

The Role of Agricultural Extension Services in Nigeria

Chiagorom, V. C., Osuchukwu, L. C., Nzereogu, I. K. and Akojuru, A. T.

Mechanical Engineering Department). Imo State Polytechnic, Omuma.

Email: victorchiaorom11@gmail.com

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Abstract

An agricultural extension and community development service is an organization set up by the government, commercial organization or groups of individuals to disseminate information to local farmers. This information dissemination comes in the form of education. Farmers receive agricultural extension, an informal form of education, to enhance their farming practices. For an extension programme to be successfully adopted a farmer must be taught how to carry out the innovation and be persuaded to try it so that he can appreciate the advantages and be convinced of the desirability of adopting it. All extension programmes must be based on the needs of farmers. The methodology employed include education and training. We needed to get the local farmers educated especially on the use of farm inputs and so on. This consistently led to improve in improved farm output. We identified the method of identifying of training needs. We also identified method of structured and unstructured questionnaires, interviews, observation and informal talks on the need and use of modern farm tools and implements to be able to get to this point. We conclude that education and training are vital tools in agricultural extension and community development.

Keywords: Agricultural Extension, Education, Training, Communication, Community Development.

Introduction

Education is the process of creating desirable changes in human behavior. In general, there are three kinds of desirable changes in human behaviour, 1. change in what people know. Example; An application of fertilizer gives more yield, change in what people think application of fertilizer gives more yields. What does he think or says about fertilizer? Change in what people can do such as to prepare good compost (Akinsanmi,2000).

Extension is a practice that uses communication as a means to convince people and bring about new changes (Alfred and Adekayode 2014).. The success of communication depends on the sharing of meanings between the sender and receiver of the messages. Therefore, extension depends on communication (Fasina 2014). Extension education serves as a linkage mechanism in the communication process between the research system and the farmers (Ayodele et al., 2016).

Land is required for various uses in both urban and rural areas of all societies. It is an essential component of any society's socioeconomic development. (Akinngbe 2014). As nations grow in population size and rural areas develop into urban centres and urban centres to large metropolitan areas, there is always an increase in competition as well as demand for land for different purposes such as residential, agriculture, industrial. This requires adequate planning and control to ensure harmonious development and functional efficiency of these uses and settlements (Adereti and Fasina 2017). Since land is fixed, free gift and immovable, it should be maximally utilized and equitably administered in order to witness the desired development in the society. On this note therefore, this article seeks to examine land use management

technologies in Nigeria for economic development, hence, poor land use management can impede economic development such as commercial agriculture (Fasina 2009).

Agricultural extension is usually referred to as “out-of-school” education for rural people, which brings about improvement in systematic ways, through carefully planned and organized programmes. The aim of Agricultural extension and community development is to teach rural people technologies on how to raise their standard of living, with minimum or no assistance from government while utilizing their own resources. This is achieved through local leadership, self-help and civic responsibility of participation. Agricultural extension is a service or system which teaches, facilitates, help and assist farm people through educational procedures, to improve farming methods and techniques in order to increase their production, efficiency, income and standard or level of living in rural areas⁷. The teaching and learning processes that take place will facilitate effective dissemination of improved technologies and innovations for adoption by rural farmers. Extension is not only concerned with the above (teaching, learning and adoption of innovation) but also with changing attitudes, skills and knowledge- overall outlook of farmer which affects his farm and home. It is a reliable, effective and scientific way of data analysis and solving problems by farmers, extension agents and researchers.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to highlight Agricultural Extension and Community Development.

Specific objectives include:

- 1.) To teach rural people technologies on how to raise their standard of living, with minimum or no assistance from government while utilizing their own resources.
- 2.) To create awareness among the community people (Poor women).
- 3.) To help them to organize and empower for decision-making
- 4.) To build up capacity for management of community
- 5.) To improve their livelihoods (Adisa et al., 2015).

Methodology

The methodology employed includes: Education and Training. We needed to get the local farmers educated especially on the use of farm inputs and so on. This reliably resulted in improved farm output. We identified the method of identification of training needs. We also identified method of structured and unstructured questionnaires, interviews, observation and informal talks to be able to get to this point.

Methods of Identification of Training Needs

There are number of methods to identify training needs such as.

- i. Interviews
- ii. Questionnaire
- iii. Observation
- iv. Focus group discussions (FGD)
- v. Informal talks
- vi. Behavioral analysis
- vii. Task Analysis

Results and Discussion

The whole structure of the study are represented in the following tables:

Table 1: Specification Grid

Unit	Scope	Group A	Group B	Group C	Total Question
		Very short Question	Short Question	Long Question	
1	Introduction	1	-	-	1
2	Communication	1	1	-	2
3	Transfer of Technology	1	-	1	2
4	Extension Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	2	1	1	4
5	Sociological Concept	1	-	1	2
6	Social Mobilization and Community Development	1	1	1	3
7	Education Dynamics	2	1	1	4
8	Rural Sociology	1	-	1	2
9	Social Mobilization	1	1	-	2
10	Need Based Training Program	1	1	-	2
11	Motivation	1	1	-	2
Total Questions		13	7	6	26
Attempt Questions		10	5	5	20
Marks		1x10=10	2x5=10	5x4=20	40
Time		18	18	38	75

The scope is grouped and scored and the scores are ranked. In very short group, Education and Extension Programme Planning ranked 2 while other scopes ranked 1. In the long scope, Education and Extension Programme Planning and every other ranked 1. In total question, Education and Extension Programme Planning ranked 4.

Conclusion

From this study, new and improved varieties of crops are developable. Better and more economic methods of cultivation were introduced, with better yields and qualities of animals evolved by selection and cross breeding. Education and Training proved to be necessary in Agricultural Extension and Community Development.

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