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Impediments to Resettlement Scheme for the Loko Flood Disaster Victims in Song Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examined the socio-economic and political impediments to the planned resettlement scheme for the Loko flood disaster victims. A simple random sampling technique was employed to interview 280 household heads by administering to, each, a questionnaire schedule. Furthermore, purposeful interviews with the respondents, field observations, and existing documents formed part of the data generation sources. Data on the occupation of the respondents, their perception of the scheme, and involvement in decision making about the scheme, as well as funding, were collected for the study. Simple descriptive statistical techniques such as the mean, percentages as well as simple tabulations were adopted to analyse the data generated. The findings of the study show that the scheme has not been successful after 19 years of operation, owing to the governments' failure to understand the victims' needs, preferences, and hopes; inadequate funding and poor management of the scheme by the government.

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, as in many other countries, resettlement schemes are aimed at alleviating over population, controlling migration, or evacuating areas struck by natural and artificial disasters such as flood, insect infestation, construction of large dams, roads, etc. One example of such schemes, is the resettlement of a 50,000 multi-ethnic population of the Bussa resettlement, as a result of the construction of the Kainji Dam in 1964, into a modern town known as, New Bussa (Faniran, 1972). Another example is that of Maroko people who were relocated from the present Bonny Camp area in Victoria Island, Lagos, to the demolished Maroko slum by the then colonial government and by the Lagos State Government of Raji Rasaki, in 1990. For 30 years, they lived in the slum, but on Monday, the 16th July, 1990, the 50,000 inhabitants of the Maroko community lost their belongings and traditional homes through the demolition exercise of the state government as a deliberate effort to save the marokans from flood, disease and death (Cole, 1993).

Another example of force settlement scheme is that of the 50,000 Nubians undertaken by the Egyptian Government as an effective instrument for relieving population pressures on the old settled area and from increasing the nation's food production as contained in Tadros (1977). The situations of Maroko, Bussa, and the Nubian communities are few examples of millions of the people forced out of their traditional settlements by governments with the ultimate aim of improving the social, economic, and the political conditions of their citizens (Scudder, 1971). In Africa, most of such schemes as the Niger Agricultural project, "the Sabi" valley irrigation project, etc., were all found wanting, involving lack of consideration of the opinions and the involvement of the affected people, arising from inadequate planning and execution, and inadequate funding of the project. Silberfein, (1976), documented that none of the many resettlement schemes, attempted in Africa has been able to duplicate the economic viability of the Gezira Resettlement Scheme having commercial orientation based on the agricultural, being the critical factor of its success. For instance, Tonga Resettlement Scheme in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia then), is known to have failed owing to the beneficiaries' perception of the Scheme as disrupting ties of kinship and friendship (Scudder, 1971), hence their unwillingness to be resettled into a new environment.

These impediments may not be unconnected with that of the Loko Flood Disaster Resettlement scheme involving an estimated multi-ethnic population of 4,200 people with Hausa settlers, being the predominant tribe affected among others, dating back to September, 1989, when the first are devastating flood occurred in the area. This was followed by the most devastating one in July, 2003, destroying several lives and property, such as crops, houses, etc., worth millions of naira. The objective of this study is to examine the impediments to the success of the resettlement scheme. It is also to analyse and identify the scheme bottle-necks that require considerable attention of the policy makers.

1.1. The Study Area

The study area includes both the flood disaster area developed linearly in the east-west direction along the River Loko course at the Yola-Mubi-Dumne Road axis and the resettlement area. It lies between the latitude 9° 35' and 9° 46' North of the equator, and the

Longitude 12° 20' and 13° 30' East of the Greenwich Meridian (Fig. attached). The inundated area is three and a half kilometers away from the resettlement site which is located to the north of it (see attached). The vegetation, according to Akosum, *et al.*, (1999), is the Northern Guinea Savannah type with the mean annual rainfall of between 909, and 1100mm with the rainy season lasting for about 4 - 5 months. According to Adebayo (1990), the annual maximum temperature can reach 40°C, particularly, in April, while the minimum temperature can be as low as 18°C between December and January. The seasonal variation in relative humidity between January and March, is very low (20 - 30%) with an increase from April to September, reach the peak of 80%.

The main occupation of the people in the area is farming/trading. They are noted for vegetable irrigation as well as rain-fed farming. The area has a mixed ethnic population groups of Hausa settlers in the majority, with Batta, the indigenous group; the Yungur, the Mboi, and the Fulani in the minority.

1.2. Material and Methods

The methodology consists primarily of three sets of questionnaires administered to 260 household heads, randomly chosen from the three, out of the six wards of the flooded area: Sarkin Hausawa, Jauro Hali, Jauro Umaru, Loko Arewa, Loko Yamma, and Loko Central wards. One household head, was randomly, selected and from the every second house, systematically, and interviewed, starting with random sampling in each ward. Twenty (20) respondents were also randomly chosen for interview from the few victims in the resettlement area, and another twenty scheme committee members and officers (Administrators) were randomly chosen and interviewed for the study. In all, 280 respondents were administered a questionnaire copy, each. This sample was drawn from the listed 4,200 inhabitants obtained from the resettlement scheme records for the area. Purposeful interviews with the scheme participants and personal field observations formed part of the data collection strategies. The interviews were, however, conducted between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm, with the help of trained research assistants who were fluent both in Hausa (i.e., the Lingua – Franca in the area), and English. Descriptive statistical techniques such as the mean, percentage, and simple tabulations were employed to analyse the data generated.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Occupation of Respondents

The main occupation of the respondents in the disaster area is farming/trading (80.36%) as the area is characterized by fertile land for crop production coupled with the locational advantage of the area at the Yola-Mubi-Dumne low axis, promoting trading and other related activities. Other provide labouring services (5.36%) as well as other occupations (14.29%) as in the Table 1 below:

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Farming/Trading	225	80.36%
Labouring	15	5.36%
Other Occupations	40	14.29
Total	280	100

Table 1: Primary Occupation of Respondents in the Flood Disaster Area
Sources: Fieldwork, 2014

2.2. Willingness to Move to the Resettlement Area

The scheme has largely been found to be a failure as about 82.15% of the respondents interviewed in the flooded area indicated no willingness to resettle at the new site (Table 2), coupled with the fact that, only, 25% of the respondents sampled in the disaster area with the bulk of 75% of them being migrants from the Dabad Tsamiya village in the host Song Local Government area, and some others, from Bauchi State.

The result of the analysis shows that government has failed to understand and respect the target groups' needs, preferences, and hopes in relation to development as in the Table 2, indicating that 82.5% of the respondents sampled in the study area are not willing to be resettled, but rather prefer to remain in the inundated area which offers favourable farming conditions for both the wet and the dry seasons farming in addition to reliable water supply for domestic purposes (Oral interviews with victims and personal observations aided in realizing these findings). Flourishing commercial enterprise stemming from the locational advantage of the inundated area along Yola – Mubi – Dumne Road axis, coupled with its accessibility to the big population centres of Yungur communities, are additional stimulating factors in this regard. The victims' attachment to the endangered area was demonstrated by the Loko River (the flood source) Channel Diversion project initiated in 1993 by the affected community, aimed at controlling the flood. On the other hand, all the respondents (100%) sampled in the scheme area indicated total support for the scheme, but expressed dissatisfaction with the facilities provided so far, at the resettlement site by the scheme authorities.

Flood Disaster Area		Resettlement Area		
Response	No	No	Total	Percentage
Yes	10	40	50	17.86
No	200	30	230	82.15
Total	210	70	280	100

Table 2: Willingness to Move to the Resettlement Area
Sources: Fieldwork, 2014

2.3. Movement to the Resettlement Area

The outcome of the analysis revealed (Table 3) that the overwhelming number of the respondents (89.29%) in the flooded area have never moved to the resettlement area since the disaster struck in 1989, with the more devastating one in 2003, as against the 10.72% of them that had ever relocated into it before returning to their previous homes, due to equipment failures.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	10.72
No	250	89.29
Total	280	100

Table 3: Movement to Resettlement Area

Sources: Fieldwork, 2014

On the issue of resettles' return to their original homes from the scheme area, all the respondents (100%) sampled in the scheme area attributed it to equipment failures such as water supply and health care (27.86%), lack of economic incentives to allow for flourishing commercial and agricultural enterprises (32.86%), poor drainage facilities (28.57%), and lack of housing (10.71%), emerging from such a re-ordering of human and physical resources as in the Table 4 below.

	No	Percentage
Lack of water supply and poor health care	78	27.86
Lack of better opportunities for agriculture and marketing	92	32.86
Total	280	100

Table 4: Reasons for Returning to Flood Disaster Area

Sources: Fieldwork, 2014

2.4. Involvement in the Decision about Resettlement

Table 5 shows that only 12.36% of the respondents, both, in the flooded area and in the scheme area indicated having had group consultation but a rush one, by the scheme administrators, shortly after the flood disaster incident. The victims, while in unstable mind arising from the disaster effects, initially seemed to be in support of the rushed resettlement planned by the State Government, but later reviewed their decision to content with the flooded area, so as to retain their cherished farm holdings. The implication here, is that, there has not been active participation of the beneficiaries in the decision making process through the councils and the committees, appropriately, as was in the Ghanain case (Tadros, 1977), to facilitate the implementation of the programme. This has amounted to ineffective emergency planning, built around the beneficiaries' reaction patterns, hence, the resettlement impediments.

Flood Disaster Area		Resettlement Area		
Response	No	No	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	16	36	12.86
No	194	50	244	87.15
Total	214	66	280	100

Table 5: Consultation during Programme Implementation

Sources: Fieldwork, 2014

2.5. Respondents' perception of the Resettlement Scheme

The outcome of the analysis in Table 6, indicates that majority of the respondents both in the disaster area and in the scheme area viewed the resettlement scheme as disrupting the ties of kinship, as the large proportion (82.15%) of the victim have remained in the disaster area. Although, people had migrated to states such as Gombe, Taraba, etc; following the 1990 government attempt to use the threat of punishment to implement the scheme, this however, was resisted by the victims. This result tallies well with that of the Tonga (Scudder, 1977), constituting serious impediments to the scheme under study.

Flood Disaster Area		Resettlement Area		
Response	No	No	Total	Percentage
Yes	200	30	230	82.15
No	10	40	50	17.86
Total	210	70	280	100

Table 6: Resettlement as disruption to Ties of Kinship and Friendship

Sources: Fieldwork, 2014.

When asked to comment freely on the entire resettlement programme, respondents, particularly, in the flooded area, voiced some suspicions that the concerned authorities had allowed political considerations to undermine the goal of concentrating the scheme in the area of high potential that is the flood disaster area. They believe that, the move was merely a government strategy to use the flood disaster incident as the basis to get them out of the way so that their fertile farm lands could be utilized in a different way. In other words, the victims believe that their resettlement is motivated by government's ambitious agricultural development programme suspected to be well-under way in the inundated area. The few respondents in the scheme area, on the other hand, expressed a contrary view, describing the scheme as a laudable one, but accused the scheme authorities of the failure to provide the necessary modern amenities as functional health, educational, marketing, and housing facilities, pipe-borne water and good farmlands.

2.6. Management Impediments

The results of this survey indicate that majority of the victims of the flood are committed to the flood disaster area and as a way of demonstrating the action, the Loko River channel diversion as a flood control measure on the River Loko, was adopted and initiated in 1993, by the affected community on the River Loko channel, being the principal source of the floods. This was executed by the use of heavy machinery such as the bulldozers, proclain and such related machinery. The strategy has yielded positive results, as the flood incidence has reduced both in frequency and severity, since then. This, thus, suggests the need for considering the people's opinion regarding the programme as contended by Ajaegbu (1972), that, a planning programme based on the existing patterns of the people's social and economic behaviour, is likely to be readily acceptable to the rural population.

Analysis of the results shows that most of the scheme participants have remained unwilling to relocate to the resettlement area. This attitude is a function of poor farmlands, unreliable water supply source, lack of market, housing, and drainage facilities in the resettlement area. The primary economic activities in the inundated area are farming, animal rearing, fishing, and trading.

The outcome of the analysis reveals 69% of the scheme officials sampled, lack previous resettlement experience gained with resettlement from others as was the case with some of the Egyptian with the from Ghanaian schemes (Scudder, 1977). Experience relating to the carrying out of the exercise in other related schemes, both, through exchange of information and through implementation of the programme.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the major impediments to the resettlement scheme include:

2.6.1. Financial Constraints

Lack of adequate funds provided from the start. This, in turn led to a small over worked staff and reduced the scope necessary surveys, hence, the provision of detailed information which could have been used for development, following the resettlement. According to the resettlement Scheme records (LFDRS/1/127), only the total sum of ₦3.6 million was generated through donations from the host Song Local Government Area Council (₦30, 000.00), the Military Government of the then Gongola State (₦357, 000.00), at the inception of the scheme in 1989; while the balance of 3.4 million was realized from an appeal fund launched in January, 1990, for the resettlement scheme programme.

2.6.2. Social Impediments

There is the dearth of innovated inputs such as the markets, the housing, reliable water supply, and drainage facilities as well as poor lands, both, for farms, and homes at the resettlement site. However, farmlands in the flooded area, are of fertile alluvial soils and are distant (Ranging from 3km - 20km along the river course) from the resettlement area.

2.6.3. Technical Impediments

These, among others, include administrative in experience, or inefficiency of the scheme, relating to the carrying-out of rapid ecological, and social surveys, the actual resettlement process, and the planning and the implementation of development, following the resettlement. The planning should have taken into consideration, the opinions of the people for whom the scheme was intended.

3. Summary

In summary, it is obvious that the resettlement scheme under consideration has been bedeviled by management impediments, such as the financial, social, and technical constraints.

4. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be concluded, that, the major impediments to the resettlement scheme include financial constraints, social constraints, such as the markets using reliable water supply source; drainage facilities and poor lands for both the farms, and the homes at the resettlement site. Other impediments are technical, embracing administrative inexperience of the scheme implementors with particular reference to conducting rapid ecological, and social surveys; the actual scheme execution and planning.

5. Recommendations

In-view of the preceding impediments to the resettlement scheme, the following recommendations are made:

1. Past management errors of the scheme administrators should be identified and corrected by reviewing the membership of the committees already existing with most of their members found to be lacking the relevant experience for the scheme, by government. People who have had the experience gained with resettlement in other countries, both, through exchange of information and incorporation of those with relevant experience relating to the carrying out of rapid ecological and social surveys, the renovation of the existing marketing, other public and processing facilities. In any case, planning should be based on the opinions of the affected participants so as to get them involved actively in the entire process.
2. The River Loko channel diversion flood control initiative put in place by the affected community be considered and improved upon by the government through the following actions:
 - (a) Creating of Reservoir through construction of Diversion of flood:
This could be achieved by diverting the flood water by constructing canals to pass through the natural levees into the adjoining flood plains. These natural levels should be reinforced with concrete walls, particularly, at where they are likely to collapse.
 - (b) Improving of Discharge Capacity of the River Reach:
The discharge capacity of the rivers, reach, could be enhanced by extending, or enlarging the bank of the river within the reach. Alternatively, this could be accomplished by cutting off the river meanders, or shortening the channel.
 - (c) Construction of flood retaining Levels:
These are meant to protect the adjoining flood plains from being flooded. It is usually a strong stable dyke built upon the natural level to reinforce it and increase its height. This construction can help to reduce the storage capacity of the flood plains and the conveyance of the river as the water flow of the river covers only the span of the low waterbed. The reduction, however, causes higher water levels and flow velocities, both in frequency and severity hence, there is the need to improve on that, for better results. This, thus, suggests the need for considering the people's opinion regarding the programme as contended by Ajaegbu (1972), that a planned programme based on the existing patterns of the people's social and economic behavior is likely to be readily acceptable to the rural population. The flood control measures initiated by the community should be considered and co-implemented by dredging the flood source of the River Loko, as a well as building embankments levees, or improving the River channel and re-afforesting the plains, or the flatlands, to check the run-offs that accelerate the flood.
 - (d) Additionally, construction of good drainage systems such as the culverts and gutters in the flooded area, can be of help in controlling the flood.
 - Government's corporate bodies, public spirited members of the society, and relevant international agencies, should come to the aid of the scheme, financially. Any funds made available for the scheme should be utilized judiciously by the scheme administrators.
 - Credit facilities as well as compensation for the loss of property, be granted and paid to the scheme beneficiaries. Furthermore, the poverty alleviation programme designed and put in place by the Federal Government, be honestly implemented and well extended to those unfortunate victims. This is to help the affected people of Loko rebuild their lives.

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