



**ASSESSMENT OF POVERTY STATUS OF CASSAVA COOPERATIVE FARMERS  
IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study assessed the poverty status of cassava cooperative farmers in South-South Nigeria, utilizing a multi-stage sampling technique to select 300 members from Delta, Edo, and Akwa Ibom states. The majority of members fall within the 41-60 age range, which accounts for 66% of the total membership. This suggests that middle-aged and older individuals are more likely to participate in cassava cooperatives. There was also a higher representation of female members (58.33%) compared to male members (41.67%). However, majority (75.67%) of the cassava cooperative members were married while 2% were divorced, 10.33% were separated/divorced, and 12% were widowed. Furthermore, majority (51.67%) of the farmers had been in a cooperative for 1-5 years. The result shows that 46.33% of households consist of 1-4 members and most (82%) of the members identify cassava farming as their primary occupation. The relative poverty line was determined based on consumption expenditure, and the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) index was employed to assess poverty status. The results indicated that over one-third of members lived below the relative poverty line of ₦882.29, although the depth (8.52%) and severity (3.13%) of poverty were relatively low. Based on these findings, the study recommends targeted poverty reduction programs, strengthening cooperative structures, enhancing access to finance, promoting value addition, investing in infrastructure, empowering women and youth, and further research to develop effective poverty alleviation strategies.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Cassava, Cooperative, Farmers and Poverty

**INTRODUCTION**

Poverty which can be considered as the inability to afford basic human needs and necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter, security, education, etc.) is a global challenge. According to World Bank (2001), Poverty is pronounced deprivation in wellbeing and it is multi-dimensional. The dimension include inability to acquire the basic goods and services for necessary survival as well as low income, poor access to clean water and sanitation, low level of health and education, lack of voice, insufficient capacity to make life better and inadequate security. Poverty in its most extreme form is a lack of human basic needs such as nutritious food, housing, clothing, health services and clean water. Extreme poverty can cause terrible suffering and death, and even modest level of poverty can limit the actualization of one's desire (Ayoade and Adeola, 2012; Ilavbarhe, 2006).

Nigeria was still recovering from its 2016 economic recession when another recession hit in 2020 due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic which could derail economic recovery. There is possibility that the lingering effect of the 2020 recession and covid-19 as well as the recent continuous depreciation of the naira may impact on household welfare and exacerbated poverty and vulnerability in the country. According to Kale, (2012), 54.7% of Nigerians were relatively poor in the year 2004 but the trend increased to 69% in 2010. This reveals a steady rise in the rate of poverty over time. By 2018 according to World Data Lab poverty clock, Nigeria overtook India at the bottom of the poverty table. An assessment by the federal government of Nigeria through the National Bureau of Statistics on the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) survey reveals that 63% of person living within Nigeria (133million people) are multi-dimensionally poor while about 40% experience monetary deprivation.



According to the National Bureau of Statistics, 65% of the poor (86million people) live in the northern part of Nigeria, while 35% (nearly 47million) live in southern Nigeria. Multidimensional Poverty is higher in rural areas than urban areas. Over 72% of people are poor in the rural areas while 42% are poor in urban areas. In 2023 nearly 12% of the world population in extreme poverty live in Nigeria, considering the poverty threshold at 1.90 US dollar per day while the number of people living in extreme poverty in Africa was estimated to reach 422 million in 2025 (NBS, 2022). According to the National Bureau of Statistic, Nigeria with the population of over 200 million people is the most populous country in the African continent and the seventh largest in the world. The United Nations forecast that the population will double by 2050 to become the third largest populous country in the world (United Nations, 2019). Given Nigeria's growth potentials and size, the need to improve and safeguard the lives of its citizens is very significant. The reports are very disturbing for a country that prides herself as the giant of Africa and is richly endowed with abundance of fertile agricultural soil and natural resources.

Agriculture contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to NBS, (2023) agriculture contributed 21.66% to real GDP in first quarter of 2023 and it is an important tool in the fight to alleviate poverty in the country. Agriculture does not only provide food for the increasing population, it is also a major source of employment, provides market for the products of the industrial sector, generates foreign exchange earnings, and supplies adequate raw materials to the growing industrial sector (Eze *et al.*, 2010). In light of the importance of agriculture to Nigeria, the importance and history of agricultural cooperative societies in the country is a long standing one.

According to Anyaele (2003), "Cooperative society is an autonomous association of people who voluntarily come together and are united having joint ownership of a business that is controlled democratically with the sole purpose of meeting their cultural, political, social and economic needs and aspirations". Ihimodu, (1998), tracked the origin of cooperatives in Nigeria to the British administration in 1935 with the enactment of the Cooperative Society Law. However, before the legislation the first agricultural cooperative in Nigeria was established in 1907 when a group of cocoa farmers and merchants in Agege areas of Lagos came together and formed a kind of market union known as the Agege Planters Union (APU). Their sole aim and objective were to circumvent the long chain of the activities of middlemen (intermediaries) in their cocoa business. The union encouraged their member to improve on the quantity of their cocoa beans and they made remarkable success. Similar organizations were also established in other cocoa producing areas of western Nigeria (Ihimodu, 1998).

The main aim of introducing agricultural cooperative was to enhance productivity and credit facilities to farmers. Cooperative societies have been tremendously involved in activities that have impacted positively on the livelihood of its members. Omotosho, (2007) noted that cooperative societies plough back their resources by paying dividend on share capital and sharing patronage bonuses proportionally to their members. Cassava is the most important staple food in Africa after maize in relation to calories consumption. It is the major source of calories for most countries in Africa including Nigeria (Haggblade and Zulu, 2003). The major roles of cassava in food economy and its ability to withstand drought and do well in poor soils makes it an all-important food and cash crop which has the capacity to reduce poverty (Owusu, 2012).

Several studies have been done on Poverty Status of Cassava farmers for instance Osuji, (2019) worked on Determinant of Poverty Status of Cassava-based farmers in Imo State, Nigeria, Babatunde, Salami and Adeboye (2016) studied Poverty Among Cassava Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Adie, Dibah and Luka, (2022) studied Contributions of Agricultural Cooperative in South-South Nigeria. Akerele (2016) worked on Effects of Cooperative Credit



on Cassava Production in Yewa Division, Ogun State. While Nzenwa and Oboh (2005) carried out a research on Household’s Endowment on Poverty among farmers in Benue State, Nigeria. However, not much work has been done considering cassava cooperative farmers in relation to their poverty status in South-South states of Nigeria. Hence, this study describes the socio-economic characteristics of cassava cooperative farmers in South-South, Nigeria; established their poverty line; and assessed their poverty status.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was carried out in the South-South of Nigeria. The South-South comprises of six (6) states namely: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo and Rivers.

**Sampling Technique**

A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents of the study. The first stage was simple random sampling of 50% of the states (Delta, Edo and Akwa Ibom) in South-South. The second stage was random selection of ten (10) cassava cooperative societies from the list of cassava cooperative farmers societies that are registered with the state’s Ministry of Industry, Business, Trade, Investment and Cooperatives; which are saddled with the responsibility of registration of cooperative societies in the states and we obtained a total of thirty (30) cassava cooperative farmers societies which constituted the sampling frame. The third and last stage was simple random sampling of ten (10) cassava cooperative farmers (members) from the list of each of the 30 cassava cooperative societies that were selected in the second stage (sampling frame) and we sampled a total of 300 cassava cooperative farmers (members).

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, standard deviations and percentages was used to describe the socio-economic characteristics of cassava cooperative farmers. The relative poverty line base on consumption expenditure was computed as follows:

$$PCE = \frac{TCE}{HHS} \dots(1)$$

$$MPCE = \frac{PCE}{n} \dots(2)$$

$$Z_i = \frac{2}{3} MPCE \dots(3)$$

Where;

Z<sub>i</sub> = poverty line

PCE = Per Capita Expenditure

TCE = Total Consumption Expenditure

MPCE = Mean Per Capita Expenditure

n = Total Number of Respondents

The Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) index of poverty was used to analyze the poverty status of the cassava cooperative farmers (Igbalajobi *et al.*, 2013; Adekoya, 2014).

The model is given as

$$P_{\alpha} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^H \left( \frac{Y_p - Y_i}{Y_p} \right)^{\alpha} \dots(4)$$

Where

Y<sub>p</sub> = Poverty line

n = Total Number of Respondents

Y<sub>i</sub> = Expenditure of the Poor Household

α = Poverty aversion parameter that takes a value of 0, if α = 0, 1, if α = 1 or 2, if α = 2

P<sub>α</sub> = Foster-Greer- Thorbecke Index (FGT), (0 ≤ P<sub>α</sub> ≤ 1)

To determine the poverty index



When  $\alpha = 0$ , the expression becomes the headcount index which measure the proportion of the population that falls below the poverty line. It is given as

$$P_0 = \frac{H}{N} \quad \dots(5)$$

When  $\alpha = 1$  in FGT, the expression becomes

$$P_1 = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^H \left( \frac{Y_p - Y_i}{Y_p} \right) \quad \dots(6)$$

This is known as poverty depth or poverty gap which means the extent to which individual fall below the poverty line as a proportion of the poverty line.

When  $\alpha = 2$ , the expression becomes

$$P_2 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^H \left( \frac{Y_p - Y_i}{Y_p} \right)^2 \quad \dots(7)$$

This is called poverty severity. It shows the impact of measured poverty if a given income by a poor person increases in proportion to the distance of the person from the poverty line.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Socio-Economic Characteristics of Cassava Corporative Members**

Table 1 revealed that the mean age across all three states hovers around the early 50s, with no members below 31 years old. The majority (66%) of members fall within the 41-60 age range. This suggests that middle-aged and older individuals are more likely to participate in cassava cooperatives. The significant representation of the >60 age group (25.33%) further underscores the reliance on older members in the agricultural sector. This aligns with findings by Ogunlela and Mukhtar (2017), who noted the critical role older adults play in sustaining agricultural practices in rural Nigeria. The mean ages in Akwa-Ibom (53.62), Delta (53.28), and Edo (52.72) are quite close, indicating a consistent age profile across the states. This uniformity suggests that the demographic challenges facing cooperatives, such as attracting younger members, are widespread across the region. The finding implies that cooperative activities and benefits might be more tailored to older members, potentially excluding younger demographics who could bring innovation and new energy to the sector. The skew towards an older membership also has significant implications for the sustainability of cassava cooperatives. As older members age, their ability to continue active participation may decline, potentially weakening the cooperative structure. Ogunleye and Oladejo (2016) emphasize the need for strategies to engage younger farmers to ensure the longevity and dynamism of agricultural cooperatives. Similarly, the absence of members in the 21-30 age bracket suggests a lack of young farmers in cassava cooperatives. This could indicate barriers to entry for younger individuals or a lack of interest in agricultural cooperatives among the youth. Studies, such as by Anyanwu *et al.* (2013), have pointed out that younger people often migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities, leaving older individuals to manage agricultural activities.

The result shows that 58.33% of the respondents were female members and 41.67% were male members. The higher percentage of female members in cassava cooperatives aligns with broader trends in Nigeria where women constitute a significant portion of the agricultural labour force. According to the FAO (2011), women account for 60-80% of the labor force in food production. Similarly, Odebo (2012) notes that the predominance of women in cassava cooperatives suggests significant socio-economic benefits as women's participation in cooperatives can enhance household food security and income given that cooperatives provide access to resources, training, and markets.

On marital status, majority (75.6%) of the cassava cooperative members were married while 2% were divorced, 10.33% were separated/divorced, and 12% were widowed. The predominance of married members in cassava cooperatives may reflect the social and economic stability that marriage provides. While all three states show a high percentage of married members, Delta state has the highest (26.67%), followed by Akwa-Ibom (24.67%) and Edo (24.33%). The percentage of separated/divorced members is notably higher in Edo (7.33%) compared to Akwa-Ibom (1.67%) and Delta (1.33%). According to a study by Ovwigho and Ifie (2012), married farmers are more likely to participate in cooperative societies due to shared responsibilities and combined efforts in farming activities.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of cassava corporative members**

Characteristics	Akwa-Ibom		Delta		Edo		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<b>Age (Years)</b>								
31-40	8	2.67	10	3.33	8	2.67	26	8.67
41-50	33	11.00	38	12.67	34	11.33	105	35.00
51-60	32	10.67	27	9.00	34	11.33	93	31.00
>60	27	9.00	25	8.33	24	8.00	76	25.33
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
Mean	53.62		53.28		52.72		53.21	
Minimum	38		38		38		38	
Maximum	79		79		79		79	
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	38	12.67	42	14.00	45	15.00	125	41.67
Female	62	20.67	58	19.33	55	18.33	175	58.33
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
<b>Marital Status</b>								
Married	74	24.67	80	26.67	73	24.33	227	75.67
Single	2	0.67	2	0.67	2	0.67	6	2.00
Separated/Divorced	5	1.67	4	1.33	22	7.33	31	10.33
Widowed	19	6.33	14	4.67	3	1.00	36	12.00
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
<b>Duration of Cooperative Membership (Years)</b>								
1-5	52	17.33	49	16.33	54	18.00	155	51.67
6-10	29	9.67	38	12.67	24	8.00	91	30.33
11-15	10	3.33	11	3.67	11	3.67	32	10.67
16-20	6	2.00	2	0.67	8	2.67	16	5.33
>20	3	1.00	0	0.00	3	1.00	6	2.00
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
Mean	7.88		7.09		8.02		7.66	
Minimum	4		2		2		2	
Maximum	26		18		26		26	
<b>Household Size</b>								
1-4	53	17.67	44	14.67	42	14.00	139	46.33
5-8	38	12.67	44	14.67	38	12.67	120	40.00
9-12	6	2.00	4	1.33	14	4.67	24	8.00
>12	3	1.00	8	2.67	6	2.00	17	5.67
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
Mean	5.49		6.02		6.48		6.00	
Minimum	2		2		1		1	
Maximum	18		18		18		18	
<b>Primary Occupation</b>								
Cassava Farming	88	29.33	85	28.33	73	24.33	246	82.00
Other occupation	12	4.00	15	5.00	27	9.00	54	18.00

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Married individuals often have better access to resources and labor, which can enhance their participation in cooperative activities. In contrast, the relatively high proportion of





widowed members (12.00%) indicates a marked presence of single-headed households within the cooperatives. Widows in agriculture often face unique challenges, such as limited access to land and resources. Their inclusion in cooperatives can provide them with necessary support and access to resources, as emphasized by the FAO (2018).

Furthermore, majority (51.67%) of the farmers had been in a cooperative for 1-5 years. The high percentage of members with 1-5 years of membership (51.67%) indicates relatively new involvement in the cooperatives. This could reflect recent efforts to attract new members or the establishment of new cooperatives. According to Lawal *et al.* (2017), the influx of new members can be attributed to increased awareness of the benefits of cooperative membership, such as access to credit, training, and market information. Edo state has the highest percentage of members in the 1-5 years category (18.00%), suggesting a more dynamic and possibly newer cooperative environment. Conversely, Delta state shows a slightly higher percentage of members in the 6-10 years category (12.67%), indicating a more stable and established cooperative membership. Meanwhile, the average membership duration (7.66 years) suggests that cooperatives have been relatively effective in retaining members. Retention is crucial for cooperative stability and sustainability.

The distribution of household sizes among cassava cooperative members shows that 46.33% of the households consist of 1-4 members followed by households with 5-8 members (40.00%), while the average household was made of 6 individuals. The high percentage of members with smaller household sizes (1-4 members) suggests that smaller families are more likely to engage in cooperative activities. This may be due to the reduced burden of household responsibilities, allowing members more time to participate in cooperative activities. According to Ogunlela and Mukhtar (2017), smaller household sizes often correlate with higher participation rates in agricultural cooperatives, as members can dedicate more time and resources to cooperative activities.

Finally, a majority (82%) of the members identify cassava farming as their primary occupation. This reflects the importance of cassava as a staple crop in Nigeria and highlights the reliance of these members on cassava farming for their livelihoods. Cassava's role as a primary occupation aligns with findings from Omoregbee and Ajayi (2014), who note that cassava is crucial for food security and income generation in rural Nigerian communities.

### **Relative Poverty Line of Cassava Cooperative Members**

#### **Total consumption expenditure (TCE) Per Day**

The result showed that the mean daily consumption expenditure is highest in Edo (₦7,292.54), followed by Delta (₦6,710.64) and Akwa-Ibom (₦6,101.45). These figures reflect regional economic differences and varying costs of living. The overall mean expenditure of ₦6,701.54 highlights a modest level of daily consumption expenditure among cassava cooperative members. The majority (52.33%) of the members spend between ₦4,001 and ₦8,000 per day, suggesting a moderate level of daily consumption. It also indicates that members can meet basic needs but may still face economic challenges. Afolabi (2010) similarly notes that many rural households operate within tight financial margins. About 21.67% of members spend less than ₦4,000 daily, indicating significant financial constraints. This is consistent with findings by Ogbeide and Agu (2015), who highlight the prevalence of low-income levels among rural farmers. Meanwhile, a smaller percentage of members (26%) spend more than ₦8,000 daily, representing those with better economic stability and higher incomes. This observation aligns with Adekola, Olawole-Isaac, and Jegede (2016), who found that higher income groups in rural areas tend to have better living standards.



**Table 2: Total Consumption Expenditure (TCE) per day of cassava cooperative members**

Expenditure/Day (₦)	Akwa-Ibom		Delta		Edo		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<4,000	25	8.33	20	6.67	20	6.67	65	21.67
4,001-8,000	57	19.00	51	17.00	49	16.33	157	52.33
8,001-12,000	9	3.00	22	7.33	12	4.00	43	14.33
12,001-16,000	7	2.33	2	0.67	17	5.67	26	8.67
>16,000	2	0.67	5	1.67	2	0.67	9	3.00
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00
Mean	6,101.45		6,710.64		7,292.54		6,701.54	
Minimum	1,971.43		2,723.21		1,596.43		1,596.43	
Maximum	17,821.43		20,071.43		17,107.14		20,071.43	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Per-Capita Expenditure (PCE) per day and Relative Poverty Line**

The PCE and Relative Poverty Line of the cassava cooperative farmers is presented in Table 3. The cassava farmers had a mean daily per capita expenditure of ₦1,323.44 according to the result. Particularly, 47.33% cassava farmers in the study spend less than ₦1,000 per day. Adepoju and Yusuf (2012) highlight that in Nigeria, this indicates a high prevalence of low-income levels and subsistence living common in such communities in Nigeria. Another 41% of members fall within the expenditure bracket of ₦1,000-2,000. This group can meet basic needs but still faces economic constraints, aligning with observations by Alabi *et al.* (2018) regarding rural households' economic challenges.

Meanwhile, only a small percentage (11.67%) of members spend more than ₦2,000 daily, indicating better economic stability. This supports findings by Afolabi (2020), who noted that higher income rural households tend to have improved living standards and can afford more than basic necessities. The mean PCE across states varies, with Edo having the highest (₦1,363.73) and Delta the lowest (₦1,282.25). The overall mean PCE is ₦1,323.44, with a relative poverty line set at ₦882.29. This is around \$0.59 at the exchange rate of \$1 to ₦1,504.50 obtainable in July 2024. Notably the relative poverty line of the cassava farmers in the study is 69.11% below the World Bank absolute poverty line of \$1.90 (or ₦2,858.55 at current exchange rate) (World Bank, 2020). This suggests that a marked portion of members live below this poverty threshold, reinforcing the findings of Ozughalu and Ogwumike (2015), who documented high poverty levels in Nigerian communities. Contrastingly, studies such as those by Akinlo and Akinbobola (2019) argue that rural cooperatives often have a positive impact on members' economic well-being by providing better access to resources and financial services, potentially leading to higher PCE over time.

**Table 3: Relative Poverty Line and Per Capita Expenditure per day**

Per Capita Expenditure (PCE)/day (₦)	Akwa-Ibom		Delta		Edo		Total		
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
<1,000	51	17.00	44	14.67	47	15.67	142	47.33	
1,001-2,000	36	12.00	48	16.00	39	13.00	123	41.00	
2,001-3,000	10	3.33	4	1.33	10	3.33	24	8.00	
3,001-4,000	0	0.00	2	0.67	0	0.00	2	0.67	
>4,000	3	1.00	2	0.67	4	1.33	9	3.00	
Total	100	33.33	100	33.33	100	33.33	300	100.00	
Mean PCE	<b>1,324.33</b>		<b>1,282.25</b>		<b>1,363.73</b>		<b>1,323.44</b>		
Minimum	<b>257.14</b>		<b>321.43</b>		<b>228.06</b>		<b>228.06</b>		
Maximum	<b>6,357.14</b>		<b>6,303.57</b>		<b>6,081.25</b>		<b>6,357.14</b>		
<b>Relative Poverty Line (Zi)=2/3(MPCE)</b>								<b>882.29</b>	

Source: Data Analysis, 2024



**Poverty Status of Cassava Cooperative Farmers**

The result of the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) poverty indices is presented in Table 4. The poverty head count (P0) for Akwa-Ibom, Delta, and Edo are 14.33%, 9.33%, and 12.00%, respectively, summing to 35.67% overall. This metric which measures the proportion of the population below the poverty line indicates that over one-third of cassava cooperative members live below the relative poverty line of ₦882.29. This is in line with Nwosu, Dike, and Oguoma (2018) who highlight that rural agricultural cooperatives can significantly reduce poverty levels through collective action and resource sharing as they found similar headcount ratios but higher poverty gaps in non-cooperative members. Similarly, Osabohien *et al.* (2020) found higher poverty headcounts and gaps in regions with less organized agricultural sectors. Their study in Northern Nigeria reported a headcount ratio of over 40%, emphasizing regional disparities. Meanwhile, Gillespie *et al.* (2019) provide a contrasting view, suggesting that cooperatives alone are insufficient to address poverty without broader economic reforms and infrastructure development.

The poverty gap index (P1) for Akwa-Ibom (0.0278), Delta (0.0249), and Edo (0.0325) show that the depth of poverty is low, with an aggregate index of 0.0852 (8.52%). The small differences among states for this metric which shows the average shortfall of the poor relative to the poverty line suggest similar levels of economic shortfall among the poor. Meanwhile the poverty severity index (P2) for Akwa-Ibom (0.0089), Delta (0.0090) and Edo (0.0134) indicate low poverty severity, with a total of 0.0313 (3.13%). The values suggest minimal inequality among the poor in these regions as this metric reflects the inequality among the poor by giving more weight to those further below the poverty line. In general, the results suggest that while cassava cooperatives help reduce poverty, comprehensive strategies that include infrastructural development, access to finance, and education are critical for substantial poverty alleviation.

**Table 4: Poverty Status of Cassava Cooperative Farmers**

FGT Scenarios	Akwa-Ibom		Delta		Edo		Total	
	Index	%	Index	%	Index	%	Index	%
Poverty headcount (P <sub>0</sub> )	0.1433	14.33	0.0933	9.33	0.1200	12.00	0.3567	35.67
Poverty gap (P <sub>1</sub> )	0.0278	0.03	0.0249	0.02	0.0325	0.03	0.0852	8.52
Poverty severity (P <sub>2</sub> )	0.0089	0.01	0.0090	0.01	0.0134	0.01	0.0313	3.13

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study assessed the poverty status of cassava cooperative farmers in the South-South region of Nigeria. The results revealed that a significant proportion of cassava cooperative members are classified as poor, with over one-third living below the relative poverty line. However, the depth and severity of poverty were found to be relatively low. The study also highlighted the socio-economic characteristics of cassava cooperative members, including age, gender, marital status, household size, and primary occupation. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Targeted Poverty Reduction Programs: Government and non-governmental organizations should design and implement targeted poverty reduction programs specifically tailored to the needs of cassava cooperative farmers. These programs should focus on improving access to credit, inputs, and markets, as well as providing training on improved farming practices.
- ii. Strengthening Cooperative Structures: Efforts should be made to strengthen the organizational and operational capacity of cassava cooperatives. This could involve providing training on cooperative management, financial literacy, and marketing strategies.
- iii. Enhancing Access to Finance: Financial institutions should be encouraged to develop innovative financial products and services that cater to the specific needs of cassava





- cooperative farmers. This could include providing loans with flexible repayment terms and lower interest rates.
- iv. Promoting Value Addition: Cassava cooperative farmers should be encouraged to engage in value addition activities, such as processing cassava into various products like garri, fufu, and starch. This would not only increase their income but also create employment opportunities in rural areas.
  - v. Investing in Infrastructure: Government should invest in rural infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and irrigation facilities, to improve the productivity and profitability of cassava farming.
  - vi. Empowering Women and Youth: Special attention should be given to empowering women and youth in cassava cooperatives. This could involve providing them with training, mentorship, and access to resources.
  - vii. Research and Development: More research is needed to understand the complex dynamics of poverty among cassava cooperative farmers. This would help in developing more effective and sustainable poverty reduction strategies.
  - viii. By implementing these recommendations, it is believed that the poverty status of cassava cooperative farmers in the South-South region of Nigeria can be significantly improved, contributing to sustainable livelihood and food security in the region.

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