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Impact of Poor Roads Networks on Marketing of Agricultural Products: a Case Study of Amansie West District of Ashanti-Manso Nkwanta.

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of poor roads network of marketing of agricultural produce within the Amansie West District of Ashanti. The data for the study was derived from 100 respondents. The data collected through structured questionnaire and was analyzed using the frequency distribution tables. The results shows that majority of the respondents (farmers) in my research area had only basic education which is making it very difficult for them to apply the needed technology and other best farming practice into their farming methods since they cannot read and write properly. The poor road transportation expansion in the district impacts negatively on the marketing of agricultural products and thereby preventing existing and potential farmers to go into agricultural production in district. There is also a low price of harvested agricultural products; this is because most of the profit from agricultural production amasses to the intermediaries and transporters rather than the farmers. The provision of better transportation networks within the district will arrest the low prices for farm produce because the farmers themselves can sell directly to the final consumers at higher prices and this will go a long way to encourage both the existing and potential farmers to invest in agricultural production to increase the production and reduce wastage of farm produce in the district.

Keyword: agricultural marketing, deplorable roads, agricultural products, poor road network, Amansie West District, Ashanti

INTRODUCTION

Roads are very essential in agricultural production since they help in easy transport and the marketing of the farm products from various farms of production. They also help in sending human and material resource to the farmlands for production to take place and aids innovation diffusion expand production and raise incomes (Gannon and Liu, 1997; Olukotun, 2007). Improved transportation reduces travel time thereby, increasing the time available for economic and social activities while also promoting access to basic facilities, (Usman et al 2013). Improved roads networks help in sales and marketing of agricultural products since after production or they are harvested, they are transported into the urban centers for sales and marketing. Amansie West District of Ashanti is of no exception as far as poor roads are concern. The district produces a chunk of food and other agricultural products but many of them are kept in the bush to decompose simply because the roads leading to those farming communities are at the deplorable state and vehicles refuse to go there and even those vehicles which go to the farms charge exorbitant fares; as a result of this, the farmers are unable to transport their products to the market centers for sales.

One can say, an improved, efficient and effective transport system is critically important to efficient agricultural products sales and marketing. If transport services are infrequent of poor quality or expensive then farmers will be at a disadvantage when they attempt to sell their crops, (Hine, J. L. and Ellis, S. D. 2001). The pattern of agricultural sales and marketing is strongly influenced by the way transport services are carried on in a particular community. Many developing countries such as Ghana suffer from low volume and high cost of transportation and marketing of farm produce by the farmers. The aim of the study is to examine the impact that poor and deplorable roads have on marketing of agricultural products in Amansie West District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Majority of the rural folks in Ghana go into agriculture all in the name of cultivating and harvesting good yield in order to sell them for better returns on their investments. But due to poor and deplorable road networks that are characterized in the farming communities in the district; these are making it very difficult for farmers and producers to transport their final products to various market centers for sales.

In Ghana, it has been established by Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) that the country's agriculture production is the backbone of the economy. According to (MOFA, 2010), the agriculture sector of the Ghana economy contribute more than 30% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) making it an important sector that more attention must be given to it to continue boasting the economy. Agricultural products are left in the bush to decompose; due to this, the intermediaries take advantage of this and buy from the producers at cheap prices and in turn sell them to the final consumers at higher price at the expense of the poor producer. This is all accruing from the poor roads networks within the farming communities making it very difficult for the poor farmer to transport their produce to the market centers. It is this idea

that the researcher seeks to examining the impact that the poor and deplorable roads networks within the Amansie West District have on sales and marketing of agricultural products. The findings of will add up to the knowledge of agricultural marketing and again inform the various stakeholders such as the government, the Amansie west district assembly and the agricultural producers the adverse impact of the poor and deplorable roads in these farming communities.

Agricultural Products; Sales and Marketing

Marketing is defined as a process of satisfying human needs by bringing products to people in the proper form and at a proper time and place. Marketing has economic value because it gives form, time, place, utility to products and services, (Asogwa, B.C. and Okwoche, V.A. 2012).

As marketing gains increasing prominence as an orientation that everyone in the organization shares and as a process that all functions participate in deploying, a critical issue that arises is the role of the marketing function, (Moorman, C and Rust, R.T 1999). The role of marketing is to sell of what have been produced and by exchanging what have been produced with value in return. Increasing in the sales and marketing of agricultural or farm products are very important thing that need a total concerns of the policy makers in the country since the agriculture sector has been the backbone of the Ghanaian economy.

The sales and marketing of agricultural product always initiates by the farmer in the farm or the bush after production of products. Due to the poor and deplorable nature of the roads networks, the products do not usually go directly to the final consumers. They either sell them to the intermediaries who always move from farm to farm and who later sell them to the final consumers or sell them to the final consumers right on the farms and roadsides. After production and before sales of the products, the farmers can store their products in the storage facilities available at their disposal or use the traditional way of storage before sales are made. The farmers get their rewards in-terms of revenues when the products are sold either directly to the final consumers or through the intermediaries.

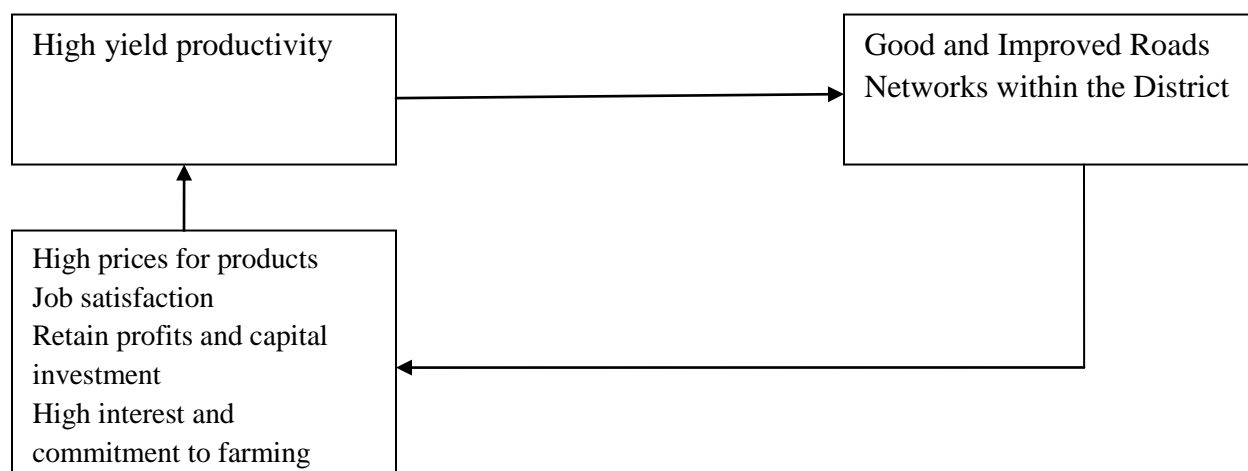
Many farmers and breeders in sub-Saharan Africa face significant difficulty when trying to bring their products to market, (Lothoré, A. and Delmas, P. 2009). In our part of the continent and precisely Ghana, farmers have been complaining about the low level of returns on their investment and attributed this to their inability to earn much income from the sales and marketing of their farm products. In the Amansie West District and Ghana as a general, it is not exceptional; it is obvious that one could constantly hear farmers complaining that they get low prices for sales of their products. This is due to the fact that there is no government intervention to regulate the prices of agricultural products.

The market provides information on the going market prices for goods and services to farmers, middlemen and consumers, which are essential in making production, marketing and consumption decisions, (Onwudinjo, L. E., et al 2013). This is true because agricultural products and for that matter, farm produce face competition in the market. Thus, the market

women bargain for lower prices for the agriculture products which in the long run affect the farmers and the nation because lower prices are always discourage them and the potential ones to enter into agriculture production. Producers often wonder about the large difference between the prices that consumers pay for food and the prices that farmers receive, (Cox, L. 2010). This is due to poor and deplorable roads networks that are making it very difficult for the farmers themselves to directly sell their products to the final consumers. These people act as intermediaries between the farmers and the consumers; buy the products from the farmers at low price and then sell them to the consumers at a higher price and enjoy the fruits of labour of these poor farmers.

The poor and deplorable roads in these communities have also contributed to low returns of profit. Many vehicle owners and drivers have been charging exorbitant fares for transporting the harvest agricultural products from the bush to market centers.

The conceptual framework of the study



Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

The conceptual framework of the study shows the results of good and improved road networks within the Ahafo Ano District. .

Impact of Transportation on Sales and Marketing Farm Products

The proportion of transport charges to final market price will vary with a range of factors such as commodity type, the efficiency of the transport and marketing sectors and travel distance, (Hine, J. L. and Ellis, S. D. 2001). Due to poor and deplorable roads network within the district, the fares for transporting the farm products to the market centers such as Kumasi Central Market, Kejetia Market, Bantama Market, Asafo Market, Atonsu Market and other big markets are always very high. If a farmer refuses to accept those exorbitant fare charges by the transport owners and their drivers, ones products will be left in the bush to decompose for lost of investment.

Again, there are buyers who go into the various farms to buy the farm products right from the bush and from the farmers. Most of these people have vehicles so they take advantage of these poor and deplorable roads and buy the products at cheaper prices since there is no government intervention as far as prices of agricultural products are concern.

Storing of Agricultural Products

The availability of markets and storage facilities play a major role in sales and marketing of agricultural products. Markets and storage facilities both provide the same role of acting as a place where agricultural products can be amalgamated, (Hine, J. L. and Ellis, S. D. 2001). This will be for the purpose of immediate sales or to transport it to the market centers. The availability of storage facilities in the district will augment to protect farmers' perishable products such as tomatoes and others for a longer period before transporting them to the market centers. In Ghana, sales and marketing activities of agricultural products have not gotten enough storage facilities and not to talk about the modern storage facilities to store these products which most of them are perishable ones. Those storage facilities that are made available for the farmers and other production are in poor stages. It will surprise you know that majority of farmers in the district continue to use the traditional way of storing their crops. Typical example is when a farmer trying to store his pepper by using the energy of the sun to dry them and pack them in sacks for future use and sales. Others also store their yams in the burns and maize using smoke. This is as results of unavailability of modern storage facilities in the district.

The availability of these storage facilities will augment to prevent high cost of transportation since the farmers will not rush in sending their products to the market centers for fear of early decompose, most especially the perishable products. The provision of storage facilities by the government through the District Assembly or the farmers' cooperative association will help the farmers to continuing doing farming since they will always get ready market for their farm products whenever they are harvested and by so doing the farmers will get their return on their investment.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher made utilization of both primary and secondary sources of data such as questionnaires, personal interviews, telephone interviews, group discussion and other important journals for the study. In all a total of 100 respondents were selected to for the study and by using simple random sampling method, the researcher decided to give the questionnaires to the respondents randomly. The respondents were the farmers and their family members. This sampling method was chosen because the researcher wanted to do away with personal bias and personal interference from the responses that were gathered for the study.

A pretest was conducted with the objective of determining an appropriate strategy to maximize response rate by checking on the adequacy of statement. The pretest was conducted within some selected farmers in the district. In all a total of 10 people were selected for the pretest. This augmented me to know and understood whether or not the respondents really understood the

questions that were given to them. The questionnaire was designed to gather pieces of information on the respondents' socio-economic characteristics, the benefits that are derived from the agricultural production, markets (places) of sales and marketing of agricultural products, how much they pay for in transporting their farm products from their farms to the market centers and others

The researcher gathered both quantitative and qualitative data from the selected respondents and these were thoroughly examined, presented and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For the purpose of this study, the researcher constructed frequency distribution tables for the sampled respondents and described them accordingly. Again, the researcher used personal interviews for the farmers to express their candid opinion on the issues at stake. These respondents were told to gather in groups to discuss and expressed their opinions on the issue and how this problem at hand will be curbed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents of the study presented in table 1 shows that at least 81% of the respondents that go into farming were male whilst only 19% are females. This shows that the male have dominated in farming activities than their counterparts, who are the females. It was revealed that the females are always at home taking care of the home, children, cooking and other household activities. Other females also prefer petty trading than engaging themselves in farming activities. They also do this to augment their husbands who are farmers.

Again the researcher wanted to find out the respondents' ages and according to table 1, the respondents ranging between 18 and 25 were only 4%, 26 and 35 range were also 14%, respondents ranging from 36 to 45 were 49% and respondents ranging from 46 and above stood at 33%. The implication of this age distribution is that, majority of the youth do not see the need to engage themselves in farming activities leaving the farm work to their parents, uncles and aunts and their grandparents in the district. It was also discovered that the low turnout of the youth in farming activities was due that majority are in schools and others have learnt different trade. When this continues like this, it will affect the production of crops for food since the aged are not strong enough to continue with farming activities for long.

In contemporary Ghana, education is very keen as far as farming is concern. Based on this, I wanted to know the educational qualifications of my respondents and according to table 1 below, one will witness that out of 100 respondents selected, 62% of the respondents had only basic education which represents the majority of the respondents. Only 23% of them have had secondary education. 15% did not even get any education at all and there was no respondent with any tertiary education. This I will say is unacceptable since majority of the respondents cannot read and write well and it will affect production of agricultural products in the district. The use of modern technical know-how has become the norm of the day and since the majority

of them cannot read and write well, it will make it very difficult for them to apply the modern technology in their farming practices.

Table 1, showing Socio-Economic Characteristics (Gender Distribution, Age Structure and the Educational Qualification) of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	81	81
Female	19	19
Total	100	100
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 25	4	4
26 - 35	14	14
36 - 45	49	49
46 and above	33	33
Total	100	100
Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic	62	62
Secondary	23	23
Tertiary	-	-
No education	15	5
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

Benefit derived from agricultural production of the respondents

Every investor wants returns from his/her investment that he/she will make in any venture. Like the farmers, they invest their capital, time and other resources into production. The research revealed that the social benefits that the respondents seek in this farming business are enormous. From table 2, it shows that, 62% out of the total respondents want to generate income out of the business. Only 2% said they do it as a source of employment, 10% was on building at least some houses and 26% on their children's education. The study revealed the majority of the respondents go into farming all in the name of getting income and after getting income they can take care of their children's education, building houses and then use it as a source of employment when the need arises. The researcher can vividly say that the welfare of these farmers was fully derived from the business they do.

Table 2 Benefits Derived From Agricultural production

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Income	62	62
Employment	2	2
Building of houses	10	10
Children's education	26	26
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

Markets (Places) of sales and marketing of agricultural products

According to BusinessDictionary.com, a market is an actual or nominal place where forces of demand and supply operate, and where buyers and sellers interact (directly or through intermediaries) to trade goods, services, or contracts or instruments, for money or barter. By this the researcher wanted to find out the places that these farmers sell their products after harvest. The following options were given; market places, roadsides and farms. It was surprise to know that majority of the respondent sell their produce in their farms. From table 3, it portrays that 31% of the respondents made me know that they send their produce to the market centers for sales, 21% sell their produce on the roadside and lastly, 48% said sales are done in their farms. The reason had been that they cannot send their products to the markets centers. They only rely on the intermediaries who go from farm to farm. This is as results of the poor and deplorable road networks available within the district and high cost of transportation.

Table 3, Places of Sales and Marketing of Farm Produce

Places	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Market place	31	31
Road side	21	21
Farms	48	48
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

Poor and Deplorable Roads Networks; Cost and Impact on the Respondents

Again, the researcher tried to know the costs that are incurred by the respondents in transporting their farm products to the market centers and roadsides for sales using high, low and moderate. Table 4 shows that, 55% of the respondents said the costs are high, 39% of them said the costs are moderate since the roads use by the vehicles owners are in deplorable state and lastly, the respondents who answered that the cost are low stood at 6%. The implication is that, the farmer will add up the cost of transportation to the products cost and sell them to the final consumer. In this case it is the final consumers who bear the added cost which is the cost of transportation. This conforms to the work of (Hine, J. L. and Ellis, S. D. 2001). In their work they came out that the proportion of transport charges to final market price will vary with a range of factors such as commodity type, the efficiency of the transport and marketing sectors and travel distance. This shows that bad roads always make producers pay high fares for transporting their products to market centers.

These deplorable roads in the districts are having impacts on the respondents and the district as a whole. From table 4 below, it shows that the poor and deplorable roads are having a reverse impact on the respondents. Choosing from positive, negative and normal, only 1% opted for positive impact on these poor roads, 2% of the respondents came with the impact which is normal and 97% of the respondents said this issue is having negative impact on them simply because they pay exorbitant fares in transporting their farm products to the markets centers. This is in line with what (Lothoré, A. and Delmas, P. 2009) proposed in their work that, many farmers and breeders in sub-Saharan Africa face significant difficulty when trying to bring their products to market. Sometimes too, their farm products are left in the bush to decompose all

because they cannot afford to pay these exorbitant fares charged by vehicle owners and drivers. This means that majority of the respondents are really suffering from this bad and poor roads within these farming communities.

Table 4, Poor and Deplorable Roads; Cost and Impact

Cost	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	55	55
Low	6	6
Moderate	39	39
Total	100	100

Impact	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	1	1
Negative	97	97
Normal	2	2
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

Channel of Distribution of Agricultural Products

Distribution is a keen in modern agriculture since the farmers or the producers cannot produce and at the same time sell the end products to the final consumers. According to BusinessDictionary.com, distribution is a movement of goods and services from the source through a distribution channel, right up to the final customer, consumer, or user, and the movement of payment in the opposite direction, right up to the original producer or supplier. Base on this the research wanted to figure out how they sell their products through intermediaries or through their own means. The results are seen from table 5, it shows that 78% of the respondents sell their farm products through the middlemen or the intermediaries and only 22% of them sell their own farm products. This means that majority of the farmers' use the middlemen in selling their farm products. They do this to do away with barriers such as high transportation cost, damages to farm products and others. When this happens, it affect the producers since these intermediaries will bargain for low prices of products and sell them at higher prices to the final consumers.

Table 5, Channel of Distribution of Farm Produce

Channels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmers	22	22
Intermediaries	78	78
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

Pricing of Agricultural Products

Prices are very essential in agricultural marketing activities since it helps the farmers to get value for their produce. The research figured out the prices of agricultural products within the district and from table 6, it can be seen that 77% responded that prices of their products are priced through bargaining, 16% claimed that there are priced by the quantity products traded and 7% also said theirs are priced by the current prevailing price within the market. This

indicates that fixing of prices for of Agricultural products are normally priced by bargaining; thus, demand and supply as indicated by the majority of the respondents. This confirms with what (Cox, L. 2010) proposed that producers often wonder about the large difference between the prices that consumers pay for food and the prices that farmers receive.

Table 6, Pricing Agricultural Products

Price Fixing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bargaining	77	77
Volume of quantity traded	16	16
Current prevailing price	7	7
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's field work-March, 2015

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the impact of poor roads network on marketing of agricultural products within the Amansie West District of Ashanti. The results of the study showed that farming in the Amansie West District is mostly dominated by males according to the research study. It was also established that majority of people who involve themselves in farming in the district are mostly elderly people with the young ones or the youth attending schools and others learning different trade and some enjoying their lives. Majority of the respondents in my research area had only basic education. This is affect the production of agriculture products in the area since apply better and modern technology and best farming practices will be very difficult for them. Again they continue using the old methods of farming instead of modern ones and this will affect product.

The poor and deplorable road networks within the district are affecting marketing of agricultural products adversely and thereby preventing existing and potential farmers to invest into agricultural production in district. There are low prices of agricultural products in the district this is because most of the profit from farming only accrues to the traders and the intermediaries rather than the farmers themselves. The high agricultural potentials of these communities can only be achieved provided there are improvement, efficiency and effectiveness in the transportation systems in the district. The provision of better transportation networks will ensure higher prices for agricultural products and this will encourage the farmers to increase their production and reduce spoilage and wastage of agricultural products in the district. The ministry of Road and Transport in collaboration with Feeder Roads through the district assembly must all put hands on desk to help in construction of improved, good and efficient roads for better and easy accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study, it has been imperative to recommends the following;

1. The government through the Amansie West District Assembly should construct new roads and improve the existing ones within the farming communities to ease transport of agricultural products to the various market centers for sales.

2. Setting of standardized prices for agricultural products in order to avoid lost of investment to the intermediaries.
3. Constructions of new and improve markets centers within the district to make producers to dispose off their agricultural products in order to eliminate the exorbitant fares been paid for transporting their products to market centers in the urban areas.

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