A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: BUILDING ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

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ABSTRACT

Complex social–ecological systems such as small-scale fisheries require the inclusion of human dimensions in fisheries management and planning for simultaneously preserving human health and habitat health. However, linkages between ecological, social, political and economic subsystems have been largely ignored in conventional fisheries management, in Nigeria in particular. Hence, the weak governance in the fisheries sub-sector in general is marred by intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral conflicts. The Nigerian fishery is predominantly small-scale in nature yet this sub-sector is contributing about 70 percent to the total national domestic fish production. Despite the significant social, economic and cultural impacts, the small-scale fisheries currently lacks enabling conditions and receives the least priority considerations in the developmental process. This paper presents a contextual analysis of historical developments and the current status of small-scale fisheries in Nigeria. In this paper, several analytical approaches were adopted. The research design used an inductive-qualitative approach, based on papers retained for relevance to development themes and cross-cutting issues in small-scale fisheries from an extensive literature search after a scanning and selection process using a four - point criteria. From this analysis, an assessment was made against the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (VG-SSF) in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and a framework conceptualized and discussed, based on collective action to improve the organization level and capacity building of fishers, data on capture fish production, integrating ecosystem–based management in addition to gender integration into fisheries policies and decision-making processes for improved fisheries performance and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Small-scale fisheries are a highly significant source of fish production contributing to two-thirds of global catches for direct human consumption (FAO, 2015). In developing countries, small-scale fisheries are estimated to employ roughly 37 million people, and directly affect the livelihoods of residents of marine, brackish and freshwater ecosystems resulting in poverty prevention and alleviation, as well as food security of approximately 357 million others (GIZ, 2013).

There is a general understanding that small-scale fisheries are failing to fulfill their potential as an engine of social and economic development. In many developing countries like Nigeria, the small-scale fisheries lack enabling conditions and receive the least priority in terms of consideration in developmental processes. Weak governance is a key underlying cause responsible for overfishing and other problems that are characterized by underlying factors especially corruption, poor

stakeholder participation, poor enforcement of laws, weak institutional capacity, overcapacity of fishing fleets, and illegal fishing (Purcell and Pomery, 2015).

A glimpse into the fisheries sector is incomplete without due reference to the rich and abundant aquatic ecosystems and fishery resources. Nigeria is blessed with 853 km coastline with total shelf area of 43,514 km^2 and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) area of 216,325 km^2 in the Gulf of Guinea (Sea Around Us, 2016). The country is also endowed with an estimated 12 904km^2 extensive brackishwaters resources comprising of creeks, lagoons, estuaries and mangroves and an equally large number of freshwater resources comprising of numerous rivers such as Niger and Benue with several tributaries, natural lakes (e.g. Lake Chad), man-made lakes (e.g. Lake Kainji), reservoirs and flood plains totaling 12.5 million hectares.
The small- scale fisheries are heterogeneous, multi-species and multi-gear in character. Major fishing and fishing – related activities are carried out in fishing settlements located in the Atlantic coastal area of the southern part of the country. Freshwater, brackishwater and inshore pelagic fish stocks are exclusively exploited by the SSF while inshore demersal fish stocks are co-exploited with the industrial fisheries (Akintola and Fakoya, 2017). SSF are most significant in terms of social, economic and cultural contexts, providing livelihoods to approximately 6.5 million fisher folk (Fish for all Summit, 2005) and has the highest impact in terms of volume and value of its products and second highest capital investment (FAO, 2007). The sector accounts for over 70 per cent of total domestic fish production and is an accessible source of animal protein in coastal and inland fishing communities.

Governance of small-scale fisheries in Nigeria involves both formal (government) and informal (traditional) institutions. Under present arrangements, intra-sectoral focus of fisheries excludes external threats and opportunities which are not addressed in fisheries policies and management. Conflicts between small-scale fisheries and industrial fisheries, and other users of coastal and freshwater environments are widespread, and typically predispose small-scale fishers at a serious disadvantage. Complex and dynamic socio-economic conditions have continually affected and shaped past and present status of this very important subsector in Nigeria. Currently, it remains highly informal, under-appreciated and characterized by a low-level of organization with very limited participation in fisheries governance.

An overarching objective of this paper is to elucidate challenges to good governance**;** facilitate gap analysis when assessed against objectives in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (VG-SSF) in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and finally presents a framework based on the integration of human dimensions in fisheries management plans to help overcome socio-economic, ecological and institutional barriers to achieve sustainability in the small-scale fisheries of Nigeria.

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METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on an in-depth evaluation of existing evidence related to historical development, present status and challenges in the governance of the small-scale fisheries in Nigeria. The research method is entirely qualitatively driven and the design descriptive based on inductive approaches. Through the process of systematic analyzing and summarizing secondary data, the aim of the integrative literature review is to summarize and critique the state of the science about the research topic and assess how the VG-SSF can help in repositioning the small-scale fisheries. Extensive literature search for peer-reviewed journal articles, books and book chapters, publications of government and international institutions, technical reports, working papers, and other gray

literature sources was undertaken from the internet using the Boolean search string for terms with relevance to the small-scale fisheries in Nigeria, at regional and international levels that relate to its characteristics, resources potential and production; gender; key livelihood groups and value-chains; its contribution to household and national economy; Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication**;** evolution, history and development; governance of tenure and sustainable management; challenges, issues or problems; social development, gender equity and equality, postharvest and inter-sectoral conflicts at local, regional and international levels, respectively. The compiled documents were assessed for scientific quality by adopting scanning and selection approach following Bene et al., (2016) based on four inclusion/exclusion criteria: language, year of publication, academic quality, geographic areas, and topical relevance after which selected papers were retained. The analytical process was used to make an assessment against the principles in the VG-SSF as to whether they can possibly help in getting action on the small-scale fisheries in Nigeria**.**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tenure and Access rights in the Small-Scale Fisheries

Security of tenure to land and water is influenced by customary tenure practices, prevailing land – use administration, statutory laws, forces of demographic changes, climate and geography. Common or communal property regimes are the most prevalent forms of ownership and user rights to fishing grounds and adjacent land while family or individual ownership (Kuta, 2010; Ajai, 2012; Madakan et al., 2015) and wealth distribution (Bene et al., 2000) were less important. Use or access rights are acquired through inheritance, rentals, tenancy and less frequently sales (Olomola, 1998; Baka et al., 2014). Access to fishing grounds are also prescribed according to gear type such that fishing grounds are co-owned by those operating similar fish gear technologies (Akintola et al., 2007).

Extant Sea Fisheries Decree (1992) confers formal fishing rights to the small-scale fishers operating within the first 5 nautical miles (7898.78 km^2) of the coastal waters. However this preferential access is not guaranteed because small-scale fishers complain of industrial trawlers' incursion in the non-trawling zone causing destruction to the latter's nets, canoes, threats to their own existence and higher juvenile fish mortalities (Ogbonna, 2001; Falaye , 2008; Akintola et al., 2017).
The extant Land Use Act of 1978 delegates authority over land allocation to State and Local Governments to ensure accessible and secured tenure to land by all. Paradoxically, the same Land Use Act vests the subsurface mineral rights as belonging to the State. In the oil-producing Niger Delta, customary tenure rights of communities and people to secure land and water are displaced for industrial development which has not constrained the environmental destruction and pollution from oil extraction operations (USAID 2010). Similarly, floating shanty slums and waterfront settlements are prone to demolition and classic examples of forced evictions in Lagos include erstwhile Maroko slum community in 1990 and more recent evictions of Otodogbame, Itedo, IIubirin and Ebute Ikate occurred between 2016 and 2017. Evictions have happened without adequate compensation or alternative housing to mitigate the impact of eviction on livelihoods of the residents. These settlements hold informal tenure rights to land and the fishery resources they depend on for livelihoods, thus lacking formal recognition and official protection by State Authorities. Hence, Low elevation and topography of the entire Nigerian coastline makes it highly vulnerable to flooding, especially at high tides and during the rainy season (Adeoti et al., 2010; Adelekan, 2010) and coastal erosion. For instance, the original site of Awoye, once a prosperous shrimping village

is now deep inside the Atlantic Ocean at a distance of 3km from the present shoreline (Fabiyi and Yesuf, 2013). Similarly, inland communities in the vicinity of river banks are also susceptible to being sacked by seasonal flooding during the heavy rains coupled with release of water from hydroelectric dams. In the Upper River Benue, seasonal flooding is a contributing factor to the poor condition of houses except when they are situated on high elevated lands (Baka et al., 2014.) In the northern arid region, Lake Chad, once considered to be one of Africa's largest freshwater lakes and major inland fisheries has shrunk to nearly 90 per cent of its size in 1960 from 45000 km^2 while river-flows in are reducing. At 25 000 km^2 open water area in the 1960s, Lake Chad was the world's sixth largest inland water body. But of recent, the Lake today is a shriveled, fragmented collection of two distinct water bodies, the northern and southern pools (Okpara et al., 2016). Recession of the lake and low fish catch has heightened tension and conflicts over territory between fishermen and fishermen, farmers and fishermen, farmers and farmers, cattle herders and farmers of different countries. The shrinkage is expected to worsen in the coming years and what this portends is gradual disappearance of the lake, its fisheries resources, fisheries –dependent communities and livelihoods which will affect national and regional food security.

Governance of Small-Scale Fisheries: Customary and Traditional Norms in Fisheries Management

Legislations relating to inland and marine small-scale fisheries are within the purview of the State and Federal Governments, respectively but governance in particular for the inland fisheries is through customary and traditional norms (Akintola et al., 2017). Traditional norms and taboos for regulating fishing practices are still very prominent. Traditional authority represented by the Chief of the communities play important role in ensuring compliance with fishery resource management practices (Oruounye, 2014) and conflicts are resolved around the traditional institutions of family or lineage and chieftaincy systems as illustrated in the case of Badagry Creek (Akintola and Fakoya, 2016) and Niger (Kuta, 2010) but may also involve spirituality as illustrated in Njoboliyo community along the Upper River Benue, Nigeria (Sarch et al., 1997). In the marine small-scale fisheries, property regime is open-access and traditional norms are virtually absent. From the eighties, over-exploitation of near-shore fishery resources drove many fishermen to cover longer distances in search of more productive fishing grounds. It became increasingly difficult for communities to control access to fisheries resources and also to limit fleet size. Consequently, in absence of strong cultural factors to promote resources management, economic benefits are the single most important factor that determined entry and exit into the fishery (Fregene, 2007).

Governance of Small-Scale Fisheries: Conventional Fisheries Management

Lack of policy coherence, institutional coordination, and collaboration is the major cause of power struggles between State government and the Federal government, among ministries and agencies at State and Federal levels, respectively over governance and ownership rights of fisheries and waterways. Added to this is the challenge of bureaucracy, the perspectives, vision, and interests of which may work against the small-scale fisheries (Akintola et al., 2017).

Nigeria lacks a fisheries co- management or decentralization policy (Ovie and Raji , 2006; Lewins et al., 2014). The nearest to this was the donor-funded project - Kainji Lake Fisheries Management and Conservation Unit (KLFMCU). Another close resemblance are the mixed systems of fisheries governance at village levels in major fishing communities of Kainji/Jebba and Chad basins, the confluence of the Niger/Benue, and Nguru–Gashua Wetlands, North – East Nigeria. The Village Heads or *Sarkin Ruwas* (Head Fishermen) act as link persons between the rural community and village level formal institutions such as the local representative of the Federal Department of Fisherie (SFLP, 2002).

The hierarchical approach presently excludes consultation with and participation of non- state stakeholders in decision-making. Hence, the failure and weaknesses of many fisheries policies in Nigeria stems from the exclusion of the most vulnerable group- the fishers and the fishing communities. Fishing rights issues for the inland fisheries are not addressed in the Inland Fisheries Decree, edicts and regulations of individual states of the Federation (Ovie and Raji, 2006). There is no counterpart ecosystem -based management plan for the small-scale fisheries as it exists for the Industrial Shrimp Fishery even though the artisanal fisheries is mentioned as utilizing near shore, estuaries and lagoons which are breeding and nursery areas of target shrimp species with consequences of affecting recruitment into the fisheries. Extant decrees regulating inland and sea fishing are poorly enforced due to poor logistics, infrastructure and human resources. In addition, they are out-dated with the realities of the present time. Application and enforcement of closed area/ season are regulations in the Inland Fisheries Decree and in edicts of some States is challenged by paucity of information. Information is also lacking on gear types and mesh size regulations within different habitats of the brackish waters and the non-trawling zone (Nwosu et al., 2011; Fakoya, 2015). Numerous fishing settlements along the coastline and littoral zones of inland waters are poorly accessible and this poses a challenge to effective fisheries data-collection and monitoring by the State Authorities (Nwosu et al., 2011). Fisheries Departments are grossly under-staffed, and inherent bureaucratic problems in government ministries, the fisheries sector and the politics of the country often create doubt on the accuracy and authenticity of data collated with consequences of catches being either unreported or exaggerated (Etim et al., 2015). Hitherto, the Nigerian artisanal fishery was reported to lack a licensing and registration scheme (Abohweyere, 2011). However, amidst concern of excess fleet capacity in many small-scale fisheries across the country the Federal Government is actively pursuing registration and licensing of artisanal fishing crafts through the States to effectively control the amount of effort and capacity.

Social Development, Gender Equality and Equity, Postharvest and Trade.

Poverty and social conditions in small-scale fishing communities: The sub-Saharan African region is the poorest in the world where just under half of the population lives in extreme poverty. In fact, the region is outperformed by all the other regions in the world in both economic and human indicators (Mosepele and Kolawole, 2017). Before Nigeria's independence in 1960, major landmarks in upgrading the rural fishermen and improving their living conditions to increase fish production fisheries sector were achieved with projects and programmes launched during the Third and Fourth National Development (1975-80 and 1981- 85) Plans. Projects specific to the fisheries sector including the National Accelerated Fish Production Project, the Inshore Fishing Project, establishment of ice and fish cold storage plants, fishing terminal facilities and the Artisanal and Fisheries Development Project were technically supported by the UNDP/FAO (Gnanadoss and Aderounmu, 1982). Deliverables of these programs/ projects were to provide fishing infrastructure, subsidized fishing inputs and mechanization and training to fisherfolks and fishing communities. However, despite these programs and active involvement of the World Bank in the Agricultural Development Programmes ADPs through development agencies, the small-scale fishing sector has continued to be deficient in fish production and the fishing communities in Nigeria are generally still far from development. Housing in most of the fishing communities is poor and many lack access to basic social infrastructure (Goman, 2006, Baka et al., 2014). A major concern is the difficult terrain and lack of good roads which alienate many fishing communities from capacity building and identification needs because

Education and Vocational Trainings: Fishing communities are characterized by low educational standards because they have poor access to formal education, basic infrastructures, supplies and

qualified teachers. Typically, there is access to primary schools, but secondary schools are far less available (Macro International Inc, 2007). fishers' children do not have the best opportunities that allow them to compete for placements in secondary school (Akintola and Fakoya, 2017). Access to decent employment opportunities are dependent on the availability of vocational training. Vocational centres for artisans and fishers are completely absent or dysfunctional in many communities (Alhaji et la., 2015; Akintola et al., 2017) while access to skill acquisitions in other occupations which improve opportunities for livelihood diversification to cushion effects of declining income from fisheries are mentioned in few studies (Akintola et al., 2017). Dependency on child labor is more important in fishing communities where the economic role of fishing is more central to daily economic life. In the coastal areas of Badagry, incidences of school age children being out of school are not common place across the fishing community though fishers do take wards on fishing expeditions early in life as a form of training. They do not consider this as child abuse (Akintola et al., 2017). However, fishing activities present children with possible harm from factors such as undue exertion, long hours, use of sharp tools, or work in the water, where disease or drowning is possible. Though there is no data available on number of children working in the fishing industry, a study by Fakayode et al., (2016) estimated children under 17 years as consisting of 55% of the fisheries labour force on the Lagos Lagoon. In the communities many children began working as early as 5 years, sustain injuries, drop out or are unable to attend school, work long hours processing fish and are at risk of drowning and contacting waterborne diseases (Macro International Inc., 2007).

Healthcare: Primary health centers in fishing communities in Nigeria are challenged by inadequate funding of facilities and payment to health care providers (Akintola and Fakoya 2017) while in the worst scenarios, some commonly lack drugs, qualified health personnel and medical equipment needed. Though, serious health issues are referred to secondary health facilities often located in fishing towns which are miles away, nonetheless lives have been lost due to time wasted in consulting alternative solutions (Kuta 2010; Alhaji et al., 2015).

Credit and Insurance: Viable schemes for fishers with regard to savings, credit and insurance are conspicuously lacking in most African fishing communities. Small-scale fisheries are often considered too risky hence most banks do not include them in their credit loan scheme and only a few financial institutions provide some credit without collateral for "small" loans (Akanni 2008). Fishers rarely avail for themselves pockets of agricultural finance schemes offered by other financial institutions such as the National Agricultural Bank, previously known as the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank [NACRDB] (Akintola et al., 2017). Modern cooperatives were introduced to the fishery sector in the 1970s and spread during the implementation of NAFPP. These replaced traditional savings and credit groups, variously known as *"esusu," "osusu," "adashi,"* "club," organizations whose primary objective is to provide some financial stability to their members and to help them during lean period (Oladoja and Adeokun, 2009; Udong, 2010; Ataguba and Olowosegun, 2013; Oparinde and Ojo, 2014). Most cooperatives are activity- specific and were purposefully created to facilitate distribution of all State-sponsored credit and technical assistance (mostly, subsidized outboard engines and fishing nets) to fishers. However, the roles of these cooperatives to create wealth through credit have not been fully utilized.

Migrant rights: Development of the SSF, particularly the marine sector has been significantly influenced by the presence of migrant fishermen (Ijff, 1991). There are two types of migrants fishers; non-indigenous and non- national migrant groups. Non- national migrants are mostly from neighbouring coastal countries in West Africa. In many communities, cordial relationships have been strengthened through intermarriage between migrants and indigenous fishers and .conflict resolution follows the pattern practiced by the indigenous fishers (Akintola et al., 2017). The

Aganrins whose grand parents emigrated from Ghana successfully integrated into communities where they have permanently settled for generations (Fregene, 2007). Formal agreements exists between migrants employed as hired labour and their Nigerian employers in which the embassy of a migrant's country is involved as witness and also acts as the channel of payment and settlement owed to the immigrant fishers (Akintola et al., 2017).

Gender equality and equity, Postharvest and Trade: According to FAO (2014), roughly about 27.3 percent of all people engaged in the fisheries sector in Africa are females. Women fisherfolks in Nigeria are primary, secondary, and tertiary users of the fishery resources. However with few exceptions, they dominate post-harvest activities as fish processors, fish mammies and fish marketers while social – cultural constraints excludes women from active participation. Compared to men, most women have poorer access to productive resources (Nlerum and Bagshaw, 2015). Market infrastructures are poorly developed, lacking storage, processing facilities and many social amenities such as power supply, generator, borehole and sanitary facilities (Ayo-Olalusi et al., 2010).Women's direct use of fisheries resources and their active participation in decision-making processes in fisheries governance, and in fisheries organisations are limited by the absence of a sense of recognition of their efforts as a professional activity (Lentisco and Lee 2014) or because they are engaged in gleaning (Olaoye et al., 2012) and peripheral harvesting for subsistence. Though they can assume leadership position within their communities (Udong et al. 2010) but are not mentioned in fisheries governance. However some women have transcended the gender norms and are active fishers (Fakoya and Oloruntoba, 2002; Olawepo, 2008; Holzlohner and Francis, 2014). The wealthy among the women have investments in canoes, outboard engines and new types of nets, and hire and manage male crew to fish for them in high sea (Odulate et al., 2011).
Aquaculture is one of the priority value chains targeted for development and specific plans of action within government documentation for addressing gender disparities in the fisheries sector are tailored towards empowerment of women in aquaculture sector (FMARD, 2014; FMARD, 2016). Presently extension information directed at women is provided by Women-In-Agriculture (WIA) programmes in the department of Extension Services of the State Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) with a gender focus (Odurukwe, 2006). However, challenges with marketing strategies, storage of wet fish, cost, expertise and technicalities of improved smoker, financial management and credit acquisition (Jaji, 2013) persist. Many improved technologies and their variants are not bottom-up driven and situated in relation to the socio-economic status and socio-cultural practices of the small-scale mongers (Odediran and Ojebiyi, 2017; Akintola and Fakoya, 2017).

Policy Gaps and Directions

Salient normative and overlapping goals governing small-scale fisheries influence prescriptions in many international policy instruments affecting small-scale fisheries. Strategies to implement these goals are embodied in the VG-SSF and a supporting document which addresses gender inequity. The main findings and discussions of this review are organized around development themes and cross-cutting issues used in the assessment against the VG-SSF. The most significant of the findings are that : (i) Nigeria is yet to adopt the VG-SSF in its policies and/or strategic development plans; (ii) implementation hurdles especially inherent in bureaucracy, legislation, and statutory fisheries governance systems will have to scaled and (iii). Opportunities to contextualize or adapt the VG-SSF to local – specific conditions exist.

Nigeria has ratified key international conventions and instruments including climate change, child labor, decent work, gender equity and quality, social protection among others which should impact the fisheries sector. Unfortunately, very few laws back the policies that have either explicit or

implicit implications for climate change adaptation within the environmental context and much more for the small-scale capture fisheries sector. Early warning systems and hazard risk assessment are not very prevalent and is the main reason why many poor communities are afflicted by incidences of flooding and sea surges. There is poor integration of low- income communities into disaster risk assessments except for local adaptation strategies. The coastal areas lack adequate infrastructure to withstand the natural threats dictated by geography and climate. Oil exploration and production activities have destroyed many stands of mangroves forests which otherwise are stabilizing systems by acting as natural barriers to storm surges and wind breakers. The Advisory Committee on Agricultural Resilience in Nigeria (ACARN) framework describes a new multi-disciplinary effort to develop an agricultural resilience national program in Nigeria to support the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) but is yet to develop capture fisheries – specific policy options and strategies. Incorporation of conventions prohibiting child labour into national legislation often does not explicitly take into account fisheries and aquaculture in terms of regulation, implementation and enforcement. Thus, child labour remains prevalent especially among informal, small-scale informal fisheries and aquaculture enterprises (FAO, 2013) despite concerted efforts at Federal and State levels, respectively to address child labour generally. The Universal Basic Education policy guarantees every Nigerian Child the right to acquire free and compulsory education for nine years. In furtherance of achieving this policy, a number of other related policies have been conceptualized to integrate nomadic/ migrant fishers' children into mainstream formal education system. The Migrant Fishermen Education policy of 1990 complemented by policies on boarding, feeding and mobile education, radio education and distance learning were enacted to enhance attendance rate of children and provide functional literacy education for adult nomads who have never had the advantages of formal education (Akpan, 2015). Reference to gender equality and equity are embedded in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Green Alternative – 2016-2020 Agricultural Promotion Policy and are more explicit in the National Gender Policy, 2006 and its Strategic Implementation Framework, 2008; and of recent a gender policy in agriculture was initiated in 2016. However, despite the array of instruments promoting gender policies, effective gender mainstreaming into fisheries governance structure has been stalled by limited gender - related knowledge and skills as well as a general mindset where gender is regarded as women business despite the existence of gender desk officers at Ministries of Women Affairs as well as Agriculture and Rural Development at national and state levels, respectively (FMARD, 2016).

Recommendations/ Strategies for Improvement

1. Short term and long term small-scale capture fisheries policy options and strategies.
2. Enhance institutional capacity and hazard risk assessment at community levels through participatory approach.
3. Strengthen adaptive capacities of fishing communities prone to natural disasters.
4. Upgrade slums/ waterfront communities to improve living conditions and general community well-being.
5. Adopt community - based approaches to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) for participatory assessment of fish stocks/resources; self-policing and enforcement of regulations.
6. National policies to decentralize fisheries management and adopt Community-based Fisheries Management within the context of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF).

7. Users rights based on spatial management scheme.

8. Spatial planning to reduce inter-sectoral conflicts.

9. Reduce intra-sectoral conflicts by incentivizing industrial fishing vessels to fish offshore.

10. Divert funds from subsidy into a proposed Capital Construction Fund.

11. Intensify implementation of Migrant Fishermen Education(1990) and other related policies to abolish child labour, enhance attendance rate of children, provide functional literacy education for adults and provide decent work.

12. Transformative Gender Approaches.

13. Sensitize women cooperatives on micro-credit schemes, special bank loan arrangement,

    promote mass literacy and adult education, vocational training

CONCLUSIONS

Driven by increased recognition of small-scale fisheries in supporting diverse livelihoods, providing an affordable source of high quality protein and other economic benefits, emphasis is shifting to adoption of a holistic approach which is central to the adoption and implementation of the VG-SSF. This approach will have the capacity to reduce current exploitation rate, ameliorate other human-induced impacts to allow fish stocks to replenish thus clearing the path to sustainable and economically – viable small-scale fisheries. Essentially, the approach is conceptualized on adoption of human – based rights to improve livelihoods, alleviate poverty, ensure equitable welfare and social justice for fishing communities within the Nigerian entity; strengthening collective action to improve organization level and capacity building of fishers, data capture of fish production systems, integrating ecosystem – based management and gender integration in fisheries policies and decision-making processes to improve fisheries performance.

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