

This study is on assessment of workers and practice of agricultural extension. The total population for the study is 200 staff of agricultural extension in selected local government in Edo state. The researcher used questionnaires as the instrument for the data collection. Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of 133 respondents made agriculturists, agricultural extension officers, senior staff and junior staff were used for the study. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Information and Communication have always mattered in Agricultural. Communication may be defined as giving or exchanging information, option and idea by writing, speech or visual means (Ganguly, 2006). Even since people have grown crops, raised livestock, and caught fish, they have sought information from, one another. What is the most effective planting strategy on steep slope? Where can I acquire a land title? Who is paying the highest price at the market? How can I participate in the government credit program? Producers rarely find it easy to obtain answers to such questions (Ganguly 2006). Up dated information allow the farmer to cope with and even benefit from these changes of weather patterns and soil conditions and epidemics of pest and diseases, but providing such information can be challenging because of the highly localize nature of agriculture.

Agriculture is the most vital sector for information and communication technology intervention most especially that majority of the population around the world rely on agriculture to live sustainably (Alexander 2009). Information and communication technology for development, agriculture provides our most basic human needs that are food clothing and shelter. Even since people have this natural way of thing on how thing can survive and make a living by harvesting crops used for food and fibres make

a living by harvesting crops used for food and poultry that produce animal product like wool, dairy and eggs, catfish or any edible marine life for food or for sale, forestry and logging to grow and harvest timber to build shelter with agriculture, people learned and acquire knowledge through sharing information with each but of course this is not enough as there are also changes and developments in agriculture. Farmers should be able to take hold of updated information like price, production techniques, services, storage, processing and the like. Evidently, update information with the change and developments in agriculture can be addressed by the effective use of information communication and technology. (Edward Elgar 2004). There is increasing evidence that infrastructure such as telecommunications helps to reduce poverty and provide opportunities to people in developing countries (Bertolini, 2005).making information readily and cheaply available can enhance production, increase bargaining power and incomes, and ultimately lead to poverty reduction and economic development. Furthermore, making information readily and cheaply available can enhance production by enabling farmers to plant and harvest at appropriate times (weather information), improve the functioning of credit markets (by facilitating social capital as through increased communications farmers develop and gain trust and reputations), facilitate access to more efficient technologies (through finances obtained through increased credit ratings/worthiness), and in the long run, transform production processes through more rapid and diffuse spread of technological innovations amongst a broader range of interacting agents – consumers (with different tastes and preferences leading to product differentiation or new product development), sellers (of inputs products and services) , traders and processors (Eggleston et al., 2002). Poor families in the rural areas have limited or no access at all to information and communication technology. However, these people also needs access to information communication and technology, since this technology would help lessen their expenses on their resources like time, labor, energy and physical resources, thus, would have a greater position impact on their livelihoods and income, the lives of the

rural poor could be alleviated through the application of information and communication technology by supplying information to inform the policies, institutions, and processes that affect their livelihood options. In the advent of ICT, it offers new opportunities to support development of the rural livelihoods. It strengthened the production and increased market coordination which is the main processes that can contribute to the future opportunities of the sector and create income for the people that depend on it. (Songan, 2004). Farmers who have better access to information and communication have access to price information, access to agriculture information, access to agriculture information, access to national and international market, increasing production efficiency, creating conducive policy environment through an informed extension agent or worker who have a broader experience. Agriculture is facing new and severe challenges in its right with rising food prices that have push over 40 million into poverty since 2010 (World Bank 2011). The growing global population, expected to hit a billion by 2050, has heightened the demand for food and place pressure on already fragile resources, feeding the population will require a 70% increases in Food production (F.AO. 2009). Most importantly, the democratization of information and science facilitated by ICT is also contributing to agriculture and rural development more broadly, using conventional information and communication tools. Majority of extension workers have attained adulthood, a stage that is very critical, at which human beings should be controlled, applying basic skills and knowledge. Agricultural extension is a professional field of information system aimed at educating people in their own context and life situation and acquires knowledge and skills on how to effectively deal with such problems so as to improve their living condition. (Ashimolowo 2002). Adopted agricultural extension system is the training and visit (T and V) agricultural extension system. It was developed for the World Bank by (Benor 2002) and aid at improving the rural farmer's productivities through efficient agricultural extension service delivery in the developing countries. The system was introduced into the Nigeria Agricultural system in the mid-70s when it was tried in three

enclosures of Gasau, Funtua and Gombe, the recorded success from the trial led to state wide implementation of the extension system, Agricultural this is not enough as there are also changes and developments in agricultural development programme (ADP), to reach out to all the rural farmers across the country, each state is structure into zones, blocks and cells. The extension personnel are as grouped as zonal manager, block extension supervisor/agent and the subject matter specialists. The extension agents are expected to cover between 8 and 10 cells where they relate directly with the farmers, reaching out to them with extension services at interval of two research institution base for the extension workers is the research institution where innovation and technical information to serve the farmers are generated, in Nigeria there are eighteen research institutes with each of them having specific research mandate (Lawal Adebowale 2002).

One of the basic functions of agricultural extension remains the dissemination of useful agricultural information from research to the end-users. The mass media have been greatly used in delivering this information. But the information boom of this century requires that worthwhile strategies of communication be developed and utilized. In order to meet up with the information explosion trend, agricultural extension needs to intensify efforts to acquire the necessary information and communication technology facilities that are available. The categories of persons who should have access to information technologies for proper direction are the extension managers and supervisors. They know enough to influence decisions in their organizations. Waldron et al., (1997) stated that an extension programme manager is the person that vested with formal authority over an organization or one of its sub units. He or she has status that leads to various inter-personal relations and from this comes access to information. Information enables the manager to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action. VITA (1995) pointed out that modern communication techniques and facilities, which ensure uninterrupted access to large amount of agricultural information, have become necessary in hiding the distinction between

urban and rural dwellers. These modern communication techniques are generally referred to as Information technology (IT) facilities. Moll (1982) cited in Madu and Adeniran (2000) classified IT into two groups viz high and low. The low technology includes equipment and machines like typewriters, offset printing machines, microform readers, projectors, stapler, paper cutter, perforators, catalogue, radio, telephone, television sets.

The high information technology, on the other hand, consists of the various means of obtaining or transferring information using computer, telecommunications and microelectronics. Nzeakor (1991) declared that information technology could help rural communities to leapfrog from peasant farming to modern agriculture. Agricultural extension has a major role to play in the area of information and communication technology. This is because, as an educational outlet that is dynamic in its dissemination delivery system, a more cosmopolitan outlook is needed. This explains why the modern technology gadgets are inevitable. Considering the fact that we are in the information technology age, extension needs to be in tune with the application of information technology to access and utilize the international network system.

Ekemode (2000) observed that agriculture has moved through the various phases of development as society transforms into modernity. He therefore noted that the Information technology era, involves the application of satellite technology for obtaining agricultural information through the internet. Agricultural extension workers are trained personnel who are responsible for transfer of information and technology to both rural and urban farmers', they play other roles like helping farmer, develop practical application of research knowledge to farmer's farm and families. But in the course of doing all these operations, agricultural extension principles must be appropriately applied. Agricultural extension principle are laws and rules discoursed by extension workers or researcher and proven by years of experience that now serve as guide law for extension workers as stated by (Ashimilowo 2002), the principle focuses on the workers with a view to empowering themselves to be able to solve and meet

the needs of respondent. The principles are:

The extension work must be based on the needs and interest of the people. Extension work should be based on the knowledge, skills, belief and value of the people.

Extension encourages people to take action and work out their own solution to their problem, rather than receiving ready-made solution. An extension programme should be flexible so that necessary changes can be made whenever needed, to meet the varying conditions and need of the people. Extension work should base on full utilization of local leadership. Extension should be a co-operative action involving participating activity in which people co-operate to pursue a common cause. Extension should be base on constraint evaluation, the effectiveness of the work is measure in terms of the changes brought in knowledge, skills and attitude and the adoption of change behavior of the people. In conclusion, communication bridge the gap between extension agent and agriculture, thereby making it easier for assessing agricultural technology, and also a gap between extension agent/workers and basic information needed.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout the developing world, it is a known fact, that farmers already have a lot of knowledge about their environment and their farming system (Ahmed 1974).

Extension can bring them other knowledge and information which they do not have example. Cause of damage to particular crops, general principles of pest control, or the way manure and compost are broken down to provide plant nutrient (Ahmed 1974). The application of such knowledge often means that the farmer has to acquire new skills of various kind, the transfer of this knowledge and skill to farmer and their families is an important extension activities and the extension agents must prepare himself thoroughly (Foster 1962). He must find out which skill or areas of knowledge are lacking among the farmers in his areas.

This study sought to examine extension workers personnel characteristics, channel frequently use in sourcing and disseminating agricultural extension principles, and

possible strategies for practicing extension principles. It also cut across the level of application of extension principles and examines the level of motivation on the use of extension principles by respondent. In addition accessing the major constraint in the use of agricultural extension principles.

This research tends to provide answers to the below:

The questions now are:

What are the personnel characteristics of extension workers in Edo and Delta State?

What are the channels, respondent frequently use sourcing and disseminating agricultural extension principles on their job?

What are the respondent perceives important and improvement strategies for practice of agricultural extension principles?

What are the motivational factors for the uses of agricultural extension principles by the respondent?

To what extent do extension workers apply extension principles in their daily operation?

What are the constraints in the use of agricultural extension principles by respondent?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are;

To examine the personnel characteristics of extension workers in Edo and Delta State;

To identify channel, respondents frequently use in sourcing and application of agricultural extension principles on their job

To ascertain respondent perceived important and improvement strategies for practices of agricultural extension principles

To access the extent to which extension workers apply extension principles in their daily operations in the study area

To identify motivational factors for respondents use of agricultural extension principle

To identify constraint in the use of agricultural extension principles by respondent.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

For the successful completion of the study, the following research hypotheses were formulated by the researcher;

H₀: There is no significant relationship between extension workers personal characteristics and perceived improvement strategies for practice of agricultural extension principles.

H₁: There is significant relationship between extension workers personal characteristics and perceived improvement strategies for practice of agricultural extension principles.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the extent to which extension workers apply extension principles and channel respondent frequently use in sourcing and disseminating agricultural extension principles.

H₂: There is significant relationship between the extent to which extension workers apply extension principles and channel respondent frequently use in sourcing and disseminating agricultural extension principles.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will give a clear insight on assessment of workers and practice of agricultural extension. The study will be beneficial to students, agriculture extension workers and the general public. The study will also serve as a reference to other researchers that will embark on this topic

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study covers assessment of workers and practice of agricultural extension. The researcher encounters some constrain which limited the scope of the study;

a) AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH MATERIAL: The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study

b) TIME: The time frame allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as

the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study.

c) Organizational privacy: Limited Access to the selected auditing firm makes it difficult to get all the necessary and required information concerning the activities.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

ASSESSMENT: the action of assessing someone or something.

WORKER; a person who does a specified type of work or who works in a specified way, a person who achieves a specified thing

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: Agricultural extension is the application of scientific research and knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education.

Generally, agricultural extension can be defined as the “delivery of information inputs to farmers.”

ASSESSMENT OF WORKERS AND PRACTICE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

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