THE IMPACT OF RICE EXTENSION PROGRAMMES ON THE ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY, PRODUCTIVITY AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FARM HOUSEHOLDS

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ABSTRACT

Extension programmes aim at improving the production and productivity of specific commodities. What has been the impact of these programmes on the adoption of technologies and productivity? Have these made any difference to the socio-economic status of the targeted households? This study addresses these concerns as they relate to rice extension programmes. Communication and economic factors affecting adoption of components of the technology package and the role of policy in present and future production are also examined.

Qualitative analytical methods were used to identify items to assess programme impact. An interview schedule was administered to 150 respondents selected by systematic random sampling from the commercial farmers of the Oropouche Lagoon. Hypotheses were tested by regression analysis and analysis of variance.

Over the period 1985-1991, rice production increased from 2 to 4 tonnes per household per annum. Productivity

increased from 2.2 to 3.1 tonnes per hectare. Extension contact showed a positive relationship with technology adoption and productivity. Adoption level had a positive relationship and age a negative relationship with change in socio-economic status. Adoption of technology components had a significant relationship with the perception of their economic importance. Extension played a critical role in energising the indigenous information network, facilitating the spread of information about, and the adoption of, technology. Additional indirect programme impacts on employment level and increased knowledge base of the community were also identified.

The policies of assured markets and pricing were the most important complementarities to production increases. Increased price and improvement of irrigation and drainage are potential stimuli of increased production.

It is recommended that research and extension aim at identifying agro-socio-economically viable technology within the particular farming system, and that evaluation be incorporated as part of programming activities. A socio-economic approach to policy formulation and modification is recommended.