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Constraints associated with stakeholders` activities on agricultural production in rivers state, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined constraints associated with stakeholders` activities on agricultural production in Rivers State, Nigeria. Six Local Government Areas out of 23were randomly selected from the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State and a total of 180 respondents were selected for the study using the multi stage sampling technique. Primary data were used with the aid of a structural questionnaire. Face and content validity were used to test the consistency of the questionnaire. The reliability of the data instrument was 0.88%. Data for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, regression analysis and correlation statistics. The result of the findings showed that more (64%) of the stakeholders were males, and 70% were married in all three Senatorial Districts. Women farmers were the current major stakeholders in agriculture as they ranked the first position with 59.4%, followed by men farmers and youth farmers with 50.6% and 38.9% respectively. Constraints to stakeholders` activities in agriculture showed that corruption assumed the highest with a mean of 3.66, followed by lack of farm machinery with 3.60, conflicts (3.46) and lack of agricultural workers with 3.46. The study recommends that, since the women were more involved as stakeholders, there is need for more government support to them. Secondly, government should foster good leadership free from corruption, set up arbitration panel to settle conflicts and train more agricultural extension workers with incentives including attractive benefits to boost agricultural production.

Keywords: constraints; stakeholders; activities; agriculture; production

1. Introduction
Agrarians all over the continents have increasingly been competing for massive food production, employment in the agricultural sector and foreign exchange earnings from agricultural raw materials. The drive for agricultural development in Nigeria is a growing concern due to the limited arable land, insufficient agricultural funds and lack of research and trained extension personnel. Agricultural sector in Nigeria and other parts of the world have experienced a decrease in the process as a result of illiteracy, inability to adapt to change, negligence on the part of government and stakeholders, inadequate information and lack of modern technology to supplement local tools; which has led to stagnation and deficiency in agricultural process (Adewale, 2017) [2]. The low productivity of Africa agriculture has received considerable attention of researchers, policy makers and development agencies in recent past and the stakeholders are the domain of change, while the central portion of the pathway of change is the innovation platform (Adekunle and Fatunbi, 2014) [1]. The inadequacy of this approach to meet the challenges faced by Africa, which had been apparent from the beginning especially as those problems stubbornly persisted and became more apparent with the systemic institutional collapse of one of the pivotal institutions like the extension services (Adekunle and Fatunbi, 2014) [1].
Maetz (2017) [11], identified major stakeholders in agriculture to include: the states and their various organizations, international and regional intergovernmental organizations, national and International Civil Society (professional organizations; including private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and lobbies) and Multinational corporations whose importance has been growing over the last decade. Stake holders in agricultural production revolve around the non-profit service enterprise individual/household (private), membership organization/ cooperative (membership) and central government/local government (public). Howlett, Bond, Woodhouse and Rigby (2000) [8], stated that stakeholders in agriculture are classified into three categories namely:

2. Primary stakeholders
a. Youth farmers,
b. Women farmers,
c. Men farmers,

3. Secondary stakeholders
a. Extension Officers of ADP,
b. Extension Officers of Agip (Green River Project),
c. Extension Officers of Shell Nigeria LTD,
d. Extension Officers of Total Elf,
e. Extension Officers of commercial and Agric banks,
f. Aid agencies
g. Commercial agents
h. Donor agents
i. Farmers association
j. Funding organizations
k. Agricultural consultants

4. External stakeholders

a. Research Institutes on agriculture
b. Universities
c. Community organizations
d. Environmental and Natural Resource Personnel
e. Local Government units
f. Other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO`s)
g. Government ministries
h. Federal Government

(Howlett, *et al*, 2000) [8] According to Maetz (2017) [11], the main issues that have mobilized stakeholders in the past include:

a. Natural resources (land, water, forests and genetic resources)
b. International trade of agricultural commodities
c. Food quality and safety
d. Food security
e. Exclusion
f. Food, environment and health
g. Policies for transition
h. Climate change, food and agriculture (Maetz, 2017) [11].

From the literary view, these issues are necessary to curb some societal ills such as; Conflicts, corruption, cultism, devaluation of Nigerian currency, high cost of agricultural raw material and farm input, lack of agricultural empowerment and training, lack of agricultural extension workers, lack of agricultural industry, lack of agricultural innovation, poor agricultural linkage, lack of agricultural manpower, lack of agricultural research workers, over reliance on non-agricultural business, poor agricultural market, scarcity of farmland, etc.

Statement of the problem

Agricultural stakeholders are instrument of rural social change but faced with obstacles to harness agricultural development. Agricultural stakeholders will scarcely thrive in such situation that affects the economy of a country. Dependence and over reliance on crude oil has gone viral thus, resulting to economic stagnation and negative influence on agricultural productivity. The Nigeria oil sector has been found to adversely affect both the agricultural sector and the economy (Sekumade, 2009) [18]. The huge investment potentials and export diversification in order to get the Nigeria agricultural sector to add to the economy as it does before (1960s) have remained locked and untapped, because of a number of constraints and factors that must be addressed (Oni, 2013). The Nigerian populace has been defaced incognizance with our traditional heritage (farming) due to the intricacies surrounding agricultural production and its success. This has attracted discouragement, lack of interest by agricultural stakeholders' involvement and poor response to farm activities. Stakeholder`s intervention to improve agricultural research and agricultural extension workers is skeletal.

All stakeholders (the government, non-governmental organizations, extension agencies, rural institutions among others) should intensify efforts to build cooperative and peaceful coexistence between farmers and pastoralists through public enlightenment, education and campaign in agrarian communities (Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu and Igbokwe, 2017) [4]. Interruption of basic agricultural interest and foreign aid should not be an oversight. This will enable the ability in strategizing the potentials required by agricultural stakeholders to facilitate agricultural business. Rural dwellers need support from agricultural stakeholders such as; frequent home and farm visit, group interaction, farm upgrade through knowledge transfer mechanism and in keeping with the traditional norms, ethics and values of the rural people. Scarcity of farmland is a major hindrance to agricultural investors and lacks stakeholder's involvement. Nlerum and Wechie (2018) [7] assert that transforming agriculture and land conversion in rural-urban fringe eats into agricultural land, thus leading to the reduction in the quantity and quality of land for farming. High cost of farm input cuts deep into discouraging most charitable organizations. Stakeholders will experience an unstable atmosphere in a state of insecurity and political instability. Agricultural stakeholders will continue to freeze in dilemma in the face of multiple inferences and problem hindering their involvement and rural livelihood. Agricultural stakeholders are not recognized by leaders who do not attach value to the agricultural sector, perhaps they are ignorant of the importance of farming as the main stay in the developed economy.

The study on constraints to stakeholders` activities on agricultural production was addressed by finding answers to the following research questions: who are the current major stakeholders in agriculture? What are the constraints of stakeholder's activities in agricultural production?

Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

a. identify the current stakeholders in agricultural production in the State,
b. identify the constraints to stakeholders` activities in agricultural production in Rivers State.

Hypothesis of the Study

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the constraints to stake-holders` participation in agricultural activities in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State.

5. Methodology

The study area was Rivers State. Rivers State is one of the 36 States of Nigeria. According to census data released in 2006, the state has a population of 5,198,716, (Nigeria population census, 2006) making it the sixth-most populous state in the country. Its capital and largest city, Port Harcourt, is economically significant as the centre of Nigeria's oil industry. Rivers State is bounded on the South by the Atlantic Ocean, to the North by Imo, Abia and Anambra States, to the East by Akwa Ibom State, and to the West by Bayelsa and Delta states. It is home to many indigenous ethnic groups such as: Ogoni, Abua, Ekpeye, Ikwerre, Ibani, Opobo, Eleme, Okrika, and Kalabari, Etche, Ogba, Engenni, Egbema, Obolo and others. The people from Rivers State are known as "Riverians". The inland part of the state consists of tropical rainforest; towards the coast the typical Niger Delta environment features many mangrove swamps (Government of Rivers State of Nigeria, 2009). Rivers State is known as the garden city of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and has three Senatorial Districts, namely:1. Rivers-East Senatorial District: Comprising the following LGA`s; Port-Harcourt, Ikwere, Okirika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Etche, Omuma and

Emohua.2. Rivers-West Senatorial District: Comprising the following LGA`s; Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Ahoada West, Ahoada East, Abua/Odual, Degema, Akuku-Toru, Asari-Toru and Bonny.3. Rivers-South-East Senatorial District: Comprising the following LGA`s; Opobo/Nkoro, Andoni, Oyigbo, Tai, Eleme, Khana and Gokana. It currently consists of 23 Local Government Areas, all of which handle local administration, under an elected Chairman. Each of the local government areas has its own administrative seat.

Farming is a major occupation in Rivers State. It is one of the leading states in the production of yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, rice and beans. About 39% (760,000 hectares) of the state's total land mass, particularly in the upland area, is suitable for cultivation. Major cash crops produced are oil palm products, rubber, coconut, raffia palm and jute. Other crops grown for food include vegetables, melon, pineapples, mango, pepper, banana and plantain. The fishing industry is an important sector in Rivers State (Government of Rivers State of Nigeria, 2009). Fish farming is supportive to food security and rural livelihood.

The population of this study comprised all fourteen (14) current stakeholders in agriculture such as: farmers, extension officers, aid agencies, commercial agents, donor agents, farmers association, funding organizations, agricultural consultants, research institutes on agriculture, universities, community organizations, local government units, non-governmental organizations (NGO`s) and government ministries, in the three senatorial districts of Rivers State.

The sample size was 180 respondents selected from agricultural stakeholders in the three senatorial districts of Rivers State. These were randomly selected from six Local Government Areas with two; Local Government Areas from each senatorial district of Rivers State. The Local Government areas selected were; Ikwerre and Etche for Rivers-East Senatorial District, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East for Rivers-West Senatorial District, Eleme and Gokana for Rivers-South-East Senatorial District. Thirty (30) Stakeholders were proportionately selected from each of the selected LGA`s to give a total of 180 respondents.

Data collected were from primary source to extract information required for this study. The primary source of data was field survey using questionnaire as the main instrument. The instrument was designed along the Likert format of Very High Extent, (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and very low Extent (VLE). A cut off mark of 2.50 and above was a benchmark for a constraint while less (<) 2.50 was rejected

The inferential statistics used was Analysis of Variance to test the hypothesis of the study.

6. Results and Discussion

Current Major Stakeholders in Agriculture in the Study Area

The result in Table 1 revealed that a good number of the respondents from Rivers East (56.7%), Rivers South East (68.3%) and Rivers West (53.3%) indicated that women farmers were the current major stakeholders in agriculture as they ranked the first position followed by men farmers and youth farmers with 50.6% and 38.9% respectively.. Farmers association ranked the fourth position from the secondary stakeholders with 45% and universities ranked the fifth position from external stakeholders with 30%.

Table 1: Current Major Stakeholders in Agriculture in the Study Area

Stakeholders	Rivers East (n=60)	Rivers South East (n=60)	Rivers West (n=60)	Pooled (n=180)	Value	Ranking
	%	%	%		%	
Primary Stakeholders						
Men Farmers	53.3	50.0	48.3		50.6	2ND
Women Farmers	56.7	68.3	53.3		59.4	1ST
Youth Farmers	45.0	35.0	36.7		38.9	3RD
Secondary Stakeholders						
Ext Officers of ADP	11.7	5.0	6.6		7.8	10TH
Ext Officers of ELF	-	-	5.0		1.7	13TH
Ext Officers of Shell	3.3	--	-		1.1	14TH
Ext Officers of Agip	3.3	-	-		1.1	14TH
Commercial Agents	3.3	1.7	5.0		3.3	11TH
Commercial and Agric Banks	1.7	1.7	1.7		1.7	13TH
Aid Agencies	-	1.7	-		1.1	
Donor Agencies	16.7	8.3	10.0		11.7	9TH
Farmers Associations	32.5	46.7	45.0		45.0	4TH
Funding Organizations	1.7	-	1.7		1.1	14TH
Agricultural Consultants	1.7	1.7	3.3		2.2	12TH
External Stakeholders						
Research Institute	16.7	18.8	21.7		21.1	6TH
Universities	18.8	35.0	30.0		30.0	5TH
Community organizations	20.0	16.7	21.7		19.4	7TH
Local Govt Units	11.7	13.3	15.0		13.3	8TH
Govt Ministries	8.3	15.0	11.7		11.7	9TH
NGOs	1.7	5.0	3.3		3.3	11TH
Environmental and Natural Resources Personnel	1.7	3.3	1.7		2.2	12TH
Other National Govt Departments	-	1.7	1.7		1.1	14TH

Source: Field survey, (2019). Multiple responses

The results imply that current major stakeholders in agriculture included primary, secondary and external sources. The result is in line with the assertion that effective institutional linkages among extension service providers, research organizations, educational institutes, and farmers are inevitable for an efficacious agricultural knowledge and information system (Ashraf, Muhammad and Chaudhry 2007) [3].

Constraints to Stakeholders` Activities in Agricultural Development in Rivers State

Table 2 shows constraint of stakeholders in agriculture in Rivers State. A cut off mark of 2.50 and above was a benchmark for a constraint, while less than (<) 2.50 was rejected as constraint. The table showed that corruption (3.66), lack of farm machineries (3.60), conflicts (3.46), high cost of imputes, lack of agricultural extension workers (3.46) , lack of agricultural industries (3.27), lack of agricultural innovation (3.27), lack of linkage (2.86), lack of manpower (2.79), and lack of agricultural research workers (3.92), were constraints to stakeholders in agriculture.

Table 2: Summary of Constraints amongst Stake Holders in Agriculture in Rivers State

Constraints	Rivers East	Rivers South East	Rivers West	Pooled mean	Remark
Conflicts	3.10	3.53	3.76	3.46	Accept
Corruption	3.17	3.80	4.00	3.66	Accept
Cultism	2.80	3.73	3.70	3.41	Accept
High Cost of agriculture raw material	3.26	2.63	2.50	2.79	Accept
High Cost of farm input	2.90	2.46	2.86	2.74	Accept
Lack of agricultural empowerment and training	3.56	3.13	2.30	2.99	Accept
Lack of agricultural extension workers.	3.36	4.00	3.03	3.46	Accept
Lack of agricultural industry	3.33	3.76	2.73	3.27	Accept
Lack of agricultural innovation	3.30	3.20	3.33	3.27	Accept
Lack o f linkages	3.40	3.20	2.86	3.15	Accept
Lack of agricultural manpower	2.76	2.53	3.10	2.79	Accept
Lack of agricultural research workers	3.10	2.96	3.23	3.42	Accept
Lack of farm machineries	3.53	3.53	3.76	3.60	Accept
Poor agricultural business	2.66	3.73	3.30	3.23	Accept
Politics	3.63	3.20	2.76	3.19	Accept
poor agricultural market	1.93	2.06	2.53	2.14	Reject
Poor weather condition	1.73	2.53	1.77	2.01	Reject
Scarcity of farmland	2.20	2.03	1.96	2.06	Reject
Unfavorable government policies	3.23	3.93	3.03	3.39	Accept

Source: Field survey, 2019, Cut-off mean = 2.50

The pooled mean values in Table 2, showed that corruption (3.66), lack of farm machinery (3.60), conflicts (3.46), lack of extension workers (3.46), lack of agricultural research workers (3.42), cultism (3.41), unfavorable government policies (3.39), lack of agricultural industry (3.27), lack of agricultural innovation (3.27), lack of agricultural business (3.23), politicization (3.19) etc. were all regarded as constraints militating against stakeholders in agriculture. The study also showed that; poor agricultural market had a cut-off mean of (2.14), poor weather condition (2.01) and scarcity of farmland (2.06) were below the cut-off mean. In all the three senatorial districts conflict, corruption, cultism, lack of extension agents, lack of innovation, lack of farm machinery, lack of linkages were common constraints. Poor agricultural markets, scarcity of farmland, poor weather condition were not seen as constraints in the various senatorial districts. Harry and Wechie (2018) [13] concluded that lack of agricultural shows and awareness ranked first as major constraint to farmers satisfaction with Niger Delta Development Commission`s agricultural activities while scarcity of farmland was not a constraint to farmers. Multiple stakeholders process (MSP) is emerging as a promising mechanism of the innovation system on which stakeholders interact to jointly identify problems, device solutions, implement solutions and evaluate the cycle (Schut, Klerkx, Sartas, Lamers, Campbell, Ogbonna, Kaushik, Atta, Krahand, Leeuwis, 2015). Sangotegbe, Taofeeq and Oluwasusi (2013) [15], recommends that there should be a greater cooperation between the extension agencies especially the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) and the research institutes in the campaign and provision of information on improved production of rice with great consideration for gender implication. Kuwornu, Demi and Amegashie (2013) [10] also, recommended that Government in collaboration with the formal and informal financial institutions should work collectively and ensure the availability of production credit and resources to farmers like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and others. Such back-up will increase chances of households to boost production and improve food security in the families. Isife and Okorie (2014) [9] found that government should make financial credit more accessible to farmers, check variability of climate conditions, strengthen extension services and provide production inputs and farm implements where necessary. The major constraint to rural human capital development of agricultural entrepreneurs in the study area was poor access to training opportunities (Elenwa and Ile, 2019) [5]. Since most of the agricultural activities were carried out in the rural area, the government must turn to the rural area and invest a lot in the infrastructure and development of the rural area as this will greatly help in combating the constraints (Ufiobor, 2017) [19].

Table 3: ANOVA of Difference in Constraints of Stake Holders amongst Senatorial Districts

Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Constraints	2.909622	5	0.581924	1.561573	0.208815	2.620654
Senatorial Districts	8.8804	1	8.8804	23.83023	5.61E-05	4.259677
Interaction	1.637033	5	0.327407	0.878584	0.510277	2.620654
Within	8.943667	24	0.372653			
Total	22.37072	35				

Source: Field survey (2019). Alpha level = 0.05 significance.

Results in Table 3 indicated that F-ratio (1.561573) for the state variation was less than the F-critical (2.620654) with a P-value of 0.208815 which is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted as true. In view of this result the conclusion was a none significant difference amongst the three Districts in constraints of stake-holders in agriculture.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Agricultural stakeholders were faced with such major constraints as corruption, lack of farm machinery, conflicts and lack of extension workers. The study recommends that since corruption, lack of farm machinery, conflicts, were some of the major constraints militating against stakeholders involvement in agricultural development, government should be fair in governance, provide support and set up arbitration panel to settle conflicts. Government should also, train more agricultural extension workers with incentives including attractive benefits to boost agricultural production.

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