

Generating information through multi-stakeholders participatory approach (msp) for local planning development in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This article focus on the information generated through MSP Approach and its effect on local planning development. The theoretical implication of MSP were explored while the information channel used for Fadama programme were critically examined. The qualitative data collected showed that mass media channel and group contact method were used to generate information on Fadama activities. The farmers were taken through MSP of divergence, emergence and convergence. It was discovered that the farmers were able to discover realities about what is going on around them, discover their common strategic intention about what they need to do and also to take collaborative action towards the implementation of their intention. The communication process used through group approach sensitized and strenghtened the existing bond of relationship in the community towards effective local planning of development. This would further enhance sustainable rural development because of the MSP procedure employed, which made all the emanated projects “People Oriented projects”.

Introduction

The word Fadama is an Hausa name for irrigable land with flood plains and low-lying area underlined by shallow aquifers and found along Nigeria’s river systems (Ingawa *et al*,2004). Qureshi (1989) also refers to Fadama as alluvial, lowland formed by erosional and depositional actions of the rivers and streams characterized by seasonally flooded area used for farming during the dry season. They encompass land and water resources that could easily be developed for irrigation agriculture (World bank, 1992). Fadama are typically waterlogged during the rainy season but retain moisture during the dry season.

The areas are considered to have high potential for economic development through appropriate investments in infrastructure, household assets and technical assistance. When Fadama spread out over a large area, they are often called ‘Wetlands’ (Nkonya *et al*, (2008); Blench and Ingawa, 2004). The Second National Fadama Development Project (NFDP-II) is a follow-up on the first phase of the programme in 1992-1998. The main objective of NFDP-II is to sustainably increase the incomes of the Fadama users through expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value added output. Nwachukwu *et al* (2008) stressed that the NFDP-II was borne out of the need to ensure all year round agricultural production using available Fadama resources in Nigeria and also as a follow – up to Fadama 1 that was adjudged successful. Emphasis was laid on the approach of Community Driven Development (CDD) used in the implementation of the project with emphasis on social inclusiveness and empowerment of the rural people to take charge of their development agenda. The CDD approach is a product of interaction between different multi-stakeholders participatory approach involved with a focus on increasing sustainably the incomes of Fadama users via empowerment in terms of capacity building, advisory services, acquisition of productive assets and rural infrastructure development. All the stakeholders involved in Fadama II collectively identified their development priorities and developed it into a Local Development Plan (LPD), which was followed at implementation stage of the project. The MSP approach used in the implementation of Fadama II is a social survey comprising of three processes namely: **Divergence**,

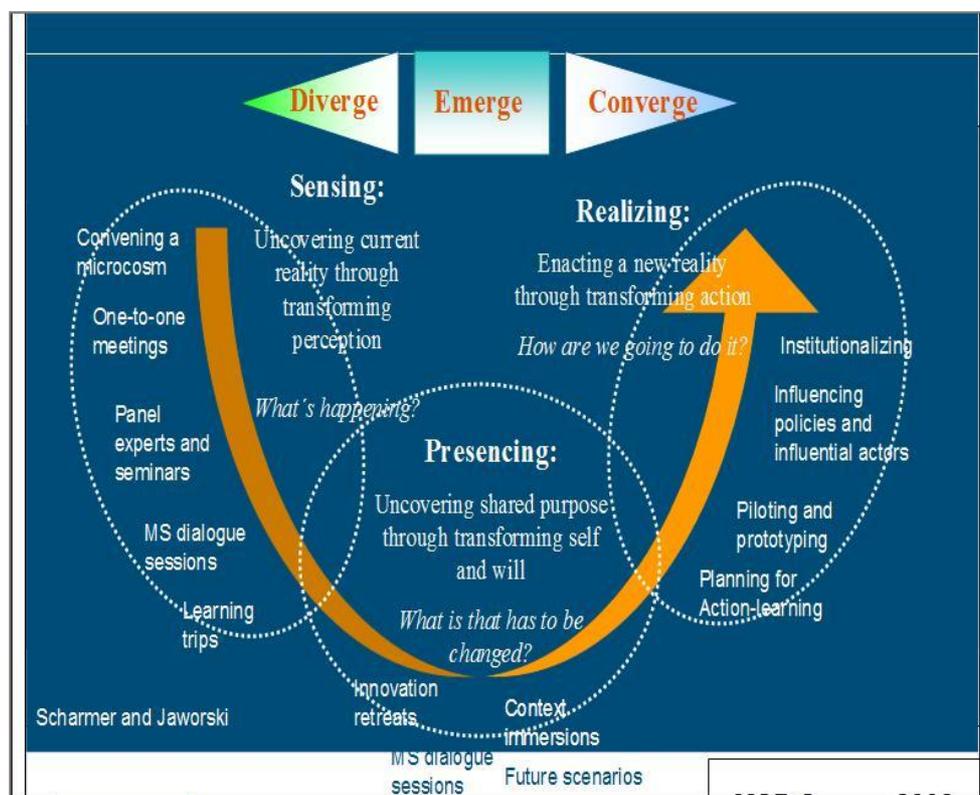
Emergence and convergence

Divergence: This is a stage in which realities of the existing situation are discovered i.e a stage of identifying what is going on around the people (people's present situation). This involves knowing the history of the people that led to the present and what obtains presently in terms of the material and non-material aspects of the people's way of life (culture).

Emergence: It is a stage of discovering common strategic intention i.e. now that we know the existing situation, what is the way forward?

Convergence: It is a stage of joint decision making that would involve collaborative action towards implementing their intention i.e. how are we going to do it?. This is actually the stage of developing local development plan to be used for the achievement of their set goals.

It is believed that going through these processes properly in carrying out programme of development at grass roots would enhance sustainable development. This is because all the stakeholders involved would have interacted sufficiently during the three stages to a satisfactory point of viewing the project as theirs.



One of the key primary objective of NFDP-II that is of great interest to this study is the empowerment of local communities to play an active role in their own development and take charge of their own development agenda. The study assessed the processes involved in their participatory process of implementation. It is from this background that this study assessed the multi stakeholders participatory approach used for the development of local plan in Fadama II in Oyo State. The key areas investigated in the course of the analysis were to:

- (i) identify the multi-stakeholders and participatory approach used in the implementation of Fadama II
- (ii) examine the various activities of the participants at different phases,
- (iii) determine the common strategic intention of the people and local plan,
- (iv) examine the outcome of local plan implementation through MSP approach.

Methodology

Four Fadama II LGAs were randomly selected from the 10 benefitting LGAs in Oyo State. In each of the LGAs, one Fadama Community Association (FCAs) was randomly selected to make 4 FCAs in all the selected LGAs. Information was sourced through Fadama Users Group (FUGs), documentary reports, Focus group discussion and Key Informants who are not part of the FGD. Six focus group discussions each were conducted per one LGA, in all, 24 Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)/ 4LGAs in fadama participating communities in Oyo state.

Table 1: Selected Local Government Areas, FCAs and Communities

LG Selected	FCAs	Community
Ido Local Govt.	Omi-Adio	Aretu, Alatare, Oke Odo Okia, Aba-Ege, Maku Odetola, Lagbende
Oyo West	Ife Sowapo	Odo-Arin, Ilora, Oyo New-Iyaji I, New Iyaji II
Orire	Bosunla Atere	Bosunla, Atere, Temidire
Egbeda LGA	Erunmu	Erunmu, Oyala

Source: SFDO

Result and discussion

Multi-stakeholders and participatory approach used in the implementation of Fadama II

Information gathered revealed that the stakeholders can be broadly categorized into 2, namely: (a) External (b) Internal

External stakeholders are those participants who are external to the actual implementation/ operations of the project but whose roles are in the areas of stimulating and coordinating of the project. This group includes: World Bank, Federal Government, State Fadama Development Official (SFDO) and The Local Fadama Desk (Facilitators).

Internal stake-holders are referred to as participants who are actually and directly involved in the operation of the programme at the community level e. g The Fadama Community Association (FCAs), Fadama User Groups (FUGs), The Local Fadama Development Committee (LFDC),

Both external and internal stake-holders were actively interacting together from the beginning to the end, contributing one idea or the other to the smooth running of the project.

MSP Process used in Fadama II

The information gathered revealed that NFDP-II made use of Community Driven Development (CDD) approach involving a MSP of social learning (Divergence, Emergence and Convergence). At the initial stage of the projects, awareness was created at the 18 selected communities. Interactive sessions were held between experts, facilitators and members of FUGs and FCAs to uncover current realities among the different economic interest groups. At the sessions, diverse issues were raised and noted to knowing the on-goings around hence it was termed as a divergence stage of MSP. Here, the key actors are the community members of the different economic interest groups that were being assisted by the facilitators or other experts as need be.

The next phase was the articulation of the thoughts gathered. It was a process of realignment of ideas and information. The formation of FUGs/FCAs took place here and group objectives are stated under the set goal. The ideas so gathered were shared, transmitted and prioritized accordingly as agreed upon by the members of either the FUG or FCA. This phase could be referred to as emerging stage of information gathering (realignment of thought).

Various activities of the stakeholders at different phases

The FGD result shows that at the on-set of the project, most of the FUGs were not in place in most of the project areas of coverage. Where they exist, they were very weak, hence most FUGs were formed. It was also observed that most of the people have only rudimentary knowledge on most of the economic activities they were engaged in, hence measures were put in place to create more awareness on the different economic interest activities.

Divergence Stage

The activities of the stakeholders were as follows:

FCAs/FUGs member/community people were involved in the analysis of their existing situations vis-a-vis the objectives of Fadama II project. The members were led through by the help of the experts and seminars in identifying the present situation in relation to each of the economic activities engaged in. The FUGs and FCAs' members were led to examine the available rural infrastructure, assets present, input support services and advisory services needed and areas of capacity building that need to be strengthened. At this stage, FUGs and FCAs were involved in attending series of meeting where issues and decisions were made on the way forward on the different projects. Members of the groups also engaged in the development of local plans for each of the economic group.

The Facilitators: Mostly, the facilitators were involved in the creation of awareness, sorting out issues and giving guidance to the members of the FUGs and FCAs. Where FUGs are not formed, the facilitators were actively involved in the formation of groups both (FUGs and FCAs). Guidance was also given to the members of FUGs and FCAs in the selection of Local Fadama Development Committee (LFDC).

State Fadama Development Official Team (SFDO)

The SFDO provides experts advice, organize seminars and create awareness through radio and television.

Emergence stage

The FUGs and FCAs with the help of the facilitators were involved in the prioritization of the needs discovered at the divergence stage for the different economic interest groups. The needs were arranged based on the areas of intervention for the Fadama II project, i.e. rural infrastructure, assets acquisition, input support, advisory services and capacity building.

The LFDP was submitted for verification by the Committee. All agreement documents were signed by the FCAs and Service provider.

Facilitators performed the following responsibilities: Collects Local development plans from the FCAs, screening of the IDPs to ensure it conforms with check lists criteria, submit the screened LDPs for action, ensure that FCA priorities are reflected in the LDPs, coordinate technical assistance from relevant ministries to support the Advisory Services component of the projects.

The SFDO were responsible for the organization of meetings and seminars for the FUGs, FCAs and Service providers. The team coordinates the activities of the facilitators.

Convergence Stage, the activities of Stakeholders are as follows:

The FUGs and FCAs were responsible for the actual implementation of the projects. Here, the bank accounts were operational with their own counterpart fund deposited in the account. They were responsible for keeping of relevant records, amount spent on the projects by the FUGs is presented at FCAs level for verification. They take charge of physical and financial control, operate and maintain sub-project and award contracts to the service provider. The FCAs monitor the ongoing infrastructural projects i.e. collect user fees to ensure that resources needed for the operation of the project were in place.

The Facilitators: They were responsible for the monitoring of community mobilization efforts, ensures that the LDFs were implemented correctly. Coordinate technical assistance given.

Common strategic intention of the People

The information gathered shows that the common strategic intentions of the people were based on the set goals and objectives of the NFDP-II. The project aims at achieving sustainable increase in the incomes of the beneficiary with emphasis on:

Capacity building: This component supported measures to build the capacity of beneficiaries so that they were equipped to access project advisory services and financing. The training also gave them the skills and know-how to carry out participatory planning as well as to implement, operate and maintain subprojects.

Rural infrastructure investment: This was to support the creation of economic infrastructure and local public goods to improve the productivity of the beneficiaries. Through this component, the construction or rehabilitation of small-scale, infrastructure subprojects which were considered priorities by the community were financed.

Pilot productive asset acquisition support: This component is to enhance the improvement in beneficiary's productivity and income by facilitating the acquisition of productive assets by individuals or associations. Here, support was given to the clients' enterprise management skills, their capacity to mobilise and own funds through the provision of matching grants for income-generating activities to groups or associations.

Demand-responsive advisory service: This supported advisory services that enabled beneficiary to adopt output-enhancing techniques and more profitable marketing practices in their enterprises. The project financed advisory services accompanied new investment activities in fadama areas on request by the user groups and advisory services that support on-going activities by users.

Project management, monitoring and evaluation (PMME) : This sub-component financed the establishment of M & E mechanisms and consultant services to develop and implement studies. These studies evaluated the impact of the sub-projects and provided feedback to improve project implementation performance, including an impact assessment for mid-term review and another at the end of the project.

Outcome of Local Plan Implementation

Capacity Building (CB): The CB for FUGs and FCAs and Service Provider from 2004-2006 were as follows: Orientation workshop for service providers, Preparation of quality LDP, Community Based Procurement and Financial management, Community participation M&E of Projects. Business management and credit mobilization. Handling, storage and Inventory Management CB for Facilitators and FCAs. Prevention and control of Avian Influenza in Poultry Birds Workshop and Launching of Input Support Programme

The training received strengthened the capacity of the beneficiaries to organize and govern. It was revealed that thirty Seven FUGs covered have Governing Committee (GC) and written constitutions to follow in the running of their groups. In each of the FUGs, the GC was made up of the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. It was reported that the GC had a significant impact on the stability and cohesiveness of their groups and has facilitated the day to day running of the groups, which has made it easy for them to access relevant assistance from the SFDO.

The report revealed that nearly all the FUGs kept manual record of all their payments in their minute books carefully wrapped in various types of Polythene bags rather than in a file.

All the FUGs reported a tremendous improvement on their ability to manage resources compared to what used to be in the various rural groups before joining NFDP-II. They acknowledged that their understanding on how to plan and manage their finances was due to the much received under NFDP II.

All the FUGs/ FCAs reported of preparing only one LDPs following socially inclusive process, i.e. everybody in their various communities had a hand in the preparation of the LDPs, hence they are all interested in the implementation of the sub- projects especially the rural infrastructure sub- project. The beneficiary reported that contrary to the peoples' usual apathy to government project in the past, the approach of NFDP II sub- projects is unique in the sense that everybody was involved at the planning

stage which serves as stimulant at the implementation stage, hence it is not likely that the project will suffer the problem of abandonment like past government projects. The FUGs/FCAs stated that the entire infrastructure put in place will be properly maintained because the projects were seen as their own.

The FUGs stated they have acquired some understanding on how to award contracts and procure services contrary to their earlier opinion of being cumbersome and time wasting before. However, FUGs stated they will still require more assistance in that area.

Mobilization of savings and credit by the FUGs was yet to be fully imbibed by the FUGs despite all the trainings received. Only one FUG, i.e. Oyinladun Bee farmers in Omi- Adio reported of having a saving and credit scheme. There is increased awareness and understanding of the project by the communities through the activities of the FCAs. Also, the FUGs/FCAs capacity was boosted in the area of project monitoring because all the FCAs sampled have monitoring reports on all the projects supervised.

Rural Infrastructure: The infrastructures that were put in place in the four Fadama II benefiting LGA are as follows: Access road construction, Borehole, Box culvert in Aretu, Alatare, Oke-Odo, Okia, Aba-Ege, Maku and Odetola.

Rural Infrastructure Sub-Projects for Oyo- West Local Government: Borehole, Feedmill and Palm kernel Processing centre in New Iyaji 1, Odo-Arin and Oyo- Ilora road.

Bosunla-Atere rural infrastructure subprojects were borehole in Bosunla, Atere and Temidire.

Erunmu Women MCS Rural Infrastructural Projects were road, Food processing centre, drainage, borehole, market stall and VIP toilet.

Pilot productive assets acquisition support

In the Fadama farm areas sampled, there were evidence of digging of deep-wells, acquisition of water pumping machines, the knapsack sprayer, goats and piggery pens, cropping nets, pelleting machine, fish pond construction, procurement of feeders, weighing scale, grinding machine, bee-hives, aprons, smokers, hoes and cutlasses, plastic water tanks and snail housing unit. These assets have been a very great help and have direct impact on the production capability of the recipient of the group or farmer unlike the rural infrastructure which have impact on the generality of the people of the area.

Demand-responsive advisory services

The reports on FGD shows that the advisory services given in NFDP-II were mainly the communication of technology transfer in Agriculture. The components used in Oyo State for NFDP-II were through radio and television programmes to relay advisory services on weekly basis rather than demand driven technology transfer which involves issuance of technical prescriptions only. The Key informant statements about their gains were stated below:

Key Informant 1: *"I can say that my income has increased by 40% after putting into practise all I learnt from the advisory services rendered to my group".*

Key Informant 2: *"The new techniques of seeding which I adopted after receiving the advisory service had resulted in seed wastage reduction and promote rapid and luxuriant growth of my crops".*

Key Informant 3: *"Thanks to the local technical knowledge I learnt from the advisory service. I can detect pests on time and use less pesticide."*

Key Informant 4: *"I have been able to solve the problem of Mange infection on my animals because I make use of local materials to treat mange infections on my animals."*

Key Informant 5: *"Now that I have received training on weed control, I am able to cultivate more acres of land".*

Conclusion and recommendation

It is evident from this study that the MSP approach used in the generation of information in NFDP in Oyo state had significantly contributed to empowerment of the Fadama users with resources and decision making powers to take charge of their own development.

The involvement of all the people concerned at every stage i.e. (divergence, emergence and convergence) have evolved a long lasting interaction and have stimulated sense of ownership and better prospect for an effective use of resources.

In summary, though most of the FUGs have had their capacity strengthened; there are still rooms for improvements which is subject to the following recommendations:

For further sustainability of the groups, more intensive training on group dynamics should be given.

To maintain continuous implementation of group activity, the SFDO must regularly embark on frequent monitoring exercise to ensure that FCAs/FUGs carry out whatever is expected of them.

NFDP activities should be replicated in areas that are yet to.

The SFDOs must brace up for better performance since the FUGs that are applying to the projects are on the increase.

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