

# SMALL FARMERS' PARTICIPATION IN ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: LESSONS FROM SELECTED VILLAGES IN MOROGORO RURAL DISTRICT

D.F. Rutatora

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of Tanzanian economy. Mattee (1989), referring to the report published by the Economic Research Bureau, points out that in 1987 agriculture contributed about 61 percent of the Gross Domestic Production (GDP). According to Mmari (1985) the agricultural sector contributes 75 percent of the total export earnings, with about 80 percent of all exports produced by small farmers.

Although small farmers contribute a great deal to the economy of the country, it is worth noting that the majority of them had no chance to experience formal schooling pointed out by Mutanyatta (1981), at the time of independence a good number of the population (about 96 percent) was engaged in agriculture and were illiterate. According to Mutanyatta "the most immediate task to release the potential for development has been to reach the illiterate peasants and their families in the subsistence sector of agricultural" (p.54). He went further and argue that "mobilization of agriculture is almost impossible without an enlightened farmer" (op. cit.).

Though adult education in Tanzania has always been considered important, its scope and purpose have changed considerably in recent years. In 1970, the former president of Tanzania, J.K. Nyerere, declared 1970 as the year of adult education and stated that the full development of Tanzania will depend upon how successful adult education will become in mobilizing the entire population (Adult Education Handbook, 1973).

Participation, drop-out and/or non-participation have been major concerns of adult education researchers, policy makers and practitioners who struggle with the problem of recruitment and retention. More often we see people defining programme success in terms of numbers enrolled and retained.

In the literature there are a variety of factors associated with adult and continuing education participation. Factors such as educational attainment, age, sex, income, occupation, place of residence, marital status and others which taken together can be considered as a measure of socio-economic status (Cookson, 1986; Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982; Cross, 1981; Johnstone and Rivera, 1965) have been found to have an impact on adult continuing education participation. Also, basing on adoption research, factors such as contact with extension agents, length of farming experience and farm size have also been reported to have an influence on the decisions farmers make whether to participate or not.

However, the relationship of the above mentioned factors to participation and the educational needs of small farmers in Tanzania have apparently not been studied (Mpogolo, 1986). The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate the adult continuing education programmes in which small farmers, in a selected are in Tanzania, were engaged and to determine

- i) the factors associated with small farmers' participation in adult continuing education and
- ii) the educational needs of those small farmers.

## **SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION**

Data for the study was collected (using structured personal interviews) from small farmers who participated in adult educational programmes in the past three years (1987 - 1989). In Morogoro rural district. Educational participants were stratified into strata namely most active and least active. Out of a sampling frame of 124 educational participants from purposively selected villages a simple random sample of 40 respondents was picked from the two strata with the aid of a table of random numbers.

## **PARTICIPATION IN ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

### **Factors Related to Participation**

One of the objectives of this study was "To determine the relative influence of educational attainment, age, sex, farm family income, marital status, location of home community, length of farming experience, farm size and contact with extension agents on participation". The findings of this study revealed that none of the factors mentioned above was found to have statistically significant relationship with small farmers' participation. The Chi-square tests of independence which were done showed that there were no significant differences.

However, when the socio-demographic characteristics of small farmers were examined it was found that the majority of participants were relatively older (above 45 years of age), married, with low educational levels and low incomes. It was also revealed that more women than men participated in various adult continuing education programmes, although the difference is too small to be significant.

Earlier studies, such as those done by Hall (1973), Kokuhirwa (1984), Beshu (1988) and Mjema (1989) found that more women than men participate in adult continuing education programmes. According to Hall, in the past, women have been forgotten educationally, hence they might be making up for this by involving themselves in different programmes. In addition, it should be noted that women make up the majority of small farmers and most national and international projects have now focused on promoting their involvement in various educational programmes (Bannaga, 1990). According to the World Bank Report (1989) the Tanzania National Agricultural Extension Rehabilitation Project stresses the need for having a higher proportion of women contact farmers. The project calls upon the extension system to focus on women farmers in order to achieve better technology diffusion.

### **Extent of Participation in Adult Continuing Education Programmes**

In response to the question posed in relation to involvement in adult continuing education programmes in the past three years, all 40 respondents indicated their involvement in agriculture, 31 in health, 28 in home economics, 18 in adult basic education and two in cooperative management. The five programme areas mentioned above were later categorized as follows:

1. **Occupational education:** This refers to those programmes which are associated with economic activities and allow one to make a living (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). This covers agriculture and includes all topics dealing with farming, oxenization, irrigation, gardening and many others.
2. **Family improvement:** This category covers topics pertaining to the establishment, maintenance and improvement of a home or family in general. It includes health and home economics.

3. **Adult basic education:** Subject matter areas falling under this category are commonly referred to as personal development subjects (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965). These are aimed at helping people expand their knowledge or helping them do away with "ignorance". They cover such aspects as basic reading, writing and counting (Literacy); elementary subjects (e.g. Chemistry) and language skills.
4. **Community improvement:** As stressed by Coombs and Ahmed (1974) these are designed to strengthen local and national institutions. They include cooperatives, community projects and many others.

The basis for classification was inferred from the analysis of the reasons which respondents gave for participating in various educational programmes they mentioned. Overall, the findings of this study showed that respondents were satisfied with the programmes in which they took part.

The programmes mentioned above were offered at one of the following places of study:

- a) Training institutions (e.g., SUA and Ilonga)
- b) Village learning centres
- c) Other places (e.g., town halls).

Although the above places of study could be used by all respondents, only most active respondents utilized such study places as training institutions and town halls. Reasons which made least active respondents not to utilize those study places are discussed under reasons for least participation.

#### **Agencies That Provided and/or Supported Educational Programmes in Which Small Farmers were Involved**

Findings from this study revealed that programmes such as agriculture, adult basic education and health were mainly supported by respective ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health. On the other hand, the cooperative management programme was supported by the Morogoro Regional Cooperative Union, although home economics has mainly been supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, it was revealed that Ministries of Health and Community Development, culture, Youths and Sports also took part in providing some aspects of home economics education to small farmers.

#### **Reasons for and Against Participation and Future Learning Needs of Small Farmers**

In this section the focus is upon (i) exploring reasons which respondents gave for their participation in various adult continuing education programmes (ii) describing reasons least active respondents gave for their least participation and (iii) projecting future learning needs of respondents.

Following Cross's idea, this study obtained reasons for participation in adult continuing education by analyzing the kinds of educational programmes in which respondents were involved (Cross 1981). It should be noted that the purpose of this research was not to develop a typology or to group respondents according to their motivational orientations. The intent was to identify reasons which were of great importance to respondents in relation to their participation in various educational programmes.

According to the findings of the study, the most important reasons for taking part in educational programmes, as rated by the respondents, were as follows: Of 40 respondents who took part in

agricultural programmes, 39 rated the desire to increase agricultural production very important. With regard to family improvement (health and home economics) programmes, of 34 respondents who did this programme, 22 rated the desire to learn about health and how to improve health habits very important, and seven rated it quite important. On the other hand, 18 and 14 of the 34 respondents rated the desire to raise a healthier family very important and quite important respectively. In addition, of the 18 respondents who participated in adult basic education programme, eight rated the desire to improve one's reading, writing and counting skills very important while two rated it quite important.

The findings of this study indicate that the two major reasons for small farmers' participation in adult continuing education were to improve occupational performance or prospects and to enhance competence or satisfaction in the roles of a parent. According to Mattee (1989), the most commonly mentioned reason for participation in extension programmes by the small farmers is the desire for increased production. Mattee further points out that although increased production might lead to increased income, hardly any farmers mentioned increased income as a reason for taking part in educational programmes.

### **Reasons for Not Participating More in Educational Programmes**

The study sought reasons for not participating more in educational programmes in order to find out the barriers or obstacles which might have prevented least active respondents from participating to a greater extent (like their counterparts) in educational programmes. Information of this type can be of use in the determination and design of appropriate strategies by which to increase participation. On the other hand, this information may shed some light on some of the barriers which hinder the general rural adult population from participating in various education programmes.

Lack of learning opportunities and time were the most important reasons mentioned by respondents. With regard to learning opportunities, respondents pointed out that they do not have equal access to many of the educational programmes which are brought to the village. In addition, the study revealed that only most active respondents were given an opportunity to attend short courses/seminars at training institutions in the country.

Other reasons given were that they were too busy with other things like petty trading, home and family responsibilities, that there was a lack of information regarding learning opportunities as well as lack of money and inadequate number of confirms an argument made by Moss (1989) that farmers or generally an adult population "do not like being told what to do; they like being involved and have a say in policies and regulations which affect them personally" (p.8).

### **FUTURE LEARNING NEEDS OF SMALL FARMERS**

The results of this study showed that of the 40 respondents, 39 said they would be ready to take part in educational programmes. One respondents reported no interest in further learning because of old age. The findings of this study also revealed that the respondents' future learning needs were not much different from what they had learnt in the past three years. This shows that respondents wanted to continue with their previous programmes although more emphasis was put on an occupational education programme (i.e., agriculture).

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The fact that the majority of participants are over 45, married and with relatively low incomes has implications for the nature and kind of programmes to be provided to those learners. Also, given the

fact that most programmes were provided within areas of reach, it is no wonder the majority of respondents found it easier for them to take part in such programmes.

With regard to age, educators and/or providers of educational programmes need to know that older adults are capable of taking part in organized learning. Educators need to consider the conditions under which such people can learn best. In addition, as different age groups are involved in educational programmes, educators as well as planners need to think of concrete strategies for handling that kind of clientele. Timing of programmes is also crucial, not only because the majority are old but also the majority are married, and hence, they have other responsibilities to take care of. This (timing) should be done in collaboration with the participants themselves.

Since the study indicates that those participants without or with low formal education can take part in educational programmes more or less to the same degree as those with relatively higher levels of education, programme planners and educators need to be aware of the existence of such differences. That is, they need to take those differences into consideration whenever designing and/or providing programmes to small farmers.

With respect to the variable sex, it was found that more women than men participate in adult continuing education programmes. This observation means that extension agents need to consider ways and means of promoting and maintaining women's interest in continued participation in adult continuing education programmes.

According to the findings of this study, small farmers were found to be participating more in an occupational education programme than in any other programmes which are offered to them in the past three years. On one hand, this reflects the interest small farmers have in that programme, and on the other hand, this shows the efforts made by the agency responsible for providing and supporting that programme.

Different government ministries were found to be offering programmes related to their activities. In some cases, however, two or three ministries provided and supported the same programme, although at different times. Provision of the same programme by different ministries calls for coordination and collaboration among government ministries in order to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. In addition, research need to be conducted to determine how they ran those programmes and the extent to which they consult each other before programmes are delivered to farmers.

In terms of barriers to participation, lack of learning opportunities and time were the most common responses given by the respondents. As pointed out by the respondents, lack of opportunities might be overcome by providing equal learning opportunities to all farmers without targeting a particular group of people.

With regard to future learning needs, small farmers showed interest in an occupational education programme although some farmers also wish to participate in other programmes. This means that an occupational education programme could be offered alongside with other programmes of interest to small farmers. Thus, what is needed is proper programming and consideration of other technicalities like logistics.

The fact that small farmers also showed a desire to continue taking part in their previous programmes calls for refresher or follow-up programmes. This may allow small farmers to continue their education after major programmes have been offered. Hence, this effort needs to be embodied in the long term plan and should not be done haphazardly.

#### REFERENCES

- Adult Education Handbook. (1973). Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House.
- Bannaga, A.M. (1990). Project Feature, Strategy and Experience With Small Farmers. Paper Presented at Institutions in the advancement of Small Farmers in Developing Countries. Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania May 1990.
- Besha, R.M. (1988). Watch Your Language: How to Speak and How not to Speak to Farmers. International Agricultural Development, Vol. 8 (4).
- Cookson, P.S. (1986). A Framework for Theory in Adult education Participation. Adult Education Quarterly, 36 (3), 130-141.
- Coombs, P.H. and Ahmed, M. (Eds.). (1974). Educational for rural Development: Case Studies for Planners. N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.
- Cross, K.P. (1981). Adults as Learners. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Darkenwald, G.G. and Merriam, S.B. (1982). Adult Education: Foundations for Practice. N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers Inc.
- Hall, B.L. (1973). Who participates in university adult education! Studies in Adult Education (Report No. 5).
- Johnstone, J.W.C. and Rivera, R. (1965). Volunteers for Learning. Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company.
- Kokuhirwa, H. (1984). Facilitating the participation of women in national development: A proposed role for the Institute of Adult Education. Studies in Adult Education, 42.
- Mattee, A.Z. (1989). Organizational and Management of Agricultural Services for Small Farmers in Tanzania. Morogoro, Sokoine University of Agriculture.
- Mjema, W.L. (1987). The Impact of Adult Education on the Utilization of Indigenous Skills for the Advancement of Technology in the Agricultural Sector in Tanzania: The Case of Mwanza, Kilimanjaro Region. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Dar es Salaam.
- Mmari, I.K.B. (1985). An Analysis of a Rural Credit Institution in Tanzania: The Tanzania Rural Development Bank. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Moss, G. (1989). Stimulating Agriculture: Lessons From Asia and the Pacific. (Occasional Papers in Rural Extension, No. 7). Guelph, University of Guelph, Department of Rural Extension Studies.
- Mpogolo, Z.J. (1986). Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing education in Tanzania. In J. Muller (Ed.), Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy: The Tanzanian Approach. Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany.
- Mutanyatta, J.N. (1981). The Training of Teachers for Adult and Non-Formal Education: Alternative Approaches Used in Tanzania's Colleges of National Education. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto.
- World Bank. (1989). Tanzania National Agricultural Rehabilitation Project. (Report No. 7366-TA). Washington, D.C.