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Rural Non-Farm Technological Change — Implications for Rural Linkages in Southeastern Nigeria

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Abstract

Technological change has affected most of rural non-farm enterprises with many positive and negative social and economic consequences. This study investigated the extent of this change and the linkage implications of the change on the rural economy of southeastern Nigeria. It also attempted assessing technical change in relation to the perceived negative consequences, to find out if the change was neutral and/or biased to those consequences.

A total of 200 non-farm entrepreneurs randomly selected from 10 rural communities in 5 out of 9 States of southeastern Nigeria provided the quantitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using interview schedules and focus group discussion guide respectively. Analysis of qualitative data was by the use of descriptive statistics, cross tabulations and factor analysis. Analysis of qualitative data was by folk interpretation and verbatim quoting of discussants views. Analysis showed that some personal socio-economic attributes of the rural entrepreneurs affected their technological adoption and use behaviour, which were regarded as negative consequences rather than wrong use of technology. Varimax rotated factor matrix of non-farm variables were used to identify and name factors that need urgent technology policy intervention. These include cost of new technology, wrong adoption of technology, non awareness of new technological packages, perception of traditional technology as superior to improved technology among others. Some of the effects of technological change were adjudged neutral while some were taken as biased to the problems of the rural enterprises. Three types of rural linkages identified in the area were: consumption, backward and forward production linkages, and their implications on technological change and the rural economy were highlighted.

Keywords: non-farm entrepreneurs, technological change, Nigeria