

The Role of Community Based Orgs (Cbos) In Rural and Agricultural Transformation in Delta State

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Abstract

The study examined the role of community based organizations in rural and Agricultural transformation in Delta State, Nigeria. A total of 144 community based organization (12 from each local government area were selected from 12 out of the 25 local government areas that make up Delta State using stratified and random sampling technique. The community based organization were interviewed using structured questionnaires and the data collected was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as means and percentages and the chi-square (χ^2). The result showed that community based organizations are veritable agents of development in ensuring the agricultural and rural transformation of Delta State. The study recommended that there is need to develop a link between the state and community us so as to increase the managerial and professional capabilities of community institutions.

Introduction

Nigeria is faced with very numerous problems of development in both the Agricultural and rural sector and some of these are so fundamental that they bother on our survival as a nation. These problems confront the majority of our country men and women on a daily, if not on hourly basis.

Basically, we did not seem from the very beginning to have bothered seriously about laying a solid foundation on which to build self reliant, self –confident, and self-sustaining

development process. A major contributing factor to this sad situation is that up till now, government has not been able to involve the people, all the people, all the people of the country fully in the development process. (Koinyan, 1988). It could be argued that the culture of not involving the people was entrenched during our colonial period and the strong dependence culture put in place by colonization was maintained by neo-colonialism. To further compound the problem, after decades of independence, we still have a culture of persistent dependence on external organizations and foreign experts. This often leaves our indigenous potential agents of development-the community-based organization as unorganized passive observer (Udegbe and Banigbose 1994).

This situation in the community in general and Delta State in particular and mainly in the rural areas is far worse than statistics of growth in the developing countries tend to show and yet, there could be no agricultural and rural transformation if the indigenous potentials represented by the Community Based Organisations are neglected. Sorkaa and Bur (1994) stated that the only viable strategy of Agricultural and rural transformation is one that is people oriented, involves the people at all stages of the planning and execution process and is committed to bringing about significant qualitative changes in the lives of all the people. This kind of development should be self-sustaining. As far as this is concerned, Community Based Organisations are better placed to ascertain local requirements, determine local community demands and very importantly in accelerating development, especially at the grassroots and in providing infrastructural facilities. In this respect, decentralization will be enhanced if local initiatives is respected and given a responsible position in the scheme of things and rapid agricultural development through the provision of foods will be achieved in the nation particularly in the rural areas.

Community Based Organisations have served as an instrument for Agricultural and rural transformation in-terms of contributing meaningfully to Agricultural and rural growth. A plethora of local and indigenous Community Based Organisations and groups were found to be active in the different communities of Delta State. Nwugo (1989) reported that the achievement of our development plans especially in the rural areas both in quality and quantity can only be fully realized with increased participation of Community Based Organisations (CBOS) in rural and Agricultural transformation. He recommended the establishment of community development liason units in various communities to provide an effective reversible tripartite interaction between government, extension services and Community Based Organisation.

Obviously government alone cannot provide all the requirements for Agricultural and rural transformation in Nigeria therefore, Community Based Organisations like the Age grades, community development unions, the women groups, the traditional and kinship institutions, co-operative societies are encouraged as supplements. Against this background, the issue is the examine the roles of community based organisations in Agricultural and rural transformation in Delta State.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Delta State. The state was divided into three Agricultural zones namely Delta North, Delta central and Delta South zones. Four local government areas were randomly selected from each of the zones, to give a total of 12 local government areas. 12 community based organizations were randomly selected in the following arrangement –3 Age grades, 3 Women groups, 3 – community development unions and 3 – Co-operative societies to make up the required 12 Community Based Organisations per local government. On the whole 144 community-based organisations

were used for the study. In line with data requirements of the study, two principal techniques were used to obtain data. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect relevant information from Community Based Organisations. A total of 144 questionnaires were distributed. The instrument was based on 10 item statement with a 2 point rating scale of agree and disagree. Based on the 2 points scale, the frequencies of these roles were calculated. The chi – square (χ^2) was utilized to test for the roles of community based organisations in Agricultural and Rural transformation in delta State, using the formula. –

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where O_{ij} = Observed frequency in the ij th cell.

E_{ij} = Expected frequency in the ij th cell.

$$\text{But } e_{ij} = \frac{R_i \cdot C_j}{N}$$

Where R_i = Total Observed frequencies in the i th row (row marginal total)

C_j = Total Observed frequencies in the j th column (column marginal total)

N = Sum of the observed frequencies (total number of observations)

With the degree of freedom (DF) = $(r-1)(c-1)$

Where r = number of alternatives in row (number of rows).

C = numbers of alternative columns.

Adopted from Murray (1972) statistics, schaum's outline series.

Results and Discussion

Table 1.0 χ^2 analysis of the Role of CBOS in rural and agricultural transformation Delta State.

S/N	<i>Roles of CBO</i>	Agree	Dis-agree	Row total (Ri)
1	Arrange for funds in form of levies, donations e.t.c to finance Agriculture	144	0	144
2	Determine projects that are feasible based on available resources and rural needs and priorities	134	10	144
3	Co- ordination and supervision of Agricultural and rural development projects	131	13	144
4	Function to harmonize and ensure unity among rural dwellers for effective Agricultural and rural growth	212	23	144
5	Help the rural communities evaluate decisions goals and procedures for goal attainment.	135	9	144
6	Policy formulation in connection with a wide variety of Agricultural and rural matters affecting the communities	120	24	144
7	Organise by developing a plan of administrative structure in communities to get the rural areas and Agriculture transformed.	110	34	144
8	Provide and liaison between the government rural people through information dissemination and educating the people on government intentions and objective of Rural and Agricultural development.	100	44	144
9	The help in awakening the political consciousness of the rural people	79	65	144
10	Acting as the mouth piece of the community	101	43	144
	Column Total	1204	236	1440

Source: Survey Data (2007)

$$\chi^2 = (0.01, 9) = 27.9$$

Table 1 shows that the roles of the CBOS are numerous as these are required for rural and Agricultural transformation of communities in Delta State. All the items analyzed in the table received favourable response from the respondents showing that they play the entire role outlined in these items. These roles included arranging for funds in the form of levies and donations, formulation of policies in connection to agricultural and rural development, determination of agricultural and rural development projects based on available funds and on community needs and priorities, organisation of projects by developing a plan of administrative to get rural and Agricultural development projects done. They are the mouthpiece of their communities; they provide the liaison between the government and rural people. They help in awakening the political consciousness of the people. They are also involved in the evaluation of decisions, goals and procedures, as well as supervision by making sure that rural and agricultural projects embarked upon are well executed.

The χ^2 (Chi-square) result showed that the computed chi-square is greater than the table chi-square. This shows the CBOS contribute greatly to Rural and Agricultural transformation in the communities that make up Delta State.

To support these findings, Nwugo (1989) emphasized that the CBOS are important in the decision making process of communities. He has recognized that that these organisations are quick to disseminate information on Agricultural and rural development, in changing of old ideas or introduction of new ideas that can ensure that the entire development process may be accelerated substantially. Abdulahi (1986) also stated that the Community Based Organisations are the eyes and ears of the people and their community. He then concluded that for success of any Agricultural and rural transformation project or

extension work. It has to work through the hierarchy of the CBOS who will not only articulate the needs of the members and the entire community at large will also legitimize the programme of government among his people and consequently spur or mobilize them with action. Esenjor (1992) also stated that the role of Community Based Organisations is vital and sensitive in the initiation and execution of Agricultural and rural development projects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A number of Community Based Organisations exist in communities in Delta State. Such Community Based Organisations were of diverse origins and forms and were directed at the transformation of Agricultural and the whole of the rural areas. The CBOS have sought sometimes, with success to augment the unpredictable performance of government agencies by their own efforts. For the most part, however, their ability to do so is limited, as they generally lack the skills necessary to maintain substantial infrastructure or provide services themselves. While Community Based Organisations have considerable potential for promoting and undertaking Agricultural and rural transformation, it is frequently these groups that are most deprived economically and least endowed with the required opportunities to express their potentials. It is therefore, recommended that the CBOS should be supported financially by the government, non-governmental and other agencies to assist in agricultural and economic problems facing them. Such financial support would need to be supported by training in technical, organizational and adult literacy. To also increase the level of performance of the Community Based Organisations in meeting the transformation needs of agriculture and the rural areas, the services of enlightenment local persons to stimulate the interest of the members in identifying problems should be employed. It

is also important to ensure public enlightenment and adult literacy by the appropriate government agency on the roles of the CBOS. For this purpose, local governments should appoint development officers who should be fully trained and should be responsible for co-ordinating the CBOS at the local authority level.

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