



KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

P.O. BOX 20412

NAIROBI

FARMERS' ATTITUDE TO TREE PLANTING
IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE

PAUL OTHIM ONGUGO

SOCIO-ECONOMICS DIVISION

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INTRODUCTION

The key word in this paper is attitude. While trying to tackle the problem of agriculture and food policy worldwide, knutson et al (1983) described attitude as what is generally believed and this involves mental conviction, acceptance, confidence or faith that a proposition is true. In Weber's handy college dictionary (1981), the word attitude is described as a position or manner indicative of feeling, opinion or intention towards a person or a thing. These are definitely neither the most exhaustive or the best definitions of the word.

As early as 1930's it had been observed by a Japanese scholar, Toyohiko Kagawa that conservation with ordinary trees was not being practiced in Japan and elsewhere. The reason, he observed was that ordinary trees did not yield early cash returns. Rural families were therefore not ready to plant them. It is true that the majority of our farming communities are rural based and most of them are subsistence farmers whose time preferences are short, risk discounted returns are low and their propensities to invest are also low. Most of such farmers produce to consume and thereby ensure their survival and that of their families.

While the above is true, it has already been recorded that there is a general shift in forest policies worldwide which have gone in tune with similar changes in economic development policies towards the emphasis on meeting the needs of the rural poor in their quest for survival resources e.g. food, fuelwood, poles, fodder medicinal herbs etc; and that industrialization and economic growth will not necessarily ensure achievement of the equity goals of development; thereby stressing the need for self reliance for the provision of production and utility goods and services, through the use of locally available resource.

2. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Attitude as beliefs are developed. They can be developed based on truth, partial truth and false beliefs. One event which must have contributed immensely to the farmers' attitude to tree planting is the historical evolution in Kenya of both agriculture and forestry. All through the years there has been a sharp division in the activities of both agriculture and forestry even though these should have been made to look, at least in the observers eyes , as truly compatible activities involving to a greater degree the utilization of the land resource. This structural division is provided for legally by separate acts of parliament i.e. the Agriculture Act Cap 318 and Forest Act Cap 385; and the policies which are geared towards the utilization of the one resource, land, are implemented by two separate ministries.

The Aldev Plan, 1945, the Swynnerton plan, 1954 and the Agriculture Act 1967, have all dealt with the development of Agriculture in isolation from forestry development. In the same way, the East African forestry Regulations of 1902 and the current forest policy, 1968, have both considered the development of forestry in complete isolation from that of agriculture.

A casual look at both acts reveal clearly that while the forest act limits wananchi in their role in forestry development, the agriculture act encourages their involvement in agricultural production. The forestry personnel used to be considered as somebody far removed from the day to day activities of forestry development as his/her major role was that of a protector of the forest resource from the people. The Agriculture personnel used to be and is still somebody working with the farmers to assist them with their activities in agricultural production.

These sharp divisions have had two effects in the way in which they have helped the farmers' attitudinal development towards agriculture and forestry.

- the first one is that agriculture and forestry are not complementary but are to be pursued separately; and,
- agriculture is for the people while forestry is for the government.

These results were that the farmers' attitude towards agriculture tended to be positive while that towards forestry tended to be negative.

3. THE NATURE OF FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE

Of the three basic needs for a human being, food, shelter and clothing; food, the resultant of agriculture, is considered first. If not only because of this reason, agriculture has always had an advantage over the other uses for land. It is not uncommon to find forests being excised, cleared legally to give way to agriculture. This attitude has in given an added courage to those individuals who encroach into protected forests.

When one considers the time involved between the production of an agricultural crop and that of a tree crop, save for the fast producing vegetatively grown fruits, agricultural production process usually takes a shorter time. Because of this reason alone, farmers attitude may favour agricultural production process to that of forestry. This is not surprising when one takes into consideration that the longer the production processes in terms of time it takes, the less the products will be valued as the rate of discounting the future incomes must be very high for them to compare favourably with those products which take short time to produce e.g. compare the production process involved in producing equal volumes of hybrid maize and wood from cypress tree.

In some cases, farmers have developed close relationship to certain things e.g. Nomadic tribes cannot compromise land for grazing with land for afforestation even though they may be well aware that afforestation will result into an increased amount of fodder for their animals. Cases are well documented

where farmers have developed an apathy towards the planting of certain tree species e.g Markhamia Lutea in some parts of South Nyanza. women farmers in Western Province particularly in Kakamega are known to fear planting trees for the fact that if they plant tree, their husbands may die.

4. OTHER CONSTRAINTS FARMERS HAVE IN TREE GROWING

Farming being a business calls for rational decision making process. A farmer has a number of things he/she would like to undertake on his/her farm, and as such, he/she must give them priority based on felt need. Cases have been noted where the development of forests has resulted into an increased number of birds and animals which may not be favourable to food production. Where land holdings are small, they may feel that the competition of trees for water, sunlight or nutrients will lead to an unacceptable reduction in crop yields.

where there are doubts over land ownership rights, farmers will tend to be unwilling to make the long term investment involved in tree growing. The same reluctance to plant trees is often felt by tenant farmers with no permanent right to their land holdings. Such farmers will tend to mine the land resource through the production of short maturing high producing crops rather than investing on the soil improving trees with long production cycles.

In some countries, the government controls the management of trees to the extent that farmers tend to think that trees are for the government. Where this is so, the obvious attitude developed is that since trees are for the government, the government should plant and manage the tree resource.

this state of affairs is also rampant in commonly owned land resources. we are all aware of the tremendous limitations there are in the proper management of the common property resources, as effectively, such resources have no owners. This problem is very urgent when one notes

that it is on such lands where tree depletion has occurred at the fastest rate due to non control of use.

5. SUGGESTED LINES OF ACTION

Throughout this paper, we have noted that farmers generally have a more positive attitude towards agriculture than they have towards forestry. We have tried to document various reasons for this. We also note here the tremendous changes which have occurred in the last five to eight years. These changes which have been in favour of forestry development have come as a result of two reasons, viz:-

- the political goodwill and encouragement marked with actual active involvement in forestry, and
- the felt needs e.g. for woodfuel, construction poles, fodder medicinal plants etc coupled with the realization that agriculture cannot survive without forestry. To a lesser extent, extension work in the form of education, information etc has also added to this realization.

5.1. THE CONCEPT OF THREE DIMENSION FORESTRY

There are two arguments in favour of this concept. The first one is that it diversifies forestry so as to end with at least three products, thus tree product, animal product and crop product or in other words, agriculture and forestry combined. The second is that it reduces the time span involved in forestry production and thereby reducing the risk. This concept which today has been labelled "agroforestry" has been practiced by farmers and institutions involved in the production of tree crops for decades, even though it has been made into a scientific practice only recently. It can be considered at the global level as a complimentary practice between forestry and agriculture.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF INCENTIVES

It is generally accepted that incentives will lead to rewards or vice versa. The community, e.g. the Kenyan community has already accepted that for the country to

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forge ahead with her economic development, tree planting must be accelerated. This implies that the nation should be able to commit resources to ensure that this happens either directly using the limited public land. There are various institutional arrangements which have been organized to encourage agriculture e.g. Public Corporations. some of them with the ability to lend farmers money for agricultural production. The same should be considered actively for forestry since tree growing involves huge monetary investments.

5.3 COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Since it is the people who will benefit from the trees, the same people should be actively involved in tree growing. Here the paramount requirement is active participation by the people in tree growing, especially on communal lands. The most limiting factor here is how to achieve spontaneous participation from the people.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN TREE GROWING

Everywhere where there is settled agriculture, spontaneous tree cultivation occurs, this happens even where climatic conditions are difficult. The problem is that such meagre spontaneous cultivation cannot meet the urgent and escalating requirement for trees and tree products on farm. The necessity of this requirement is the need to activate and accelerate this spontaneous tree cultivation.

6.1 Understanding the people's socio-Economy

The most important aspect of stimulation of spontaneous participation by farmers in tree growing lies in understanding and appreciating the farmer's existing behaviour, which we have explored in this paper, and their own perception of what is desired i.e. the need for increased efforts in tree planting on public and private lands. If this is achieved then our efforts will be sustained. Diamo and cambell (1986) have argued that people follow their present behaviour patterns for very good reasons and will only participate in anything new

if they see there is something in it for them. Of those farmers who live in arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya, Konuche and Milimo (1989) have quoted from Burley (1980) that environmental constraints and practical afforestation techniques are not considered the major factors limiting tree planting in ASALs; important are the social features (such as land tenure system and community organization), and economic factors including lack of monetized economy, poor transport and marketing systems, and poor understanding of long term benefits.

We are convinced that once we understand these problems and devise ways and means of surmounting them then, we are surmounting them then, we are sure of soliciting spontaneous participation from the farmers. Some of the ways and means which have been put forward by many scholars include:-

- creation of favorable conditions of tree planting by the people such as incentives, proper land tenure system.
- development of marketing systems and structures capable of absorbing the products of participation e.g. making sure that the activity will give tangible rewards and personal satisfaction.
- Multidisciplinary approach. This calls for an approach to a problem in different ways which are both complementary and compensatory such that losses and gains are easily cushioned by the participants.
- creation of responsibility such that the participants are responsible for both the activity of tree growing and its products. The participants must also be involved in the decision making process at all levels.
- equity in distribution of the resource or product to benefit the greater majority of the participants within the limits of social acceptability will sustain participation.

One of the most difficult questions to answer is how do you ascertain that the answers indicated are the right answers to the right questions:

To know and get this right, the farmers themselves must be involved. They must decide on their needs and priority

of needs in afforestation. They must decide how these needs can be met. Ours is only to guide them to follow the right procedure in problem solution.

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