

Innovation Diffusion Constrained– Technical Change in Agriculture on the Mossi Plateau, Burkina Faso

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Agricultural transformation is essential for poverty reduction in rural areas. For such transformation to happen, technical change is necessary. How are processes of technical change unfolding in poverty stricken areas, where rainfall levels are low and erratic, and where farming populations are surviving on low input food crop cultivations?

This paper builds on recent field studies in three villages at the mossi plateau in central Burkina Faso. For two of these villages, comparisons are also made with findings from fieldwork performed ten years ago. The paper describes a pattern both of innovation diffusion with early and late adopters as well as non-adopters; and with a centralized, hierarchical system of diffusion working in tandem. One result of this amalgam is that the role of opinion leaders becomes limiting rather than enabling in the transformation process. In such situations, the actions of external actors run risks of becoming counterproductive.