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Constraints to Local Government Performance in Agricultural Development in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify constraints to local governments' role performance in agricultural development in Anambra State of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the local government staff in the agriculture and veterinary department in the 21 LGAs of Anambra State. One management staff (head of department agriculture) and five (5) field staff from other cadres were purposively and randomly selected, respectively, giving a total of 60 respondents. Questionnaire and field observations were used for data collection. Frequency, percentage, mean score and factor analysis were used to analyze data. The mean age of the staff was 42.5years while majority (70.0%) was female and the mean of work experience was 18.33 years. Most LGs' roles in agricultural development had not been accomplished to great extent. Only provision of slaughter houses and slabs, establishment of market gardens, mobilization of farmers for cooperatives and procurement and distribution of fertilizer, improved seeds, improved seedlings, tractors and implements among others were perceived as accomplished to very great extent. All the 24 identified problems were serious, and four problems were factored as political, manpower, operational, and logistic problems.

Introduction

Development of the grassroots has been the concern of every responsible and responsive political system. However, development and participation have continued to elude people at the grassroots. Development remains insignificant if it does not positively affect the lives of those in the periphery of decision making arrangement (Arowolo, 2008). The Nigerian state therefore created the LG as the third tier of government whose objective is to ensure effective, measurable and efficient service delivery to the people. The LGCs are responsible for agricultural and rural development in their areas of jurisdiction as stipulated in the 1999 Constitution and the 1976 Guidelines of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Most projects' and programmes' implementation are mainstreamed within LGC structure, with trainings and other technical assistance provided to strengthen them. However, there are six standardized departments in a LGC within which the agricultural department is one, each with a supervisor and head of department who is a career civil servant. The responsibilities of the agricultural department are overall agricultural development, including crops, livestock, fisheries and agro-forestry/forestry plantation development (IDB, 2007).

Okpala (2003) notes that the greater percentage of people in Anambra State representing over 80% of the entire populace live in rural areas of the state and farming still remains the major occupation of the greater number of the population. A large proportion of the citizens are still tilling the soil with crude implements. This according to Anolue (2004) should be the concern of the agricultural departments in each of the LGAs of the state. However the impact and presence of the LG agricultural departments are not felt in most of the LGAs of the state thereby making agricultural transformation agenda difficult to attain. The question relates to the role performance of the LG and the problems inhibiting their role

performance in the area of agriculture. What roles have LGs been able to accomplish; and what are the problems inhibiting their role performance in boosting agricultural production in Anambra state?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to identify the constraints to local governments' role performance in agricultural development in Anambra State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- i. identify the roles LGs have been able to accomplish; and
- ii. Identify factors inhibiting the role performance of LGs.

Methodology

The study area was Anambra State of Nigeria. It is made up of 21 LGAs. Among the LGs, only five (5) (Awka South, Idemili North, Onitsha North, Onitsha south and Nnewi North) are said to be urban local governments, while the remaining are rural (Anolue, 2004). The major food baskets of the state among the LGs are Anambra East, Anambra West, Awka North, Ayamelum, Ogbaru, Orumba North and South and Oyi LGs. Anambra State occupies an area of 4,416 sq. km. Seventy percent is arable land and less than 55 percent of this arable land is under cultivation. Crops, livestock and fisheries are main stock in the farming system of the state. Off-farm activities like processing and marketing are also vital components. Currently, there are seven (7) recognized departments in the local government system in Anambra State and these include: Administration/Personnel; Agriculture and Veterinary; Education and Social Welfare; Health and Environment; Works; Finance; and (recently approved) Planning and Statistics. Agriculture and Veterinary Department is one department manned by Head of Agriculture Department (HOD Agriculture).

All the LG staff in the agriculture and veterinary department in the 21 LGAs of Anambra State comprised the population of the study. Out of this, about 50 percent, that is 10 LGAs were purposively selected. These included the nine (9) National Programmes on Food Security (NPFSS) participating LGs and one (1) LG (Anambra West) of the eight major food baskets of the state. One management staff (HOD Agriculture) and five (5) field staff from other cadres were purposively and randomly selected respectively, each from the agriculture and veterinary department. This gave a total sample of 60 respondents. A questionnaire and field observations were used to collect data for the study.

Measurement of variables

Objective 1 aimed at identifying the roles LGs have been able to accomplish. Here the respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point- Likert type scale the extent the shortlisted roles have been accomplished. Their response categories and the corresponding weighted values were as follows: to a great extent (TGE) = 5; to some extent (TSE) = 4; to little extent (TLE) = 3; to very little extent (TVLE) = 2; to no extent (TNE) = 1. These values were added to obtain a value of 15 which was divided by 5 to get a mean score of 3.0. The respondents mean was obtained on each of the items. Any mean score ≥ 3.0 was regarded as role accomplished to great extent, while any mean score < 3.0 was regarded as role not accomplished. Objective 2 sought to identify factors inhibiting the role performance of local governments. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to indicate on a 4-point Likert type scale, how serious each of the various factors inhibit the role performance of the local governments in the study area. Their response categories were; very serious (VS) = 4; quite serious (QS) = 3; somewhat serious (SS) = 2; and not serious (NS) = 1. Any mean score equal to or greater than 2.5 was regarded as very serious problem; while any mean score less than 2.5 was regarded as not serious problem.

Also data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis procedure, using the principal factor model with varimax rotation in grouping the constraint variables into major constraint factors. However, only variables with loadings of 0.4 and above (10% overlapping variance) were used in naming the factors. Personal characteristics were presented using frequencies, percentages and mean scores. Objective 1 was analyzed using mean statistic while objective 2 was analyzed using explanatory factor analysis procedure.

Results and Discussion

Personal characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows that greater proportion (50.0%) of the staff were between the age ranges of 41 to 50 years. This was followed by 40.0% of them whose age ranges from 31 to 40 years while the remaining (10.0%) staff were between the age ranges of 51 to 60 years. The mean age of the respondents was 42.5 years. This implies that majority of the staff are still within their middle age and have not reached or neared their retirement age. It is evident from Table 1 that majority (70.0%) of the staff were female while 30.0% were male. The result implies that the local government staffs are predominantly female. Table 1 also indicates that at first appointment 30.0%, 20.0%, 20.0% and 30.0% of the respondents had WAEC/GCE, OND/NCE, HND and degree certificates respectively. Also the table shows that majority (50.0%) of the respondents at current obtained degree certificates and this was followed by 28.3% who had HND while the remaining (18.3% and 3.3%) obtained OND/NCE and M.Sc. respectively. This implies that there were great educational advancements by the respondents from the date of first appointment to date.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of the respondent according to their socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Percentage (%)	Mean (M)
Age (years):		
31-40	40.0	
41-50	50.0	42.50
51-60	10.0	
Sex:		
Male	30.0	
Female	70.0	
Educational qualification at 1st appointment:		
WAEC/GCE	30.0	
OND/NCE	20.0	
HND	20.0	
Degree	30.0	
Current educational qualification obtained:		
OND/NCE	18.3	
HND	28.3	
Degree	50.0	
M.Sc.	3.3	

Source: field data, 2012

Extent of LGs role accomplishment

Table 2 also shows that the following LGs roles; establishment of demonstration plots (M=3.00), provision of slaughter houses and slabs (M=4.25), establishment of market gardens (M=3.00), provision of health centre and clinics (M=3.87), mobilization of farmers for cooperatives organizations and formation (M = 3.40), procurement and distribution of fertilizers (M=4.67), improved seeds (M=3.33), improved seedlings (M=3.17), tractors and implements (M=3.97), awareness creation through exhibition of agricultural products-agricultural shows, farming seasons, tree planting and field days programmes (M=4.83), participation and coordination of agricultural development projects and programmes at local level (M=4.43), and agricultural staff training and workshops (M=4.33) were accomplished to very great extent. The remaining roles with weighted mean score less than 3.00 (M<3.00) were said to be unaccomplished. The finding implies that LGs did not accomplish most of the roles accorded to them by the law establishing them thereby performed beyond expectation in the area of agricultural development in the study area. The finding is in an agreement with Anolue (2004) who observed that the impact and presence of the LG agricultural departments are not felt in most of the LGAs of the state apart from the occasional procurement and sale of fertilizers, maintenance of flowers and hedges at the local government secretariats and may be meat inspection at various markets in the locality.

Table 2: Mean distribution of respondents according to the extent of role accomplishment

LG role	Extent of role accomplishment(M)
Provision of agricultural extension services	2.65
Provision of animal health extension services	2.58
Control and acquisition of land for new entrants into farming	2.13
Provision of rural infrastructure:	
Road network or good feeder roads	2.93
Processing plants	2.30
Storage facilities	1.92
Transport and communication facilities	1.95
water scheme-borehole	2.58
establishment of demonstration plots	3.00*
(vii) Schools	2.68
(viii) Provision of veterinary clinics	2.10
(ix) Provision of markets	2.50
(x) Provision of slaughter houses and slabs	4.25*
(xi) Parks	2.50
(xii) Market gardens	3.00*
(xiii) provision of health centre and clinic	3.87*
e) Mobilization of farmers for cooperative organizations and formation; farmer/community associations	3.40*
Procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs such as:	4.67*
i) Fertilizers	2.25
ii) Agro-chemicals	3.33*
iii) Improved seeds	3.17*
iv) Improved seedlings	1.83
v) Improved breeds of livestock	3.97*
vi) Tractors and implements	2.70
vii) Veterinary drugs and vaccines	2.25
viii) Agricultural credits	
Promotion of viable agro-based projects such as snail, fish, poultry farming etc.	2.42
Coordination of data collection at primary levels	1.97
Awareness creation through exhibition of agricultural products- shows, farming seasons, tree planting and field days	4.83*
Participation and coordination of agricultural development projects and programmes at local level	4.43*
Manpower training and organization:	
Rural youth, women and farmers training on various agricultural enterprises	2.83
Agricultural staff training and workshops	4.33*

* = role accomplished to great extent; M ≥ 3.00

Factors inhibiting role performance of LGs in the study area

Table 3 shows the mean distribution of identified problems that inhibited the role performance of LGs. The table however reveals that all the 24 identified problems inhibitors were very serious ($M \geq 2.50$). This implies that many factors abound that militate against role performance of LGs in agricultural development. This is in support of Mkparu (2008) who noted that a number of factors have been identified as the reasons for the inability of the LGCs to have lived up to expectations in spite of the deep pool of resources (human and material) "supposedly" available to most of them. These factors according to him include: (i) the current of contracting out the revenue windows of LGCs by the state governments; (ii) the issue of poor staffing; (iii) general poor attitude to work of our people, (iv) the issue of constituting of the council with people who are alienated from the culture of the people such as elected and appointed officials; and (iv) lack of transparency and accountability which induce high incidence of corruption and corrupt practices.

Table 3: Mean distribution of identified problems inhibiting role performance of LGs in the study area

Problems	Mean(M)	Std. Deviation
Poor staff remuneration and allowances	3.63*	0.551
Poor extension services-poor coverage	3.72*	0.524
Marginalization of agricultural departments	3.53*	0.700
Lack of derive amongst heads of agricultural departments	3.35*	0.840
Corruption and corrupt practices among managements and staff	3.53*	0.700
Poor and shortage of skilled manpower/ extension personnel	3.60*	0.741
Lack of rural farmers participation in a programme development	3.05*	0.946
Lack of understanding the philosophy of the LG system	2.83*	1.044
Existence of role duplication and overlapping of functions among the tiers of government	2.82*	0.965
Poor funding of agricultural developmental activities both in quantum and release pattern	3.52*	0.701
Inadequate budget allocation to agricultural departments	3.47*	0.724
Inadequate extension training	3.30*	0.962
Inadequate availability of inputs or poor inputs supply	3.42*	0.829
Inadequate planning and evaluation of extension programmes	3.45*	0.699
Lack of local government autonomy	3.37*	0.863
Instability of the political climate	3.53*	0.769
Insecurity of investment	3.45*	0.811
Poor logistic support for field staff	3.28*	0.993
Politicizing of project sitting and objective	3.37*	0.758
High cost of production	3.33*	0.857
Lack of quick or immediate cash return from most agricultural projects	3.27*	0.936
Poor job description of staff	3.40*	0.887
Ineffectiveness of agricultural policies and regulations	3.02*	1.097

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Ineffectiveness of agricultural policies and regulations	3.02*	1.097
Poor general attitude to work of our people	3.35*	0.899

*= very serious problems, $M \geq 2.50$

Exploratory factor analysis was however used to group the variables into possible factors for major factors inhibiting the role performance of LGs in the study area as shown in Table 4. From data in Table 4, four problem factors were extracted based on the response of the respondents. Factors, 1, 2, 3, and 4 were named political, manpower, operational, and logistic problems respectively.

Items with high loading under factor 1 “political problems” included: lack of rural farmers participation in a programme development (0.678), inadequate budget allocation to agricultural department (0.584), inadequate planning and evaluation of extension programmes (0.724), lack of local government autonomy (0.730), and instability of the political climate (0.535). While in factor 2 “manpower problems”, the dominating variables were: lack of derive amongst head of agriculture departments (0.451), poor and shortage of skilled manpower/ extension personnel (0.660), insecurity of investment (0.823), lack of

quick or immediate cash return from most agric. projects (0.600), and ineffectiveness of agricultural policies and regulations (0.560).

Factor 3 “operational problems” was dominated by lack of understanding the philosophy of the L.G. System (0.614), existence of role duplication and overlapping of functions among the tiers of government (0.725), inadequate availability of inputs or poor inputs supply (0.531), high cost of production (0.636), and poor job description of staff (0.433). Specific issues with the high loadings under Factor 4 “logistic problems” included: poor staff remuneration and allowances (0.653), poor extension services such as poor coverage (0.582), marginalization of agriculture department (0.829), Poor funding of agricultural developmental activities both in quantum and release pattern (-0.511), poor logistic support for field staff (0.504), and poor general attitude to work by our people (0.403).

The implication of the findings is that LGC can never perform very efficient and effective unless the problems of politics, manpower, operation and logistic are tackled and addressed. These are the major hindrances to LGC role performance in the study area. For instance, most of programmes and programme activities in the LGC are politicized thereby discouraging rural farmers’ participation. Also little fund is allocated to agricultural department and field staff are not well remunerated, thereby hindering agricultural development in the area. These findings are in agreement with Gumel (2009), Igbuzor (2007) and Arowolo (2008) who observed that the factors that inhibit the performance of the LGCs are multifaceted. The most important factors are those that hinge on: (i) operational factors arising directly from the behaviour and attitude of the persons operating the system i.e. politicization distribution of amenities in the LGCs; (ii) excessive state government control of and interference in the activities of the LGCs; (iii) the phenomenon of bribery, corruption and inefficiency on the part of some LG officials; (iv) staffing problems ; (v) electoral irregularities seldom allows for credible candidates to be elected at the LGCs elections; and (vi) inadequate funding.

Table 4: Major factors inhibiting the LGs role performance in agricultural development in Anambra state

Problems inhibiting LGs role performance	Factor1 (political problems)	Factor2 (manpower)	Factor3 (operational)	Factor4 (logistic)
Poor staff remuneration and allowances	-0.009	0.039	0.354	0.653
Poor extension services-poor coverage	0.094	0.192	-0.063	0.582
Marginalization of agricultural departments	-0.024	-0.255	0.225	0.829
Lack of derive amongst heads of agricultural departments	-0.279	0.451	0.161	-0.039
Corruption and corrupt practices among managements and staff	0.462	0.413	0.204	-0.158
Poor and shortage of skilled manpower/ extension personnel	0.327	0.660	0.237	-0.072
Lack of rural farmers participation in a programme development	0.678	0.099	0.186	-0.133
Lack of understanding the philosophy of the LG system	0.322	-0.159	0.614	0.056
Existence of role duplication and overlapping of functions among the tiers of government	-0.234	-0.027	0.725	-0.044
Poor funding of agricultural developmental activities both in quantum and release pattern	0.273	0.148	0.146	-0.511
Inadequate budget allocation to agricultural department	0.584	0.024	-0.138	0.005
Inadequate extension training	0.252	0.206	0.230	0.174
Inadequate availability of inputs or poor inputs supply	0.035	0.047	0.531	0.294
Inadequate planning and evaluation of extension programmes	0.724	-0.009	-0.039	-0.059
Lack of local government autonomy	0.730	-0.102	-0.035	0.173
Instability of the political climate	0.535	0.264	-0.160	0.167
Insecurity of investment	0.074	0.823	-0.101	0.141
Poor logistic support for field staff	0.393	0.071	-0.148	0.504
Politicizing of project sitting and objective	0.385	0.005	0.175	0.165
High cost of production	-0.180	0.232	0.636	-0.031
Lack of quick or immediate cash return from most agricultural projects	0.153	0.600	0.370	-0.054
Poor job description of staff	0.343	0.299	0.433	-0.089
Ineffectiveness of agricultural policies and regulations	-0.061	0.560	-0.150	0.091
Poor general attitude to work of our people	0.211	0.288	0.048	0.403

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were arrived at: Majority were females; they have long year of work experience and have acquired more additional educational and training qualifications. Very few of the roles were accomplished; and the 24 identified problems inhibitors were very serious, and in the rotated component matrix, four problems were factored: political, manpower, operational, and logistic problems. These problems are said to have made agricultural transformation non attainable at grassroots in the study area. It is recommended that efforts should be geared toward full implementation of the most roles accorded to LGs in agricultural development; and the problems posed by political, manpower, operational, and logistic should be curbed in order to make the third tier viable and agricultural transformation agenda attainable.

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