



GETTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS TO SHARE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO WATER AND FOOD SECURITY

Akwasi Asamoah^a, Charles Antwi-Boasiako^b and Kwasi Frimpong-Mensah^c

a,b,c. Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

*Corresponding author's Email: asamoah38@yahoo.com

Received: 27th Feb.2013

Revised: 25th May 2013

Accepted: 15th June 2013

Abstract: The depth of traditional knowledge found in indigenous and marginalized communities dictates the extent to which their populations adapt to and mitigate climate change much as the intactness of biodiversity of the agro-ecosystems on which they depend does. Often, a lot more is done to ensure the intactness of biodiversity than the effective sharing of traditional knowledge in a quest to empower indigenous and marginalized populations to adapt to and mitigate climate change. But the latter is equally important as the former, and the two ought to go close together in empowering indigenous and marginalized populations. Nonetheless, the effective sharing of a dynamic commodity as traditional knowledge requires an all inclusive approach which involves consultation with all groups as the leaving out or the limited participation of any group could undermine the sharing process. However, there are issues that arise in ensuring an all-inclusive traditional knowledge sharing process. Issues may be viewed as challenges or opportunities to the effective sharing of traditional knowledge, and arise as a result of cultural, political, economic, legal, geographical, technical, historical, and institutional differences (subtle as they may be) within/among indigenous and marginalized groups. Thus, this paper captures these challenges and opportunities that characterize the all-inclusive sharing of traditional knowledge within/among the different groups in indigenous and marginalized populations. And, recommends the best way forward by using competent actors who are self-motivated to bring all their competences to the facilitation of all-inclusive traditional knowledge sharing within/among the different groups for oneness of voice of indigenous and marginalized communities.

Keywords: Development, Livelihoods, Sustainable.

Postal Address: P.O Box 2770, Kumasi, Ghana, Phone: 00233-244605483

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous and marginalized populations are custodians of many of the remaining areas with significant biodiversity. Secluded somewhat by socio-cultural circumstances, indigenous and marginalized populations depend directly on their immediate environment for food, fuel, clothing, medicine and shelter (CI, 2001). But climate change threatens their environment and their very survival.

To survive, they will have to effectively adapt to and mitigate climate change. Nonetheless, the depth of traditional knowledge found in indigenous and marginalized communities dictates the extent to which their populations adapt to and mitigate climate change much as the intactness of biodiversity of the agro-ecosystems on which they depend does. Often, a lot more is done to ensure the intactness of biodiversity than the effective sharing of traditional knowledge in a quest to empower indigenous and marginalized populations to adapt to and mitigate climate change. But the latter is equally important as the former, and the two ought to go side by side to ensure indigenous and marginalized populations effectively adapt to and mitigate climate change. Nonetheless, the effective sharing of a dynamic commodity as traditional knowledge requires a consultative approach which involves all groups, as the leaving out or the limited participation of any group undermines the sharing process. However, there are issues that arise in ensuring an all-inclusive sharing process. Issues may be viewed as challenges or opportunities to the effective sharing of traditional knowledge, and arise as a result of cultural, political, economic, legal, geographical, technical, historical, and institutional differences (subtle as they may be) within/among indigenous and marginalized groups. Thus, this paper captures these challenges and opportunities that characterize the all-inclusive sharing of traditional knowledge within/among the different groups in indigenous and marginalized populations. And, recommends the best way forward by using competent actors who are self-motivated to bring all their competences to the facilitation of all-inclusive traditional knowledge sharing within/among the different groups for oneness of voice of indigenous and marginalized communities.

CHALLENGES

Indigenous and marginalized actors are diverse in their cultural, political, economic, legal, geographical, technical, historical, and institutional backgrounds which may be challenges and possible barriers to the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge.

Informational

Flow of accurate information is hindered within and among actors in indigenous and marginalized populations (Christoplos, 2008) often due to language and cultural differences. This constrains understanding and networking within and among actor groups essential for the all-inclusive approach to traditional knowledge sharing.

Financial

Even though financial resources of actors in indigenous and marginalized populations are generally low (Christoplos and Farrington 2004), some actors have more financial resources than others. This makes actors unable to adequately share traditional knowledge in an all-inclusive manner to enable indigenous and marginalized populations sustain their ecosystems and livelihoods.

Legal

Tribal and customary laws vary from one group of actors to the other in indigenous and marginalized populations (UNDP, 2010). Varying laws erects a barrier to traditional knowledge sharing within and among actors. Insensitivity of national governments to tribal and customary laws paves way for private investors to indiscriminately plunder the natural and intellectual estates of indigenous and marginalized populations.

Geographical

Indigenous and marginalized people who have remained integral part of their environments are a valuable source of climate change information, as they are the ones that feel first-hand slightest changes in climate. Thus, indigenous and marginalized peoples can serve as first and relay points of climate information for early global action, but they are the most obscured and difficult to get in touch with in efficient real time.

Technical

Indigenous and marginalized actor groups have different levels of technological know-how within and among populations. This hinders the effective and efficient sharing of technical traditional knowledge and consensus building for sustainable development.

Historical

Indigenous and marginalized actors have different histories within and among populations. This poses a barrier to the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge, and undermines consensus building. Inherent in each history are experiences that better empower indigenous and marginalized peoples to cope with environmental challenges as deforestation, fragmentation and climate change. Loss of history poses a serious survival threat to indigenous and marginalized communities.

Political

Politics shape the perceptions and opinions of indigenous and marginalized peoples on issues affecting them. Perceptions and opinions determine the extent to which indigenous and marginalized actor groups can share traditional knowledge and build consensus for sustainable development. Nonetheless, indigenous and marginalized actors vary sharply in political circumstances within and among populations, which can be a barrier to the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge.

Economic

Indigenous and marginalized actor groups vary in Economic circumstance within and among populations, though subtly. One who is economically stronger may be tempted to impose certain knowledge (interventions) on the less strong in difficult situations, which does not promote all-inclusiveness of traditional knowledge sharing among a people who must have a united front.

Institutional

Actor institutions involved in the sharing of traditional knowledge vary in mandates, strengths and weaknesses within and among groups of actors. This often is a bane to the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge among indigenous and marginalized communities.

OPPORTUNITIES

Indigenous and marginalized actors are diverse in their cultural, political, economic, legal, geographical, technical, historical, and institutional backgrounds which may be opportunities and possible impetus for the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge.

Informational

Visual media presents an effective and efficient means to improve access to information within and among groups of actors especially where there is language and cultural difference. Language and cultural differences ought to inform the choice of visual media to effect the required attitudinal and behavioural change for continuous co-operation. ICT, especially mobile phones, is fast becoming an indispensable tool in driving access to information. And development activities of indigenous and marginalized communities ought to look at how to reform information formats and dissemination structures using ICT for the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge.

Financial

All-inclusive sharing of traditional knowledge requires the investment of both public and private resources to make it efficient and effective (Christoplos, 2008). Public-Private partnerships ought to be structured in such a way that there is fair sharing of dividends on investments to sustain the partnerships. Where private investment is more than public investment, policy ought to ensure that private actors do not turn autocratic, which is the temptation in most cases. There ought to be innovation to strengthen and sustain public-private partnerships responsive to the human rights, changing needs and aspirations of indigenous and marginalized populations, especially with regard to traditional knowledge sharing.

Legal

Tribal and customary laws within and among groups of actors ought to be respected and considered to ensure the free sharing of traditional knowledge. Knowledgeable indigenous and marginalized opinion leaders ought to be involved in multilateral law-making to inspire adherence to

unanimous legal instruments for the full and adequate protection of the estates of indigenous and marginalized populations.

Geography

Development activities ought to build the capacity of indigenous and marginalized peoples to observe record and transmit climate change to national and global response institutions around the world for timely action. Climate change scientists and indigenous peoples ought to be empowered to exchange knowledge to support each other in action (Salick and Byg 2007).

Technical

Development activities ought to promote adaptive and/or experiential learning that build on actor knowledge systems in the face of changing climatic conditions. Multi-actor participation is the way to develop effective and efficient experiential learning curriculum for the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge.

Historical

Inherent in each history are experiences that specially empower indigenous and marginalized peoples to cope with environmental challenges as deforestation, fragmentation and climate change. Adequate appreciation of the past experiences of each group of actors is essential to the effective and efficient sharing of traditional knowledge as it promotes understanding and consensus building.

Political

Indigenous and marginalized peoples ought to be sensitive to the varying political circumstances of different actors while sharing traditional knowledge. A good appreciation of the political orientation of each group of actors heightens understanding and consensus building.

Economic

Indigenous and marginalized peoples ought to identify and be sensitive to the economic strengths and weakness of each actor while sharing traditional knowledge in order to see how best to share cost and benefit for continuity.

Institutional

Indigenous and marginalized peoples ought to identify and be sensitive to the mandates, weakness and strengths of actor institutions while sharing traditional knowledge. That way, they recognize how best to support each other for sustainable traditional knowledge sharing.

CONCLUSION

The best ways to ensuring an effective and efficient all-inclusive traditional knowledge sharing process is to involve knowing actors who are self-motivated to bring all their competences to the facilitation of traditional knowledge sharing within/among the different groups for oneness of voice of indigenous and marginalized communities.

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