
Public Library Participation in the National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on public library participation in the National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) in Nigeria. It traces agricultural development programmes in Nigeria from the farm settlement schemes (FSS), National Accelerated Food Production programme (NAFPP), the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution Programme, to the World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). It specifically highlights the activities of the World Bank sponsored Fadama Project in Nigeria and discusses the participatory role of the public library in the effective implementation of the Fadama Project. Some of the identified roles of the public library include acquisition of relevant materials, exhibition and display, repackaging of information on Fadama project, publications and jingle, and maintenance of database on Fadama project. It concludes that the public library has a civilizing role in seeing to the sustenance of the Fadama Project by its statutory role of collecting, organizing, preserving and disseminating information to the people involved in the Project for its proximity to the people.

KEYWORDS

Public library; Agricultural Development; Fadama Project-Nigeria; World Bank Development Programmes

PAPER TYPE *Conceptual*

INTRODUCTION

The role of public libraries in making information widely available to many people and organizations must be fully accepted and acknowledged. Public libraries exist primarily to preserve and organize recorded knowledge, owing to the growth of new disciplines from different fields of knowledge and information explosion due to advancement in every sphere of life. Public libraries constitute the fulcrum that drives technological and educational development. Public libraries

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established by state governments in Nigeria are supported by tax payers' money. It is therefore obligatory on these libraries to support government programmes through effective information provision to make them successful particularly when the initiatives are public-driven and requiring communication and information support. The public library provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge. Since they have a broader mandate than academic and special libraries, develop their collections to reflect diversity which they make readily available to their users (**Reitz, 2004**). Some of the key missions that form the core of public library services outlined by UNESCO public library, revised in 1994 include promoting awareness of ... scientific achievements and innovations, and to give users access to information over the whole range of human activities such as agriculture, commerce and industry (**Edoka, 2000**).

It is a known fact that agriculture in Nigeria has not been given the required attention because of the shift to the oil sector. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has tried series of agricultural development programmes to achieve self-sufficiency and security in agriculture. However, **Camble (1994)** says that these agricultural development programmes in developing countries, including Nigeria are often formulated and executed with insufficient information about and by the primary beneficiaries. The paper therefore seeks to investigate the participatory role of public libraries in the agricultural development programme under the National Fadama development project which is in its third phase of implementation and one of the components for effective implementation is communication and information support.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Agricultural development, according to **William (1981)**, is a systematic use of knowledge gained from research for the production of useful materials, devices, systems, practices, methods and processes that result in increased returns to the farmers in relation to the cost of input or labour. Nigerian agricultural development can be traced to the time of colonial dispensation when agriculture was the major source of earning for the country. From 1960-1992 agricultural policies, which were aimed at developing the agricultural sectors in Nigeria, enacted by the former civilian and military regimes were not fully implemented (**Okoli, 1982**). It was further noted that agriculture in Nigeria, with its ever slower post-civil war growth was the slowest growing sector of the economy and a drag on the overall economic performance. In the words of **Aboyade (1985)**, agriculture, especially food production, is dearly the starting point of economic and rural transformation for many developed countries of West and East; and the role of agricultural transformation in the process of national economic development begins with the basic strategy of creating a food surplus as a prelude to or as a parallel with industrialization. Regrettably, in case of Nigeria, agricultural development has been on the steady decline over the years that the country is no longer self sufficient in basic food items, and food imports continue to soar at an alarming and embarrassing rate.

This growing decline in agricultural development in Nigeria, especially with regard to food production and raw materials had led, in the recent past, to some government measures to revitalize agriculture. Under the military regime in the mid seventies, Operation Feed the Nations (OFN) was introduced, with limited success. This gave way to the Green Revolution Programme. The 1962-1968 national development plan

emphasized the introduction of more modern agricultural methods through farm settlement, co-operative plantations, supply of improved farm implements and greatly expanded agricultural services. Some of the specialized agricultural development schemes initiated and implemented during this period included the Farm Settlement Schemes (FSS) and National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) launched in 1972. Between 1976 and 1980, also other agricultural development programmes, notably the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) were launched in 1976, Green Revolution Programme inaugurated in 1980 and the World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). While each of the above sought to improve food production, the ADPs represented the first major practical demonstration of the integrated approach to agricultural development in Nigeria. Following successful negotiation for multi-state agricultural development projects with the World Bank, each state of the country, and the federal capital, Abuja has one ADP (**The World Bank Group, 2009**). In the early 1990s, the World Bank launched the National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) to reduce poverty in the rural areas of Nigeria. However, the search still continues in the present dispensation with President Shehu Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda, which include food security and sufficiency. Government has been doing everything possible to ensure agricultural development being restored, which involves, among other things, the timely provision of fertilizers, seedlings, pesticides, mechanical equipments, credit loan schemes and infrastructural facilities. It also involves effective training and utilization of agricultural extension workers to provide a link between agricultural researchers and those who apply their results on the farm, especially through the Fadama project.

THE NATIONAL FADAMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NFDP)

Fadama, the Hausa (One Nigerain national Language) name for irrigable land, means flood plains and low lying areas underlined by shallow aquifers and found along Nigeria's river system. The National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) is a major instrument for achieving the Nigeria Government's poverty reduction in the rural areas. Its beneficiaries are the private economic agents who achieve livelihood directly or indirectly from the exploitation of the natural resources in a given Fadama area. The project empowers the Fadama Community Associations (FCAs) with the resource and the necessary training and technical assistance support to properly manage and control these resources for development. The overall goal is to reduce poverty by improving the living condition of the rural poor and to contribute to food security, which is one of seven-point agenda of the present Yar'Asdua administration, and increased access to rural infrastructure. The project aims at enhancing agricultural production and value addition for small holders and rural entrepreneurs in Fadama areas on a sustainable basis.

The First National Fadama Development Project (**Fadama I**) was designed in the early 1990s to promote simple and low-cost improved irrigation technology under the World Bank financing. The wide spread adoption of the technologies enabled farmers to increase production, by more than 300% in some cases. Impressed by the achievements of Fadama I, the Federal Government approached the African Development Fund (ADF) of the African Development Bank for support in expanding the achievements in Fadama I in scope and size. To achieve its broader objectives, Fadama Development Project is adopting Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach with extensive participation of the stakeholders at early stage of the project cycle. This approach is much in line with the ADB policies and

development strategies in Nigeria, which emphasizes poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary participation.

The Second National Fadama Development Project (**Fadama II**) is a follow-up on the first phase (1992-1998). The main objective of Fadama II is to sustainably increase the incomes of the Fadama users through the expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value added output. The World Bank assisted project covers twelve states including the federal capital, Abuja. The states include Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, Taraba and the FCT. The NFDP is co-financed with loans from the ADF to cover the programme in the six (6) states of Kogi, Katsina, Jigawa, Plateau, Kwara and Borno. The four components of Fadama II are capacity building for Fadama users (farmers, pastoralists, fishers, hunters, gatherers and service providers) and other stakeholders, support for technical, social and location – specific activities to improve the management of critical watersheds that ensure Fadama productivity and sustainability in new (pilot) areas with high potential for upscaling and replicability; support for a range of advisory services, training, information sharing, awareness programme and adoption of land use practices that will enable Fadama users to adopt productivity enhancing techniques and more profitable marketing, and at the same time ensure the sustainability of the Fadama resource-base; and project management mechanisms including monitoring and evaluation plans to implement Fadama II (**World Bank, 2009, a**).

The objective of the Third National Fadama Development Project (**Fadama III**) is to sustainably increase the incomes of Fadama users. By increasing their incomes, the project will help reduce rural poverty, increase food security and contribute to the achievement of a key millennium development goal (MDG). The aim of Fadama III is to sustainably increase

the incomes of Fadama resource users by directly delivering resources to the beneficiary rural communities, efficiently and effectively, and empowering them to collectively decide on how resources are allocated and managed for their livelihood activities and to participate in the design and execution of their subprojects. Fadama III has six components which include capacity-building support for community organizations, capacity building for local governments, communication and information support: improve existing low levels of rural infrastructure; advisory services and input support through adequate financing; support of agricultural development programmes including training of facilitators and extensive staff and sponsor research and in farm demonstration; asset acquisition for individuals by giving matching grant; and project management, monitoring and evaluation **World Bank (2009, b)**.

PARTICIPATORY ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The public library is one of the most important sources of information dissemination because it has to acquire as many materials as possible on every point of view. Public libraries can therefore, participate in the effective and enduring implementation of the Fadama Project through the following ways:

➤ **Acquisition of Relevant Materials**

Public libraries are expected to acquire information materials on all kinds of subjects. In its participatory role in the realization and sustainability of the Fadama project aimed at reducing poverty in the rural areas, public libraries therefore should, as matter of their duty to the communities it serves and through its rural libraries information system (**Aboyade, 1985**), endeavor to collect all materials relating to Fadama Project and make them available to their users who may need them.

➤ **Exhibition and Display**

Public libraries can create awareness on Fadama project to their users by the use of exhibition and displays. Through this service, public libraries are expected to put on display on their boards the posters containing Fadama projects and activities. Libraries can also organize exhibitions of cuttings of Fadama projects. By doing so, people will come to know about its existence, operations and activities and how to benefit from the project.

➤ **Repackaging Information**

It is no longer news that majority of 70% Nigerians are illiterate and live in the rural areas. Since Fadama project is rural-driven and one of its components is communication support, it is therefore pertinent that those for which the project is packaged should understand what it means in order to participate actively. This is where repackaging of information comes in. This is to avoid what **Aguolu and Aguolu (2002)** call linguistic inaccessibility. Public libraries should repackage the information content of Fadama in the language or even dialect the illiterate rural dwellers will understand. Videos showing practical demonstration of Fadama projects especially the use of equipment will make more meaning to illiterate rural dwellers than the book display of similar activities. Vernacular communication medium can be used by rural public libraries staff to teach the rural dwellers what Fadama is all about and what they stand to gain from it. In doing so, they will come to appreciate the project better.

➤ **Publications and Jingles**

Public libraries can participate in Fadama project by publishing activity articles on newspapers and sponsoring radio and television jingles which can favour the project. This requires staff responsible for the publications to be conversant with the terminology used in the Fadama project. The contents of the publications should focus on the components of the

projects, the beneficiaries, how to benefit from the project and citizen participation in the project. The jingles should mainly focus on what the citizens stand to gain from Fadama project and possibly in the three major Nigerian national languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

➤ **Database Maintenance**

Public libraries can maintain current database on Fadama project available to the government, Fadama officials and beneficiaries. The database centre should be responsible for the collection, classification, storage, publication, and dissemination of data on Fadama project available anywhere in the country. This can be made possible through newspaper cuttings on the project, World Bank Information Office and the national office of Fadama Project in Nigeria or the National Office of Statistics. The database can be accessed by the government, the World Bank, the beneficiaries and researchers (**Unagha and Okon, 2006**).

➤ **Collaboration**

The public library should collaborate with the Communications and Information Office of the Fadama Project and fashion out ways for making the project known to the remotest areas of the country. This collaborative effort can be achieved as a part of the extension services of the library usually undertaken with the objective of reaching groups of people who might otherwise be unaware of the library services. . In case of this project, with this collaborative effort, the implementers of the project can assist the library to reach these areas and the people and create awareness about the project.

➤ **Current Awareness Service**

Current awareness service (CAS) is a library service aimed at making available current editions of documents and new arrivals in the library to the users. In rendering these services, public libraries can make available

Fadama Project documents available to the users, wherever they may be, unasked. To the rural dwellers, who are the direct beneficiaries of the Fadama project, public libraries through the rural libraries can make these documents available to them, at no cost of the users.

CONCLUSION

Proper information dissemination is an indisputable and indispensable factor in the success and realization of any government development project, especially those that positively touch the lives of the common man. Apart from other sources of information available on the Fadama project, the library has a civilizing role in this aspect by its statutory role of collecting, organizing, preserving and disseminating information, as it continues to play an important participatory role in the sustainability of the National Fadama Development Project aimed at poverty reduction and food security in Nigeria.

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