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EXTENT OF COMPLIANCE TO STANDARD PRACTICES BY BENEFICIARIES AND OFFICERS OF FADAMA PROJECT IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The National Fadama Development Project (NFD) aimed at reducing poverty by improving living conditions of the rural poor and contributing to food security. However, this was not sufficiently realized as poverty and food insecurity still persist among rural households in Nigeria with no exception to Oyo State. This connotes some anomalies among which could be poor compliance to standard practice that eventually lessened expected outcomes despite project investments. Hence, this study examined the extent of NFD beneficiaries and officers' compliance to standard practices in Oyo state. Multistage sampling procedure was employed to elicit information from 120 beneficiaries selected from 5 LGAs (Orelope, Ibarapa-North, Oyo-East, Ogo Oluwa and Akinyele) under the 4 ADP zones in Oyo state. Questionnaire and in-depth interview were used to obtain data which were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean age of respondents was 45.6 years while most (74.2%) of them were males. Majority (83%) of the beneficiaries never paid their 50% share of inputs purchase; most (97.5%) likewise maintained that Fadama User Group (FUG) members were carried along at each stage of the project. Also 91.7% of respondents disagreed that due process was abused by officials during asset procurements, however, 67.1% of them complained that supplies of input usually arrived late; insufficient finance was a major constraint to project effectiveness according to 97.5% of the respondents. Officers guided beneficiaries in project decisions without lording ideas on them as 76.7% of respondents posited. The study concluded that there was a moderately high level of compliance (56.7%) of both officers and FUGs to project's standard practices. It recommended that project stakeholders should put in more efforts towards better compliance. Also record keeping should be encouraged among beneficiaries to facilitate evaluation while sponsors should improve fund support and ensure timeliness in documents approval, as well as release of fund for the project.

Keywords: Standard practices in programme implementation, Fadama National project, project beneficiaries

INTRODUCTION

The National Fadama Development Project (NFD) is a project of the Federal Government of Nigeria through the pooled World Bank loan to finance the development of *Fadama* lands by introducing small-scale irrigation in states with *Fadama* development potentials. The project aims at boosting incremental food production and raising the standard of living of the beneficiaries. The *Fadama* Project has a development objective which is to increase the income of users of rural land and water resources on a sustainable basis. By increasing their incomes, the project would help reduce rural poverty, increase food security and contribute to the achievement of a key Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

Specifically, the project aims at increasing the incomes of *Fadama* resource users on a sustainable basis by directly delivering resources to them (i.e. 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 sub-projects. It entails the women and other vulnerable groups having a voice in the decision-making process and benefiting equally from the project inputs (Third NFD Project Implementation Manual, 2009).

Using the CDD approach, the project is expected to help attain national food security and improved wellbeing of the poor and marginalized. This objective of course, as evident by the

persistent high levels of food insecurity and rural poverty; has not been achieved despite the efforts and huge capital investments that have been put into the project by various stakeholders, which predicate some anomalies among which could be poor compliance to standard practice that eventually lessened expected outcomes.

The general objective of the study was to examine NFD beneficiaries and officers' compliance to standard practices in Oyo State and the specific objectives were to:

- i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiaries
- ii. determine the perception of beneficiaries on the transparency in the NFD delivery
- iii. examine beneficiaries' satisfaction with the project.
- iv. examine beneficiaries and officers' compliance to standard practices of the NFD

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Oyo State. Oyo State is one of the six states that make up the southwest agro-ecological zone of Nigeria. The state covers a total of 27,249 square kilometres of land mass. Its population makes up about 4% of Nigeria's total population (2006 estimate). There are 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state, out of which the National *Fadama* Development Project covers 20 LGAs.

The target population for this study was the *Fadama* Community Association members



comprising of the *Fadama* User Groups, and field officers from the selected LGAs as well as the staff of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

Twenty out of the thirty-three Local Government Areas benefited from the *Fadama* III project in Oyo State. Twenty percent of the LGAs in each ADP zone was selected; making two LGAs from the Ibadan-Ibarapa zone, one from Ogbomoso zone, one from Saki zone and one from Oyo zone; totaling 5 LGAs in all. Ten percent of the 200 FUGs in the 5 LGAs were sampled; giving a population of 20 FUGs. There are about 20 members in each FUG translating to 400 members out of which 30% of FUG members were randomly selected giving a total of 120 respondents.

At the officer level, all the nine officers at the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Oyo State *Fadama* Coordination Office were interviewed, as well as one field facilitator from each of the selected Local Government Areas (making five field facilitators in the state). This gave a total of fourteen *Fadama* officers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the beneficiaries' socio-economic characteristics investigated in the study. The result indicates that the mean age was 45.6 years. This means that most of the *Fadama* farmers were within the economically active and productive age therefore constituting a good labour force in agricultural production since the project is aimed at increasing overall food production.

The Table also shows that 74.2% of the respondents were male suggesting that males made up the larger number of the beneficiaries of this project. This corroborates the reports of Fadairo, Olutegbe and Tijani (2015) as well as Thomas and Abegunde (2013) who respectively found 68.6% and 73.3% of males to constitute their study respondents in Oyo and Lagos States of Nigeria. This makes it clear that, there is generally a high ratio of male farmers relative to females in Nigeria.

Majority (95.0%) were married, 2.5% single and 2.5% were widowed. This is not unexpected as married people generally have more responsibilities, which they expect their farm enterprises to help cater for. FAO (1995)

concurrently revealed that 91.9% of the women farmers were married in Syria, 85.0% married in Nigeria, 78.8% in Thailand and 61.3% in Trinidad. Another study by Ofuoku *et al.*, (2009) further stated that married individuals were more involved in agriculture in Nigeria. Umunna (2010) explained that married farmers are likely to be under pressure to produce more, not only for family consumption but also for sale. Similarly, the availability of family labour could be an incentive to the married farmer to cultivate more crops and to use agricultural information.

Table 1 also shows that most of the beneficiaries (43.3%) had secondary education, 25.0% had primary education, 19.2% had tertiary education while only 12.5% had no formal education. With this appreciable high level of education, the cooperation of the beneficiaries with implementing field officers was enhanced as they had a fair understanding of the procedures of the *Fadama* project as well as knowledge of the importance of inputs like fertilizers, their uses and specifications. Education assisted participating farmers to know how to apply information on improved farm practices.

The mean duration of participation of the beneficiaries in the project was 3.2 years. This implies that majority of the respondents in the *Fadama* III were not beneficiaries of any of the first two phases of the project. This reflects a lack of continuity and little consideration for sustainability in the effect of the project on farmers' livelihood; as the farmers were randomly selected at each phase and none of the respondents participated in *Fadama* I, few of them benefitted from *Fadama* II, while the majority of the *Fadama* III beneficiaries are a new set of farmers.

This lack of continuity and consideration for sustainability is however a contributing factor that affects the consistency and impact of several agricultural development projects in the lives of the selected target beneficiaries. However, Chinedu (2013) opined that the prevailing economic circumstances might entail a change in policy direction, but a careful study of the Nigerian situation shows most of these policy inconsistencies are avenues for siphoning public funds.

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, n = 120

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
Age (Years)			
Less or equal to 30	1	0.8	45.6167 ± 8.43
31-40	29	24.2	
41-50	67	55.8	
51-60	15	12.6	
61-70	7	5.8	
71-80	1	0.8	
Sex			
Male	89	74.2	
Female	31	25.8	
Marital Status			
Single	3	2.5	
Married	114	95.0	
Widowed	3	2.5	
Religion			
Christianity	56	46.7	
Islam	64	53.3	
Level of Education			
Primary	30	25.0	
Secondary	52	43.3	
Tertiary	23	19.2	
No Formal Education	15	12.5	
Years of Participation in Fadama Project			
1-2	14	11.7	3.2083 ± 0.68
3-4	104	86.7	
5-6	2	1.6	

Source: Field survey, 2015

Perception of beneficiaries on transparency in the project delivery

Information in Table 2 reveals that 99.2% of respondents agreed that all decisions affecting the community were made in open meetings, implying a high level of openness in the decision-making of the project. Majority (86.7%) equally agreed that information about purchases and hiring was made open to any interested community member. It can be deduced from the table also that 85.0% of the respondents agreed that members can attest that project funds were used as intended. In fact, 70.0% of the respondents consented to the fact that all expenses were accurately recorded in a project cash book which shows a form of transparency in the project delivery.

About half (48.3%) of the respondents revealed that the cash book and other records were not made open to community members. Concurrently also, 43.3% stated that the use of project supplies is not recorded in a stores book. This depicts a dark area for perpetration of sharp practices among field officers. Majority (97.5%) also concurred that no single person could make decisions about the use of project funds without input from other committee members.

From table 3 however, the perception of beneficiaries on transparency in the project delivery was generally favourable as 60% of the respondents attested to this fact. This implies that most of the beneficiaries believe that the officers dealt with them with clearness, openness and honesty as far as they knew.

Table 2: Perception of beneficiaries on transparency in the project delivery

Statement	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
1 All decisions affecting the community were made in open meetings	119	99.2	1	0.8
2 Information about purchases and hiring is made open to any interested community member	104	86.7	16	13.3
3 The cash book and other records are open to any community member	58	48.3	62	51.7



	Statement	Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
4	There are clear criteria for bidding to do paid work for the community project and bidding opportunities are announced and posted in public	86	71.7	34	28.3
5	Members can attest that project funds were used as intended	102	85.0	18	15.0
6	All expenses are accurately recorded in a Project cash book	84	70.0	36	30.0
7	There are receipts for all purchases and wage payments	86	71.7	34	28.3
8	Use of project supplies is recorded in a stores book	68	56.7	52	43.3
9	No single person can make decisions about the use of project funds without input from other committee members	117	97.5	3	2.5

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 3: Perception of transparency

Perception	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Unfavourable	48	40.0	6.867	2.029	2.0	9.0
Favourable	72	60.0				

Source: Field survey, 2015

Beneficiaries’ satisfaction with the *Fadama* project

Findings in Table 4 revealed that, majority (70.8%) of the respondents agreed that they had been able to increase their capacity to produce as a result of the intervention. Likewise, 59.2% of the respondents agreed that they have achieved an increase in the yields of their agricultural products as a result of the intervention. Considering the impact of the project, 80.0% disagreed to the statement that they have not experienced any significant positive change brought about by the project. This implies that however little, that *Fadama* project has contributed positively to the success of their enterprises.

On assessment of the effectiveness, 82.5% of the respondents agreed that the management, monitoring and evaluation helped overall project coordination and supervision and strengthened the effectiveness of the project. Sixty percent agreed that the project delivered what was promised and expected while 21.7% were undecided. Only 45.0% of the respondents agreed that their hopes and aspirations were met by the project. From this, one can see that not up to half of the *Fadama* beneficiaries had their hopes and aspirations met. On assessment of general satisfaction with the project, 63.3% of the respondents agree that they were satisfied with the project while 28.3% were undecided.

Table 4: Beneficiaries’ satisfaction with the project, n=120

Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I have been able to increase my capacity to produce as a result of the intervention	20	16.7	85	70.8	7	5.8	4	3.3	4	3.3
Our community infrastructure (roads, storage and processing structures) are now better off because of the project	30	25.0	33	27.5	29	24.2	14	11.7	14	11.7
I have achieved an increase in the yields of my agricultural products as a result of the intervention	21	17.5	71	59.2	17	14.2	5	4.2	6	5.0
The services were timely in responding to our demands and problems	5	4.2	32	26.7	8	6.7	26	21.7	49	40.8
The intervention helped to increase my income and improve local level productivity in general	20	16.7	89	74.2	5	4.2	4	3.3	2	1.7
Benefits of the project were directed more often than not, to a particular set of people	1	0.8	2	1.7	3	2.5	35	29.2	79	65.8
I have not experienced any significant positive change brought	3	2.5	17	14.2	4	3.3	31	25.8	65	54.2

Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
about by the project										
The management, monitoring and evaluation helped overall project coordination and supervision and strengthened the effectiveness of the project	22	18.3	77	64.2	20	16.7	1	0.8	0	0.0
The project delivered what was promised and expected	9	7.5	72	60.0	26	21.7	6	5.0	7	5.8
My hopes and aspirations were met by the project	14	11.7	54	45.0	29	24.2	7	14.2	6	5.0
The project needs a lot of adjustments because it is still far from being at its best	51	42.5	52	43.3	14	11.7	0	0.0	3	2.5
I am satisfied with the project	0	0.0	76	63.3	34	28.3	5	4.2	5	4.2

Source: Field survey, 2015

Extent of compliance of officers and FUGs to the project’s specified procedures

Results on officers and FUGs compliance to project’s procedures were presented on table 5 from responses to different compliance statements about the project. The ranks associated with compliance statements’ weighted mean scores show that beneficiaries played a significant role in monitoring and evaluation of project implementation ($\bar{x} = 1.78$), project decisions were taken by consensus ($\bar{x} = 1.73$) and beneficiaries’ interest counted in project implementation ($\bar{x} = 1.68$). These alluded to the fact that *Fadama* project deployed the bottom-up approach using the Community-Driven Development (CDD) strategy as described by Umar *et al*, (2012). Also, of high importance in terms of compliance to project procedures are statements directed to project implementation actions to which beneficiaries responded. Most (97.5%) maintained that service providers were never forced on them, 95.8% positioned that that there was no favouritism displayed while 91.7% stated that due process was never abused or downplayed during asset procurement. These outcomes are all part of the benefits of CDD approach adopted by the NFD as it adheres more to participatory techniques which in essence gives project beneficiaries significant level of control in project implementation according to Nkonya *et al* (2008), Dasgupta and Beard (2007) and Dongier *et al* (2001).

From the study also, the field officers occasionally did not deliver the quality and quantity of what they promised to as noted by 45.0% of the beneficiaries. We can therefore say that in project delivery, officers did not fully perform up to beneficiaries’ expectation. This can however affect the beneficiaries’ participation in other development projects and their adoption of other development practices later in future.

All the respondents (100.0%) never paid more than the stipulated 30% of the sub-project cost in

asset acquisition (instruments, machines, structures). Majority (83.4%) of the respondents never paid the 50% of the purchase price of inputs designated for them as stated in the Project Implementation Manual. Some of the respondents (83.4%) who never paid their part of the input subsidy; it was further stated in a discussion that inputs such as seeds and fertilizers were given to them without charge at all. The project accountant in an interview explained that the reason for the free distribution of inputs was because most of the time, the FUGs could not afford their counterpart fund contribution and so did not comply, except in very few Local Government Areas like Surulere, Olorunsogo and Saki- West. Moreover, he added that inputs were not given to defaulting FUGs for free, contrary to their report, because in most cases, they usually paid in kind as permitted by the Project Implementation Manual; for instance, by participating in construction work which usually would have cost the project some money. For instance, they could decide to work with the service provider and their labour was valued to ensure that it covered their 50% counterpart contribution.

Concerning delays in project supplies reported by beneficiaries, one of the officers in his words said “*anything that involves the government usually takes time*”. In corroborating these, officers generally affirmed that there were several processes involved in the approval of project supplies and until all the approval was obtained, fund could not be released. They also noted that there was slow movement of files from table to table (bureaucracy) which also facilitated the delay. Even when approval was obtained, the FUGs themselves were sometimes not ready with their counterpart contribution and that constituted more delay to action.

Only 25.0% of the beneficiaries posited that the direction of project decision was not usually decided by consensus, this implies implementing



officers in these areas where consensus is not considered did not do well enough.

Table 5: Extent of compliance of officers and FUGs to project’s specified procedures (n=120)

Statements	Always %	Occasionally %	Never %	WMS	Rank
The project was transparently executed by all officers	56.7	32.5	10.8	1.46	7 th
Field officers delivered their promises	53.3	45.0	1.7	1.52	5 th
Most times, service providers were forced on us	0.8	1.7	97.5	0.03	18 th
We were all carried along at each stage of the project	53.3	44.2	2.5	1.51	6 th
Rich and highly connected persons were more favoured	0.8	3.4	95.8	0.05	17 th
Our views and complaints were respected	48.3	48.3	3.4	1.45	8 th
Most of the time, our choice counts	71.7	25	3.3	1.68	3 rd
Involvement of FUGs members in planning process inhibited standard mgt	14.2	20	65.8	0.48	11 th
Due process was abused in most procurements made by officials	3.3	5	91.7	0.12	15 th
Often than not, we paid more than the stipulated 30% of the sub project cost in asset acquisition	0.0	0.0	100	0.00	20 th
As specified, we most often paid only 50% of the purchase price of inputs available to us	13.3	3.3	83.4	0.30	13 th
On payment of our counterpart contribution, the time before supplies are made is usually too long.	46.7	15	38.3	1.08	9 th
We were often denied grants despite fulfilling all the criteria	0.0	18.3	81.7	0.18	14 th
Project officers sometimes gave us waiver	3.3	26.7	70	0.33	12 th
Identification of beneficiaries for various aspects of project was often influenced by political ties and belongings	0	3.3	96.7	0.03	18 th
Formulation of local development plans for <i>Fadama</i> projects were often done by the beneficiaries	21.7	8.3	70	0.52	10 th
Direction of project decision is decided by consensus	75	22.5	2.5	1.73	2 nd
The role we play in monitoring and evaluation is significant	83.3	11.7	5	1.78	1 st
Officers usually guide us but do not lord their ideas on us	76.7	8.3	15	1.62	4 th
Officers tend to discourage the use of chosen contractors	2.5	5.0	92.5	0.10	16 th

Source: Field survey, 2015

According to Table 6, 56.7% of study respondents posited that compliance to project procedures was high while 43.3% said it was low. A close look at the figures supporting the two positions among respondents however revealed a

marginal difference showing that while compliance was not low, there still exists a wide room for improvement concerning compliance to procedures in the *Fadama* project implementation which is in consonance with earlier results discussed.

Table 6: Categorisation of extent of compliance to project’s specified procedures

Perception	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Low	52	43.3	15.975	2.958	6.0	22.0
High	68	56.7				

Source: Field survey, 2015

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that compliance to standard practices in the implementation of *Fadama* project in Oyo State was marginally above average. The study therefore recommended that:

- i. Incentives and allowances (especially transport allowances and other allowances that will be expended in the course of the project execution) should be promptly provided to encourage the project officers, especially the field facilitators who have direct contact with

the *Fadama* beneficiaries. This will help curb the search for other means of compensation (rent-seeking) in the course of the project execution.

- ii. There is need to create more awareness in respondents and through adult education, organize trainings on record keeping for beneficiaries. This is in order that there may be a basis for evaluation of the beneficiaries’ performance as a result of the project and the input of the facilitators can also be measured.

- iii. There is need for the sponsoring bodies to improve fund support and ensure timeliness in approval of documents, as well as release of fund for the project. This will encourage *Fadama* beneficiaries and enable them achieve the goals for their farm enterprises within a reasonable time frame.

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