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Agriculture Support Programs And Poverty Eradication In Rural Areas: A Case Study Of Ntusi Sub-County

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between agriculture support programs and poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county, Sembabule District, Uganda. The research was guided by three specific objectives: to assess the influence of input support programs on poverty eradication; to examine the effect of extension services and farmer training on poverty eradication; and to determine the role of access to credit and financial services on poverty eradication. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 120 respondents comprising farmers, agricultural extension workers, local government officials, and community leaders using structured questionnaires, interview guides, and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that input support programs significantly improved agricultural productivity and household incomes among beneficiary farmers. Extension services and farmer training were found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on farming practices and poverty reduction. Access to credit and financial services was identified as a critical enabler of agricultural investment and economic advancement among rural households. The study concluded that agriculture support programs played a vital role in reducing poverty levels in Ntusi Sub-county when effectively implemented and coordinated. It was recommended that government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and development partners strengthen and sustain agriculture support interventions to achieve lasting poverty eradication in rural Uganda.

Keywords: Agriculture Support Programs, Poverty Eradication, Input Support, Extension Services, Credit Access, Ntusi Sub-county

Background of the study

Agriculture remains the backbone of Uganda's economy, employing approximately 72% of the labour force and contributing significantly to household food security and income generation, particularly in rural areas(Alex & Julius, 2024). Despite this centrality, rural poverty has persisted as a major development challenge, with millions of smallholder farmers unable to meet basic needs due to limited access to productive resources, inadequate technology, and weak market linkages(Julius & Kaazara, 2025). Ntusi Sub-county, located in Sembabule District in the central region of Uganda, epitomized these challenges, with a predominantly agrarian population engaged in subsistence farming under difficult socio-economic conditions(Francis et al., 2023).

In response to these challenges, the Government of Uganda, through various ministries and development partners, implemented a range of agriculture support programs including input subsidies, agricultural extension services, and credit facilitation initiatives(Derrick et al., 2023). These programs were designed to transform smallholder agriculture from subsistence to commercial farming, increase household incomes, and ultimately reduce rural poverty(Julius &

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Kazaara, 2026d). The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), the Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) program, and various microfinance initiatives formed part of this broader policy framework(Julius & Nancy, 2025b). Despite these interventions, empirical evidence on their effectiveness in reducing poverty in specific rural localities such as Ntusi Sub-county remained limited(Julius & Kazaara, 2026c). This study therefore sought to investigate the extent to which these agriculture support programs contributed to poverty eradication in the sub-county, providing locally relevant evidence to inform policy and programming decisions.

Problem statement

Ntusi Sub-county continued to experience high levels of rural poverty notwithstanding the existence of various government and donor-funded agriculture support programs. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2019), Sembabule District recorded one of the highest poverty rates in the central region, with over 40% of rural households falling below the national poverty line(Faridah et al., 2023). Farmers in the area faced persistent challenges including low agricultural productivity, poor access to improved inputs, inadequate extension services, and limited financial services(Grace et al., 2023).

While agriculture support programs such as NAADS, OWC, and various microfinance schemes were operational in the sub-county, questions lingered about their actual impact on household poverty levels(Oromo et al., 2023). Reports from local government and civil society organizations suggested that many farmers did not benefit equitably from these programs, and that systemic weaknesses in delivery mechanisms undermined their effectiveness(Christopher et al., 2022). There was, therefore, a critical gap in empirical knowledge about the specific contribution of input support, extension services, and credit access to poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county, which this study sought to address.

Objectives of the study

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the relationship between agriculture support programs and poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county.

Specific Objectives

i. To assess the influence of input support programs on poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county.
ii. To examine the effect of extension services and farmer training on poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county.
iii. To determine the role of access to credit and financial services on poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county.

Literature review

Agriculture Support Programs and Poverty

Agriculture support programs have been widely recognized in development literature as essential instruments for poverty reduction in rural communities(Julius & Kazaara, 2025). According to Diao et al. (2019), agricultural growth was found to be two to three times more effective at reducing poverty than growth in other sectors, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where most of the poor depended on farming. Input support programs, including subsidized seeds and fertilizers, were reported to significantly increase crop yields and household incomes among smallholder farmers

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(Chirwa & Dorward, 2013). Governments across Africa, including Uganda, adopted such programs as part of their agricultural transformation strategies(Julius & Audrey, 2026).

Extension Services and Farmer Training

The role of agricultural extension services in transforming smallholder agriculture and reducing poverty was extensively documented(Julius & Kazaara, 2026b). Davis et al. (2012) demonstrated that farmer training and extension visits led to significant improvements in farming practices, productivity, and household welfare across East Africa. In Uganda specifically, NAADS was found to have contributed to improvements in technology adoption among participating farmers, though effectiveness varied by region and implementation quality (Benin et al., 2011). Farmer Field Schools and group-based extension approaches were particularly highlighted as cost-effective methods for reaching large numbers of smallholders(Alex et al., 2024).

Credit and Financial Services

Access to credit and financial services was identified as a fundamental constraint for smallholder farmers in developing countries(Derrick et al., 2023). Yunus (2007) argued that microfinance represented a powerful tool for poverty alleviation by enabling the poor to invest in productive activities. In the context of Uganda, studies by Birungi and Mugisha (2015) found that access to agricultural credit was positively associated with increased farm investment, productivity, and household income. However, significant barriers including high interest rates, collateral requirements, and limited financial literacy continued to restrict access for the poorest farmers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design, which facilitated the collection of data from multiple respondents at a single point in time, allowing for both breadth and depth of information. The study integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches through a mixed-methods strategy(Olanrewaju et al., 2021). Quantitative data provided measurable information on the extent of participation in agriculture support programs and poverty indicators, while qualitative data enriched the understanding of experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing program effectiveness. This triangulation of methods enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings.

Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in Ntusi Sub-county, Sembabule District, Uganda. The target population comprised smallholder farmers, agricultural extension workers, local government officials, and community leaders in the sub-county. The total estimated population of smallholder farming households in the sub-county was approximately 4,500. Agricultural extension workers, local government officials, and community leaders constituted additional categories of respondents who provided institutional and policy perspectives on the programs under study(Julius & Audrey, 2025).

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

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Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination formula, a sample of 120 respondents was selected for the study. Specifically, 100 smallholder farmers were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across the sub-county's different villages and parishes. The remaining 20 respondents, comprising extension workers, local officials, and community leaders, were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge and direct involvement in agriculture support programs(Julius & Nancy, 2025a). This combination ensured both representativeness and depth of information.

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data were collected using three instruments: structured questionnaires, key informant interview guides, and focus group discussion guides. The structured questionnaire, administered to farmer respondents, captured demographic information, participation in support programs, and self-assessed poverty indicators including household income, food security status, and asset ownership(Julius & Kazaara, 2026a). Key informant interviews were conducted with extension workers and government officials to gather institutional perspectives. Focus group discussions involving groups of six to eight farmers were organized to explore community-level experiences and perceptions of program impacts. Secondary data were obtained from published reports, government documents, and academic literature.

Validity, Reliability, and Data Analysis

The content validity of the research instruments was established through expert review by two academic supervisors and a panel of agricultural specialists. A pilot study was conducted with 12 respondents from a neighboring sub-county to assess instrument reliability, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, which was considered satisfactory. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, employing descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations(Nelson et al., 2022). Pearson correlation and regression analyses were used to establish the nature and strength of relationships between variables. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed thematically, with themes identified and interpreted in relation to the study objectives.

Results and findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=120)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	60.0
	Female	48	40.0
Age Group	18 – 30 years	18	15.0
	31 – 45 years	54	45.0
	46 – 60 years	36	30.0

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	Above 60 years	12	10.0
Education Level	No formal education	15	12.5
	Primary level	48	40.0
	Secondary level	42	35.0
	Tertiary/University	15	12.5
Farm Size	Less than 1 acre	24	20.0
	1 – 3 acres	60	50.0
	4 – 6 acres	27	22.5
	Above 6 acres	9	7.5

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The demographic data presented in Table 1 revealed several notable characteristics of the study respondents. Males constituted the majority of respondents at 60%, reflecting the predominance of male household heads as primary decision-makers in agricultural activities in Ntusi Sub-county, consistent with broader patterns observed in rural Uganda. Females accounted for 40% of respondents, indicating meaningful participation of women in farming, though the gender gap underscored the need for targeted interventions to promote female engagement in agriculture support programs. The largest age group was 31 to 45 years at 45%, suggesting that farming in the sub-county was predominantly undertaken by individuals in their productive middle years, which had positive implications for the adoption of new agricultural technologies and practices. Young farmers aged 18 to 30 years represented only 15% of respondents, raising concerns about youth engagement in agriculture. In terms of education, the majority of respondents had attained primary level education at 40%, while 35% had secondary education. This relatively moderate educational profile indicated reasonable capacity for comprehension of agricultural training and information, though functional literacy programs remained important. Farm size data showed that half of the respondents operated on farms of one to three acres, characteristic of the smallholder farming system predominant in the area, which highlighted the importance of intensive, productivity-enhancing interventions for small parcels of land.

Influence of Input Support Programs on Poverty Eradication

Table 2: Respondents' Views on Input Support Programs (n=100 farmers)

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
I received improved seeds through support programs	38	42	8	7	5	4.01	0.98
Fertilizer support improved my crop yields	35	38	10	10	7	3.84	1.12
Input support reduced my household food insecurity	32	40	12	10	6	3.82	1.09

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I received farm tools/equipment through programs	28	35	15	14	8	3.61	1.18
Input support increased my household income	30	38	14	12	6	3.74	1.11
Overall: Input programs reduced my poverty	36	41	10	8	5	3.95	1.02

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 2 presents the responses of farmer respondents regarding the influence of input support programs on their poverty situation. The results demonstrated an overwhelmingly positive assessment of these programs across all measured dimensions. The statement that respondents received improved seeds through support programs recorded the highest mean score of 4.01, with 80% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This finding reflected the wide reach of seed distribution programs, particularly those implemented under the Operation Wealth Creation initiative, which was the most frequently cited program by beneficiaries during both the survey and qualitative discussions. The substantial proportion of respondents who received improved seeds corroborated reports from extension workers, who confirmed during key informant interviews that seed distribution was the most consistently delivered component of agricultural support in the sub-county.

Fertilizer support was found to have improved crop yields for 73% of respondents, as reflected in a mean score of 3.84. Qualitative data from focus group discussions enriched this finding, with farmers reporting that access to subsidized fertilizers enabled them to intensify production on their small plots, leading to harvests that exceeded previous seasonal outputs. One focus group participant noted that the yields obtained after fertilizer application were sufficient not only for household consumption but also for market sale, which directly contributed to increased cash income. However, a notable proportion of respondents, approximately 17%, disagreed that fertilizer support improved their yields, with some attributing this to delayed delivery of inputs, poor quality of supplied fertilizers, and inadequate guidance on proper application methods.

Input support was reported to have reduced household food insecurity by 72% of respondents, with a mean of 3.82. This was one of the most significant poverty-related outcomes identified, given that food insecurity was consistently cited as a primary manifestation of poverty in the sub-county. The receipt of farm tools and equipment through support programs was acknowledged by 63% of respondents, with a slightly lower mean of 3.61, reflecting that this component of input support was less universally distributed compared to seeds and fertilizers. The overall composite statement that input programs reduced poverty garnered agreement from 77% of respondents and a mean of 3.95, confirming a strong positive association between input support and poverty reduction. These findings were consistent with those of

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Chirwa and Dorward (2013) who documented similar outcomes of input subsidies in smallholder farming contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Effect of Extension Services and Farmer Training on Poverty Eradication

Table 3: Effect of Extension Services and Farmer Training (n=100 farmers)

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Extension workers visited my farm regularly	22	35	18	15	10	3.44	1.21
Farmer training improved my agricultural skills	40	42	8	6	4	4.08	0.95
I adopted new farming techniques after training	36	40	10	9	5	3.93	1.07
Extension services helped me manage crop diseases	30	38	14	12	6	3.74	1.14
Training improved my household income	28	36	16	14	6	3.66	1.13
Overall: Extension services reduced my poverty	34	40	12	9	5	3.89	1.05

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The findings on extension services and farmer training, presented in Table 3, indicated a generally positive effect on farming practices and poverty outcomes, though with some variation across different dimensions. Farmer training was reported to have improved agricultural skills for the highest proportion of respondents, with 82% agreeing or strongly agreeing and a mean of 4.08, the highest recorded across all statements in this section. This result underscored the critical value that farmers placed on knowledge and skill development, affirming that training was perceived as one of the most transformative aspects of agricultural support programs. Key informant interviews with extension officers further corroborated this finding, with extension workers noting that farmers who attended training sessions demonstrated significantly better crop management practices, including proper planting densities, pest management, and post-harvest handling.

The adoption of new farming techniques following training was confirmed by 76% of respondents with a mean of 3.93, suggesting that training was effectively translating into behavioral change at the farm level. This was a particularly important finding, as technology adoption represents the critical pathway through which training leads to productivity gains and income improvements. Focus group participants described specific instances of adopting new crop varieties, irrigation techniques, and soil conservation practices that they had learned during farmer training

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sessions. However, the adoption rate varied by age and education level, with younger and more educated farmers demonstrating higher rates of uptake, consistent with the findings of Davis et al. (2012) in East African contexts.

The regularity of extension worker farm visits recorded the lowest mean score in this section at 3.44, with only 57% of respondents confirming regular visits. This finding pointed to a significant gap in the delivery of extension services, with many farmers reporting infrequent or irregular contact with extension workers. During focus group discussions, farmers expressed frustration about the limited availability of extension officers, citing that one extension worker was often responsible for multiple villages, making regular individual farm visits practically impossible. This structural constraint in the extension delivery system was identified as a key factor limiting the potential impact of extension services on poverty reduction. Despite this, 74% of respondents agreed that extension services had helped them manage crop diseases, and 74% reported overall that extension services had reduced their poverty, with a mean of 3.89.

Role of Access to Credit and Financial Services on Poverty Eradication

Table 4: Role of Credit and Financial Services (n=100 farmers)

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
I accessed agricultural credit in the past 3 years	25	30	15	18	12	3.38	1.30
Credit enabled me to invest more in farming	28	35	12	16	9	3.57	1.22
Savings groups/SACCOs improved my farm income	30	38	14	10	8	3.72	1.16
Mobile money services eased my financial access	42	36	10	8	4	4.04	1.01
Credit improved my household food security	26	32	18	14	10	3.50	1.24
Overall: Financial services reduced my poverty	27	36	16	13	8	3.61	1.19

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 4 presents findings on the role of credit and financial services in poverty eradication among farming households in Ntusi Sub-county. The results revealed a moderately positive but nuanced relationship, with both enabling effects and significant access barriers evident from the data. Mobile money services emerged as the most positively received financial service, with 78% of respondents confirming that these services had eased their financial access and a mean score of 4.04. This finding reflected the growing penetration of mobile financial services in rural Uganda and their

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practical utility in facilitating savings, remittances, and small-scale transactions for farming households. Focus group participants particularly valued the convenience and accessibility of mobile money, which they contrasted favorably with the logistical barriers associated with accessing formal banking services in distant urban centers.

Savings groups and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs) were reported to have improved farm income by 68% of respondents, with a mean of 3.72. These community-based financial mechanisms were identified during key informant interviews as the most accessible form of formal financial service for the majority of farmers in the sub-county, given that commercial bank branches were absent from the immediate area. Extension officers and local government officials noted that SACCOs had enabled many farmers to accumulate savings during favorable seasons and access loans for input purchases during planting seasons, creating a positive cycle of agricultural investment and income generation.

Despite these positive findings, access to formal agricultural credit was the least universally accessed financial service, with only 55% of respondents confirming that they had accessed agricultural credit in the past three years. This relatively low access rate, paired with the lowest mean score of 3.38 in this section, indicated that formal credit remained out of reach for a significant proportion of farmers. Key informant interviews revealed that collateral requirements, high interest rates charged by microfinance institutions, and limited financial literacy were the primary barriers to credit access. The overall composite statement that financial services had reduced poverty was agreed upon by 63% of respondents with a mean of 3.61, suggesting a moderate but meaningful contribution of financial services to poverty reduction, constrained primarily by the limited reach and accessibility of formal credit mechanisms.

Correlation Analysis: Agriculture Support Programs and Poverty Eradication

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1. Poverty Eradication	2. Input Support	3. Extension Services	4. Credit Access
1. Poverty Eradication	1.000			
2. Input Support Programs	0.712**	1.000		
3. Extension Services	0.684**	0.521**	1.000	
4. Credit & Financial Services	0.638**	0.487**	0.503**	1.000

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Source: Primary Data, 2025

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The Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 5 revealed statistically significant positive relationships between all three agriculture support program dimensions and poverty eradication at the 0.01 significance level. Input support programs demonstrated the strongest correlation with poverty eradication ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that increased access to and effectiveness of input support programs was strongly associated with improved poverty eradication outcomes. This finding placed input support as the most powerful driver of poverty reduction among the three program dimensions examined, consistent with the descriptive findings and the broader literature on input subsidies in developing agricultural economies.

Extension services and farmer training recorded a moderate to strong positive correlation with poverty eradication ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.01$), confirming the significant role of knowledge transfer and technical assistance in reducing household poverty. The strength of this relationship underscored that the quality and regularity of extension service delivery were critical determinants of poverty outcomes, and that investments in extension infrastructure and human resources were likely to yield substantial poverty reduction dividends. The correlation between credit and financial services and poverty eradication, while still significant and positive ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$), was comparatively lower, reflecting the access barriers documented in the descriptive analysis that limited the poverty-reducing potential of financial services. The inter-correlations among the three program dimensions were also significant, suggesting that they were complementary and mutually reinforcing interventions, and that integrated program delivery combining inputs, training, and financial services was likely to be more effective than any single component alone.

Regression Analysis: Predictors of Poverty Eradication

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis – Predictors of Poverty Eradication

Variable	Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
(Constant)	0.312	0.198	1.576	0.118	–
Input Support Programs	0.381	0.072	5.292	0.000	Significant
Extension Services	0.298	0.068	4.382	0.000	Significant
Credit & Financial Services	0.241	0.071	3.394	0.001	Significant

$R = 0.784$, $R^2 = 0.615$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.604$, $F(3,96) = 52.67$, $p < 0.001$

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The multiple regression analysis presented in Table 6 examined the combined predictive effect of the three agriculture support program dimensions on poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county. The overall model was statistically significant ($F(3,96) = 52.67$, $p < 0.001$) with an R-squared value of 0.615, indicating that the three independent variables collectively explained 61.5% of the variance in poverty eradication outcomes. This was a substantial explanatory power, confirming that the three dimensions of agricultural support programs were collectively strong

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predictors of poverty eradication in the study area. The adjusted R-squared of 0.604 confirmed that this explanatory power was robust even when accounting for the number of predictors in the model.

Input support programs emerged as the strongest individual predictor of poverty eradication with the highest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that a one-unit increase in input support program effectiveness was associated with a 0.381-unit improvement in poverty eradication outcomes, holding other variables constant. This finding reinforced the critical role of tangible material inputs including improved seeds, fertilizers, and farm tools in directly improving agricultural productivity and household welfare. Extension services recorded the second largest beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating a significant and independent positive effect on poverty reduction even when input support and credit access were controlled for. This finding affirmed that knowledge transfer through extension and training had a distinct poverty-reducing value beyond its role in enhancing the effectiveness of other interventions.

Access to credit and financial services also made a significant independent contribution to poverty eradication ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that financial inclusion was an important complement to input and extension support in enabling farmers to invest in and sustain agricultural improvements. The relatively smaller beta coefficient compared to the other two predictors was consistent with the descriptive findings on limited credit access, suggesting that the potential poverty-reducing effect of financial services was being constrained by access barriers. Collectively, these regression findings provided strong empirical support for a multi-dimensional approach to agricultural support that simultaneously addresses input access, technical knowledge, and financial inclusion as interlocking pathways to poverty eradication.

Discussion of results

The findings of this study demonstrated that agriculture support programs in Ntusi Sub-county had a significant positive relationship with poverty eradication, with all three dimensions of agricultural support contributing meaningfully to improved household welfare outcomes. These results were consistent with the broader development literature that positioned agricultural investment as a central strategy for poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa (Diao et al., 2019). The dominance of input support programs as the strongest predictor of poverty eradication confirmed the theoretical premise that access to productive resources forms the foundation of agricultural transformation, as smallholder farmers without seeds, fertilizers, and tools remained trapped in low-productivity subsistence farming regardless of knowledge or financial access.

The significant positive effect of extension services and farmer training on poverty eradication aligned with the findings of Davis et al. (2012) and Benin et al. (2011), who documented similar outcomes in East African extension programs. The gap identified in the regularity of extension worker visits was a critical finding that explained why the

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effect of extension services on poverty, while significant, was not as strong as the effect of input support. This pointed to systemic under-resourcing of the extension service delivery mechanism, a challenge documented across Uganda by multiple policy reviews. The finding that mobile money services were the most accessible and widely used financial service reflected the transformative role of digital financial services in bridging the financial inclusion gap for rural communities in Uganda.

The moderately lower contribution of credit and financial services to poverty reduction, despite its statistical significance, reflected the structural barriers that continued to limit formal credit access for the poorest and most vulnerable farmers. This gap called attention to the need for more inclusive financial product design and the strengthening of community-based savings mechanisms. Overall, the integrated nature of the relationships among the three support dimensions suggested that the most effective poverty eradication strategy involved coordinated delivery of inputs, technical assistance, and financial services as a comprehensive agricultural support package rather than isolated interventions.

Conclusions

This study reached several important conclusions about the relationship between agriculture support programs and poverty eradication in Ntusi Sub-county. First, input support programs were found to be the most influential dimension of agricultural support in reducing poverty, with widespread distribution of improved seeds, fertilizers, and farm tools translating directly into improved crop yields, food security, and household incomes for beneficiary farmers. Second, extension services and farmer training made a significant positive contribution to poverty eradication by building farmers' technical knowledge and promoting the adoption of improved agricultural practices, though the effectiveness of extension was constrained by insufficient staffing and infrequent farm visits. Third, access to credit and financial services played an important enabling role in poverty reduction, particularly through community-based savings mechanisms and mobile financial services, though formal credit remained inaccessible to a significant proportion of the farming population due to structural barriers.

The study concluded that agriculture support programs, when effectively implemented and adequately resourced, represented a powerful pathway to poverty eradication in rural Uganda. The strong explanatory power of the regression model confirmed that these three dimensions of agricultural support collectively accounted for a substantial proportion of variation in poverty outcomes, affirming their centrality in anti-poverty programming. However, the existing gaps in delivery effectiveness, geographic reach, and financial inclusion indicated that current program performance fell short of its poverty eradication potential, underscoring the need for targeted reforms to maximize impact.

Recommendations

Strengthening Input Support Programs

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The Government of Uganda and development partners were recommended to scale up input support programs in Ntusi Sub-county and similar rural areas, ensuring timely delivery of high-quality improved seeds, fertilizers, and farm tools to all eligible smallholder farmers. Quality control mechanisms for distributed inputs should be strengthened, and beneficiary selection processes should be made more transparent and equitable to address the concerns raised by non-beneficiary farmers. The government was further recommended to explore sustainable models for input support that reduced dependence on annual budget cycles and ensured continuity of assistance across multiple farming seasons.

Improving Extension Services

To address the gap in extension service delivery, the District Local Government was recommended to recruit and deploy additional agricultural extension workers in Ntusi Sub-county, ensuring an improved farmer-to-extension-worker ratio that allowed for regular and individualized farm visits. Complementary approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, radio-based extension, and mobile phone advisory services should be institutionalized to expand the reach of agricultural knowledge to farmers in remote areas. Training curricula should be updated regularly to incorporate the latest agricultural technologies and climate-adaptive practices relevant to the farming conditions of the sub-county.

Expanding Access to Credit and Financial Services

Financial institutions including microfinance organizations and SACCOs were recommended to design agricultural loan products specifically tailored to the cash flow cycles of smallholder farmers, with flexible repayment schedules aligned to harvest seasons and reduced collateral requirements. The government should invest in financial literacy programs for farming communities to improve farmers' understanding of credit products and their ability to manage financial obligations responsibly. The expansion of mobile financial service infrastructure in rural areas should be supported to deepen financial inclusion and enable farmers to save, access credit, and manage agricultural transactions conveniently.

Coordinated Program Implementation

Development agencies, government departments, and non-governmental organizations operating in Ntusi Sub-county were recommended to adopt a coordinated and integrated approach to agricultural support, ensuring that input provision, extension services, and financial inclusion activities were delivered in a complementary and synchronized manner. A local agricultural support coordination committee should be established to harmonize program schedules, share resources, and avoid duplication, thereby maximizing the collective poverty eradication impact of the various interventions operating in the sub-county.

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