

Problems of Agricultural Extension Services in Toto LGA Nassarawa State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT— *The objective was to bring educational advantages of universities to ordinary people. Ordinary people in this sense refer to those people who are illiterate or do not have enough educational qualification or training to be able to decide for themselves as well as manage resources for their own benefit and the people around them. These set of people are mostly found in the rural areas where physical and social infrastructures are almost insufficient, inefficient inadequate or non – existent. In Nigeria, agricultural production majorly rest in the hands of these classes of people and they account for almost 70% of her population. The need to strengthen agricultural extension therefore becomes imperative in the battle line against poverty and inadequate food production since experience has shown that Nigerian extension workers are poorly trained and ill-equipped. In Toto Local government, the challenge to effectively visit all the categories of farmers, some of whom are women, as well as the young men and women who are just entering farming; pose a special and complex assignment for extension personnel in the area. How can agricultural extension services be effective or strengthened in this area? This is the basis for this study. To be able to determine where efforts are needed to strengthen extension services nine (9) major problem areas from literature will be assessed. These are Technological problems, linkage, technical training, extension training, Mobility, Equipment Lack of teaching Aids, organizational and Miscellaneous.*

Keywords— Agricultural services, farmers

1. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural extension is an educational agency that not only helps people to increase their efficiency and their income but also helps to build these people themselves into understanding, accomplishing, self-confident, capable men, women and youth, with vision and leadership.

The term “extension” originated in England to describe a system of university education, taken up first by Cambridge and Oxford universities, and subsequently by other educational institutions in England and elsewhere (Swanson, 1984).

The objective was to bring educational advantages of universities to ordinary people. Ordinary people in this sense refer to those people who are illiterate or do not have enough educational qualification or training to be able to decide for themselves as well as manage resources for their own benefit and the people around them. These set of people are mostly found in the rural areas where physical and social infrastructures are almost insufficient, inefficient inadequate or non – existent.

In Nigeria, agricultural production majorly rest in the hands of these classes of people and they account for almost 70% of her population. The need to strengthen agricultural extension therefore becomes imperative in the battle line against poverty and inadequate food production since experience has shown that Nigerian extension workers are poorly trained and ill-equipped. In Toto Local government, the challenge to effectively visit all the categories of farmers, some of whom are women, as well as the young men and women who are just entering farming; pose a special and complex assignment for extension personnel in the area. How can agricultural extension services be effective or strengthened in this area? This is the basis for this study. To be able to determine where efforts are needed to strengthen extension services nine (9) major problem areas from literature will be assessed. These are Technological problems, linkage, technical training, extension training, Mobility, Equipment Lack of teaching Aids, organizational and Miscellaneous.

- i) Technological problems- that is, when appropriate technology is not available to extend to farmers
- ii) Linkage problems- this is when a continuing two – way flow of information between extension services and national agricultural research institution is lacking.
- iii) Technical problems- this is a situation in which a field-level extension personnel lack practical agricultural training about improved technology.
- iv) Extension training problems- when extension personnel lack training in extension methods and communication skills.
- v) Mobility problems- when the field-level extension personnel lack adequate transportation to reach farmers efficiently.
- vi) Equipment problems- when extension personnel lack essential teaching and communications equipment.
- vii) Lack of Technology Aids- occurs when extension personnel lack essential teaching aids, bulletins, demonstration materials, and so forth.
- viii) Organizational problems- takes place when extension personnel are assigned many other tasks besides extension work.
- ix) Miscellaneous problem- Specific other problems identified such as may be determined etc.

The study therefore assessed the seriousness of the level of seriousness of these problems; as well as examine if there is relationship between the problems faced by extension agent and extension services they provided to their client in the study area.

2. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND DATA COLLECTION

By purposive sampling twenty extension personnel each from Federal, State, Local Government and Non-Governmental organizations (NGO's) were picked, totaling eighty respondents were selected for the study out of which seventy eight who submitted their questionnaire were used as data.

Data was collected through the use of structured, close ended questionnaire as primary source while past projects, conference proceedings, textbooks were also consulted. The seriousness of problems facing agricultural extension services were rated on a three- count likert like scale of very serious (VS), serious (S) and not serious (NS) with weights 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive and inferential tools of analysis were used to analyze the data.

The socio economic characteristics of respondents were analyzed by descriptive statistics (frequency tables).

The seriousness of the problems was analyzed by average mean score:

Average mean scores (AMS) :

AMS = Total sum of response/Total sum of respondents

The only hypothesis of the study that there is no significant relationship between the problems faced by extension agent and services they provided in Toto LGA was tested by chi-square (X^2)

$X^2 = (O - E)^2/E$, where;

O = Observed frequencies of the seriousness of problems of extension services in the study area

E = Expected frequencies of the seriousness of problems of extension services in the study area

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.0 Socioeconomic characteristic of respondents.

Age	Percentage (%)
20 -25	29.48
26 – 30	26.92
31 – 35	12.82
36 – 40	10.26
41 – 45	8.97
46 – 50	11.54
Sex	
Male	73.07
Female	26.93
Marital status	
Married	60.26
Single (widowed, divorced)	39.74
Educational status	
Primary Education	7.7
Secondary	38.5
Tertiary	39.8
Others (faith certificates)	14.0

Source: problem of agricultural extension services in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State 2009.

Table 2.0: Main problems facing extension services in the study area

Objective 2	Yes%	No%
1. Technological problem	96.2	4.9
2. Linkage problem	98.7	12.8
3. Technical Training problem	96.2	4.9
4. Extension training problem	97.4	2.5
5. Mobility problem	96.4	4.9
6. Equipment problem	98.7	12.8
7. Lack of teaching aids	92.3	7.6
8. Organization problem	92.3	7.6

Source: problem of agricultural extension services in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State 2009.

Table 3.0 Seriousness of problems facing extension services in the study area

Objective 3	Vs(3)	S(2)	Ns(1)	Total	Means	Ranking
1. Technological problem	3(64)	2(13)	1(1)	219	2.80	1
2. Linkage problem	(37)	(36)	(5)	151	1.93	9
3. Technical Training problem	(57)	(21)	(0)	213	2.73	3
4. Extension training problem	(57)	(17)	(2)	204	2.78	2
5. Mobility problem	(49)	(28)	(1)	205	2.62	4
6. Equipment problem	(40)	(37)	(1)	195	2.50	7
7. Lack of teaching aids	(43)	(34)	(1)	198	2.54	5
8. Organizational problems	(43)	(32)	(3)	196	2.51	6
9. Other specific problems	(30)	(43)	(3)	181	2.32	8

Source: problems facing agricultural extension services in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State 2009.

Table 4(a) Mean Ranking of the problems by different Extension organization

Problems	Federal	Ranking	State	Ranking	Local	Ranking	NGO	Ranking
Government	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.
Technological	0.72	2	0.66	3	0.72	5	0.66	1
Linkage	0.73	1	0.63	5	0.67	6	0.63	4
Technical Training	0.72	2	0.72	1	0.74	1	0.62	5
Extension training	0.71	3	0.71	2	0.62	9	0.64	3
Mobility	0.71	3	0.61	8	0.74	1	0.65	2
Equipment	0.67	7	0.63	5	0.67	6	0.62	5
Lack of teaching aids	0.63	9	0.63	5	0.63	8	0.57	7
Organizational	0.71	4	0.64	4	0.73	4	0.55	9
Miscellaneous	0.64	8	0.56	9	0.74	1	0.56	8

Source: problems of agricultural extension services in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State 2009.

Table 4(b) Summary of Ranking order of seriousness of problems by organization.

Federal Government	State Government	Local Government	NGO	Ranking
Linkage Mobility, Miscellaneous	Technical Training	Technical Training	Technical	1
Technology Technical Training	Extension Training	”	Mobility	2
Extension Training Mobility	Technological	”	Extension Training	3
Extension training Mobility Organizational	Organizational	Organizational	Linkage	4
--- Equipment Technical Aids	Linkage Problem	Technological Training Equipment	Technical	5
-----	-----	Linkage problem	-----	6
-----	-----	-----	Teaching aids	7
Miscellaneous	Mobility	Teaching Aids	Miscellaneous	8
Teaching Aids	Miscellaneous	-----	Organizational	9

Source: problems and prospect of Extension services in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State, 2009.

Table 5.0 Chi-square analysis of the relationship between the problems faced by Extension Agents and extension services provided in the study area.

Problems	Level of seriousness and its effect on extension services.				Total
	very serious	serious	not serious		
Technology	4	16	0		20
Linkage	16	4	0		20
Technical Training	16	4	0		20
Extension	11	9	0		20
Mobility	15	5	0		20
Equipment	12	8	0		20
Lack of Teaching Aids	9	11	0		20
Organizational	8	12	0		20
Miscellaneous	10	7	3		20
Total	101	76	3		180

Source: problem and prospect of Extension service in Toto LGA of Nassarawa State

Source: problems of Agricultural Extension Services in Toto LGA 2009.

Variables	Seriousness of the	df	P-Value	X ² .cal	X ² .tab
problems					
Agricultural Extension Problems (Nine problems)	Very serious	16	0.05	54.4	7.69
	Not serious				

There is significant relationship between the problem faced by the extension agents and Agricultural Extension Services provided in Toto LGA.

This is because X² calculated is greater than X² tabulated.

That is, X² tab = 7.69;

Level of significance = (0.05), degree of freedom (df) = 16

X² cal = 54.4. Therefore there is significant relationship between the problem faced by extension agents and agricultural extension services provided in Toto LGA.

5. DISCUSSION

The study examined the problems facing agricultural extension services in Toto LGA Nassarawa State. Table 1 shows the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents in Toto LGA, NAssarawa state. Majority (56.40%) extension personnel are youth. This is a good development for agricultural development, quite unlike before when extension services is an exclusive profession of the aged. This result is similar to Adegboye (2008) where majority (51.25%) of student who registered for agricultural programme in plateau state are between the age 25 – 29 years. This further confirms that agricultural development has a brighter future in North central Nigeria.

Majority (73.07%) are female while about 60.26% are married. Education was not serious issues as nothing less than 78.3% of respondents were certificated in secondary and tertiary education. This development will enhance easy interpretation of recommended package to farmers in the area and thereby result to good yield and better agricultural practices.

Of the nine problems examined, all of them appear to be facing extension organization in the study area (Table 2.0). However, on the seriousness of the problems, technological and Extension training consistently ranked as two of the more important problems, while Linkage and Miscellaneous were among the least important (Table 3.0).

The rank order of problems by organization is presented in Table 4.0(a) and the summary on Table 4.0(b). Here extension training and Technical problems are ranked within the three most important problems.

Mobility problems are ranked high especially among the Local government extension staff while teaching aids ranked consistently low among the Federal and State extension organizations as linkage problems increased in seriousness mainly with the Federal extension organization. Relationship was found to exist between problems of agricultural extension and extension services carried out in the study area (Table 5.0). The implication of this is that the more serious are the problems facing extension staff, the less the services rendered to farmers.

6. CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding, it appears that lack of technical training and Mobility were perceived to be very serious problems in the study area. These problems were closely followed in importance by the lack of extension training and Technological training. It was found that more youth were involved in agricultural extension services, and it was further confirmed that there was a relationship between agricultural extension services and the problem facing extension personnel in the study area.

Consequent on the above, the following recommendations were made; more attention be focused on the alternative means of gaining proximity to individual farmers as against transportation which for now remain the only source for extension workers. A critical look at the relationship between technical training (what to extend), extension training (how to extend) and technological training (appropriateness of what is extended) will help in moving extension forward. This is because

meeting the need of farmers is the starting point in extension before the thought of how to get those needs packaged in an acceptable way and in consonance with farmers' condition without much initial deviation from their present knowledge.

Moreover, it should be noted that youth is a strong force in agricultural extension service. Thus, programmes that will encourage them to be actively involved in carrying out extension services such as youth organizations should be encouraged. Such initiative as its already in place in Japan, Zambia have been used for many community development programmes like teaching the adult, care for the aged and building of market among others. To achieve this in the study area, requires quick removal of the serious problems that are hindering agricultural extensions service.

7. REFERENCES

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