

Chapter 26

Agricultural Schemes in Namibia for Meeting Essential Needs

Neeta Baporikar

Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia

Konis Elungi

Agro Marketing and Trading Agency, Namibia

ABSTRACT

Namibia has been striving to improve the rural poor quality of life through policies and schemes in line with the national development framework (Vision 2030). Sustained food production is one of the major initiatives, as it constitutes as basic livelihood activity but also augments rural income and livelihood. Apart from that, it is also a citizen's critical need. Though significant the schemes are, their contribution to household income and their role in improvement of livelihood is never taken up and exploration done. Adopting the DFID sustainable livelihood assessment framework, this chapter uses direct observations and primary data to present an assessment of the contribution of selected agricultural schemes.

INTRODUCTION

The Namibian government has been striving to improve the rural poor quality of life by strengthening existing livelihood programs, crafting and implementation of enabling policies, schemes and introduction of enabling institutions to diversify and increase their income by securing the market, improving the distribution network and developing agro-processing so as to meet the essential needs. Agricultural schemes play an important role in enhancing personal development, agricultural productivity of the farmer (Okorji & Meheja, 1993). They also ultimately contribute to national development especially in developing countries (Orebiyi, 1999).

According to Rigour (2006), there is no comprehensive appraisal method for agricultural schemes in terms of their performance in accordance with Namibia's National Development Framework (Vision 2030). Due to lack of suitable appraisal method, the difficulty lies in measuring effectiveness of these

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schemes and their contributions to national development to enable to meet citizens' essential needs. Hence, the aim of the current chapter is to do that by adoption of (DFID, 1999, 2000) Sustainable Livelihood Assessment Framework. The sample includes selected schemes based on national development and livelihood improvement that enable to meet beneficiaries' essential needs. Fifty respondents (household head) were involved in the household questionnaire survey conducted from the study areas. The main objective of this study was to assess the contribution of schemes to household income and livelihood improvement and analyse factors influencing the economic activities and sustainability of livelihood strategies of public agricultural schemes beneficiaries in Orange River Irrigation Project and Ndonga Linena Project.

Specific objectives of the study include:

1. To analyse Livelihood Capital/Assets from which beneficiaries of schemes construct their livelihood.
2. To examine the various Livelihood Strategies engaged by schemes beneficiaries in Orange River Irrigation Project and Ndonga Linena Project.

BACKGROUND

The government of the Republic of Namibia has initiated several agricultural schemes for development in the last decade. These schemes implementation was the responsibility of competent project implementing agencies. Some of the important schemes among them are: Green Scheme Projects, National Horticulture Development Initiative, National Resettlement Programme, The Affirmative Action Loan Scheme, Provision of Livestock Breeding Material (Bull Scheme) and Dry Land Crop Production Programme (DLCPP). This study deals with only two Green Scheme Irrigation Projects, chosen in accordance with their ability to contribute to Namibia's development framework (Vision 2030). The schemes aimed to reduce poverty, create employment, promote economic empowerment, stimulate and sustain economic growth and reduce inequalities in income distribution and regional development.

Small-scale farmers who use governmental schemes as a tool in poverty mitigation were the focus. Their socio-economic characteristics and community related factors did have influence on their livelihood activities. Hence, in-depth analysis of beneficiaries' social, cultural and economic relationships as it influences their livelihood activities was undertaken. These variables were explored through qualitative method through personal interviews with semi structured questionnaire followed by a thorough transect walk. Qualitative method consists of three kinds of data collection techniques namely: in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation and documents (Patton, 1990). The sample in this study are Ndonga Linena Green Scheme and Orange River Irrigation Projects, under the management of a state-owned enterprise (SOE), namely Agricultural Business Development Agency (AGRIBUSDEV).

According to (World Bank, 2010), a transect walk is a systematic walk along a defined path (transect) across the community/project area together with the local people to explore local conditions by observing, looking, asking, listening, and then create a transect diagram. This walk was generally useful as it helped seeing the 'bigger picture' and understanding the context before the actual interviews are administered (Zeeuw & Wilbers, 2004). With the help of local translator, a transect walk was carried out for two days at each study areas to capture various physical and socio-economic aspects that have a bearing on the operation of the schemes. Primary data collection was through a formal household survey with the help of standard questionnaire designed to obtain information from beneficiaries of those interventions/schemes.

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