

**BENEFIT SHARING, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT**

Case of three peasant association namely Arogie Adama, Solokie and Kechema Seboko of Adama district, Nazrthe Zone, Oromia region, Ethiopia.

Abstract

The areas under this study were closed from human and livestock interference so that the natural resources can regenerate adequately findings in each selected peasant association are

1. Aroge Adama PA: In this peasant association members did not receive any benefit. Matured Eucalyptus tree, which could have been used by the community members were kept for nearly a decade until it was eventually looted by ex-solders of the military government. Members weren't willing to protect it.
2. Soloke PA: Member received some benefits. Eucalyptus trees were used to construct Cooperative stores. Therefore, they partially protected the natural resources within the protected area.
3. Kechemo Seboka PA: Every member received immediate benefit. Hence, they watched it vigilantly and unanimously protected the natural resources.

In general peasants who received benefits by protecting the natural resources have actively protected the area. Other PAs, who received some benefits, protected the area partially. And those who do not receive benefit were reluctant to defend the protected area.

Lessons learned: - In natural resources management, members active participation can be realized through benefit sharing mechanism. Such mechanism would highly

contribute in combating desertification. This lesson could be replicated in developing countries.

When the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Party took power by overthrowing the military government, most of the natural resources were destroyed by the people. The sociologist was eager to know why the peasants were actively engaged in destroying their own natural resources. Therefore, three peasant associations were randomly selected for the study.

1. **Arogie ADAMA** for total destruction of the natural resources that were protected for nearly a decade.
2. **Solokie** peasant association for the partial protection of the natural resources, and
3. **Kechema Seboko** association for the full protection of the protected areas.

In order to address this problem, standard questionnaires were designed for three target groups

- 1) The first questionnaire was addressed to 10 – 15% of the Household heads randomly selected in the respective three peasant associations. This task was carried out by enumerators, who were recruited for a short time to undertake Socio – economic surveys required for the attitudinal studies.
- 2) The second questionnaire was directed to key informants and executive committee members of the three selected peasant association.
- 3) The third focused on general questions posed to development agents of the Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection assigned to ADAMA District.

The findings were the following:-

- 1) **AROGIE ADAMA** – This peasant association was selected for an area that was fully destroyed when the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Party took power. In the era of the late Emperor Haile Selassie, the land was owned by land lords. The forest resources were protected. When the military government took power, it was declared that all land was owned by the state. Hence there was no body to protect the forestry resources. In 1977 in order to minimize this problem coupled with the prevailing drought the military government in collaboration with the world food program initiated various soil conservation activities. One of the conservation practice was area closure, where the area was closed from the interference of the live stock and human beings.

Above all, the fact that the peasant association members are of different ethnic composition they were unable to decide in taking actions. Thus they kept matured and easily harvestable eucalyptus trees up to ten years. This in turn has helped city dwellers of Nazareth particularly soldiers of the military government to loot the trees and sell them to meet this economic needs. In short development agents of the ministry of agriculture and natural resource conservation should not have rushed for intensive plantation of trees and construction of various soil conservation technique for the sake of meeting their quotas, but they should in collaboration with the executive members of the peasant association realize the economic return of what has been planted on protected areas (i.e like harvesting eucalyptus for various uses depending on ages). These resources could have been utilized earlier than keeping it for ten years.

According to the respondents in this peasant association, the different ethnic groups living did not get benefit from the protected area. Therefore, they destroyed all the forestry resources.

- 2) **SOLOKIE** - Peasant association partially protected since the sales of eucalaptus in 1989 has helped the members to buy 120 (tin as roofs) for their offices and stores. Though members didn't get benefit individual, the community in general has benefited hence they formed a committee and partially protected it; though it was looted for two weeks.
- 3) **KECHEMA SEBOKO** – every member of the community got benefit. Therefore, they totally protected the area from looters.

The respondent recommendations are:

- ◇ Educating peasant on the PROS and CONS of development programs. Awareness must come first. They should not start food for work program before they give lessons on the benefit of conservation. The development agent should change the attitude of peasant instead of rushing in implementing the various soil conservation techniques. There must be closer cooperation (contact) between peasants and development agents based on mutual respect and understanding.
- ◇ Food for work can only be functional if the people are asked to work from 6 – 9AM, every day so that they can get time to work on their own plot. Wheat and oil should be given to them when ever they participate in soil conservation activities on their own plot, rather than working as migratory workers.
- ◇ People should not only participate at the plantation period but payments for close follow-ups (i.e like checking for the survival of planted seedling)
- ◇ Land ownership right has to be declared.

- ◇ Development program of their type were planned and implemented by the government (Top – down approach) Hence government properties are liable to the destroyed.
- ◇ The protection of natural resources by government alone can not be achieved. The responsibility to select, conserve and protect the area must be given to members of the peasant associations.
- ◇ Tree seedling raised and distributed must be in the interest of the people.
- ◇ Women must be encouraged to actively participate and take the leadership role.
- ◇ Instead of top - down approach, they prefer the program to be initiated at a grass root level.

Lessons Learned

The case study demonstrates the fact that in Natural Resource management, public participation must be supplemented by benefit sharing.