

# **Self-Help Farmer Cooperatives' Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable development in Southwest Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

There is ample evidence that much of Africa fails to meet basic criteria of agricultural sustainable development and environmental preservation. The objective of this study was to explore the management of natural resources by self-help farmer cooperatives. The study was carried out in five local government areas of Southwest Nigeria. These local government areas are forest zones covered by derived savannah. The raining season normally starts around April and ends in October/November, followed by a dry season. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. Several methods were used to collect information. These included group discussions and questionnaires. Results from the study show that women have played a major role in almost every aspect of agriculture. Farmers possess valuable knowledge of the natural resources in their environment. They have made use of changes in soils and topography, which have resulted in planting patterns in the scattered farms around the villages and distant farm plots. With the help of cooperatives, farmers are taught how to develop innovatory regenerative techniques to conserve the tree stock on the farm. These techniques focus around the preservation of forest species. This study has shown that given the opportunity, local farmers can face the environment and tackle the problems when given the required support.

Key words: farmers; cooperative and natural resources management.