$), fair labour standard act ($M=1.20$ $SD=0.445$) and prohibition of discrimination against rural labour force ($M=1.90$ $SD=0.912$).

Table 16 equally reveals that the two ethnic regions (Igala and Ebira) were aware of labour laws such as freedom of association act ($M=3.31$ $SD=0.820$ and $M=3.44$ $SD=1.003$) and child labour act ($M=3.01$ $SD=0.898$ and $M=3.44$ $SD=0.588$) respectively. Members from Ebira ethnic group were aware of prohibition of forced labour act ($M=2.56$ $SD=1.003$), but their Igala counterpart had little knowledge about it. This implies that most of the labour laws protecting rural farmers are still not known by farmers in the study area. According to ILO (2008), many rural farmers/workers especially those in agriculture experience severe difficulties and gaps in protection against farm hazards. In consequence, about 170,000 agricultural farmers/workers are killed each year and millions more are seriously injured in workplace involving agricultural machinery, pesticides and other agro-chemicals without being compensated (ILO,2008).

According to ILO (2008), 70% of child labour is found in agriculture in developing countries. This implies that children are exposed to lots of farm hazards such as chemical poisons, animal and plant diseases and other farm-related fatalities in some developing countries of Africa. But the findings here show that farmers in both ethnic groups are conscious of labour laws such as forced labour, use of underage labour and freedom of association.

Table 16: Mean distribution of respondents by awareness of labour laws (n=114)

Aware	Ethnic group				Overall	
	Igala(n=89)		Ebira (n=25)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Prohibition of forced labour act	2.13	0.932	2.56*	1.003	2.23	0.960
Compensation and provision act	1.16	0.366	1.20	0.408	1.17	0.374
Normal hour of work provision act	1.22	0.494	1.16	0.374	1.21	0.470
Child labour act	3.01*	0.898	3.48*	0.588	3.11*	0.860
Prohibition of discrimination against rural-						
labour force	1.71	0.815	2.20	1.155	1.82	0.918
prohibition against exploitation of rural-						
labour force	1.85	0.911	2.08	0.909	1.90	0.912
Freedom of association	3.31*	0.820	3.44*	1.003	3.34*	0.860
Seasonal agricultural worker protection act	1.17	0.376	1.08	0.277	1.15	0.358
Occupational safety and health act	1.15	0.355	1.08	0.277	1.13	0.340

Source: Field survey, 2014

*** Aware**

4.17 Farmers' labour groups and farmer-to-farmer extension

Table 17 shows that, farmers' labour groups in both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups developed some potentials/skills for farmer-to-farmer extension. Some of these skills developed were knowledge-sharing ($M=2.87$ $SD=0.343$ and $M=2.84$ $SD=0.374$), problem-solving potentials ($M=2.48$ $SD=0.642$ and $M=2.48$ $SD=0.586$), potentials for conflict resolutions ($M=2.44$ $SD=0.602$ and $M=2.48$ $SD=0.510$) and improved farmer-to-farmer networking ($M=2.36$ $SD=0.569$ and $M=2.36$ $SD=0.490$) respectively. Farmers in group can freely share ideas on common farm problem and then arrive at a common solution. Interaction among members of farmers' labour group will enable them swap agricultural information which will greatly enhance their learning (Dominguez and Brown, 2004).

Entries in Table 17 also shows that the two ethnic groups shared similar farmer-to-farmer extension potentials as; knowledge-sharing ($M=2.87$ and $M=2.84$), improved farmer-to-farmer networking ($M=2.36$ and $M=2.36$), farmers' problem-solving abilities ($M=2.48$ respectively) and conflict resolution ability ($M=2.44$ and $M=2.48$). Other potentials were not fully developed as shown in the table. The commonalities of potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension among the two ethnic set ups could be attributed to the socio-cultural linkages between them as they share common boundaries. There is information flow between the two ethnic groups. Katz (2002) contends that farmers' labour groups are positioned in this context as independent, strategic actors capable of expertise, knowledge generation and exchange and local groups' process. Farmers' groups are instrumental in achieving economies of scale by adapting and

disseminating new knowledge among members and the entire community (Royal Tropical Institute, 2006).

Table 17: Mean distribution of farmers' labour groups by potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension (= 114)

Potential	Ethic group				Overall	
	Igala(n=89)		Ebira(n=25)		(n=114)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Knowledge-sharing	2.87*	0.343	2.84*	0.374	2.86*	0.349
Improved farmer-to-farmer networking	2.36*	0.569	2.36*	0.490	2.36*	0.551
Involvement in decision-making process	1.75	0.695	1.56	0.651	1.71	0.688
Involvement in programme design	1.12	0.366	1.12	0.332	1.12	0.357
Promotion of farmers' capacity to adapt- technologies.	1.26	0.465	1.08	0.277	1.22	0.436
Ability to learn through experimentation- and become experts	1.30	0.531	1.34	0.436	1.29	0.510
Strengthen farmers' problem-solving ability	2.48*	0.642	2.48*	0.586	2.48*	0.627
Partnership ability with other actors in agric.	1.46	0.604	1.24	0.436	1.41	0.577
Self-discovery ability	1.27	0.495	1.12	0.440	1.24	0.485
Conflicts resolution ability	2.44*	0.602	2.48*	0.510	2.45*	0.581

Source: Field survey, 2014

***Major potentials**

4.18 Effectiveness of farmers' labour groups in some selected farm and non-farm activities

Data presented in Table 18 reveals that majority ($M=2.93$ $SD=0.257$) of farmersö labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups believed that expansion of farmlands can be achieved effectively when working in group, other areas that farmersö labour group can be effective were bulk purchase of farm inputs ($M=2.77$ $SD=0.480$), saving of cost of farm labour ($M=2.71$ $SD=0.510$), facilitation of group solidarity ($M=2.46$ $SD=0.693$) and availability of adequate farm labour ($M=2.02$ $SD=0.697$).

According to Table 18, the two ethnic groups shared certain perceived effectiveness of farmersö labour groups. Some of these were saving of cost of labour ($M=2.69$ and $M=2.84$), expansion of farmlands ($M=2.94$ and 2.88), bulk procurement of farm inputs ($M=2.75$ and 2.84), adequate farm labour ($M=2.25$ and 2.48) and facilitation of group solidarity ($M=2.55$ and 2.12 respectively). Rotational farming among members of farmersö labour groups brings about expansion of membersö farm land as each member enjoys more labour hands in their farms. Farmersö in Ebira ethnic group perceived access to external supports ($M=2.36$) and involvement in community development ($M=2.15$) as highly effective as against their Igala counterparts ($M=1.93$) and ($M=1.70$) respectively.

Table 18: Mean distribution of respondents by effectiveness in some selected farm and non-farm activities

Effectiveness	<u>Ethnic group</u>				<u>Overall(n=114)</u>	
	<u>Igala(n=89)</u>		<u>Ebira(n=25)</u>			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Saves costs of farm labour	2.69*	0.539	2.84*	0.374	2.71*	0.510
Easy access to credits	1.76	0.675	1.56	0.507	1.71	0.645
Expansion of farmlands	2.94*	0.232	2.88*	0.332	2.93*	0.025
Easy access to agro-information	1.73	0.539	1.92	0.572	1.77	0.549
Access to external supports	1.93	0.636	2.36*	0.810	2.03*	0.697
Bulk procurement of farm inputs	2.75*	0.506	2.84*	0.374	2.77*	0.480
Facilitate innovation adoption	1.94	0.591	1.92	0.812	1.94	0.642
Provide adequate farm labour	2.25*	0.712	2.48*	0.714	2.30*	0.716
Food availability and security	1.89	0.665	1.84	0.748	1.88	0.680
Facilitate group solidarity	2.55*	0.640	2.12*	0.781	2.46*	0.693
Facilitate rural community devt.	1.70	0.647	2.16*	0.688	1.80	0.681
Source: Field survey, 2014				*Effective		

4.19 Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between farmers' labour groups and effectiveness in farm operations.

Chi-Square test of significance for relationship between farmers' labour group and effectiveness in some selected farm operations is shown in Table 19. According to the results, slight differences existed in the areas of access to external support ($t=-2.79$ at $P\hat{O}$ 0.05), facilitate group solidarity ($t=2.83$ $P\hat{O}$ 0.05) and facilitate rural community

development ($t = -3.12$; $P \hat{=} 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a strong relationship between farmers' labour groups and effectiveness in carrying out both farm and non-farm operations. This is so as differences existed only in three areas (access to external support, group solidarity and rural community development) out of all the variables measured. It could therefore be inferred that farmers working in groups can bring about improvement and economies of scale in farm operations.

Table 19: Chi-Square test for relationship between farmers' labour groups and effectiveness in some selected farm operations

Effectiveness	Ethnic group				t-values
	Igala(n=89)		Ebira(n=25)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Saves costs of farm labour	2.69*	0.539	2.84*	0.374	-1.44
Easy access to credits	1.76	0.675	1.56	0.507	1.40
Expansion of farmlands	2.94*	0.232	2.88*	0.332	1.10
Easy access to agro-information	1.73	0.539	1.92	0.572	-1.53
Access to external supports	1.93	0.636	2.36*	0.810	-2.79**
Bulk procurement of farm inputs	2.75*	0.506	2.84*	0.374	-0.80
Facilitate innovation adoption	1.94	0.591	1.92	0.812	0.16
Provide adequate farm labour	2.25*	0.712	2.48*	0.714	-1.44
Food availability and security	1.89	0.665	1.84	0.748	0.30
Facilitate group solidarity	2.55*	0.640	2.12*	0.781	2.83**
Facilitate rural community devt.	1.70	0.647	2.16*	0.688	-3.12**

Source: Field survey, 2014

*Effective

**P $\hat{=} 0.05$

Chapter Five

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The overall purpose of the study was to assess farm labour groups among Igala and Ebira ethnic groups in Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described farm labour groups among the two ethnic groups; ascertained perceived benefits of farmers' labour groups; identified the various constraints to farmers' labour group formation and productivity; ascertained farmers' level of awareness of farm labour laws; determined group potentials for farmer-to-farmer extension; and ascertained the effectiveness of farmers' labour groups in some selected farm operations.

Kogi State is located in north central Nigeria and has three major ethnic groups namely: Igala (found in the eastern part), Ebira (central) and Okun (western). The Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were purposively selected for the study because of the greater number of farmers' labour groups found in them. A total of 114 farmers' labour groups were randomly selected from the two ethnic groups consisting of 342 sampled farmers as sample size for the study. Structured interview schedule and personal observation were used to collect data from the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean score, standard deviation (SD), student t-test, Chi-Square and factor analysis with varimax rotation.

Results showed that majority (91.0%) of members of farmers' labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were males with mean age of 51 years. A greater proportion (48.0%) of the farmers spent between 7-12 years to acquire formal education. Slightly over half (50.5% and 56.0%) of farmers from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups

had household sizes in the range of between 7-11 persons. Majority (60.7% and 60.0%) of the farmers from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups had farm sizes of between 1-4 hectares with a mean farming experience of 38 years. Most (77.5% and 76.0%) of the farmers from the two ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) inherited their farmlands from their fore-parents. Greater proportion (61.8% and 95.0%) of the farmers planted cassava with an annual average income of 183,614. 04. And majority (43.8% and 52.0%) of the farmers from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups had no extension contact.

On the year of formation, majority (42.7% and 68.0%) of the farmers labour groups in both ethnic groups were formed before 1990, with an average group size of 11 persons. Majority (70.8% and 96.0%) of the labour groups from both ethnic groups sold their labour at an average sum of 5,228.65. On the reasons for labour groups formation, respondents from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups gave dearth of farm labour (83.1% and 100%); rural-urban migration (74. 6% and 68.0%); to assist one another (53.3% and 12.0%), among others as major reasons for labour group formation. On the organizational structure of farmers' labour groups, all (100%) farmers' labour groups from both Igala and Ebira ethnic groups had chairmen (leaders) and treasurers respectively. The study also found out that the leaders performed certain functions among these were: conflict resolutions (96.6% respectively); coordination of group activities (76.4% and 88.0%); facilitation of group activities (59.6% and 48.0%), among others.

Majority (80.9% and 100%) of farmers entered farmers' labour groups through invitation, while all (100%) farmers' labour groups from both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) held meeting mainly on fortnight (51.7% and 56.0%) basis. Greater proportion (36.0% and 24.0%) of farmers' labour groups from both ethnic groups fined erring

members as the major punitive measure. On the sources of funds, majority (78.7% and 76.0%) Of the farmersö labour groups from both ethnic groups (Igala and Ebira) sourced funds from contributions made by members, though some (61.8% and 64.0%) of the labour groups sourced funds from sales of their labour. On the changing roles performed by farmersö labour groups, institution of thrift and loans (69.7% and 80.0%); bulk procurement of farm inputs (88.8% and 56.0%); construction of rural markets stalls (71.9% and 96.0%); and building of local houses for some members (75.3% and 84.0%), among others were some of the changing roles performed by farmersö labour groups in the two ethnic groups. The various sources of agro-information available to the farmersö labour groups were: radio (75.3% and 100%); peer groups (61.8% and 40.0%); community leaders (53.9% and 40.0%), among others in both ethnic groups.

On the perceived benefits of farmersö labour groups, respondents perceived deep inter-personal relationship (M=3.38); access to a pool of farm labour (M= 3.72); assisting indigent members (M= 3.37); and increased income (M= 2.99), among others as major benefits derived from farmersö labour groups. And on the awareness of farm labour laws, respondents reiterated that they were aware and used freedom of association act (M= 3.34) and child labour act (M= 3.11), among others. And on the potentials of farmer-to-farmer extension of farmersö labour groups from Igala and Ebira ethnic groups perceived that they had skills in knowledge-sharing (M= 2.86); problem-solving ability (M= 2.48); conflict resolutions potential (M= 2.45), among others. The study also found out the respondents perception of the effectiveness of farmersö labour groups in carrying out some farm operations. Some of these were: expansion of farmlands (M= 2.77); saving of

cost of farm labour (M= 2.71); group solidarity (M= 2.46); availability of adequate farm labour (M= 2.02), among others.

The study further found out some constraining factors to farmers' labour groups formation and productivity in the two ethnic groups. Some of these factors were: rural-urban migration (M= 2.71); high cost of farm labour (M= 2.61); ageing of some members (M= 2.58); low level of education and low extension contact (M= 2.44 respectively); land ownership (land tenure) (M= 2.37); high poverty level (M= 2.26), among others.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Members of farm labour groups in respect to Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were fairly old, with majority of them having primary education. The farmers had large family size which could be advantageous for farm works. In addition to crop production, farmers from both ethnic groups also reared animals which serve as source of income and protein. Majority of these farmers inherited their farmlands and the major crop they grow was cassava. And most of these farmers' labour groups were formed before 1990. The major reason adduced for forming labour groups was dearth of farm labour. To ensure conformity to the guiding rules, payment of fines was the major punitive measure adopted by these farmers' groups by erring member(s).

Both farmers' labour groups from Igala and Ebira ethnic groups received assistance from government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the major assistance were in the areas of farm inputs and advisory. The major sources of fund for these farmers were sales of farm labour and contributions by members. Farmers from both

ethnic groups diversified to other areas such as building of local houses for needy members and institution of thrift and loans to cushion farmers' financial difficulties.

Majority of the farmers sourced their agro-information from radio. And the major benefits they derived from forming farmers' labour groups were access to pool of farm labour and promotion of deep interpersonal relationships. While the major constraints they faced were migration of youth population, high cost of farm labour, old age of some members and problem of landownership.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

- Government and private institutions should intensify the processes of urbanizing rural areas as they serve as repository of labour force and food sources for the entire country at large by providing the necessary infrastructure. This will help check rural-urban migration of youth population and hence, reducing migration of rural labour force.
- Capacity building/training in the areas of formal education and awareness creation should be intensified to enable farmers appreciate and adopt the use of farm labour. Government and private partners can help in this direction by establishing adult literacy centres in rural areas so as to enable members of farmers' labour groups acquire the necessary skills and competence to carry out their traditional and enterprising roles effectively.
- The weak extension service should be strengthened by government and other private extension outfits by way of funding, training and provision of necessary logistics. This will enable farmers' labour groups have constant

access to extension services and information for the improvement in their farm operations.

- It was discovered in the study that farm inputs were not scarce but costly, government and actors in the agricultural sector should help subsidize the costs of these inputs to make them accessible to rural farmers.
- Also, it was discovered that, most members of farmers' labour groups in Igala and Ebira ethnic groups were aged, government should come out with policies and programmes that can make the agricultural sector enticing to the younger generations. This can be done by increasing the yearly budgetary allocation to agriculture, provision of farm inputs at subsidized rate, granting interest-free loans to farmers and organizing seminars for students and young school leavers to appreciate agriculture as a good career,
- Farmers' labour groups need political, financial and technical support to enable them play greater roles in community development. Government and donor organizations should strengthen these farmers' organizations to enable them explore their full potentials for sustainable development and food security, and
- Government should establish well-functioning labour inspection system in line with the guidance provided in the ILO Conventions 1969, No.129 on labour inspection (ILO, 2011). This will help in ensuring that farm labour laws cover rural farmers who are majorly unaware of their existence.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIR

Department of Agricultural Extension,
Faculty of Agriculture
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
10th February, 2014.

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria conducting a research titled “*Assessment of Farm Labour Groups among Igala and Ebira Ethnic Groups in Kogi State, Nigeria.*”

The research is purely for academic purposes and all the information supplied shall be treated confidentially. Please, kindly respond to the below items as accurately and objectively as you can.

Thanks for your cooperation

Yours sincerely

Edoka, Mathew H.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE RESPONDENTS

Section A: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

1. What is your sex?
 Male ()
 Female ()
2. How many years were you in your last birthday? _____
3. How many years did you spend in acquiring formal education? _____
4. How many people do you have in your household? _____
5. What is the size of your farmland in hectare? _____
6. If you are an animal farmer, what is the size of your animals?
 1-5 ()
 11-15 ()
 16-20 ()
 20 and above ()
 None ()
7. How many years of farming experience do you have? _____
8. What is your total annual income () from all your farming operations? _____
9. What is the source of your farmland? a. Inheritance () b. Borrowed () c. Rented ()
10. Major crop grown. a. Yam () b. Cassava () c. Beans () d. Maize () e. Others, specify -----

Section B: Characteristics of Farmers' Labour Groups

11. What year did you form your group? a. Before 1990 () b. 1991-1999 (), c. 2010 (), d. 2011 and above ()
12. How many are you in your group? (actual size) -----
13. Does your group have sub-groups? a. Yes () b. No ()

14.If yes, how many sub-groups do you have? 2 (), 3 (), 4 (), 5 (), More than 5 ()

15.List them and their roles.

- i. -----
- ii. -----
- iii. -----
- iv. -----
-

16.What informed the formation of farm labour groups?

- a. Dearth of farm labour () b. Economies of scale c. Rural-urban migration d.
- Pooling of money for lending () e. Others, specify

17.Do you choose some people (officials) to run the group? Yes () No ()

18.If yes, which of these roles do they perform?

Role	Yes	No
Conflict resolution		
Setting of group goals		
Coordination of group activities		
Information management		
Collective decision-making		
Facilitation		
Adequate representation		

19. How do you choose your leaders? By election () Appointment () Imposition ()
20. What is the mode of entrance? a. By initiation () b. Registration () c. Inheritance ()
d. By invitation, e. Others, specify -----

21. Does your group have constitution? a. Yes () b. No ()
22. If yes, is it written or unwritten? a. Written () b. Unwritten ()
23. How does your group penalize erring members? a. Cutting off benefits () b. Suspension ()
c. Expulsion () d. Ostracizing () e. Others, specify -----

24. Does your group hold meetings? a. Yes (), No ()
- 25 a. If yes, how often? a. Weekly (), b. Fortnightly (), c. Monthly (), Quarterly (),
Yearly ()
- b. Where do you hold meetings? -----

26. What is the gender composition of your group? a. Men only (), b. Men and women ()
27. Does your group sell their labour to members and non-members? a. Yes (), b. No ()
28. If yes, how much per hectare/day? -----
29. Is your group registered with the state Agricultural Development Project (ADP)/any other government agency?
- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

30. What form of assistance do you receive from the state ADP? a. Training () b. Extension services () c. Farm inputs () d. Cash () e. Advisory services () f. Others, specify -----

31. How does your group source for fund to fund its activities? a. Contributions from members () b. Donations from members and non-members () c. Sales of farm produce () d. Investment () e. NGOs/government () f. Sales of group labour ()

32. Which of these changing/enterprising roles does your group perform?

Change in role	Yes	No
Institution of thrift and loans		
Processing of farm produce		
Bulk procurement of farm inputs for sale to members		
Construction of rural market stalls		
Marketing of farm produce for members		
Building of local houses for needy member		
Provision of rural water		
Construction of rural roads		

33. What are the sources of your agro-information?

a. Community/traditional leaders () b Radio programmes () c. TV programmes () d. Newspapers () e. NGOs () f. Farmers cooperatives () g. Peer groups/friends () h. Religious organizations () i. Extension agents () j. Ministry of Agriculture () k. Internet () l. Academic Journals () m. Posters/billboards ()

Section C: Perceived Benefits of Farmers' Labour Groups

34. What benefits do you derive from joining farmers' labour group?

Benefits	SA	A	D	SD
	4	3	2	1
Access to credits from financial institutions				
Promotion of deep interpersonal relationships				
Access to pool of farm labour				
Promotion of saving culture				
Self-sufficiency in food production and security				
Assisting indigent members in times of needs				
Development of leadership abilities into other areas of village life				
Increased income				
Serve as veritable platforms for acquisition/adoption of innovation				
Access to necessary agric. Information				
Enhancement of community labour-sharing				
Access to external support from donors				
Lending money in circles as the case may be				

SA=Strongly Agreed, A= Agreed, D= Disagreed, SD= Strongly Disagreed

35. Which of these sources of farm labour/power do you prefer most?

Source of farm labour	Yes	No
Community labour		
Hired labour		
Family labour		
Group labour		
machiney		

36. How effective is farm labour group compared to other sources of farm labour?

a. Highly effective () b. Moderately effective () c. Effective () d. Not effective

Section D: Constraints to Farmers' Labour Groups

37. Which of the under-listed factors constrained effective operation of farmers' labour groups?

Constraint	VS	S	NS
	3	2	1
Exclusion from national labour Laws (due to casual or seasonal nature of work)			
Lack of support by the government			
Lack of involvement in decisions that affect them			
Constant internal crisis			

Low level of education			
Low extension contact			
Poor health status of farmers			
Old age of some members			
Corruption (embezzlement of funds)			
Religious differences			
Migration of youth population			
Pests and diseases			
Imposition of taxes by local authorities			
Bad weather conditions			
High poverty level of members			
Poor state of infrastructure			
Low productivity			
Problem of land ownership			
Low prestige accorded farm labour groups			
Lack of commitment on the part of members			
Lack/limited access to agro-information			
Poor storage facilities for harvested crops			
Scarcity of farm labour			
High cost of labour			
Scarcity of farm inputs			
High cost of farm inputs			

VS= Very Serious, S= Serious, NS=Not Serious

38. If yes which of these hazard; a. Wounds/skin cuts () b. Snake bites () c. Burn from fire () d. Chemical poisons () e. Insect bites/sting () f. Others, specify -----

Section E: Awareness of labour laws by rural farmers labour groups

39. Is your state government aware of your existence? a. Yes () b. NO ()

40. Are you aware of labour laws that guide your operations? A. Yes () b. No ()

41. To what extent are you aware of these farm labour laws?

Labour law	To a great extent (TGE)(4)	To some extent (TSE)(3)	To a little extent (TLE)(2)	To no extent (TNE)(1)
Prohibition of forced labour				
Compensation and provision act				
Normal hour of work provision act				
Child labour act				
prohibition of discrimination against rural labour force				
prohibition against exploitation of rural labour force				
Freedom of association				

21. Is your group protected by law or government? a. Yes () b. NO ()

43. If no, can you give two reasons for the non-protection of your group by government

Laws:

i. -----

ii. -----

Section F: Group Potentials for Farmer-to -Farmer Extension

44. Does farm labour group involve in farmer-to-farmer extension?

a. Yes () b. No ()

45.To what extent do your group perceive farmer-to

farmer (participatory) agricultural extension service delivery? Tick from the below options.

Perception	To a great extent (TGE) (3)	To a little extent (TLE)(2)	To no extent (TNE) (1)
Knowledge sharing			
Improved farmer-to-farmer networking			
Involvement in decision making process			
Involvement in the design of programme and execution			
Promotion of farmers capacity to adapt and develop appropriate technologies			
Encourage farmers to learn through experimentation and become experts			
Strengthens farmersö problem solving and managerial ability			
Encourage equal partnership between farmers, extension and researchers			
Participation in govt. devt. Programmes			
Resolution of conflicts among members			

Section G: Farm labour group effectiveness

46. How effective is your farm labour group on your farming operation

Effectiveness of groups	Highly effective	Effective	Not effective
Farm labour groups saves cost of farm labour			
Farm labour groups enable farmers have easy access to loans			
Farm labour group has caused expansion of farm size			
Farm labour group enable better access to agricultural information			
Enables farmers to access external supports/incentives from donor agencies			
Enables bulk purchase of farm inputs			
Facilitate adoption of innovation			
Provides adequate labour for my farm labour demands			
Ensures adequate food availability to rural households			
Facilitate group solidarity			
Facilitate community development			