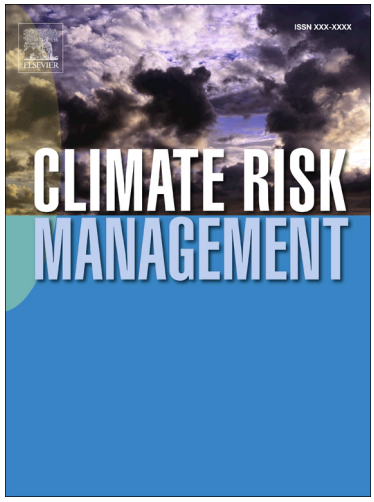

Challenges faced by cocoyam farmers in adapting to climate change in southeast nigeria

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CHALLENGES FACED BY COCOYAM FARMERS IN ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the challenges faced by cocoyam farmers in adapting to climate change in Southeast, Nigeria. Three hundred and eighty-four respondents selected through multi-stage sampling technique were used for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview schedule and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Findings showed that majority were females (67%), married (92%) and maintain average household size of 6 persons and a mean age of 51 years. They were mainly primary (32%) and secondary (34%) school certificate holders with farming (77%) as their major occupation. The major cropping pattern practiced was mixed farming with cassava (63%) and maize (58%) as the major crops cultivated by the farmers. Majority of the farmers owned farms of one hectare and below accessed mainly through inheritance (76%) and labour sourced mainly through hiring (50%). Most (81%) of the farmers have spent more than ten years in farming. Climate change information was accessed mainly through their personal experience (64%), radio (42%) and fellow villagers (39%). The study identified eight major challenges faced by cocoyam farmers in adapting to climate change namely Lack/high cost of farm inputs and low soil fertility (Factor 1), Land and labour constraints (Factor 2), Poor access to information and ineffectiveness of cooperatives (Factor 3), lack of/poor access to fund and credit facilities and poor government support (Factor 4), lack of improved varieties of cocoyam (factor 5), poor value attached to cocoyam (Factor 6), poor infrastructural capacity and technology know-how (Factor 7) and Transportation constraint (Factor 8). Analysis of variance identified significant variations in the challenges faced by cocoyam farmers in the study area. The study recommends enrollment in cooperatives and revitalizing existing cooperatives, re-orientation of farmers on the benefits of cocoyam and increased used of climate change information sharing using mobile phones as possible ways of alleviating the challenges.

Keywords: Challenges; climate change; cocoyam farmers; adaptation.

1.1 Introduction

Both natural and human systems in all continents have experienced the impacts of climate change though the evidence is more pronounced in natural systems (IPCC, 2014). Changes in climate and its impacts come as a result of varying changes in weather parameters over time,