

Assessment of Non-Governmental Organisations Activity Orientation and Prospect in Extension Delivery in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the prospect of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) engagement in agricultural extension service delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. Specific issues addressed included 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 using Snowball sampling technique. The 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%). Only few NGOs (23%) were engaged in entrepreneurial activities with crop and livestock farming being dominant. The Friedman 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) were significantly more willing to engage in agric-oriented activities compared to other NGO types. It was recommended that appropriate policies and enabling environment should be put in place by agricultural policymaker to encourage NGOs participate in extension services, while linkage with ADPs be strengthen to enhance production performance of those engaged in farm enterprises.

Key Words: *Entrepreneurship, Non-Governmental Organizations, Extension Service Delivery, Edo State.*

Introduction

For more than two decades, 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 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 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). 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 study of Agricultural Extension Services when World Bank Funds were used to revamp the Extension Services in Nigeria, noted that significant progress was 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 entrepreneurial orientation and 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 enormous to assume that the nature of the NGOs has no bearing with their willingness to participate in agricultural entrepreneurial orientation extension service delivery. Thus, to be more strategic in the employment of NGOs in delivery agricultural extension service will require an understanding of the different firms of NGOs available in the State as well as the disposition of the different NGO types to agricultural extension service delivery.

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to assess the willingness of NGOs to engage in entrepreneurial activities in extension delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to;

- i. characterize the NGOs operating in the study area, and
- ii. ascertain the NGOs interest in participating in agricultural extension delivery based on type.

Hypothesis of the study

Ho₁: There is no sign difference among the NGO type in their willingness/interest to participate in agricultural entrepreneurial activities in extension service delivery.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Edo State. The State has approximately 1,928,193 square kilometers and a projected population of 4,863,121 in 2018, based on the population growth rate of 3.5%. 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, piggery, sheep and goat rearing is also practiced.

The population size of registered NGOs in the state is comprising, 139 in Edo South, 15 in Edo Central and 9 in Edo North, (Conference of NGOs office, Edo State, 2017).

The three senatorial districts in the State were purposively sampled to give the study a state-wide focus. Giving the population size of 163, the researchers targeted all the NGOs. However, only 143 responses were received from the target sampled and analysis was based on this Data were collected from the respondents by means of validated questionnaire. The reliability of questionnaire was ascertained using the Test-retest Method, which gave a correlation value of 0.872 which indicated that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistical tools, comprising frequency, percentage and mean were used in the analysis while Freidman test was used to test the hypothesis formulated for the study.

Measurement of Variables

Characteristics of NGOs

- (a) **Year of Establishment:** The NGOs operators were ask to indicate the years of establishment and their responses were categorized.
- (b) **Number of Branches:** The NGOs operators were asked to indicate the number of branches they have. Their responses were also categorized.
- (c) **Staff Strength:** The NGOs operators were asked to indicate the number of staffs working with them and their responses were also categorized.

Activity-Oriented

The NGOs were asked to indicate the activity they were into e.g. health economic (vocational/skill capacity building), advocacy/good governance, civil rights, educational, environmental and agriculture, based on their major activities. Based on their responses, they were characterized into health oriented, economic oriented, environmental oriented, civil rights oriented, agricultural oriented, advocacy/good governance oriented, infrastructural development, social welfare, conflict resolution, society watchdog and agriculture.

Willingness of NGO Types to Engage in Agric-Extension Rural Advisory Services Delivery

In order to categorize NGO based on their general willingness to participate in agricultural extension delivery, five statement relating to agricultural extension services were developed. The maximum and minimum scores obtained on the minimum was the five item were determined. The maximum score obtainable was 20(4 x 5 = 20) and the minimum was 5(1 x 5). The response code was four (4) represent “Very willing”, (3) “willing”, (2) “little willing” and (1) “not willing” represent the number of items/questions. In order to categorize the NGOs, the average of the minimum and maximum score was taken which was 13. The total items were summed up; any score above 13 implied that the NGO is willing to participate in the extension delivery, while any score equal to below 13 implies that the NGOs is not willing.

Results and Discussion

Year of Establishment

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

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

Table 1:NGO Year of Establishment

Age (Year)	Freq	Percent age	Mean
1-10	50	35.0	
11-20	49	33.3	
21-30	33	23.1	
>30	11	7.7	
Total	143	100.0	16

Branch Networks of NGOs

Table 2 shows the Non-Governmental Organizations branch network in the study area. The result in Table 2 shows that 72.7% of the NGOs had 1 -2 branches, 25.2% had 3 – 4 branches, 1.4% had 7 – 8 branches while 0.7% had 5 – 6 branches. 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 with only one branch in Benin the State capital will find it more difficult to cover activities that have to do with the grassroots people in other part of the State.

Table 2: NGO Number of Branches

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

Non-Governmental Organisation Staff Strength

Table 3 shows the staff strength of the Non-Governmental Organisations. From Table 3, 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 a more effective and efficient service delivery. The result of the study agrees with Blum (1991), who noted 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	Freq	Percentage
1-10	53	37
11-20	80	56
>20	10	7
Total	143	100.0

Characterization or Activity-Orientation 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, environmental, infrastructural development, social welfare, society watchdog, conflict resolution, agriculture and religious. Based on the activities and percentage response, the result indicate that more than half of NGOs in the state (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, 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 act as society watchdog (2.8%), and focused on conflict resolution (2.8%). Only 2.1% of the NGOs were characterized as agricultural- based NGOs.

***Multiple Responses**

Those NGOs directly on agriculture were (2.1%). Therefore, NGOs activity orientation is very fair with total of (35.7% + 2.1% = 37.8%). However, more effort should be made by NGOs to engage in agriculture and economic empowerment as part of their activities. 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 disaster in the study area hence there is need for NGOs on environmental related issues while in the case of infrastructural development activities the results agree with Adebayo (1997) which reveals that among NGOs in Nigeria, those focusing on infrastructural developmental related issues dominates. The number of NGOs characterized as been involved in conflict resolution was low, because the states enjoys relative peace.

This result shows that NGOs presently participating in agricultural related activities were few. Such NGOs assist farmers with fertilizers, soft loans for agricultural production and training on how to use latest technology in improving agricultural production. Studies by Graham (1990), Sollows, Thongpan and Lee Iapatra (1993), Watson and Laquihon (1993) noted that agricultural based NGOs have developed innovative dissemination methods, new technologies and new management practices in improving the agricultural production in the society. Mattock and Steele,(2008) have asserted that most NGOs have not meet the expected roles in agricultural development despite the fact that agriculture constitute the major livelihood of the Nigeria rural population. The implication of this therefore, is that the living standard of people living in rural areas remains poor. More efforts are expected of NGOs to implement more agricultural projects in order to improve the living standard of people in rural areas.

Table 4: Characterization or Activity-Orientation of NGOs

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Freq*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
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

Willingness of the NGOs to Participate in Extension Delivery

Table 5 showed that the agricultural based NGO had the highest score with a mean of 3.93, followed by economic based NGOs (\bar{x} =3.75), educational NGOs with (\bar{x} = 3.66), infrastructural related NGOs (\bar{x} = 3.41), environmental based NGOs (\bar{x} =3.22), religious based NGOs (\bar{x} =3.21), health NGOs (\bar{x} =3.08), civil right NGOs (\bar{x} = 2.94) and advocacy based NGOs (\bar{x} = 2.92). The above NGOs score indicated their willingness to engage in extension service since their mean score were greater than 2.50. However, NGOs such as 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 score were below ≥ 2.50 . Overall, nine of the 12 identified NGO type, representing 90%, indicated willingness to expand their activity orientation and engage in agricultural extension service delivery.

Table 5: Willingness to Engage in Agricultural Extension Services by NGOs

<i>Characterization</i>	<i>Willingness score</i>	<i>Ranking</i>
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 ≥ 2.50]

Test of Difference in NGOs Willingness to Engage in Agricultural Extension Delivery.

Table 6 shows the result for the test of difference among the NGO types to delivery. The Freidman test result($\chi^2=41.55$) was significant at 5% level, indicating that significant differences existed among the willingness of NGO types in their willingness to engage in extension delivery. Using a grand mean of 3.56, 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 more 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), given their lower mean ranks (<3.56).

Table 6: Test of Difference in NGOS Willingness to Engage in Agricultural Extension Delivery

NGO Types	Mean Rank
Agriculture	3.93*
Economic (vocational and capacity building)	3.75*
Education development	3.66*
Infrastructural development	3.41
Environmental	3.22
Religion	3.21
Health	3.08
Civil right	2.94
Advocacy	2.92
Social welfare	2.44
Conflict resolution	2.42
Societal watchdog	2.29

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

Source field data, 2014

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings revealed that the level of the NGOs involvement in agricultural related activities was very low. Mattock and Steele, (2008) has asserted that most NGOs have not met the expected roles in agricultural development despite the fact that agriculture constitute the major livelihood of the Nigerian rural population. The implication of this therefore, is that the living standard of people living rural areas remains poor. More efforts are expected of NGOs to implement more agricultural projects in order to improve the living standard of people in rural areas.

Based on the findings of the researchers, therefore 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.

The researchers therefore, recommended that;

- Appropriate policies and enabling environment should be put in place by agricultural policy maker that will encourage NGOs to participate in extension delivery.
- ADPs should link with NGOs in order to enhance the NGOs capacity to deliver agricultural extension services.
- The public extension service i.e ADP should equally link the NGOs to farming groups to facilitate the delivery of extension services to them.

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