

# PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF COMMUNITY – BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH: AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAN ON BEACH SEINES ON LAKE KAINJI

BY

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## Abstract

Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) understood as an approach emphasizes a community's capability, responsibility and accountability with regards to managing resources. Based on the recommendations for the Nigerian-German Kainji Lake Fisheries Promotion Project (KLFPP), the Niger and Kebbi States Fisheries Edicts were promulgated in 1997. These edicts, among other things, banned the use of beach seines. Given the conviction of KLFPP, that if communities whose livelihood is linked to the fishery, understand and identify with the problems and by consensus agree to the solutions of fisheries problems, they are more likely to adhere to any control measures, specifically the ban on beach seine. In 1999 a first agreement was reached between beach seiners, non – beach seiners and government authorities leading to an almost complete elimination of beach seine on the Lake. However, despite on going efforts of the Kainji Lake Fisheries Management and Conservation Unit in 2000 and possibly because of certain oversights during and after the first agreement, in May 2001 significant number of beach seiners was observed. This led to a re-assessment of our approach, which lately culminated into another round of negotiation. The paper shall present the latest results on this on-going process.

## Introduction

Community-based natural resource management (CBRM), as explained by Sajise (1996), is a process by which the people themselves are given the opportunity and or responsibility to manage their own resources, define their needs, goals and aspirations, and to make decisions that affect their well-being. He further states that 'CBRM as an approach emphasizes a community's capability, responsibility and a accountability with regards to managing resources. It is inherently evolutionary, participatory and locale specific and considers the technical, socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental factors impinging upon the community. CBRM is basically seen as community empowerment for resource productivity, sustainability and equity.

A central theme of CBRM, as stressed by Ferrer and Nozarwa (1997), is empowerment, specifically the control over and ability to manage productive resources in the interest of one's own family and community. It invokes a basic principle of control and accountability, which maintains that control over an action, should rest with the people who will bear its consequence.

CBRM can be looked at in various ways. It can be as a process, a strategy, an approach, a goal or a tool.

As a process, it is a means by which the people, are given the opportunity and or responsibility to manage their own resources, define their needs, goals and aspirations and make decisions affecting their well-being.

A strategy for achieving a people – cent red development, CBRM has a decision-making focus in which the sustainable use of natural resources in a given area lies with the people in the local communities.

It is an approach through which communities are given the opportunity and responsibility to management in a sustained way the community resources, define or identify the amount of resources and future needs, and their goals and aspirations, and make decisions affecting their common well-being as determined by technical, socio-culture, economic, political and environmental factors.

It is a tool, which facilitates the development of

multilevel resources management skills vital to the realization of potentials of the community.

CBRM stands for people empowerment for achieving, resources, management, access and control over resources, viable organizations and availability of suitable technology for resource management and utilization.

### **The Nigerian – German Kainji Lake Promotion Project (NGKLFPP)**

Kainji Lake, in the middle belt zone of Nigeria was created in 1968 by the damming of the river Niger. Although the lake's primary function is for hydroelectric generation, an important small-scale fishery developed using beach seines (which is now banned), gill nets, fishing traps, drift nets, long lines and cast nets (du Feu and Abiodun, 1999).

As one of the first man made lakes in West Africa the lake fishery initially attracted much research. Early yields estimate after impoundment reached 28,639 metric tones (mt) in 1970, which then fell to 4,500 mt, in 1980 (Ita, 1982). After this period, regular monitoring of the fishery stopped, due to lack of fund and logistics.

The reported declines of fishermen's catches prompted the Nigerian government to seek a technical assistance from Germany. This gave birth a 9-year technical co-operation project, the Nigerian – German Kainji Lake Fisheries Promotion Project (NGKLFPP) in 1993.

The Project purpose is that the fisheries and other aquatic resources of Kainji lake are managed on a sustainable basis. The results through which the purpose is to be achieved include the followings, amongst others:

1. a community – based fisheries management (CBFM) plan is put in place and partly implemented.
2. an effective extension delivery system is fully functional, and
3. monitoring and evaluation system for Kainji Lake fishery is put in place and operated sustainably by counterpart institutions.

The first 3 years of the project was devoted to conducting surveys which would show the trend of the fisheries and assisted in evolving a management plan for the Lake. These surveys included the frame, fishing gear, catch assessment, economic and social surveys. According to du Feu (1996), the trend indicated by these surveys was that the number of gill nets and long lines were declining whilst the drift net and especially the beach seine fisheries are rapidly expanding. Du Feu and Kasali (1996) further indicated that very small mesh sizes of the various fishing gears are in use. The mean mesh size for gill net was put at 2.8", drift nets, 1.8", beach seines 0.12" and cast nets 1.8".

In recognition of the above, and a thorough review of the then existing Niger and Sokoto state fisheries edicts and the Inland fisheries decree of 1992 by du Feu in 1995, it was recommended that a review of the edicts be embarked upon and should contain amongst others:

1. Details of all the fishing gears,
2. Ban on the use of beach seine of any mesh size,
3. Ban on the use of any net below 2.5" stretched mesh, (du Feu, 1996).

### **Review of the Fisheries Edicts**

Based on the recommendations of the NGKLFPP, the Niger and Kebbi state fisheries edicts were promulgated in 1997. The edicts among other things:

1. Banned the use of beach seines,
2. Introduced a new licencing fee for entrepreneurs and the assistants,
3. Lists the types of gears and the mesh sizes permitted for fishing.

### **Implementing the ban on Beach Seine**

An assessment of the level of destruction of the gears banned, singled out the beach seine as the first target for elimination on the Lake. According to du Feu, (1996), between September to December, the by-catch of beach seine can reach up to 60% of its total catch, thereby endangering the recruitment of fish species such as *Citharus citharus*, *Synodontis membranaceous*, *Alestes sp* and *Lates niloticus*.

Given the conviction of the project, that if people whose livelihood is linked to the fishery, understand and identify with the problems and by consensus, agree to the solutions to those problems, they are more likely to adhere to any control measures. A rigorous mobilization was embarked upon, to sensitize and engage the fisherfolks in the process of identifying strategies of combating the problem.

### **Community Mobilization Workshops with Fishermen Representatives (Sarkin Ruwas)**

Three workshops were held with Sarkin ruwas around the mid of 1997. June and July specifically. The approach of the workshops were participatory inferential learning, with the complement of drama sketches to reinforce discussions. The purpose of the workshops includes:

- Promoting better understanding in the working relationship between the fishermen and the project,
- Creating awareness of the fishing edict,
- identifying the implications of the edict on the Lake fisheries management, and
- Establishing ways by which the communities can be used to monitor fishing regulations.

The consensus reached at all the meetings, after considering the advantages and disadvantages of using

law enforcement agents or the local leaders within the fishing communities, was that using the local leaders to enforce compliance will be more acceptable and effective (Okomoda and Alamu, 1997).

### **Community Mobilization Workshops with Extension Agents**

The field extension workers involved in the monthly catch assessment surveys, all the field supervisors and other subject matter specialists were trained on community mobilization strategies. The workshops purpose includes:

- Understanding the purpose and aims of the Kainji Lake Promotion Project and how this relate to community participation,
- Understanding how communities react to new ideas and proposed changes,
- Exploring issues surrounding working with local communities, and
- Drawing up guidelines for working effectively with local communities.

The product of the workshop was a field note identifying guidelines that can assist extension workers to be able to organize effective village meetings where decisions can be taken, follow-ups organized. The various forms of resistance were identified and methods of handling each outlined (Okomoda and Asuwaju, 1997).

These workshops were geared towards persuading fisherfolks to identifying with the problems and being part of the solutions. The whole essence was to empower them towards assuming the responsibilities of managing their resources. This activity spanned over 12 months, before the implementation of the ban in January 1999. However, before the effective implementation of the ban, a negotiating meeting was organized in October the effective implementation of the ban, a negotiating meeting was organized in October 1998.

### **Beach Seiners and non-beach Seines' Meeting**

The meeting was held using the stakeholder interest analysis approach to negotiate a win-win resolution of the situation. Stakeholders invited to the meeting included:

1. Fish mongers,
2. Fish consumers,
3. Beach seiners,
4. Non-beach seiners,
5. Fisheries officials, and
6. Scientists.

### **The objectives of the meeting was to:**

- Come up with a workable method of halting the destructions associated with beach seining.
- Work out a strategy for the sustainable use of the various aquatic vegetation on the Lake to cater

- for all interest groups, and
- Find a way of protecting the breeding sites.

After the different interest groups have listed their values, threats were identified and observed to cut across. The identified threats translated generally into declining catches.

### **The threats also included:**

- i. Disturbance/destruction of breeding grounds,
- ii. The use of undersized gears,
- iii. Fish fencing,
- iv. Grass cutting,
- v. Destruction of burugu grass,
- vi. Beach seining,
- vii. Water hyacinth,
- viii. Non-prosecution of offenders,
- ix. High cost of gears, and
- x. Too many fishermen on the lake.

For each of these threats, goals were identified towards deciding on actions to curb the resulting effects. For beach seining, the followings were the decisions reached:

1. New entries are to be discouraged by fishermen,
2. Other fishing methods for cropping clupeids are to be looked into, and
3. The ban on beach seining is to be implemented within a five month period i.e. October to November 1998 – Compilation of list of beach seiners  
December 1998 – Distribute warning letters  
January 1999 - Begin prosecution  
February 1999 – All unyielding beach seiners must have been prosecuted, (Okomoda, 1998).

By January 1999, pleas coming from beach seiners touched on the Kainji Lake Fisheries Management and Conservation Unit. Concession was given to beach seiners in terms of compensation, they are to exchange their beach seine nets with double length of gill net of appropriate mesh size within a specified period of 2 weeks. At the end of the period, further concession was given again for exchange on 50% basis of gill net length to submitted beach seines within another two weeks. This action led to the surrender and burning of 306 seine nets, and the number of beach seiners going down from 690 to 120.

The year 2000, witnessed intensive implementation of the beach seine ban. The local leaders participated in further enlightenment campaign, while the local police and court staff were supported in patrols and prosecution of offenders. However, in a recent survey (12 – 15 May, 2001), effected simultaneously on the whole Lake Kainji, an alarming 234 beach seines were encountered, (KLFMCU, 2001).

In June 2001, a conflict management training workshop was organized by the project to equip staff with the skills needed in negotiating and or mediating a conflict situation such as its operates.

### **Second Negotiation Meeting with Stakeholders on Lake Kainji**

As a result of the outcome of the training workshop on conflict management, a meeting was held to reflect on what could be done to achieve an affective ban on beach seine. The resolution reached was a return to the negotiating table taking care to avoid all mistakes made at the initial negotiation.

At the negotiating meeting, a number of agreements were reached by all the stakeholders with a duly signed communiqué.

### **Problems Encountered in the Implementation**

The major problems encountered in the process of achieving effective implementation of the ban include the followings, amongst others:

Inability to offer acceptable alternative net to replace the beach seines,

The seemingly 'unjust' loss of a profitable method of fishing by operators. This urges them on to persevere and explore all means of ensuring the continuity of their practice,

Inability of the project to effectively monitor the Lake, towards the apprehension of offenders. The size of the lake as a limiting factor,

Non-identification with the long-term effect of the problem by some village heads / Sarkin ruwas, who still allow the operation of the net on their beaches,

The strong feeling of 'brotherliness' existing among fisherfolks had influenced the inability of other non-beach seiners to bring to book their beach seiners colleagues by reporting and standing to bear witness against them,

Collaboration of some law enforcement agents in aiding and abetting the flouting of the ban – for gratifications. It has even been reported that local police inform beach seiners of planned patrols in order for them to avoid arrest, and

The operation of other legal gears with under meshed sizes gives a picture of 'isolated' harassment in the perception of the beach seiners.

### **What Prospects exist, which way forward?**

The way forward lies in our rethinking of the approach taken thus far. A re-assessment of the degree to which we have been community-based? CBRM as an approach should emphasize a community's capacity, responsibility and accountability with regards to managing their resources.

Some of the obstacles encountered in the process of implementing the ban had already been enumerated by the fisherfolks' leader during the initial mobilization workshops (Okomoda and Alamu, 1997).

If we still intend to continue with our initial commitment of community-based fisheries management approach, then we have to:

Increase the fisherfolks level of participation in decision taking and implementation process,

They must be made more accountable, in terms of managing their resources – the Lake Kainji fisheries resources,

Re-assess our approach thus far towards a thorough analysis of the causes of our 'failures'.

The recent identification and training of the local mobilizers 'wakilis' (Okomoda, 2001), is a right step in the right direction, but it is only the starting point. They have to be empowered? They must become responsible and accountable to the entire fishing communities, not the unit nor the governments. The answer may lie in supporting them to evolve the capacity of administering the Lake resources? Conclusion and recommendation is better late than never, the use of 'force' through the law enforcement agencies is not yielding the desired result, and does not seem to be in position to yield desirable result in the future. Why?

\* The project/unit and the law enforcement agencies do not share the same value for lake Kainji.

\* The resource available cannot sustain the required effort needed to monitor the Lake even now, not talking about beyond German withdrawal in 2002

It is not within the realm of community – based resource management approach.

We may consider going back to the negotiating table. Concerted effort is required from both sides. The problems must be transformed from theirs to our collective responsibility. The key lies in ensuring that fishers come to understanding that they have to be involved in finding the solutions, in sustaining the fisheries and thereby assuring the livelihood of the future generation.

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## **A STUDY OF THE PARTICIPATING WOMEN IN LAKE ALAU'S FISHERY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article discusses the increasing participation of Women in Artisanal fishery. The concept of involvement of women in poverty alleviation, food security and social development activities should be given high priority by putting them on the research agenda as one of the means of bridging the gap in knowledge regarding their status and contribution in rural development in Nigeria.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

One of the greatest problems afflicting contemporary Nigeria is food. The issue of self-sufficiency in food seems to have eluded solution inspite of the government's effort. It stands to reason that the problem will continue to defy all solution as long as our agricultural and rural development policies and strategies are conceived and

executed in such a way that they marginalize peasant women who constitute a bulk of the agro-rural population. While the peasant women toil hard in food production, processing and marketing, they are at once the most neglected, most exploited and most under-rewarded stratum of humanity. Due to divergent cultures, while some peasant women are over worked some are under-worked in their contributions to the socio-economic