



EFFECT OF STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT IN FOREST POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the impact of involvement of stakeholders in forest policy formulation and implementation in South-west Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions to gather relevant data from the forest stakeholders in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti States of South-west Nigeria. The respondents were made up of Forest Officers, Saw-millers, Timber Contractors and Forest Community. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that only 16% of the saw-millers and little above 10.0% of the timber contractors indicated that they were involved in decision-making processes as regards the forest reserves. 30.3% of the respondents in forest community indicated that they were involved in decision-making. In all, 35.0 % of the Forestry Officials, 32.0 % among the Sawmillers, 34.0 % among the Timber Contractors and 41.0 % among the rural people in the forest reserves perceive the forestry policy implementation as adequate. There is need for adequate involvement of stakeholders in policy formulation towards sustainable forest management. It is recommended that the nation reviewed its existing forest policy and approves a unified National Forest Policy in line with the emerging forest issues as well as sustainably manages the forest estate.

Keywords: Forest policy implementation, forest stakeholders, involvement, policy review

INTRODUCTION

Forest management in Nigeria started in earnest in the last 18th century with the establishment of regional forestry authorities, followed by a period of nearly 60 years of forest reservation, introduction of timber licensing systems, development of royalty determination systems, introduction and development of silviculture and silvicultural systems in natural forests, achievement of reliable regeneration methods, establishment of plantations, development of fire protection

practices and the building up from scratch of forestry and forestry education at technical and tertiary levels (FAN, 1989).

The main objective of forest management in any country is usually the attainment of sustainable management of forest resources as well as self-sufficiency in forest produce particularly wood. In Nigeria, the broad policy objectives include sustainable forest management, forest conservation and environmental protection (Adeyoju 1975; Bada, 1996). Subsequently, other issues

became important including utilization of forest products; development of non-wood forest products that play significant roles in rural economy thereby creating employment and income, creation of alternative source of energy other than wood and; international cooperation for forestry development among other things. Over-exploitation has destroyed the recuperative capacity of the forests including non-timber produce collected from the forest. The obvious fact is that the remaining natural forest cannot cope with the rapidly decreasing area of exploitable forest and high prices for timber exports.

Over the last 40 years of independence in Nigeria, there has been a significant shift from long term pursuance of policy objectives to inconsistent and epileptic management (Agbeja, 1999, Faleyimu, 2010). However, the national forest policy recommended for Nigeria in 2006 has the basic principles, which should guide the development and control of forestry in Nigeria (NFP, 2006). This study evaluates the involvement of stakeholders in forest policy formulation and implementation in South-west Nigeria with the view to facilitating sustainable forest management in the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The study was carried out in five states of south-west Nigeria; these include Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti States. The area has 85 constituted Forest reserves with a forest area cover of 842,499 hectares.

Sampling of Forestry Stakeholders

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire and focus group discussions to gather relevant data from forest stakeholders in the selected States. The secondary information was obtained from desk review of literatures on forest policy in Nigeria.

The respondents were made up of forest officers, saw-millers, timber contractors and Forest dwelling communities. One Officer in charge of each administrative zone was selected and 20 percent of forestry officials from each of the State headquarters; this gives a total of 152 officials. Ten percent of the registered timber contractors were randomly selected in the forestry zones within each of the states. The samples were collected pro-rata, according to the population of the timber contractors in each zone. Thus, for the six states, 10 percent sampling yielded a total of 128 timber contractors. Ten percent of the registered saw-millers were randomly selected from each State across the zones. The number of saw-millers arrived at is presented was 201. A total of 251 dwellers in local communities located in selected forest reserves in each of the states were randomly sampled. These people constitute a major stakeholder because they live within the forest reserve and directly have impacts on the state of the forests.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, bar charts and histograms.

RESULTS

Involvement of forest community in decision-making by Forestry Officials

Figure 1 showed responses of forestry officials on the involvement of forest community in decision-making. From the combined result, only 30.3% of the sampled rural dwellers in forest community indicated that they were involved in decision-making and this was highest in Ogun State with 42.1% of the officials indicated that they involved the community in decision-making while the least was just about 15.0% in Ekiti State.

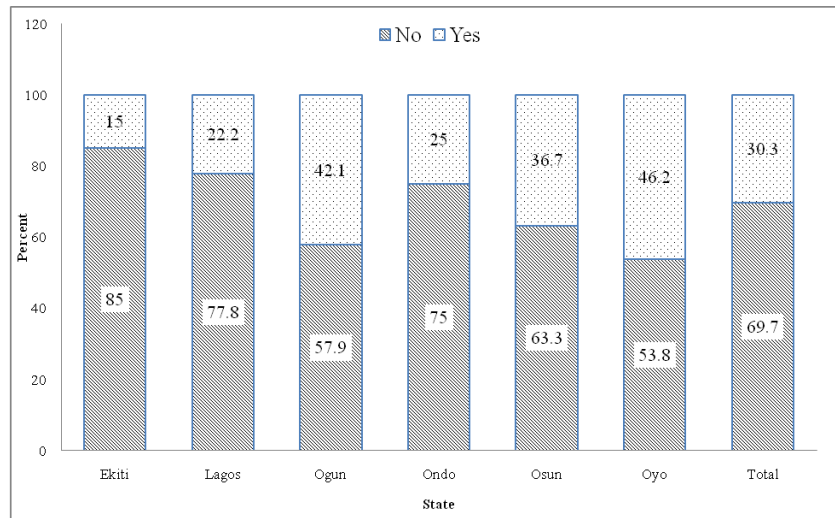


Figure 1: Responses of Forestry Officials on involvement of forest community in decision-making

Forest Policy Objectives Implementation in South-west, Nigeria

Figure 2 shows responses of forestry stakeholders on level of implementation of forest policy in southwest Nigeria. In all, about 35.0 % of the forestry officials, 32.0 % among the saw millers, 34.0 % among the timber contractors and 41.0 % among the rural people in the forest reserves perceive the forestry policy implementation as adequate. The responses across the states is

almost similar, as 39.0 % of the forestry officials in Ondo State indicated that the forest policy implementation is adequate, while 47.0 % of the saw miller in Oyo State also view the policy implementation as adequate. Furthermore, 41.0 % of timber contractors in Osun State view the policy implementation as adequate while 62.0 % of the farmers in Oyo State view the policy implementation as adequate.

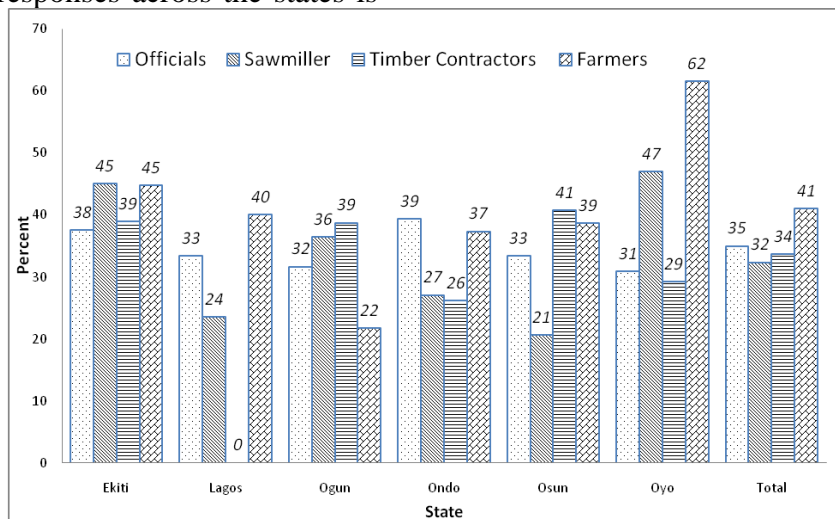


Figure 2: Responses of forestry stakeholders on appropriate implementation of forest policy in Southwest Nigeria

Implementation of Specific Aspects of Forestry Policy

Across all the states, 28.4 % (47.0 % in Ekiti and 15.0 % in Ondo) viewed reservation of existing forest reserve as adequate; 42.6 % (50.0 % in Ekiti and Ogun and 33.0 % in Lagos) perceived value of forest policy as adequate as shown on Table 1. Concerning forest administration, 43.2 % (48.0 % in Ondo and 33.0 % in Lagos) viewed this law as adequate and just 18.9 % (30.0 % in Osun and 11.0 % in Ogun and Ondo) indicated provision of funds for the realization of forestry objectives was adequate. About 35.1

% (48.0 % in Ondo and 24.0 % in Ekiti) indicated that provision of forest estate policy was adequate and more 65.0 % (89.0 % in Ogun and 48.0 % in Ondo) considered mutual interdependence of forestry and forestry industry policy as adequate. Research and education on forestry policy was considered adequate by 40.5 % (44.0 % in Ogun&Ondo and 31.0 % in Oyo); and, 44.6 % (50.0 % in Ekiti and 22.0 % in Lagos) considered private forest policy adequate. Employment policy was considered by 29.7 % (33.0 % in Osun and 11.0 % in Lagos) of the forest officials as adequate.

Table 1: Responses on adequacy of forestry policy as indicated by the forestry officials across all States

| Forest Policy | Response | State | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| | | Ekiti | | Lagos | | Ogun | | Ondo | | Osun | | Oyo | | N | % |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| Reservation of existing forest reserve | Yes | 18 | 47.4 | 3 | 33.3 | 4 | 22.2 | 4 | 14.8 | 7 | 23.3 | 6 | 23.1 | 42 | 28.4 |
| | No | 20 | 52.6 | 6 | 66.7 | 14 | 77.8 | 23 | 85.2 | 23 | 76.7 | 20 | 76.9 | 106 | 71.6 |
| Value of forest | Yes | 19 | 50 | 3 | 33.3 | 9 | 50 | 10 | 37 | 14 | 46.7 | 8 | 30.8 | 63 | 42.6 |
| | No | 19 | 50 | 6 | 66.7 | 9 | 50 | 17 | 63 | 16 | 53.3 | 18 | 69.2 | 85 | 57.4 |
| Forest administration | Yes | 17 | 44.7 | 3 | 33.3 | 7 | 38.9 | 13 | 48.1 | 12 | 40 | 12 | 46.2 | 64 | 43.2 |
| | No | 21 | 55.3 | 6 | 66.7 | 11 | 61.1 | 14 | 51.9 | 18 | 60 | 14 | 53.8 | 84 | 56.8 |
| Provision of funds for the realization of forest objectives | Yes | 7 | 18.4 | 2 | 22.2 | 2 | 11.1 | 3 | 11.1 | 9 | 30 | 5 | 19.2 | 28 | 18.9 |
| | No | 31 | 81.6 | 7 | 77.8 | 16 | 88.9 | 24 | 88.9 | 21 | 70 | 21 | 80.8 | 120 | 81.1 |
| Provision of forest estate | Yes | 9 | 23.7 | 4 | 44.4 | 5 | 27.8 | 13 | 48.1 | 11 | 36.7 | 10 | 38.5 | 52 | 35.1 |
| | No | 29 | 76.3 | 5 | 55.6 | 13 | 72.2 | 14 | 51.9 | 19 | 63.3 | 16 | 61.5 | 96 | 64.9 |
| Mutual interdependence of forestry and forest industry | Yes | 28 | 73.7 | 6 | 66.7 | 16 | 88.9 | 13 | 48.1 | 18 | 60 | 16 | 61.5 | 97 | 65.5 |
| | No | 10 | 26.3 | 3 | 33.3 | 2 | 11.1 | 14 | 51.9 | 12 | 40 | 10 | 38.5 | 51 | 34.5 |
| Research and education on forestry science and management | Yes | 16 | 42.1 | 3 | 33.3 | 8 | 44.4 | 12 | 44.4 | 13 | 43.3 | 8 | 30.8 | 60 | 40.5 |
| | No | 22 | 57.9 | 6 | 66.7 | 10 | 55.6 | 15 | 55.6 | 17 | 56.7 | 18 | 69.2 | 88 | 59.5 |
| Private forest | Yes | 19 | 50 | 2 | 22.2 | 7 | 38.9 | 13 | 48.1 | 14 | 46.7 | 11 | 42.3 | 66 | 44.6 |
| | No | 19 | 50 | 7 | 77.8 | 11 | 61.1 | 14 | 51.9 | 16 | 53.3 | 15 | 57.7 | 82 | 55.4 |
| Employment | Yes | 15 | 39.5 | 1 | 11.1 | 4 | 22.2 | 7 | 25.9 | 10 | 33.3 | 7 | 26.9 | 44 | 29.7 |
| | No | 23 | 60.5 | 8 | 88.9 | 14 | 77.8 | 20 | 74.1 | 20 | 66.7 | 19 | 73.1 | 104 | 70.3 |
| Total | | 38 | 100 | 9 | 100 | 18 | 100 | 27 | 100 | 30 | 100 | 26 | 100 | 148 | 100 |

Stakeholders' involvement in decision making on forestry issues

Only 16.0% of the saw-millers and little above 10.0% of the timber contractors

indicated that they were involved in decision-making processed as regards the forest reserves as shown in Table 2. The highest among the Saw millers was in Ekiti State where 40.0 % of the saw-millers indicated

that they were involved and this was followed by 31.0% of the saw millers in Oyo State while only 2.9% of the saw millers in Osun State, which had the least percentage, indicated they were involved. Among timber

contractors, Lagos State had the highest number of contractors (20.0%) who pointed out that they were involved in decision-making while Ekiti State had the least (5.6 %).

Table 2: Involvement of forest stakeholders in decision-making

| State | Saw miller | | | | | | Timber Contractors | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | Involvement in Decision-Making | | | | | | Involvement in Decision-Making | | | | | |
| | No | | Yes | | Total | | No | | Yes | | Total | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Ekiti | 12 | 60.0 | 8 | 40.0 | 20 | 100.0 | 17 | 94.4 | 1 | 5.6 | 18 | 100.0 |
| Lagos | 30 | 88.2 | 4 | 11.8 | 34 | 100.0 | 4 | 80.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 5 | 100.0 |
| Ogun | 37 | 84.1 | 7 | 15.9 | 44 | 100.0 | 27 | 87.1 | 4 | 12.9 | 31 | 100.0 |
| Ondo | 35 | 94.6 | 2 | 5.4 | 37 | 100.0 | 20 | 87.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 23 | 100.0 |
| Osun | 33 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.9 | 34 | 100.0 | 25 | 92.6 | 2 | 7.4 | 27 | 100.0 |
| Oyo | 22 | 68.8 | 10 | 31.3 | 32 | 100.0 | 20 | 83.3 | 4 | 16.7 | 24 | 100.0 |
| Total | 169 | 84.1 | 32 | 15.9 | 201 | 100.0 | 113 | 88.3 | 15 | 11.7 | 128 | 100.0 |

DISCUSSION

The Federal Republic of Nigeria consists of 36 states and Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Each of the states and the FCT has an established forestry services as division under the appropriate Ministry. Each State Forest Service (SFS) is responsible for setting and administering policies for its forests. Each SFS Department is headed by a Director reporting to the Permanent Secretary, who reports to the Commissioner i.e. the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry in the state (Aruofor, 2001).

Generally, it was observed that the forestry stakeholders perceive implementation of forest policies as being inadequate. About six in ten of all the stakeholders hold to the position that forest policy implementation was inadequate and hence, the gross misconduct observed in the forest reserves. Forestry laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulate that prosecution of forest offences, at the local government level, in courts of law is the function of the State Director of Forestry or an officer delegated by the Director, whose status should not be

below the rank of Forest Superintendent (Agera *et al.*, 2009) but most of the forestry officials do not possess the constitution (or gazette) and this was observed as one of the factors influencing forest offences even among the officials. Most of the officials do not have the constitution and they may not be aware of the provisions of the forestry laws in prosecuting offences and they are likely to take laws into their hands or handle it wrongly.

There is no conducive atmosphere for effective operation of forest policy among the stakeholders in Nigeria (Ogunwusi, 2013). For instance, while the forest policy stipulated increase in economic wood availability in the forest reserves, gregarious deforestation has resulted in scarcity of economic wood species. As far back as 1899, the perspective planning for economic development was to exploit forest resources (Adeyoju, 1975). The export revenue from forestry grows at 4.1%, 8.0% and 28.8% between 1950-60, 1960-70 and 1970-80, respectively (Aribisala, 1993). Despite years of deforestation occasioned by dependence of

the budget on wood and other forest resources export, the forest policy in Nigeria remains outdated and unable to effectively promote afforestation and development of industrial wood species (Ogunwusi, 2013). These developments have significant impact on the operations of the forest industries. Closely linked with this is the availability of fund for research and development of forestry sector. It is stipulated that certain percentage of income generated from forest exploitation should be ploughed back into management and regeneration activities, yet the forestry sector does not receive adequate funding to carry out official responsibilities. Consequences of this are wanton destruction of forest and loss of huge amount of revenue from illegal forest activities.

It is worrisome that Nigeria is still battling with the issue of National Forest Policy which was enunciated in 2006 but yet to be backed with National Forestry Act. This is greatly affecting development of the forestry sector in the country. The reason is that each state of the country manages its forest and there is no unified legal document to guide against disparities in the management strategy.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study has shown that majority of the forestry stakeholders are not involved in forest policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. It is high time that the nation reviewed its existing forest policy and approves a unified National Forest Policy in line with the emerging forest issues as well as sustainably manages the forest estate. Also, there is need for adequate involvement of stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation because successes of forestry sector largely depend on cooperation of the stakeholders.

In addition, the institutional framework and may be the constitutional changes in respect of forest ownership and development planning, as well as programme implementation should be revisited and strengthened. The challenges call for private sector and public participation, the evolution of an appropriate national forestry legislation, aggressive and scientific forest management, capacity building and adequate financing of forestry development in Nigeria.

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