
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS TOOLS TO MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE HAPPEN

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SUMMARY

This paper discusses the role of good governance and community participation as tools to make environmental enforcement happen. Agenda 21 and other International conventions and agreements on environment emphasize the need for community participation in implementation of their objectives. To effect this approach, governments and other development agencies have developed tools to enhance environmental compliance and compliance.

In Kenya, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach has been used to enforce environmental management initiatives and to mobilize community action in the implementation of objectives of various environmental conventions. Participatory Rural Appraisal works because information is made available and people participate in making decisions on issues they understand and that are in their interest.

This paper is divided into four sections. Chapter 1 introduces the concept of good governance and community participation in the context of environmental compliance and enforcement. Chapter 2 introduces the concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with research and a Participatory Rural Appraisal case study the author of this paper carried out in Nzoeni Division in Kenya and the lessons learned. The case study and many others in Kenya show that good governance and community participation is an effective tool for environmental enforcement and compliance.

1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process emphasized that the world is in a state of unsustainability due to destruction of the environment. The social and economic consequences of environmental degradation and depletion of biodiversity and other natural resources were and are still manifested in many parts of the world. Agenda 21, a programming tool that could set the planet on a new course towards global sustainable development recommended "the need for integrating environment protection into national development policies and practices". This is to insure that sustainable livelihoods are built on initiatives that provide the means of survival and prosperity without jeopardizing the natural resource base.

The Governments are the main actors in implementing agenda 21. Agenda 21 and all other sustainable development conventions emphasize the need for public participation in decision making and implementation of actions affecting peoples environment and livelihoods. Hence participation from grassroots to the national level remains a fundamental building block for effective environment and natural resources management.

Past environment conservation initiatives have failed due to communication gaps between those who design and manage project interventions and the intended beneficiaries. Lack of involvement in projects affecting their environment and natural resources make communities see conservation as a threat to their traditional lives. Hence community is critical to the effective environmental conservation.

Today many development agents have realized that economic development cannot be realized without conservation of the environment. They also realize that local communities have rights to their natural resources; have a lot of indigenous knowledge on conservation of the environment and have the power to implement and sustain natural resources management activities over a long time.

This paper argues that community participation is a necessary tool in making environmental enforcement and compliance happen. On the same lines, community participation cannot be realized without good governance. Compliance and good governance is associated with among others, assuring respect for human rights, i.e., all humans have a right to clean environment and natural resources including water air, and biodiversity. Community have the right to take decisions on matters affecting their environment and natural resources. Good governance encourage participation in resource management resulting to ownership.

The UNCED process emphasized need for governments to put in place institutions for natural resources management. Many governments have as a result been reviewing their institutions including environmental law and institutions and rearranging and strengthening institutions that deal with environmental management. Many Governments have also improved-access to environmental information, skills, technology and resources for peoples advancement.

For implementation of the Agenda 21, governments have developed several tools to enhance compliance and enforcement of environmental conservation. Some of the tools include Environmental Impact Assessment Tools and Participatory Rural Appraisal.

2 PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA) IN ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

As the cliché goes, “think globally act locally”. This also goes for that little action on the ground to conserve the environment, which also counts globally. Participatory Rural Appraisal is rooted in the conviction that participation and particularly from the grassroots is an essential element of sustainable development.

For many years in Kenya, as in other countries, environmental conservation initiatives have been encouraged. Many of these efforts have failed because the intended beneficiaries do not own the conservation programs which are usually externally planned and imposed on them. This mostly lead to unsustainability of most conservation initiatives. As a result, the environment continues to deteriorate as manifested by among others soil loss, deforestation, destruction of biodiversity and multiple environmental problems in our urban environment.

As the Brutland commission report on the state of the environment in Africa “our common future” reports - “Project failures are especially dramatic in areas of environmental management including soil, water and trees, where adverse impacts have weakened Africa’s long-term ability to feed and clothe itself”. The Brutland report calls for new perspectives and ways to halt environmental decline and introduce sustainable rural development.

Participatory Rural Appraisal, a community based environment management and development tool, is being used in many parts of the world. The approach is to get the community together, sensitize them to gather environmental data, and develop an action plan to be implemented and monitored at community level.

Participatory Rural Appraisal was developed in the late 1980's by officers from the National Environment Secretariat in Kenya and Clark University in United States. The method has since been used as a tool for development in many parts of Kenya as well as other developing countries. Participatory Rural Appraisal helps local communities mobilize their human and natural resources to define problems, consider previous successes, evaluate local institutional capacities, prioritize opportunities and prepare a systematic and site specific plan of action - a community environment and resource management plan (CERMP) by communities for implementation and conservation of environment and enhancement of economy.

Participatory Rural Appraisal is an excellent tool to bring together development needs defined by community groups on one hand and on the other hand resources and technical skills of government donor agencies and non-governmental organizations. In so doing, it integrates traditional skills and external technical knowledge in the development process. Rather than importing and imposing foreign technologies, Participatory Rural Appraisal utilizes and enhances locally conceived sustainable approaches.

The methodology assumes that:

- a. Rural economic development cannot be realized without environment conservation;
- b. Community participation is a fundamental ingredient in project and implementation and it enlists sustainability of projects as the community internalizes development ideas as their own and, supports the initiatives.
- c. Communities have a good working knowledge of their environment and development needs, but do not necessarily have the means to systemize this information to mobilize commitment to action plan.
- d. Traditional resources management and land use practices are incorporated into contemporary environment and policy decision.
- e. Environment is a common good it and gives a chance to communities to reflect on the real value of environmental resources and services.

3 INTRODUCTION TO A CASE STUDY ON PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA) DONE BY NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT SECRETARIAT (NES) IN NZOENI SUB-LOCATION IN KENYA

The Participatory Rural Appraisal site in Nzoeni sub-location in Machakos District is about eight kilometers from Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. The terrain is hilly, the climate dry and has an average rainfall in normal years of about 400 - 600mm.

The residents of Nzoeni are Akambas, an agro-pastoralists tribe who originated from Northern Tanzania and entered Kenya through the South East boarder at about 17th century. They settled at the North Eastern and Coastal districts of Kenya.

The National Environmental Secretariat Team (the Team) went to Nzoeni for participatory environment assessment on June 20th 1998. This was after El Nino rains that had spelled havoc in the whole of Kenya as in other countries in the region. These circumstances gave a false impression of Nzoeni as an environment with plenty of flowing water in streams and in marshes and plenty of green grass, shrubs and bushes.

Nzoeni environmental problem derive from the community way of life as follows:

- a. Traditionally the people of Nzoeni like the other Kambas, lived on hill tops for security reasons and especially from the Maasai who used to attack them and steal their livestock. Today many people are settled on very hilly areas;
- b. Increasing land pressures due to overpopulation and more people moving into the area in search of land;
- c. Extension of agriculture and the subsequent constriction of grazing lands are forces that led to accelerated natural resource degradation including loss of ground cover, biodiversity, soil erosion and reduced water availability (the volume of water in natural wells and streams was smaller than it was many years ago even after El Nino rains). By the time National Environmental Secretariat Team visited the area, infrastructure such as roads and bridges had been destroyed. This, coupled with environmental problems, had a lot of negative impacts on the economic, and social welfare of the people and had led to extensive shortage of agricultural production and poverty;

Women's groups in Nzoeni had approached various donor agencies for technical and technical support. The donor agencies felt that Participatory Rural Appraisal should be done before any aid is disbursed. The Assess prioritize communities development needs and commitment to implementation proposed development activities.

A preliminary visit was done by the Team on May 15, 1988 to meet local leaders and to let the leaders know what was expected of them.

This Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise in Nzoeni took five field working days. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact will be part of this project. The PRA was carried out as follows:

3.1 Data Collection (First day)

On the first day, the chief mobilized the community members both men and women. After short introduction representatives of Nzoeni community were asked why they came to the meeting. The answers given and which were a reflection of community expectations were as follows:

- To learn from the visitors;
- To find out what the visitors brought for us;
- To tell the visitors about our problems;
- To find out whether the youth can be given financial support;
- To find out if our problems can be solved;

The rest of the morning was spent on discussion of seasonal calendars and division of work on gender lines.

The afternoon of the first day was spent in group works. The community members were requested to draw their village sketch map and insert boundaries, physical features like streams and natural wells, infrastructure like roads and institutions like schools and churches.

The sketch map more than anything else gave an insight to the community on how much natural resources they have.

3.2 Village Transect Walk (Second day)

The Team and the community divided themselves into two groups and took a transect walks in two directions, to identify land use, type of soils, vegetation, environmental problems and potential for solving them. The walk also afforded an opportunity for members of the National Environmental Secretariat to interact with the community in an informal manner and learn more about their environment and social economic lives.

The transect walk provided a detailed look at land use practices, present problems and potential solutions. It also helped development agents get acquainted with details of the micro-zone.

Farm Sketches - drawn by the development agents illustrated the validity and potential that can be realized on the land.

3.3 Time Line (Third day)

The time line is an aggregate of historical events and their influence on present conditions. The elderly used their age long wisdom to give an account of historical events. This gave an indelible input of experience and understanding of the current state of environment , social and economic situations.

3.3.1 Trend Lines

Trend analysis helped the community perceive change over time in various sectors including population, social development and education, environmental trends, wildlife charges, status of vegetation.

These two exercises reviewed to the community how over time their environment and natural resources had deteriorated.

3.3.2 Village Institutions

The groups of residents ranked community institutions in order of importance and constructed diagrams to indicate the relationships between and among units. An understanding of institutional roles and relations is fundamental to sustainable development. In this analysis women's groups were identified as being in the best position to coordinate and follow up on any development work.

3.4 Ranking Problems (Fourth day)

Villagers came together to rank their problems. This work was done in two stages as follows:

- a. On their own, the community ranked their problems as follows
 - Soil erosion
 - Lack of water

- Lack of health/medical centre
- Lack of grain grinding mills
- Lack of boarding schools
- Lack of roads
- Lack of electricity
- Lack of firework
- Lack of firewood
- lack of market for their agricultural produce

The general feeling of the community at this stage was that aid to solve their environmental and economic needs will come from outside.

- b. In the second activity the local community was facilitated by the Team to prioritize their needs and to specify requirements and source of materials and budget. The following was the result in order of importance.

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Requirements/opportunities</u> | <u>Source of Materials/ Funding</u> |
|---------------------|--|--|
| A. Lack of water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build artificial wells • Roof catchment • Conserve natural wells | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community |
| B. Lack of firewood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start public and private tree nurseries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community |
| C. Soil erosion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build gabion and bench terraces • Need technical advice on soil conservation activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor, materials and experience found in the local community • Local agricultural officer will be approached for technical advice if needed |
| D. Lack of roads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need cement and ballast to arrest soil erosion on the roads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor and materials can be found in local community • Ministry of Transport officials will be approached if need be |
| E. Lack of Boarding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build hostels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money to be contributed by the community • Outside help to be sought if need be |

The important point about this exercise is that the community reduced and focused their needs better and felt that they had most of the technical, human and financial resources to carry out the Community Environment Natural Resource Management Plan.

3.5 Community Environment Resource Management Plan (CERMP) and Follow Up Activities (Fifth day).

The community formed a resource management committee along the lines of the five priority community needs. That way a water and soil conservation committee, road maintenance committee, tree nursery and planting committee were formed

When I visited Nzoeni village on July 15, 1998, work had started and particularly on the infrastructure destroyed by the El Nino rains. Roads and bridges were under repair and the various committees had worked out modalities on community labor and financial contribution towards the community development needs. The National Environment Secretariat Team will be closely monitoring the progress of Nzoeni Community resource management implementation.

4 CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) provides an organizational structure that focuses and systemizes participation. It assumes that no economic, social and political development can be realized without environment and resource management. The case of Nzoeni is a micro example of good governance and community participation in the drawing of a Community Environment Natural Resource Management Plan for development in the area. In a transparent manner, the members participated in the discussions of their resource opportunities and prioritized their problems. The leaders of various committees were chosen in a transparent manner and after consideration of their commitment and expertise. The community group internalized ideas and recommendations arrived at during the five day PRA work in Nzoeni as their own and were committed to the implementation.

In conclusion, good governance and community participation as shown in the above case study is necessary if environmental enforcement and compliance has to happen. If the community is involved in the early stages of environmental management, they will also be engaged in ensuring and monitoring compliance with its terms.

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