

Community Perceived Attitude on Forest Related Environmental Issues using Mass Media in Osun States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines community perceived attitude on Forestry Related Environmental Issues (FREI) in Osun state with a view to strengthening mass media use. Data collected from primary and secondary sources were analyzed qualitatively. The pooled data on frequency distribution of perceived attitude on forest related environmental issues reveals that majority of the end users (75percent) agreed minimally that it is important to pay attention to FREI to eco-balance the environment while 60percent respondent said it is a mere threat, that FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment. This suggests that attitude to forest related environmental issues with respect to community awareness on forestry mitigation approaches have been ranked very low while more end-users/ farmers considered average mass media efforts as town criers a mere threat, and thus FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment.

The need to undertake community perceived attitude on FREI in Osun state with a view to strengthening sustainable livelihoods approach using mass media coverage is essential. The results of this study brought into focus the involvement of mass media in disseminating environmental issues as watchdogs for a good environment but that is currently dominated by incidental reporting from actual assessment. Most mass media do not channel feedback to appropriate body such as FRIN for processing, therefore this disposition becomes imperative for collaboration and coordination among government agencies horizontally and vertically. Community forestry awareness supports livelihood assets such as social capital and community organization, as well as diversified livelihoods and the protection of the natural resource base on which they depend.

Keywords: perceived attitude; Mass media; Forestry Related Environmental Issues; Mitigation;

1. Introduction

The interplay of human activities and natural phenomena constantly lead to changes in environmental constituents and capabilities. Given the significant role of forests on rural livelihoods and understanding the relationship between mitigation and adaptation activities on forest-based communities is vital, failure to consider mitigation and adaptation in the context of forests and forest based communities may result in undermining sustainable forestry practices and loss of rights and livelihoods among vulnerable communities (Angelsen, 2011; Chao, 2012). Exploring the role of forests for mitigation and adaptation can identify potential synergies and trade-offs. Mitigation aims to address the causes of climate change, while adaptation responds to its impacts (Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia - RECOFTC, 2012).

Nigeria has a total land area of 983,213 km² occupied by about 160 Million people (Omofonmwan and Osa-Edoh, 2008). The interaction of these millions of people with their environment has left unerasable impact on the landscape. Urbanization, deforestation, desertification, over population and all kinds of pollution are some of the resultant effect of man's interaction with his environment. These changes occur as the people attempt to acquire their seemingly endless desire for food, shelter, recreation and infrastructural facilities. Though these wants and desires contribute to the development of the country, the inexpedient use of land and its resources produce negative impacts on the environment (Omofonmwan and Osa-Edoh, Op cit, 2008).

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (UNFAO Report, 2005; Mongabay, 2005) estimated that Nigerians destroy about 600,000 hectares of her forest every year through careless exploitation and husbandry. Such careless exploitation of the forest has implications in a number of worsening environmental problems in the country including soil erosion and infertility, desertification and flooding.

2. Conceptual Framework and Literature

Environmental issues have become important in the world for decades. National governments as well as the United nations have taken steps to increase the level of awareness and attention paid to problems of air and, water pollution, deforestation, desertification, green-house gas emission, global warming, climate change, etc.

These problems have necessitated a number of summits, conferences, conventions and declarations. The Rio declaration on environment is one such example. Adopted by 178 nations at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio-de Janeiro, Brazil; Principle 10 underscores the importance of awareness, access to information, and participation of the people in matters that affect them in relation to the environment.

Principle 22 underlines the critical role of indigenous people and their communities which should be enabled to participate effectively in the achievement of sustainable development (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development UNCSA, 2012).

For the agroforestry communities in case of the southwestern Nigeria, a critical factor is shifts in seasonality with the unusual over-flooding as a result of unpredictability of rainy seasons affecting both planting and harvesting of arable crops often reported with decline in much of the household consumption. In Nigeria, with livelihood community development support; in specific communities via assistance in developing adaptation plans for the causes of nomadic pastoralists uncontrolled grazing on agroforestry farmland, it is observed common practice that communities may inform one another about incursion of fulani's herdsmen by the agro pastoralists. With deforestation and different environmental challenges increasing critical role of indigenous people in the country it is important that communities attitude to FREI be re-examined in order to support effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development. Since it increases the available knowledge about inhabitants' mitigation approaches that may subsequently elicits indigenous policy solution formulation from the community stakeholders themselves. Therefore, it has become necessary to analyse the community attitude about forestry related environmental issues. This paper examines community perceived attitude on Forestry Related Environmental Issues (FREI) in Osun state with a view to strengthening mass media use.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Study Area

The study area is Osun state. It is located in the Southwestern geo-political zone (Figure 1). The study area was chosen because it was recognised as one of the major timber producing state with forest related environmental issues in the past and present (Agbeja, 2008).

3.2 Method of data collection

Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Osun states was selected for the study. They were Iwo, Osogbo and Ile-Ife LGAs (Figure 1). Purposive sampling method was used to select 36 study sites/ locations in Osun state. Within each of the LGAs stratified random sampling method was used to divide the population into homogeneous subgroups of mass media and end users respectively; in the order of nine locations of mass media houses, nine towns and eighteen communities totaling thirty (36) sites for the study (Table 1).

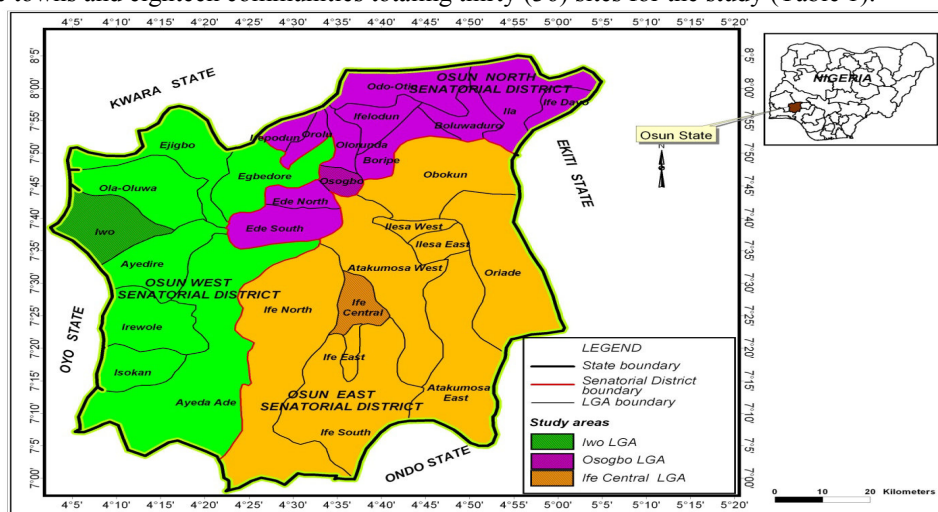


Figure1. Showing map of Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Osun State

The tools used for data collection was structured questionnaires which were administered to the respondents according to the number of end-users comprising peasant agroforestry farmers; traders; artisan and civil servants households and Mass media' correspondents. Purposive sampling with Focus Group methods was used in each LGAs using locations of mass media houses as the sampling frame. A deliberate attempt beyond the scope of the three selected LGAs was made for the study on community awareness about FREI using the mass media locations by Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria team. Sample frame for the study involved field survey in Iwo, Osogbo and Ile-Ife LGAs while relevant stakeholders in Obokun, Ilesha and Ikire (beyond the selected LGAs) provided secondary information that supplemented primary data. The details according to mass media houses, towns, communities and Local Government Areas in Osun state, Nigeria are as shown below:

In view of the extent of the area covered, two survey crew was used each comprising a researcher and a trained technical field officers. One group covered the LGAs in Osogbo, the state capital while the other group covered the LGAs in Ile Ife central. Purposive sampling and Focus group discussion (FGD) methods made it possible to

select target audience respondents at the occasion marking the activities and discourse of the 2012 World Food Day in Osogbo. This approach further leads to identifying additional locations in particular for other mass media houses and subsequent expansion of the study scope beyond the three selected LGAs for more representative sampling. The instrument for the data collection was subjected to validity and reliability tests at Laroye (Oyo Testing ground community) in Iwo Local Government Area. A total of one hundred and five (105) questionnaires administered comprising seventy-five (75) for end-users and thirty (30) for mass media respondents respectively. Of these, seventy-three (73) were administered to end-users and retrieved while twenty-four (24) were administered to mass media and retrieved given a total of ninety-seven (97) questionnaires for analysis.

The administration of structured interview schedule 2012 focused on detailed appraisal of the level of awareness on FREIs in nine mass media houses, nine towns and eighteen communities making 36 study locations in Osun state (Table 1). The period of the field work coincided with the activities and discourse of the 2012 World Food Day in Osun State. Rural-urban community participants were divided into groups of not more than 5-8 respondents for the exercises. In-depth interviews with personal contacts/focus group discussion (FGD), village leaders, local authorities, and selected relevant professionals (such as mass media program director) were interviewed.

The questionnaire was designed based on a) Demographic variables (Age, Occupation, and Educational Qualification) b) Problems faced by end-users' production and livelihood system in the face of Forestry Related Environmental Issues (FREI).

Table 1: Name of mass media, sample towns, sample communities and sample Local Government Study Areas for the Communities in the Osun state, Nigeria

State	Mass media houses	Towns	Communities	Local Government Areas for the Communities
Osun	Reality Tv/ Radio vision	Laroye	Testing ground	Iwo
			Ponya	''
			Kajola	''
	NTA	Abere	Okepupa	Osogbo
			Irepodun (Ilobu, Erin-Osun)	''
			Obate	''
			Olorunda	''
	NTA	Mokuro	Oloyinbo Hill	Ile-Ife
			Fajuyi	''
			Ibukun olu	''
			Ibode-arodan	''
			Lagere	''
	Orisun FM	Ile-Ife		Ile-Ife
	OSBC/ Awiye	Oke Baale	Ibokun Road	Osogbo
	The Nigerian Tribune	Osogbo	Olaiya Road	Osogbo
	The Punch	''	Odi-Olowo	Osogbo
	OSBC New Dawn Tv	Obokun	Ibokun	Obokun
	Unique FM	Ilesha	Ilesha East	Ilesha
	Gold FM	''	Iloko	''
		Ikire	Asejire	Ikire
	9 Media houses	9 Towns	18 Communities	

3.3 Analytical techniques

Descriptive analysis includes the use of frequency, percentages and photographs. Inferential analysis employed the use of scale ranking analyses where, strongly agree (SA) indicates if agree totally with the statement, Agree (A) if just agree with the statement, Undecided (U) if not sure of your position on the Statement, Disagree (D) if not in support of the statement and Strongly disagree (SD) if opposed to the statement vehemently. Twelve (12) statements (variables) were developed in the questionnaire to measure the attitudes of the respondents' towards

FREI practices by using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method. End-users' community awareness of FREI was tested in terms of positive or Negative.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentages (%)
21-30	18	24.66
31- 40	14	19.18
41-50	13	17.81
51- above	28	38.36
Total	73	100.00
Gender		
Male	49	67.12
Female	24	32.88
Total	73	100.00
Educational Background		
Non- formal	11	15.07
Primary	15	20.55
Secondary	26	35.62
Tertiary Education	21	28.77
Total	73	100.00
Occupation		
Civil Servant	11	15.07
Traders	22	30.14
Artisan	10	13.70
Peasant Farmers	10	13.70
Others	20	27.40
Total	73	100.00
Marital Status		
Single	17	23.29
Married	53	72.60
Divorced	3	4.11
Total	73	100.00
Religion		
Christian	38	52.05
Muslim	34	46.58
Others	1	1.37
Total	73	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2012

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of sample as shown in table 2 reveal that majority of the respondents are over 51 years- of age (38%), followed by age group of between 21-30 years (25%) but other respondents accounted for age group of between 31- 40 years (19%) and age group of between 41-50 years (18%).

From the total respondents, about 67% respondents are male and 33% respondents are female. Respondents are mostly secondary school certificate holder 36%, followed by 29% that are of the graduate certificate holder, closely followed by primary school certificate holder (21%) but respondents (15%) the non- formal education.

Table 2 also reveals views of respondents on the basis of occupation. About 30% of the respondents are traders, followed by other end-users such as: practitioners, welder, retirees, etc. that were not accommodated by questionnaire options (27%). For religion of the respondents, the sample population shows both Christian and Muslim dominance with 52% and 47% respectively while only a fraction of the sample population (1%) indicate as traditional practitioner(herbalist).

4.2 Frequency Distribution of Perceived Attitude on Forest Related Environmental Issues

The pooled data on frequency distribution of perceived attitude on forest related environmental issues is shown in table 3. The maximum and minimum values under each column have been highlighted by bold figures based on minimum and highest standard deviation respectively. The data reveals that majority of the end users (75percent) agreed minimally that it is important to pay attention to FREI to eco-balance the environment while

60percent respondent said it is a mere threat, that FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment. This suggests that attitude to forest related environmental issues with respect to community awareness on forestry mitigation approaches have been ranked very low while more end-users/ farmers considered average mass media efforts as town criers a mere threat, and thus FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment. Umejei (2010) reports that the media in Nigeria appear to be relatively distant in matters of creating awareness on climate change issues that Nigeria risks the devastation of global challenges posed by climate change. In his assessment, the Nigerian media seem to lag behind in awareness campaign on climate change and tend to leave it for individuals.

Table 3. Pooled population sample in Osun state according to attitude on forest related environmental issues

Variable	Frequency	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
It is important to pay attention to FREI for ecobalance of the environment	73	1.205479	.4068478	1	2
FREI has consequences on the means of livelihood of the community	73	1.232877	.6128383	1	5
Any community that participate in mitigating against FREI are preserving the future for the yet unborn generations	73	1.315068	.7971601	1	5
Regardless of individual and community efforts FREI cannot be combated	73	3.767123	1.317832	1	5
FREI goes a long way to influence the ecosystem thus it is worth paying attention	72	1.541667	1.006143	1	5
It is a mere threat, FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment	70	4.014286	1.51794	1	5
Awareness of FREI is very important to both individuals and community	72	1.402778	.9140488	1	5
Only educated people should participate in combating FREI	72	4.083333	1.460754	1	5
Nature can handle all forms of FREI therefore individuals and community should not take any action	73	4.150685	1.329904	1	5
FREI is a phenomenon that is on increase	73	1.808219	1.088546	1	5
FREI is a consequence of climate change	72	1.930556	.9833313	1	5
It is cheaper and better to prevent FREI rather than trying to combat it	72	1.222222	.5867606	1	5

Frequency distribution of the 12 statements (variables) was also developed to assess from pooled sample whether perceived position agreed minimally or maximally to the posted PCA. In this respect majority of the end users (75percent) agreed minimally that it is important to pay attention to FREI to eco-balance the environment, while 60percent respondents said it is a mere threat, that FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment.

Table 4. Perceived Community Awareness on FREI Using Mass Media

Factor Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Status of Organization		
Private Owned	3	12.50
Federal Corporation	9	37.50
State Corporation	12	50.00
Total	24	100.00
Have you heard of forestry before?		
Yes	24	100.00
No	0	0.00
Total	24	100.00
Are you aware of environmental issues in your organization?		
No	1	4.17
Yes	23	95.83
Undecided	0	0.00
Total	24	100.00
How often?		
Daily	1	4.17
Weekly	5	20.83
Fortnightly	9	37.50
Monthly	1	4.17
Others	8	33.33
Total	24	100.00
How do you source for information on forestry related environmental issues?		
Public	2	8.33
NGO's	11	45.83
Research Institute	4	16.67
ADP's	1	4.17
Others	6	25.00
Total	24	100.00
Do you get support from any of the bodies?		
No	16	66.67
Yes	8	33.33
Total	24	100.00
State the type of support received		
Cash	7	29.17
Information on subject matters	3	12.50
Feedback	5	20.83
Materials(blocks, sands, gravels stones, slabs, seeds/ seedlings)	7	29.17
Others	2	8.33
Total	24	100.00
Which aspect of forestry environmental issues do you regularly showcase?		
Bush burning	3	12.50
Erosion	4	16.67
Flooding	3	12.50
All of the above	12	50.00
Others	2	8.33
Total	24	100.00
In what form do you package your environmental issues?		
Advert	6	25.00
Jingles	2	8.33
News	5	20.83
Special Program slot	10	41.67
Others	1	4.17

Total	24	100.00
When do you put up your news to your audience?		
At the prime hour	12	50.00
At late in the night	3	12.50
At noon	3	12.50
All of the above	6	25.00
Total	24	100.00
What is the duration of disseminating Forestry Related Environmental Issues		
1-10mins	1	4.17
11-20mins	9	37.50
21-30mins	6	25.00
31-40mins	2	8.33
>40mins	1	4.17
Others	5	20.83
Total	24	100.00
How many times?		
Weekly	15	62.50
Monthly	1	4.7
Quarterly	1	4.7
Others	7	29.07
Total	24	100.00
Do you have special column for forestry related environmental issues?		
No	16	66.67
Yes	7	33.33
Total	24	100.00
For how long have you been disseminating environmental issues in your organization?		
1-5years	1	4.17
6-10years	10	41.67
11-15years	8	33.33
16-20years	1	4.17
>20years	1	4.17
Others	3	12.50
Total	24	100.00
Does this awareness have impacts on your target audience?		
Yes	21	87.50
No	3	12.50
Total	24	100.00
Who are the target audience?		
Agro- forestry farmers	1	4.17
Rural dwellers	4	16.67
Urban dwellers	2	8.33
All of the above	16	66.67
Others	1	4.17
Total	24	100.00
Do you get feedback from the public?		
Yes	0	0
No	0	0
S.M.S	4	16.67
Phone calls	2	8.33
e-mails	8	33.33
Letter	6	25.00
Personal contacts	4	16.67
Total	24	100.00
Do you channel feedback to appropriate body for		

processing?		
Yes	9	37.50
No	15	62.50
Total	24	100.00
At what interval do you review information on forestry related environmental issues?		
Weekly	4	16.67
Fortnightly	17	70.83
Quarterly	1	4.17
Others	2	8.33
Total	24	100.00

Table 4 indicates that 33% get support from any of the bodies mentioned ; while 67% did not. Of the 100% type of support received, 29% obtained cash; another 29% obtained Materials support in forms of: blocks, sands, gravels stones, slabs, seeds/ seedlings; 21% obtained support inform of Feedback; 13% obtained subject matters information and 8% received other forms of support not mentioned. Time period specified on news presentation to target audience were the prime hour (50%) late in the night (12.50%) at noon (12.50%) and (25.00%) indicates for all time period used by the media.

As for the number of years involved in disseminating environmental issues in different media houses sampled, 6-10years (42%) are in the majority, followed by 11-15years (33%), others constitute 13% as they remain undecided about the number of years involved. Few categories: 1-5years, 16-20years and >20years accounted for the same number of respondents (i.e. 4%).

Information on table 4 reveals that majority (i.e.87.50 %) affirmed impacts of FREI awareness on target audience by the mass media while (i.e. 12.50%) possibly as a result of the spectacular and destructive gully erosion that has laid waste vast areas in many parts of the country including communities in Osun state.

From table 4, about 67% of the target audience comprises agro-forestry farmers, rural dwellers and urban dwellers while other respondents that indicated as rural dwellers, urban dwellers and agro-forestry farmers amongst others accounted for 17%, 8%, 4% and 4% respectively. The result implies that some farmers are disadvantaged by distance from others and find themselves in such a situation which makes it difficult for them to have easy access to information. Owing to illiteracy some of the farmers cannot read and only understand the local language.

On the basis of whether there are feedbacks, 33% receive their feedbacks via e-mails/internet possibly due to the increasingly use of this medium by many in the contemporary. 25% got their feedbacks through postage which indicates the close effectiveness of this aged-old practice to the community. Short message service (S.M.S) and phone calls accounted for 17% and 8% respectively. However the use of personal contact as feedback also share the same number of respondents with that S.M.S (17%), it is important to state that this statistics further attests to the claims that the use of contact farmers is characterized by message distortion (Agbamu, 2006). Most, (62.50%) do not channel feedback to appropriate body for processing as indicated from table 4 while (37.50%) of the respondents said they channel feedback.

About seventy-one percent (71%) of the media houses sampled said they review information on forestry related environmental issues fortnightly although members of the press will need to be trained to be more responsible in reporting FREI events and to serve as watchdogs for a good environment that is currently dominated by incidental reporting from actual assessment. About 17% indicates weekly review of information on forestry related environmental issues, the least number of respondent do their review of information on forestry related environmental issues on quarterly basis (i.e.4%). However, a fairly higher population of respondent sampled (i.e.8%) were among others in the undecided category.

4.3 Policy implications of these results.

The study has succeeded in establishing that attitude to forest related environmental issues with respect to community awareness on forestry mitigation approaches have been ranked very low while more end-users/ farmers considered average mass media efforts as town criers a mere threat, and thus FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment. This suggests not acting on the new evidence of the changing frequency and magnitude of extreme events will mean a lost opportunity to prevent the loss of lives, protect livelihoods, reduce economic damage and population displacement, and their associated socio-economic consequences. Taking action now could help reduce the risk to lives, livelihoods and properties. Moreover, it could also enhance economic development in developing countries exposed to climate extremes by helping them avoid damage from climate related disasters. As climate change crosses national borders, a coordinated programme of funding and new technologies is required. But the funding needed for adaptation is enormous, and the amount available for FREI adaptation/mitigation approaches in developing countries is still insufficient.

From data collection to response of end users and feedback to mass media collecting data and issuing warning on FREIs such as: bush burning, flooding, erosion, over felling amongst others will need to improve sufficiently. In this vein, policy decision-makers must believe in the process—that raises awareness of the benefits of agroforestry systems to farmers and end users with emphasis that agroforestry development is a good solution. For this to happen, the importance of agroforestry must be demonstrated within and beyond the fields of agriculture and forestry, using rigorous broaden scope of climate change coverage and framing, widen local sourcing of reports, diversify the formats of reporting must be critical mass media representation. The FREI may be framed through involving interested stakeholders from relevant sectors and quantifying the cost and benefits of agroforestry at both national and local level. According to FAO (2013) such data are of particular importance when assessing financial incentives for farmers in the framework of field projects.

5. Conclusion

The need to undertake community perceived attitude on FREI in Osun state with a view to strengthening sustainable livelihoods approach using mass media coverage is essential. The results of this study brought into focus the involvement of mass media in disseminating environmental issues as watchdogs for a good environment but that is currently dominated by incidental reporting from actual assessment. Most mass media do not channel feedback to appropriate body such as FRIN for processing, therefore this disposition becomes imperative for collaboration and coordination among government agencies horizontally and vertically in view of the fact that majority of the end users agreed minimally that it is important to pay attention to FREI to eco-balance the environment, while the next ranking of respondents said it is a mere threat, that FREI cannot have adverse effect on the stability of the environment. Though majority affirmed impacts of FREI awareness on target audience by the mass media possibly as a result of the spectacular and destructive gully erosion that has laid waste vast areas in many parts of the country including communities in Osun state. Education awareness of the general public on FREI via FRIN media Department, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Broadcasting Corporations (BBC), Personal contacts via phone calls, e-mails and free access to FREI

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