

Original Research Article

Willingness of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to Participate in Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the willingness of Non-Governmental Organizations NGOs to engage in agricultural extension services delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. Specific issues addressed were to identify the type of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the study area, and their willingness to participate in extension service delivery. Data were collected with the aid of questionnaire from 143 NGOs selected from the three agricultural zones of the state. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count and mean as well as Friedman test. The dominant forms of NGOs in the study area were; health (53.1%), economic (vocational skills capacity building) (35.7%), advocacy/good governance (32.9%) civil rights (28.0%), educational development (21%), environmental (16.1%) infrastructural development (8.4%), social welfare (7.7%), Society watchdog (2.8%), conflict resolution (2.8%), agriculture (2.1%) and religion (0.7%). The Freidman test ($\chi^2=41.55$) was significant at 5% level indicating that significant differences existed among the NGO types in their willingness to engage in extension service delivery. NGO type such as agriculture (mean= 3.93), economic (vocational and capacity building) (mean=3.75), and educational (mean=3.66) compared to other NGO types. It was recommended that appropriate policies and enabling environment should be put in place by agricultural policy maker that will encourage NGOs to participate in extension services so to encourage NGOs participation in extension service delivery, also ADPs should link with NGOs in order to enhance their capacity to deliver extension services effectively in order to enhance NGOs capacity in extension service delivery.

Key words: Assessment, Non-governmental organization, extension service delivery

Introduction

For more than two decades now, the agricultural sector of the Nigeria economy has performed below expectation despite the sum of money allocated to the sector in each year's budget (Onyeahialam, 2002). This realization promoted past governments in the country to establish

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several extension outfits like the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) and Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI)

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 government-owned agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the respective research institutes that are spread across the country (with mandates 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 could be attributed to the fact that despite the large number of development programmes undertaken by national and state agencies in Nigeria, the living conditions of the rural people still remain deplorable as it has been identified with acute poverty, crude farming tools, poor income, high infant mortality, low agricultural production, and lack of basic amenities such as potable water and electricity (Omoruyi *et al.*, 1999). According to World Bank (2012), inadequate linkages between research and extension organizations 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 organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (Egbuna, 2003). Donors in particular have started calling for more NGOs involvement in programmes that have traditionally been implemented through the public sector, and there has been a recent upsurge of donor interest in direct funding of South-based NGOs in Nigeria (World Bank, 2010a, 2010b).

Oladele (2004), in his evaluation of Agricultural Extension Services under World Bank Funding in Nigeria, noted that significant progress had been made in the establishment of an institutional framework for a functional extension service in the country, and that some weak areas such as harnessing of NGO efforts 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.

However, NGOs are of different types, and it would be erroneous to assume that the nature of the NGOs has no bearing with their willingness to participate in agricultural extension services delivery. Thus, to be more strategic in the involvement of NGOs in the delivery of agricultural extension services in a state such as Edo state, Nigeria, it will require an understanding of the different forms of NGOs available in the state as well as the disposition of the different NGO types to agricultural extension services delivery.

Objective of the study

The main purpose of the study was to assess the willingness of NGOs to participate in agricultural extension services delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to

- i. identify the NGOs operating in the study area,;
- ii. categorize the NGOs according to their activities
- iii. ascertain the NGOs' willingness in participating in agricultural extension delivery based on type

Hypothesis of the study

H01: There are no significant differences among the NGO types in their willingness to participate in agricultural extension services delivery.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Edo State, Nigeria. The state is approximately 1,928,193 square kilometres, and had a projected population of 3,694,087 in 2011 (NBS, 2006).

The state is mainly agrarian, 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. The keeping of livestock such as poultry, pigs, sheep and goats is also practiced.

The registered NGOs in the state is made of 139 in Edo South, 15 in Edo Central and 9 in Edo North. These figures were obtained from Conference of NGOs, Edo State (2016).

The three senatorial districts in the State were purposively sampled to give the study a state-wide focus. Given the population size of 163, the entire population of NGOs was used. However, only 143 responses could be retrieved from the target population, and analysis was based on this. Data were collected from the respondents by means of a validated questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha method which gave a correlation value of 0.872, which indicated that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistical tools comprising, frequencies, percentages and means were used to summarize the data, while Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and Freidman test were used to test the hypothesis.

Characteristics of NGOs

Questions were included in the questionnaire to obtain information on NGO characteristics in terms of how long they had existed, the number of branches they had, their staff strength among others

Characterization of NGOs

The NGOs were asked to indicate the activities they were into. Based on their responses, they were characterized into health-oriented, economic-oriented, environment-oriented, civil rights-oriented, agriculture-oriented, advocacy/good governance-oriented, infrastructural development, social welfare, conflict resolution, and society watchdog NGOs.

Willingness of NGOs to engage in extension service delivery

The NGOs operators were asked to indicate the extent to which they were willing to participate or engage in five (5) 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 provision of farm inputs. *Willingness* was measured using a four-point likert scale as follows: "Very Willing" (coded 4), "Willing" (coded 3), "Slightly Willing" (coded 2) and "Not Willing" (coded 1). To make a decision on whether NGOs were willing to participate in the above-stated five extension services, a weighed mean score of 2.50 was used. The extension service with a score of 2.50 and above meant the NGOs were willing to participate in such extension service, while a score below 2.50 was taken to mean that the NGOs were not willing to participate in such extension activities.

Results and Discussion

Years of Existence

The result in Table 1 shows that about 28.0% of the Non-Governmental Organizations were established 6 – 10 years ago, 26.6% were established 11 – 16 years ago, 13.3% were established 26 – 30 years ago, 9.8% were established 21 – 25 years ago, 7.7% were established 16 – 20 years, 7.7% were established over 30 years ago, while 7.0% were established 1 – 5 years ago.

Table 1: NGO Year of Establishment

Year	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	10	7.0
6-10	40	28.0
11-15	38	26.6
16-20	11	7.7
21-25	14	9.8
26-30	19	13.3
>30	11	7.7
Total	143	100.0

Field survey, 2017

The average length of NGO existence in the study area was 16 years. This suggests that the NGOs had some experience in carrying out NGO activities in the study area. The above result is similar to that of Koyenikan (2011) who asserted that long years of experience of NGOs promotes an understanding of the norms and values of their host communities.

Numbers of Branches Operated by NGOs

Table 2 shows the distribution of number of branches of the Non-Governmental Organizations in the study area. The result in shows that most (72.7%) of the NGOs had just 1 or 2 branches, while 25.2% had 3 or 4 branches. NGOs with 6 or more branches constituted only 2.1%. The average number of branches was 2. This is relatively low, because the number of branches to a great extent determines NGOs' ability to increase their outreach in the study area. For example, an NGO that has only one branch in Benin City, the State capital, will find it more difficult to cover activities that have to do with the grassroots people in other parts of the State.

Table 2: NGO number of branches

Number	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
1-2	104	72.7	
3-4	36	25.2	
5-6	1	0.7	
7-8	2	1.4	
Total	143	100.0	2

Field survey, 2017

Staff Strength

Table 3 shows the staff strength of the Non-Governmental Organizations. Results reveal that 42.0% of NGOs had 11 – 15 staff, 34.3% had 6 – 10 staff, 14.0% had 16 – 20 staff, 4.2% had 21 – 25 staff, while 2.8% had above 25 staff. The average staff strength was 13, which means the staff strength was low. However, limited staff strength may prompt the NGO to network with other NGOs for more effective and efficient service delivery. The result of the study agrees with the findings of Blum (1991) that the ability of public sector research and extension institutions to serve poorer farmers is especially limited by inadequate financial support, human resources and facilities.

Table 3: Staff Strength of NGOs

Staff Strength	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	4	2.8
6-10	49	34.3
11-15	60	42.0
16-20	20	14.0
21-25	6	4.2
>25	4	2.8
Total	143	100.0

Field survey, 2017

Characterization of NGOs

Table 4 shows that NGOs in the state were involved in 12 major activities namely health, economic (vocational/skill capacity building), advocacy/good governance, civil rights, educational development, environment, infrastructural development, social welfare, society watchdog, conflict resolution, agriculture and religion.

Based on the activities and percentage responses, the result indicates that more than half of NGOs in the state (i.e. 53.1%) were categorized 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, 16.1% were characterized as environmental NGOs, 8.4% were into infrastructural development while 7.7% had a social welfare orientation. Very few NGOs in the state were engaged as society watchdog (2.8%), or focused on conflict resolution (2.8%). Only 2.1% of the NGOs were characterized as agriculture-based NGOs.

The higher proportion of health-based NGOs could be because there is a high level of support, both locally and internationally, for healthcare development in the state in particular, and the nation in general.

Table 4: Characterization of NGOs

Activities	Frequency*	Percentage
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 responses

Health as the major activities of NGOs may be attributed to the level of increase in health failure especially from child and maternal health challenges and also the serious danger recorded from HIV/AIDS and many infections/diseases associated with sexual reproduction in both men and women. Economic (vocational/skill capacity building) was next. This can also be as a result of the importance of vocational and skill capacity building drive to develop or empower the people in

the study area. The above result shows that NGOs see the needs to advocate for good governance of the people in the study area. This may be as a result of foreign bodies who are interested in good governance of the world.

The importance of environmental sanitation becomes necessary as a result of climate change and the need to protect against natural disasters in the study area, hence there is need for NGOs on environment-related issues. In the case of infrastructural development activities the results revealed that among the NGOs in the area, those focusing in infrastructure development-related issues dominate. The number of NGOs involved in conflict resolution was low, probably because the state enjoys relative peace.

This result shows that NGOs presently participating in agriculture-related activities are few. Such NGOs assist farmers with procurement of fertilizers, facilitation of soft loans for agricultural production and training on how to use latest technologies in improving agricultural production. Studies by Graham (1990), Sollows *et al.* (1993) and Watson and Laquihon (1993) noted that agriculture-based NGOs have developed innovative dissemination methods, new technologies and new management practices to improve agricultural production in the society. NGOs with religious focus were few. Such NGOs use religion to induce good behavior in the society, and condemn social vices.

Willingness of the NGOs to Participate in Extension Delivery

Table 5 shows the responses of the NGOs regarding their willingness to participate in agricultural extension service delivery.

Table 5: NGO willingness to engage in extension services by NGOs type

NGO Category	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]

The result shows that the agriculture-based NGOs had the highest score with a mean of 3.93, followed by economic-based NGOs ($\bar{x}=3.75$), those concerned with education ($\bar{x} = 3.66$),

infrastructure ($\bar{x} = 3.41$), environment ($\bar{x} = 3.22$), religion ($\bar{x} = 3.21$), health ($\bar{x} = 3.08$), civil rights ($\bar{x} = 2.94$) and advocacy ($\bar{x} = 2.92$). The above NGO scores indicated their willingness to engage in extension service since their mean scores were greater than 2.50. However, NGOs engaged in social welfare ($\bar{x} = 2.44$), conflict resolution ($\bar{x} = 2.41$) and society watchdog ($\bar{x} = 2.4$) were considered not willing to engage in agricultural extension services since their scores were below 2.50.

This result further shows that though the NGOs in general expressed willingness to participate in agricultural extension services, some of the NGOs were, however, more willing to participate in agricultural extension services than others.

Test of difference in the willingness of NGO types to engage in extension service delivery

Ho: There are no significant differences among the NGOs in their willingness/interest to participate in agricultural extension service delivery.

Table 6 shows the willingness of NGO types to engage in extension service delivery. The Friedman test result was significant at 5% level indicating that significant differences existed among the willingness of NGO types to engage in extension service delivery. Using a grand mean of 3.56,

Table 6: Test of difference in the willingness of NGO types to engage in extension service delivery

NGO Types	Mean Rank	Mean Rank
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

$\chi^2 = 41.55$, $df = 11$, grand mean = 3.56

Source field data, 2017

the result suggest that NGO types such as agriculture (mean=3.97), economic (vocation and capacity building) mean=3.75 and educational development (mean= 3.66) were significantly willing to engage in extension service delivery compared to other NGO types such as infrastructural development (mean=3.41), environmental (mean =3.22), religion (mean=3.21),

health (mean=3.08), civil right (mean=2.94), advocacy (mean=2.92), social welfare (mean=2.44) conflict resolution (mean=2.41) and societal watchdog (mean=2.29).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that significant differences existed in the willingness of NGO types to participate in extension service delivery. This could be as a result of their predominant orientation or activities that characterise their formation.

Recommendations

The researchers therefore recommended as follows:

Appropriate policies and enabling environment should be put in place by agricultural policy maker that will encourage NGOs to participate in extension services so to encourage NGOs participation in extension service delivery.

ADPs should link up with NGOs in order to enhance their capacity to deliver extension services effectively in order to enhance NGOs capacity in extension service delivery.

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