

Analysis of Non-Governmental Organizations' Challenges for Participation in Agricultural Development Policy-Making

RASOOL LAVAEI ADARYANI¹, KHALIL KALANTARI², ALI ASADI³

1, Ph.D in Agricultural Development, Department of Agricultural Management and Development, Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Development, University of Tehran, Karaj, Iran

2, Professor, Department of Agricultural Management and Development, Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Development, University of Tehran, Karaj, Iran

3, Professor, Department of Agricultural Management and Development, Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Development, University of Tehran, Karaj, Iran

(Received: Apr. 15, 2017- Accepted: Jul. 13, 2019)

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper was examining challenges of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for participation in agricultural development policy-making. The Statistical population of study composed of experts of Agricultural and Natural Resources Engineering (ANRE) Organizations at province level (N=349). 112 of the experts of ANRE selected randomly in two stages which determined by Cochran formula. The data were collected by questionnaire which its face and content validity was approved by a panel of experts. For measuring the reliability of questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied and the obtained coefficient for participation in policy-making process and challenges parts were, 0.92 and 0.78, respectively. These amounts showed that research instrument was reliable. Exploratory factor analysis showed that challenges facing NGOs in agricultural development policy-making in the "external factors", "communication gap" and "internal factors" were identified. The most important challenges were related to external factors, especially laws and regulations of NGOs.

Keywords: NGOs, Policy-Making, Agricultural Development.

Extended Abstract

Objectives

A non-governmental organization is an entity that works voluntarily at the local, national, or international levels and is created and controlled by members with common interests. Its activities include providing humanitarian services, overseeing government policies and practices, and encouraging political participation in foreign affairs. In fact, NGOs have the considerable potential to contribute to development policy-making. By focusing specifically on their role in the policy process, these organizations can be seen as powerful structures in some activities. Activities that include participation as an information element in communication between different social sectors and powerful government agencies to promote changes in governmental policy-making. However, agricultural NGOs do not participate in policy-making process. Therefore, the current study seeks to identify the challenges facing these organizations to participate in this process.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach to identify the challenges facing agricultural NGOs to participate in policy-making process. The Statistical population of study composed of experts of Agricultural and Natural Resources Engineering (ANRE) Organizations at province level (N=349). 112 of the experts of ANRE selected randomly in two stages which determined by Cochran formula. The data were collected by questionnaire which its face and content validity was approved by a panel of experts. For measuring the reliability of questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied and the obtained coefficient for participation in policy-making process and challenges parts were, 0.92 and 0.78, respectively. These amounts showed that research instrument was reliable. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) technique was used to identify the mentioned challenges. Principal Axis Factoring method was employed to explore the factor structure in data.

Results

Results indicated that challenges facing NGOs in agricultural development policy-making consisted of "external factors", "communication gap" and "internal factors". The most important challenges were related to external factors, especially the laws and regulations of NGOs. The communication gap factor indicates that agricultural NGOs do not have the capacity to communicate with stakeholders in agricultural sector. The results also showed that the involvement of agricultural NGOs in the pre-implementation phase of the policy-making is more important than the implementation and evaluation phase. In the pre-implementation phase, they generally compile instructions. In the implementation and evaluation phase, they are more concerned with policy evaluation and less implementation.

Conclusion

In general, it can be seen that agricultural NGOs have some inherent weaknesses that, along with other structural weaknesses, such as legal challenges, have made them into actors that cannot play an effective role in agricultural development policy-making. some structural challenges may arise from periodic changes in public administration and, as a result, different attitudes about their involvement in agricultural development policy. The inherent weaknesses may also be due to the fact that NGOs do not have significant policy-making experiences in a systematic and planned sense.