

EVALUATION OF FOREST POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN GASHAKA-GUMTI NATIONAL PARK, SERTI, TARABA STATE

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Abstract

Several forest policies exist in GGNP. However, the extent of its implementation is not known and documented and hence the need for this study. A purposive sampling technique with 100 respondents were selected as follows; 40 farmers, 10 hunters, 15 State forestry staff, 10 LG forestry staff and 25 Park officials with only 95 retrieved due to re-location. Data generated were analyzed using simple percentages. The result on age, 2(2.1%), 1-15years; 23(24.2%), 16-30 years; 45(47.4%), 31-45years; 20(21%), 46-60years; 5(5.3%), above 61years. Sex, 75(78.9%), males; 20(21.1%), females. Marital status, 20(21%), singles; 65(68.5%), married; 10(10.5%), widowed. Educational status, 5(5.3%), each had both Quranic and Adult education, 10(10.5%) had primary and secondary education, 45(47.4%) tertiary education. Household size, 5 (5.3%), 0; 10 (10.5%) 4-6 and above 7, 70(73.7%), 1-3(Table 1.1). Result on forest policies had; Compounding of offenses detected on exploitation, Exploitation based on allocation; Selective exploitation, Rational and control harvesting on sustainable basis, Protection of endangered wildlife and tree species through special permit rates, Regeneration at par with exploitation, payment on permit basis for every tree fell in free area (Table 1.2). Rating level of implementation had; 80(84.2%) rated low (0-35%), 10 (10.5%) rated moderate (36-75%) while 5(5.3%) rated high(76-100%)(Table 1.3). The result on major constraints showed; lack of finance, shortage of skilled personnel and staff; lack of effective supervision, co-ordination and control, ill-equipped forestry institutions to carry their functions, political instability (Table 1.4). Based on the above; adequate funding, strict forest policy implementation and compliance, recruitment of qualified skilled personnel and staff, effective supervision, co-ordination and control, continuity in policies, provision of functional equipments and patrol vehicles are recommended.

Key words: Constraints, Gashaka-Gumti, Forest policy implementation, National park

INTRODUCTION

Forest policy is a plan of action designed to indicate what proportion of a country's land area should be dedicated to Forestry, how the forest area should be developed and how the forest product of the forest be utilized for public use. Simply put, it encompasses mainly directions or courses of national

economic development as adopted and pursued by the national society. (Arifalo, 2005). It is needed to enable the society to continue to have an un-interrupted access to forest goods and services and where a it is not in operation, the forest base will be over exploited to the great disadvantage of the future generation. In such a situation, it will

provide the frame work for the use and replacement strategy of the forest so that from time to time, the society has access to forest goods and services (Agbeja, 2010). Adeyoju, (1991) stated that, to implement a forest policy successfully, government authorities must take into account, the receptivity and demands of those whom the policy will affect. Forest policies that are objectively formulated in Nigeria are sometimes implemented poorly or not at all. Its implementation constitutes an index for measuring the efficiency of Forestry department. Ineffective implementation hinders the capability of GGNP to adequately contribute to the development of the National Economy. In Nigeria, Forest policy formulation is not the major challenge but the implementation of the policies and hence the need for this study. Gashaka-Gumti National Park (GGNP) has forest policies guiding its operations, however, its level of implementation are not known and documented in Gashaka-Gumti National Park. Forest policy evaluation is critical for minor and major changes in formal public statement and administrative implementation of a forest. Forest policy implementation constitutes an index for measuring the efficiency of Forestry department. Ineffective forest policy implementation hinders the capability of Gashaka-Gumti National Park to adequately contribute to the development of the National Economy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Gashaka- Gumti National Park (GGNP) is located in a mountainous region of North – Eastern Nigeria, adjacent to the international border with Cameroon and immediately to the North of the Mambila Plateau with few lonely paths winding through the forested mountain and no road crossing through them. GGNP is located between latitude $6^{\circ} 30'$ & $9^{\circ} 36'N$ and longitude $9^{\circ} 10'$ & $11^{\circ} 50'E$ (Fig.1). The Park's name is derived from two of the region's oldest and most historic settlements; Gashaka town in Taraba State and Gumti town in Adamawa State with Gashaka at the Southern fringe and Gumti at the Northern fringe respectively. The

Gashaka-Gumti National Park started as Gashaka game reserve and Gumti game reserve during the then Gongola State in 1972. The creation of Taraba and Adamawa States from the then Gongola State put Gumti in Adamawa State and Gashaka in Taraba State respectively and each of the Game reserves was managed by their respective States and their respective communities (Gumti or Gashaka). Dun, (1995). In 1991, the two game reserves were merged together by the Federal decree no.36 of 1991 which was later amended in 1999 as Federal Decree no. 46 of 1999 and was re-named "Gashaka-Gumti National Park and its management, was transferred from the two states (Taraba and Adamawa) to the Federal Government. The Park has two head offices, Bodel for Gashaka and Toungo for Gumti respectively. The park is by far the largest (6,402sqKm) and most scenic of all the National Parks in Nigeria (Fig. 1). Potentially, it is also the most important site for nature tourism with pleasant sub temperate climate, beautiful array of scenery, dominated by mountains, valleys, rivers, streams and montane forests. The Park is also home to some very highly endangered species of wildlife. These include Chimpanzees, Cheetah, Leopards, Giant Forest hog, Red River hog, Mountain Reedbuck, Sitatunga, Colobus monkeys etc. The Park is also a spawning ground for some fish species such as Nile Perch, Electric fish, Tilapia etc. in recent times, Giraffes and Elephants have been sighted crossing in from the Republic of Cameroon. However, the effective exploitation of this Park's potentials in tourism depends on the development and linkage of good network of roads to the rest of the country. The Park also contains historic sites, one of which is the old German Fort at the top of Gashaka hill. Gangarwal peak of the Chapal Wadi Mountain of the park is the highest peak in Nigeria. The temperature is $40^{\circ}C$ in March and May drop to $5^{\circ}C$ in December, rainfall begins April to October and is followed by sand-laden harmatan wind from November to March. The following ethnic groups, Jibu, Dakka, Ndoro Tigon, Gbaya, Mambila, Kaka and Fulani, surround the Park. The major activities before the

establishment of the park were farming, pastoralism and hunting. Major enclaves of the park include; Sabere, Delam, Ngel-yaki, mai-Idanu, Filinga, Shirgu, Hendu, Tale, Nyumti, Tipsan, Mayo-Yum, Adagoro, Tapare, Jiman, Kila, Mayo-butale etc. The Park is drained by five (5) streams namely, Kam, Gamgam, Gashaka, Yim and Ngiti (NCF, 1998).

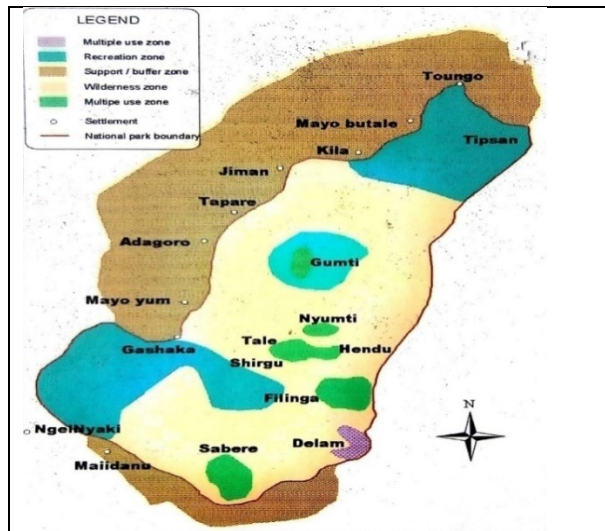


Fig. 1: Map of Gashaka-Gumti National Park
Source: Zaku, (2013)

Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. A total of 100 respondents were selected as follows; 40 farmers, 10 hunters, 15 State forestry staff, 10 LG forestry staff and 25 Park officials from Gashaka-Gumti National Park respectively bringing the total to 100 respondents for this study. A total of 100 questionnaires were developed and administered to the respondents to elicit their responses with only 95 retrieved. The data was analyzed using simple percentages

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents

The result on Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents on age of respondents indicated that, two respondents (2.1%) are within the age bracket 1-15years; 23(24.2%) are between 16-30 years; 45(47.4%) are between 31-45years; 20(21%) are between 46-60years while 5(5.3%) are above 61years of age respectively. Also, the result on sex of the

respondents indicated that, 75 of the respondents representing 78.9% are males while 20(21.1%) are females. The result on marital status of the respondents showed that, 20(21%) are singles; 65(68.5%), married while 10(10.5%) are widowed. Similarly, the result on educational status shows that, 5(5.3%), each had Quranic education and Adult education, another 10(10.5%) each had primary and secondary education while 45(47.4%) had tertiary education respectively. The result on household size of the respondents indicated that, 5 (5.3%) had no children; 10 (10.5%) each of the respondents had 4-6 household size and above 7 while 70(73.7%) of the respondents had 1-3 household size respectively (Table 1.1). The highest number of 45 respondents (47.4%) recorded on ages of the respondents that are between 31-45years implied that, most of the respondents are at their active age and forms the bulk of the work force in the study area. Also, the highest number of 75 respondents representing 78.9% recorded on sex of the respondents implied that, most of the respondents are males. Similarly, the highest number of 65 respondents (68.5%) recorded on marital status implied that, majority of the respondents are married. Also, the highest number of 45 respondents (47.4%) recorded on Educational status implied that, most of the respondents had tertiary education. The high number of 70 respondents (73.7%) of the respondents on household size implied that, majority of the respondents had 1-3 household size in the study area.

1.2: Existing forest policies in Gashaka-Gumti National Park

The result on existing forest policies in Gashaka-Gumti National Park indicated that, 30 respondents representing 31.5% reported Compounding of offenses detected on exploitation; 20(21.1%), Exploitation based on allocation; 10(10.5%), Selective exploitation; 5(5.3%), Rational and control harvesting on sustainable basis; 20(21.1%), Protection of endangered wildlife and tree species through special permit rates; 6(6.3%), Regeneration at par with exploitation and 4(4.2%) for payment on

permit basis for every tree fell in free area respectively (Table 1.2)

Table 1.1: Socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	No. of Respondents	%
Age		
1-15 years	2	2.1
16 - 30 years	23	24.2
31-45 years	45	47.4
46 - 60 years	20	21.0
61 years and above	5	5.3
Total	95	100
Sex		
Male	75	78.9
Female	20	21.1
Total	95	100
Marital Status		
Single	20	21.0
Married	65	68.5
Divorced	0	0
Widow	10	10.5
Single mother	0	0
Total	95	100
Educational Status		
Quaranic	5	5.3
Adult Education	5	5.3
Primary Education	20	21.0
Secondary Education	20	21.0
Tertiary Education	40	47.4
Total	95	100
Household Size		
0	0	0
1-3	30	31.6
4-6	55	57.9
7 and Above	10	10.5
Total	95	100

Source; Field Survey, (2021).

Table 1.2: Existing forest policies in Gashaka- Gumti National Park

S/N	Variables	No. of Respondents	%
1.	Compounding of offenses detected on exploitation(In operation)	30	31.6
2	Payment on permit basis for every stump felled in forest reserve	0	0
3	Out-turn volume concession	0	0
4	Exploitation based on allocation (Not in operation)	20	21.1
5	Revenue generation through exploitation	0	0
6	Selective exploitation (In operation)	10	10.5
7	Rational and controlled harvesting on sustainable basis(Not in operation)	5	5.3
8	Protection of endangered wildlife and tree species through special permit rates(In operation)	20	21.1
9	Regeneration at par with exploitation (Not in operation)	6	6.3
10	Payment on permit basis for every tree felled in free area (In operation)	4	4.2
11	Payment per load system	0	0
12	Total	95	100

Source: Field Survey, (2021).

The result on existing forest policies in GGNP implied that, there are seven (7) forest policies in existence in GGNP. The highest number of respondents recorded on compounding of offenses detected on exploitation as one of the existing forest policies implied that, it is the most widely used forest policy in Gashaka-Gumti National Park. This forest policy is of paramount importance to the success of forest resources management in Gashaka-Gumti National Park. An 'offense' is defined as any act or omission made punishable by any law for the time being in force' under section 3(38) of general clauses Act, 1897. Section 2 (n) of criminal procedure code 1973 ('CrPc') also defines (Offense) in the same way. A person guilty of committing an offense is liable to be prosecuted under the relevant provisions of law. Compounding of an offense in the context of law means an amicable settlement for the purpose of averting prosecution for an offence. According to Black's Law Dictionary in Vidya, (2014), to "compound" means "to settle a matter by money payment, in lieu of other liability". This definition thoughtfully presents the concept of compounding as settlement mechanism that affords the offender an opportunity to avoid prosecution in exchange of him undertaking a liability that is pecuniary in character or otherwise. This corroborates Dunn, (1995) that, poachers and illegal harvesters of forest resources are arrested, prosecuted or makes to pay fines accordingly to serve as deterrent to potential forest offenders in Gashaka-Gumti National Park. Also mentioned as an existing forest policy was forest exploitation based on allocation. "Forest exploitation" in the mind of many people is often associated with the tropical timber trade. However other known wood forest products (NWFPs) such a medicinal plants, snails, mushrooms, wrapping leaves etc now provides the opportunity for a more seemingly benign form of forest resources exploitation that is also extremely profitable. As a matter of fact, exploitation based on allocation is the popular policy in GGNP known to be associated with Timber trade, where by logging is allowed to be carried out only on

allocated plot in the reserve(Buffer zone). Payment must have been made for such plot by the allottees who most times are timber contractors prior to felling. Mostly property hammers are issued for them after passing through due process of application. This policy generally helps the government to control the proportion of forest resources that are to be released for exploitation at every point in time so as to plan for replacement to ensure sustainability. Similarly, selective exploitation was mentioned as an existing forest policy in GGNP and refers to the felling of trees of specific ages and girths. This forest policy is basically used to curb the act of cutting the under-girth trees so as to allow them reach maturity stage. Also mentioned as forest policy in GGNP was rational and controlled harvesting on sustainable basis. Here harvesting is the activity linking resource management and resource utilization and thus influences resource sustainability. Rational and controlled harvesting of forest resources exploitation are very necessary if continual production of forest resources is to be achieved. Control simply means the maximum area from which forest produce may be harvested. This policy is very crucial for sustainable forest management. The low figure reported of this policy implied that, it is not always used. It must be noted that, there is need for rational and controlled harvesting of forest resources on sustainable basis so as to continue to enjoy forest production in perpetuity. Another existing forest policy mentioned in GGNP was protection of endangered wildlife and tree species through special permit rates. In this forest policy, special permit rates which are very high are introduced for the exploitation of endangered tree and wildlife species so as to discourage exploitation of such species and to ensure conservation of such species. The application of this particular forest policy in GGNP would go a long way in preserving threatened indigenous trees and wildlife species. Also mentioned as an existing forest policy in GGNP was regeneration at par with exploitation. Forest regeneration is the act of renewing tree cover by establishing young trees naturally or

artificially. This forest policy therefore expects that, there should be balance between the regeneration rate and the exploitation rate if any forest resources is to be taken at all. Another existing forest policy mentioned in GGNP was payment on permit basis for every tree fell in free area. Here, "Forest Permits" means any written licence issued by or under authority of the forestry department, permitting the performance of a specified act or acts. Where standing timber is sold on the stump, the stumpage is used. It is the earliest method of assessing fees payable for exploiting timber in Nigeria and is an in- situ method. In this method, the value of standing timber is determined by deducting the cost of harvesting and marketing from the value of the round wood. The remainder is then divided into an allowance for profit and risk (for the producer) and the stumpage fee (for the forest owner). In every state forest service has a list of tariffs for all commercial tree species, which is revised periodically. In addition different rates are charged depending on whether the trees are taken from inside or outside Gashaka-Gumti National Park. The stumpage rates also vary by species, depending on the quality of wood. In all cases, high stumpage rates are a strategy to protect the first class trees, such as *Milicia excelsa*, *Mansonia altissima*, *Entandrophragma Spp.* etc. which are particularly threatened. The above findings are in line with the earlier study conducted and reported by FAO, (2001). Similarly, those forest policies with zero implies that, they are not operational in Gashaka-Gumti National Park. This conforms with the report of Arifalo (2005) on the forest policies in Nigeria as he observes their operation across states in Nigeria. In a nut shell, in managing the forest resources of Gashaka-Gumti National Park, if people who are guilty of committing an offence are not prosecuted in accordance with the relevant provisions of forest policy, the porosity of the forest policy would be taken as an advantage by the others. Hence, more of such offenses should be expected from time-to-time in which the recurrent of such would in turn lead to total destruction of forest resources in Gashaka-Gumti National

Park and hence the need for strict implementation.

1.3: Rating of implementation level of forest policies in Gashaka-Gumti National Park

The result on rating level of implementation of forest policies in Gashaka-Gumti National park indicated that, 80(84.2%) of the respondents said it is between 0-35%, 10 (10.5%), 36-75% while 5(5.3%) are of the opinion that, it is between 76-100% respectively (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Rating of implementation level of forest policies in GGNP

Variables	Respondents	%
Implementation level of forest policies in GGNP		
0 – 35 %	80	84.2
36 – 75 %	10	10.5
76 – 100 %	5	5.3
Total	95	100

Source: Field Survey, (2021).

The highest number of respondents recorded for 0-35% level of forest policy implementation implied that, most poachers and illegal harvesters of forest resources work away without being apprehended because of poor forest policy implementation. This means that, the implementation level was low and this could be due to some constraints that needed to be tackled. This agreed with the findings of Smith, (1973), Faleyimu and Agbeja, (2012) and Vidya, (2014) respectively. According to Arifalo (2005), implementation of a policy is a vital stage in a policy development. Without a successful execution, a policy is merely a good idea. Therefore, the success of a policy, which is a programme of action or plan, depends largely on how it is implemented. Investigation into the level of implementation of existing forest policies in Gashaka Gumti National Park indicated low level of implementation.. This low level of implementation could be attributed to a number of factors, ranging from non-availability of manpower, equipment,

finance, patrol vehicle etc to mention but a few. Arifalo (2005) also buttressed this with a report that the implementation of forest policy is faced with constraints.

1.4: Constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP

The result on constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP indicated that, 15 (15.8%) of the respondents reported lack of finance; 20(21.0%), shortage of skilled

personnel and staff; 25 (26.3%), lack of effective supervision, co-ordination and control while another 25 (26.3%) of the respondents recorded ill-equipped forestry institutions to carry their functions as a major constraints. Similarly, 10 (10.6%) of the respondents are of the opinion that, political instability is a major constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP respectively (Table 1.4).

Table 1,4: Major Constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP

S/N	Variables	No of Respondents	%
1	Lack of finance	15	15.8
2	Shortage of skilled personnel/staff	20	21.0
3	Lack of effective supervision, co-ordination and control	25	26.3
4	Political instability	10	10.6
5	Ill-equipped forestry institutions to carry out their function	25	26.3
6	Total	95	100

Source: Field Survey, (2021).

The result on major constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP implies that, there are five (5) major constraints to forest policy implementation mentioned by the respondents in GGNP and the include the followings; Lack of finance; The success of any policy rest on finance. GGNP had inadequate funding and in order to perform their functions and fulfill their mandate, adequate funding is of paramount importance. The above corroborates Faleyimu, (2010). Similarly, shortage of skilled personnel and staff was another constraint to forest policy implementation in GGNP. GGNP needs more staff to police the park especially now that poaching and illegal logging is on the increase. The park is the largest with 6, 402 square kilometers. This finding agrees with the submission of Faleyimu, (2010). Another constraint also mentioned was lack of effective supervision, co-ordination and control which are very essential for any policy implementation. This finding corroborates Faleyimu and Agbeja, (2012). Also mentioned as a

constraint to forest policy implantation in GGNP was political instability; The management of GGNP is vested in the hands of the Federal government being a national park. However, constant changes of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria interference with existing forest policies, un-sustainable management decisions, frequent policy changes, lack of interest of the forestry sector etc are the prevalent challenges facing or hindering effective forest policy implementation in GGNP as a result of political instability. This finding agrees with the findings of Akindele, (2001) and Faleyimu, (2010) in their various submissions. However, ill-equipped forestry institutions to carry out their functions were another constraint mentioned by the respondents in GGNP. GGNP does not have adequate, available and functional equipments to enable them carry out their various operations as enshrine in their forest policies. These equipments ranges from tractors, patrol vehicles and fire fighting equipments. Most

of the tractors and patrol vehicles sighted had been grounded. The finding of this study corroborate Faleyimu, (2010), Faleyimu and Agbeja, (2012) respectively.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicated that, most of the respondents are males, married with moderate household size with tertiary educational certificates and are at their active age. Similarly, Compounding of offenses detected on exploitation; Exploitation based on allocation; Selective exploitation, Rational and control harvesting on sustainable basis, Protection of endangered wildlife and tree species through special permit rates, Regeneration at par with exploitation and payment on permit basis for every tree fell in free area were existing forest policies in GGNP. The findings on rating level of implementation of forest policies in Gashaka-Gumti National park indicated that, forest policy implementation is low. The findings on constraints to forest policy implementation indicated that, lack of finance, shortage of skilled personnel and staff, lack of effective supervision, co-ordination and control, ill-equipped forestry institutions to carry their functions and political instability were the major constraints to forest policy implementation in GGNP respectively.

Recommendation

Based on the above findings, the followings are recommended; The federal government should always provide adequate funding for GGNP to enable them carry out their mandate of ensuring strict forest policy implementation and compliance. More skilled personnel and staff should be recruited to ensure strict implementation and compliance of forest policies in GGNP. There should be effective supervision, co-ordination and control by all personnel and staff of GGNP. There should be continuity in the implementation of forest policies in GGNP irrespective of political changes in government. Federal government should provide functional equipments such as tractors for clearance, patrol vehicles for the enforcement of forest policies in GGNP.

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