

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DELIVERY.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) willingness to engage in agricultural extension delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. Data were collected from 143 NGOs and analyzed using descriptive statistic. The study found out that most NGOs in the study area had health (53.1%), economic (vocational skills capacity building) (35.7%), and advocacy/good governance (32.9%) orientation. Agricultural (mean = 3.93), economic (mean = 3.75) and educational development (3.66) focused NGOs indicated greater willingness to engage in extension delivery. The study therefore recommends a greater use of these NGOs by the extension agency in the State to foster the development of the agricultural sector.

Background to the Study

The responsibility for providing extension services has been largely that of government. According to Erie (2006), Extension services in Nigeria have always been provided through such government owned agencies as the Ministry of Agriculture, the respective research institutes that has spread across the country with mandate on specific crops and livestock, Universities, and other agriculture based intervention programmes. The level of achievement of these government owned extension agencies has been of great concern to academics and practitioners. Reason being that despite the large number of development programmes undertaken by National and State agencies in Nigeria the living condition of the rural people still remain deplorable as it has been identified with acute poverty, crude tools, poor income, high infant mortality, low agricultural production and lack of basic amenities such as portable water and electricity (Orhue, 2011). According to World Bank Study (2012), inadequate linkage between research and extension establishment are a major weakness of development. In recent years, many observers have suggested that agricultural and rural development strategies would benefit from increased collaboration between government and extension Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (Egbuna, 2003). Oladele (2004) argue that harnessing NGO for a wider coverage and sustainability of the extension services required special attention, for the extension services to remain functional and relevant to the needs of a majority of farmers.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study were to identify NGOs willingness to undertake agricultural extension delivery in Edo State; specifically, the study

identified NGO types in the State and probed their willingness to engage in extension delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Edo State. Edo State is an inland state in Nigeria, created on the 27th August, 1991 from former Bendel State. There are 18 Local Government Areas in the state distributed across three (3) agricultural extension zones which are Edo South, Edo Central and Edo North. The State is mainly an agrarian state with majority of the people as farmers cultivating cash crops such as timber, rubber, cocoa, plantain/banana, oil palm and arable crops such as fruits, vegetables, maize, cassava, yam and cocoyam. Livestock such as piggery, poultry and small stocks are reared. *Sampling Techniques:* The population size of registered NGOs in the state was 163, distributed across the senatorial districts as follows: (Edo South = 127; Edo Central = 15; and Edo North = 9). Purposive sampling of the 3 senatorial Districts in the State was done to give the study a State-wide focus. This figure was obtained from Conference of NGOs office in the State. Giving the population size of 163 the whole total numbers of NGOs were sampled. However, only 143 responses were received from the target sampled and analysis was based on this. Data were collected by means of validated questionnaire, and analyzed using frequency, percentage and mean

Operationalization of Variables

NGOs Willingness to Participate in Extension Services: The NGOs operators were asked to indicate the extent to which they were willing to participate or engage in five extension services namely: mobilization of farmers for programmes; disseminating information on modern farming practices; conducting capacity building for farmers on modern farming practices; Informing

agricultural development agencies on community related problems as well as farm input provision.

The extent or willingness was measured using a four point – likert scale: Very willing (coded 4), willing (coded 3), little willing (coded 2), not willing (coded 1). To make a decision on whether NGOs were willing to participate in the above five extension services, a weighed mean score of 2.50 was used. The extension service with a score of 2.50 and above, means the NGOs are willing to participate in such extension service while a score below 2.50 means the NGOs were not willing to participate in such extension activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows that NGOs in the State were 12 major orientation or activities namely health, economic (vocational/skill capacity building), advocacy/good governance, civil rights, educational development, environmental, infrastructural development, social welfare, society watchdog, conflict resolution, agriculture and religious. More than half of NGOs (i.e. 53.1%) were characterized as health based NGOs followed by economic NGOs (35.7%). About 33% of the NGOs were classified as advocacy/good governance, 21% were into civil rights. Only 2.1% of the NGOs were characterized as agricultural based NGOs.

Willingness of the NGOs to participate in extension delivery

Table 2 shows the general willingness of the NGOs to participate in extension delivery based on the characterization of the NGO. Table 2 examine the willingness to embark on extension delivery based on nature or orientation of the NGOs. The result shown that the agricultural based NGO had the highest score in terms of willingness with a mean score of 3.93, followed by economic based (3.75), and educational NGOs (3.66). However, NGOs such as social welfare with a mean of 2.44, conflict resolution with a mean of 2.41 and society watchdog with a mean of 2.29 were considered not willing to engage in agricultural extension services since their score were below 2.50. This result shown that though NGOs had general willingness to participate in agricultural extension services, however the nature of the NGOs i.e. their orientation shows their willingness to participate in extension services and some NGOs are more willing to participate in agricultural extension services than some.

Areas of agricultural extension service NGOs are willingness to participate:

Table 3 shows areas of extension delivery NGOs were willing to participate in agricultural extension services. The major area of interests by NGOs included mobilizing farmers for programmes with mean score of 3.53, conducting capacity building for farmers on modern farming practices (mean = 3.50) and farm input provision (mean = 3.43). Other area of interests included disseminating information on modern farming practices (3.24), and informing agricultural development agencies on community related problems (3.22).

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the study areas were involved in different activities. Based on these activities, the NGOs were characterized into 12 categories namely; Health, Economic (vocational skill capacity building), Advocacy, Civil right, Educational development, Environmental, Infrastructural development, Social welfare, Society watchdog, Conflict resolution, Agriculture and Religious. Some of the NGOs were willing to participate with agricultural extension services delivery in the state, and this has implication for their utility in agricultural extension delivery.

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Table 1: Characterization of NGOs

Activities	Freq*	%
Health	76	53.1
Economic (vocational/skill capacity building)	51	35.7
Advocacy/good governance	47	32.9
Civil rights	40	28.0
Educational development	30	21.0
Environmental	23	16.1
Infrastructural development	12	8.4
Social welfare	11	7.7
Society watchdog	4	2.8
Conflict resolution	4	2.8
Agriculture	3	2.1
Religious	1	0.7

*Multiple response

Table 2: NGO willingness to engage in extension services by NGO type

Characterization	Willingness score	Ranking
Agriculture	3.93	1
Economic(vocational skill capacity building)	3.75	2
Educational development	3.66	3
Infrastructural development	3.41	4
Environmental	3.22	5
Religious	3.21	6
Health	3.08	7
Civil rights	2.94	8
Advocacy	2.92	9
Social welfare	2.44	10
Conflict resolution	2.41	11
Society watchdog	2.29	12

*willing [mean $\geq$ 2.50]

Table 3: Areas of agricultural extension NGOs are willingness to participate

Aspects	Mean	SD
Mobilizing farmers for programmes	3.53	0.84
Disseminating information on modern farming practices	3.24	0.73
Conducting capacity building for farmers on modern farming practices	3.50	0.74
Informing agric development agencies on community related problems	3.22	0.74
Farm input provision	3.43	0.83

*Willing (mean $\geq$ 2.50)