

ASSESSMENT OF STATE GOVERNMENTS PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempted to put into a clearer perspective the different programmes embarked upon by Ogun, Oyo and Lagos states government in the management of wetlands located within their domain. Zeroing on state ministries, agencies or parastatal involved in water management, the study investigated the various existing management plans embarked upon by the three State Governments. Results showed that solid waste management was in place in all the states. However, none of the States has clear legislation, enforcement and prosecution as regards the different use that are injurious to the Wetlands. Habitat creation/restoration, in situ and ex situ action, protected areas options are also not being employed in managing wetlands in southwest, Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that policies geared towards sustainable management of Wetlands should be put in place and actively pursued by the state Governments.

Keywords: Wetlands, Environmental Management, State Government, and Policies.

INTRODUCTION

The crux of economics is the allocation of scarce resources in a way that the net benefits derivable by their uses are maximized over time (Olubanjo, 1999). These economic benefits are easily observable and maximised with respect to private goods as the pricing mechanism limit consumption to those who can afford them and the quantity they can afford. The case however is not the same for many natural resources such as the forests, oceans and Wetlands that provides valuable environmental services and benefits that are not exchanged in

a market because they are public goods whose consumption is not limited and non exclusive. As a result, most of these resources are often poorly managed and/or are explored in an unsustainable way. Thus, the quality of environmental services they provide including enhancement of biodiversity, climate regulation, nutrient recycling, and adding aesthetic value to the planet earth tends to decline over time creating environmental problems of un-imaginable proportions that now threatens both human and non-human life on the planet earth (Fernandez, 1999; Lockwood, 1998).

Arising from the reported and wide degradation of Wetlands, O'Connell (2003) has noted that an essential tool for management action is the ability to detect, measure and then reverse changes in the 'ecological character' of a site. Ecological character according to Ramsar Convention Bureau (2000) is defined as the structure and inter-relationships between the biological, chemical, and physical components of a Wetland, derived from the interactions between its processes, functions, attributes and values. Ecological change can therefore be defined as an impairment or imbalance in any of the processes or functions which maintain the products, attributes and functions of a Wetland (O'Connell, 2003). According to Springate-Baginski *et al.* (2009), these inter linkages and interconnectivity mean that the relationships and drivers that affect Wetland status are extremely complex, concern both biophysical and socio-economic elements, and involve a series of interactions between them. However, sustainable use of Wetlands by humans in a way compatible with the maintenance of its natural properties has been identified as a major way of enhancing its functioning (Martin & Sutherland, 2003). In order to achieve this, it is pertinent that management interests and development pressures be reconciled since both are competing interests (Springate-Baginski *et al.*, 2009). According to them there are many ways of attempting this reconciliation of which the participatory planning guided by adaptive management which involves all stakeholders and balancing local interests with the wider public interest is the best. As argued by them this approach advocates decentralization of management to the lowest appropriate level, to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and equity. As noted in Ramsar resolution (Ramsar, 2008), lack (insufficient) of sustainable man-

agement plans for Wetlands is one of the most serious threats to Wetland ecosystems, and consequently the buffer the Wetlands would have provided in mitigating the impacts of climate change in the world at large, and poverty reduction in Nigeria is removed.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the existence of different programmes such as advocacy, capacity building, habitat restoration, regulation of use in Ogun, Oyo and Lagos states government.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was based on information obtained by interview from nine different government establishments directly or indirectly involved with water/environmental management in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo state. These include Ogun State Environment Protection Agency (OGEPA), Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development (MOWRD) and Ministry of Environment (MOE) in Ogun State. The two government bodies that were identified to have oversight functions in wetland management and covered in Oyo state are Ministry of Agriculture (MOA-Fisheries department), Oyo State Environmental Protection Agency (OSEPA). The Lagos state Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), Lagos state Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Waterfront Management (MWM) programmes in the management of wetlands were examined for Lagos state government.

The Information/data used for this study were collected in interview granted by a staff that is conversant with the ministry's or agency's activities. The data were collected in an interview using a topic guide in October, 2010. The existence of the following management plans which according to O'Connell

(2003) are being implemented at local, national or international scales were tested in the three states. They include advocacy; capacity building; education; habitat creation/restoration; in situ and ex situ action; legislation/agreements; protected areas; public awareness; research; site management planning. The above are accommodated within the five principal approaches that are used in ensuring sustainability in the use of natural resources (Initiative Overview, 2010). The areas and means of accomplishing them are given below.

Research and development; these involve conducting studies and analyses aimed at sustaining policy on natural-resource access and sustainable uses and disseminating the results to all stakeholders.

Advocacy and communications: Wetland resource users and other stakeholder's opinions are sourced in workshops and seminars in order to develop innovative policies. Promoting successful methods for community resource management, advocating policy reforms in meetings and negotiations with government officials and using the media to promote policy ideas that favor rural community resource rights are also employed in advocating for wetland management. Other avenues include communicating achievements to all stakeholders (governments, philanthropic funders, NGOs, technical cooperation agencies, academics, journalists, regional networks, and grassroots organizations).

Training and capacity building: These include training wetland stakeholders about natural-resource policy issues and related topics from a pro-poor perspective, building the advocacy skills of indigenous, traditional, and other rural leaders, improving

the management, governance, means, and communications of organizations and networks that advocate for community rights.

Networking is achieved by coordinating with other donors that have greater influence with policymakers, supporting civil-society organizations and sub-national, national, and international networks that serve as platforms for policy advocacy as well as promoting exchanges between community-rights experts and advocates.

Policy-Oriented Pilot Projects: It involves the funding of pilot projects that introduce and test new methods for national wetland policies and international funding initiatives and using specific cases to demonstrate that giving rural people rights to manage natural resources reduces poverty and strengthens the environment.

Descriptive statistics such as percentages, tables and histogram were used in analyzing the data and presenting the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Ogun state, evidences in Table 1 suggest that no clear cut mandate is given to any Ministry as it relates to Wetlands and their management. This is substantiated by visits to different Ministries in order to determine which of them is in charge of Wetlands. Also from the Table, government is involved in public awareness and site management plans (solid waste management) which are the bed-rock of any successful management plans. It therefore follows that the programmes embarked upon by the government of Ogun state in managing the wetland in its domain are public awareness through the media and site management plans through the evacuation of solid waste only. Thus improving on these and adding other ones would go a long

way in sustainably managing the Wetlands in Ogun state.

In Oyo state as observed, the Ministry of Agriculture through the Fisheries Department is directly linked with the management

of the Eleyele Wetland. The Ministry monitors the activities of the fisher folk by imposing an annual access fee of N1,000.00 on them. Other management plan in place is regulation of use patterns.

Table 1: Existing Wetland Management Programmes in Ogun, Oyo and Lagos State

Sustainable Management Programmes	Ogun State			Lagos state		Oyo State			
	OGEPA	MOWRM	MOE	MOA	OSEPA	LASEPA	LAWMA	MOE	MOWM
Advocacy	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Capacity Building	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done
Education	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done
Habitat Creation/ Restoration	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
In Situ and Ex Situ Action	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Legislation/ Agreements	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Protected Areas	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Public Awareness	Done	Not done	Done	Done	Done	Not done	Not done	Done	Done
Regulation of use patterns	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Research	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done
Imposition of fee	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Not done
Site Management Planning	Done	Not done	Not done	Not done	Done	Not done	Done	Not done	Done

Source: Field survey 2010

This is achieved by specifying the net sizes to be used for artisanal fishing while the use of poisonous chemicals in killing t fish is out rightly banned on this water. Further investigation however reveled that all these management measures are however streamlined around the fisher folks while other user’s activities are left unchecked. Solid waste management as well as public awareness is also in place in this state.

Result on Table 1 indicate that solid waste management is of paramount importance to the Government of Lagos state as a Ministry is in charge of this. These together with public awareness which are very important steps in Wetland management are being actively pursued by the state Government. Also Ministry of water front management which is directly linked with the management of the Wetlands is in place in this state. The activities of the Ministry with regards to sustainable programmes for wetland management are still very minimal.

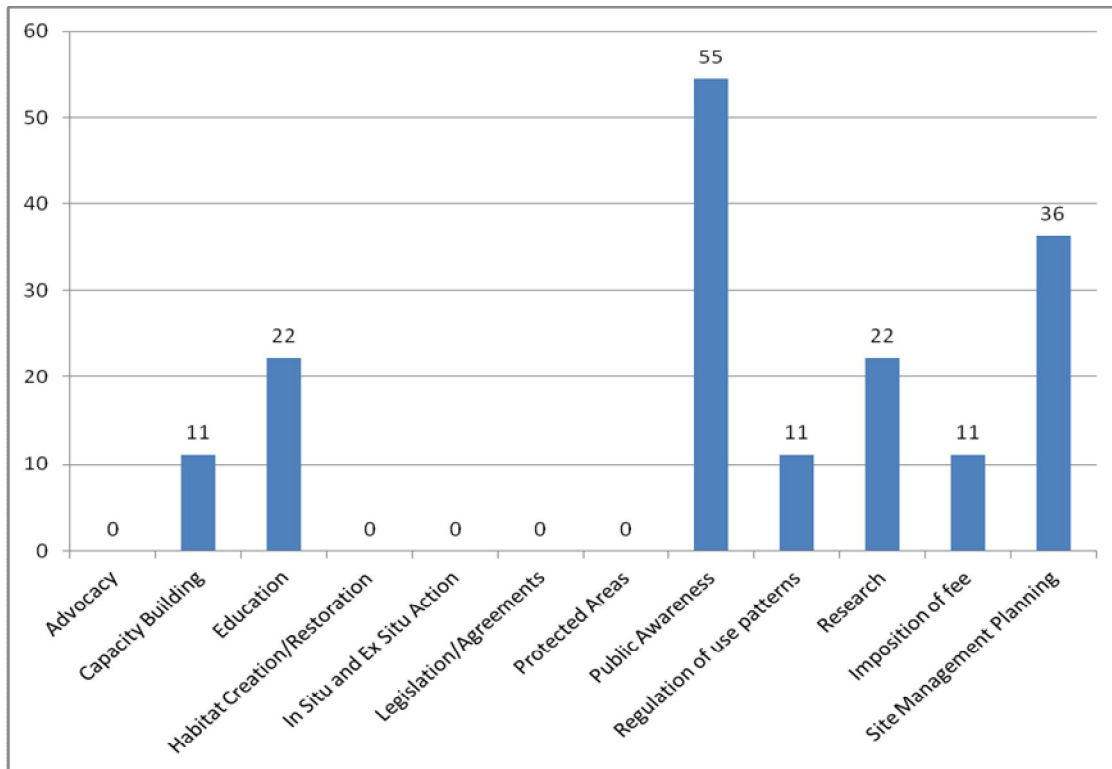


Figure 1: Government involvement in Wetland management programmes

Source: Field survey 2010

Figure 1 shows the percentage involvement of government in wetland management programmes. Majority (50%) are involved in public awareness while habitat creation/restoration, in situ and ex situ action, legislation/agreement, and protected areas options are not being employed in managing wetlands in southwest, Nigeria. None of the States has clear legislation as regards the different use that is injurious to the Wetlands. Also, there is no monitoring of the Wetlands in order to pick up and prosecute those who break such laws. Thus abuse of the Wetlands is inevitable as there are no holistic control/management plans in place

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Oyo State however, the activities of the fisher folks of Eleyele Wetland are moderated to ensure sustainable use of the Wetland as it relates to this purpose while other activities are left unchecked. Existing Wetlands management programmes in the southwest include public awareness and solid waste management. No clear legisla-

tion as regards the different uses that are injurious to the Wetlands exists and where there are; there is no monitoring of the Wetlands in order to enforce such laws and possibly prosecute offenders. Thus abuse of Wetlands is inevitable as there holistic management programmes are not in place. It is however noteworthy that Lagos state has taken the right step by inaugurating a Ministry that will be directly responsible for the

management of the wetlands. If other states could imbibe this and also be truly committed to the sustainable management programmes for the Wetlands then the role of Wetlands in livelihood support and ecosystem balancing will be maximally assessed.

Based on the foregoing, it can be safely concluded that the State Governments do not have holistic plans in place for the sustainable management of Wetlands in their domain.

It is therefore recommended that Policies geared towards sustainable management of Wetlands should be put in place and actively pursued by state Governments so that the Wetlands in their domain can continue to render all its benefits optimally.

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