



**Institute of Social Studies**  
Graduate School of Development Studies

**Participation of the Poor in Poverty Reduction:  
An Analysis of Implementation of PMA/NAADS in the case  
of Nebbi District - Uganda**

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## **Dedication**

To my wife Juliet, and to my sons – Alvin and Elly.



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## List of Acronyms

AADS	Agricultural Advisory Services
ASED	Action for Socio- Economic Development
CAP	Community Action Programme
CBF	Community-Based Facilitator
CDI	Community Development Initiatives
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRCM	Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFF	District Farmer Forum
FID	Farmer Institutional Development
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
HIPCs	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IDA	International Development Association
LGs	Local Governments
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NFF	National Farmer Forum
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NURP	Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PERD	Public Enterprises Restructuring and Divestitures
PMA	Plan for Modernization of Agriculture
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers
SCC	Sub-county Coordinating Committee
SFF	Sub-county Farmer Forum
SNC	Sub-county NAADS Coordinator
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund

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VGS  
UNRISD

Vulnerable Group Support  
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

## **Abstract**

The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) was designed based on the need to empower farmers – particularly the poor and women – to demand and control agricultural advisory services and increase participation of the people in decision-making with the goal of reducing poverty. The purpose of this study was to find out whether the implementation of NAADS in Nebbi district was participatory. The study took critical look at Farmer Institutional Development (FID), Advisory and Information Services and Participatory Planning, Enterprise Selection and Technology Development as key units of analysis.

Using The Ladder of Participation as analytical tool, the study found out that the institutional development process under NAADS in Nebbi district has not enhanced the participation of farmers in planning process and capacity of group. The involvement of farmers in decision-making processes is constraint by inadequate institutional and resource capacity. Farmers' participation is further being constraint by self-interest elites and politicians who have influence and dominated the institutions that are meant to empwer poor farmers.

In conclusion therefore, institutional processes that were aimed at enhancing participation of poor farmers under NAADS are not promoting capabilities of farmers to take control over processes of decision-making. NAADS implementation process in Nebbi district is therefore not participatory.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction and Background**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This study was based on the promise that participation of the poor in poverty reduction interventions is the best way forward in reducing the level of poverty. It sought to analyze whether the poor farmers in Uganda are participating in the implementation of Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) which are the key programmes aimed at reducing poverty among the rural poor in Uganda. For the purpose of this analysis, Nebbi district was taken as a case study.

In the last decade there has been a growing significance of the concept of 'participation' as a new paradigm in development discourses. This trend has shifted the thinking and practice from a process that used to be 'top-down' to what is now 'bottom-up' approach to development. Although 'participation' is not in itself a new concept, its use and meaning has greatly expanded (Chambers, 1995). This has been by and large informed by changing contexts of development challenges in the developing countries. The escalating nature of poverty, for example, suggests that past development strategies meant to reduce poverty have not involved the poor people themselves. Current development interventions emphasize participation of the poor as the strategy to reduce poverty.

The increasing significance of the concept of participation in development thinking has inevitably attracted the attention of many scholars and practitioners alike. Within scholarly work, there has been remarkable critique of the approach. Within the circle of development agencies, it has become a new orthodoxy and a common denominator for development practices. It is no surprise that the international development institutions like the World Bank have in the last decade, joined the proponents of the approach.

For example, in the mid 1990s the initiative to provide special debt relief from public creditors to at least forty Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) was rede-

financed into a new approach to development co-operation. In this initiative, HIPC countries have been conditioned to formulate Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs) entailing how they will pursue the twin goals of sustaining economic growth and curbing poverty as guarantee to creditors that budgetary resources available by freeing debts is used to combat poverty, (Molenaers and Ronard, 2002: 3). The approach is also complemented by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG); especially goal number one that targets to reduce the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day (UNCDF, 2003:23). The donor emphasis on participation of all stakeholders as key to the success of poverty reduction strategies and the attempts of recipient countries to involve stakeholders can not be underestimated. Emphasis is also placed on the participation of 'civil society', the population, the media as well as relevant government departments, (Molenaers and Ronard, 2002: 3). It is worth noting though, that the PRSP agenda is a World Bank led framework for development. The centrality of the concept of participation within the World Bank is therefore taken with caution. There is suspicion that it is "repertoire with which the Bank has sought to remake its public face" (Fances, 2001:72)

## **1.2 Background**

In Uganda the HIPC initiative resulted into formulation of Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), a poverty reduction strategic paper. PEAP was drafted in 1997 and revised in 2000 and 2004, also adopted as a comprehensive development framework with the aim of propelling economic growth by reducing poverty.

In pursuance of PEAP, the government in 2000 took to implement a multi-sectoral approach under the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) principally to eradicate poverty by effectively transforming the livelihoods of the 85 per cent of Uganda's population and subsistence farmers, 48 per cent of whom lived below absolute poverty line (MFPED, 2004:3). PMA's mission is "eradicating poverty by transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture" (MFPED, 2004:28)

According to the PMA document, poverty is defined as lack of income and powerlessness to change one's way of life. PMA was therefore set to increase income of poor farmers on the one hand and on the other hand, giving them a voice in making



decisions about issues that affect their lives. “The main target beneficiaries of PMA intervention are the subsistence farmers who constitute majority of the poor in rural areas”, (MFPED, 2004:29). Participation is, therefore seen as a key factor in the process of alleviating poverty, as it would provide the poor with the channels and space to influence policies that would be to their interest.

The decentralization and Local Government structure are viewed as the premise for effective participation of the poor. The PMA document stipulates that “this empowers the Local Governments (districts, sub-counties and urban authorities) to take increasing responsibility for the delivery of services and promotion of popular participation and empowerment of local people in making decisions”, (MFPED, 2004:36). PMA emphasizes that the farmers have greater say on the allocation of resources and local government investment and priority expenditures. Accordingly, “For the agricultural sector, Local governments will be responsible for, among other functions, designing local government agricultural sector plans...” (MFPED, 2004:44). Institutional arrangements have therefore been put in place to facilitate poor farmers’ participation.

NAADS, has been put in place under PMA as a “new paradigm, and will advocate for an agricultural advisory service (AADS) that is owned by stakeholders...where the farmers are empowered as partners and have a role to play”, (MFPED, 2004:55). In his Foreword to the NAADS Master Document, 2000, the then Uganda’s Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries – Kisamba Mugerwa asserted that:

“The philosophy for the NAADS design is the need to empower farmers – particularly the poor and women – to demand and control agricultural advisory services [...] and increase participation of the people in decision making”. (MFPED, 2004: v)

Thus, NAADS offers the main institutional framework for farmer participation. In this arrangement the farmers are expected to articulate their interests (in special groups) from village to national levels based on common interests as a bottom-up approach to policy formulation and demand-driven service delivery. The policy

documents therefore clearly articulate the participation of poor farmers in all processes in reducing poverty.

### **1.3 The Problem**

NAADS has been implementing the agricultural component of PMA since 2002. However, there are early signs that suggest the process of implementation is not benefiting the poor farmers. Some studies have already raised concerns as to whether or not poor farmers are actually participating, (Oxford Policy Management, 2005:11; Oxfam/FOWODE, 2004; Stroud et al, 2005).

For example, the PMA evaluation of 2005 has noted that whereas the PMA document identifies subsistence farmers as its main beneficiaries, NAADS is targeting the 'economically active poor' who are believed to have economic assets and thereby able to take riskier ventures considered inappropriate for poor farmers. In essence therefore this implies the poorer farmers are not participating but the well-off farmers, (Oxford Policy Management, 2005:11). Oxfam/FOWODE in an earlier study of PMA/NAADS also revealed that the selection of 'economically active poor' has in effect affected the women more because most women do not own the basic asset – land<sup>1</sup>, (Oxfam/FOWODE, 2004)

Further more, Oxford Policy Management study found that the element of co-funding which is required by PMA implementation is discouraging poorer farmers from participating in NAADS<sup>2</sup>, (Oxford Policy Management, 2005: 12). The same report has raised doubt whether the enterprise selection process under provides enterprises that are appropriate to farmers needs or to market opportunities facing the poor farmers, (Oxford Policy Management, 2005: 14). The report notes that, "despite NAADS enterprise selection in being conducted in an apparently participatory manner, the technologies available to farmers are limited to only three enterprises – or for the most recent 8 NAADS district, to just one enterprise", (Ox-

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the land in Uganda is held under customary tenure system in which land is inherited and controlled by male heirs in the interest of the family lineage. Women have limited control over land even where they marry.

<sup>2</sup> According to the provisions, NAADS farmer groups are to contribute 2% towards the cost of advisory services they receive. Oxfam/FOWODE (2004) study found out that most farmers find the contribution unaffordable.

ford Policy Management, 2005: 18). The narrow scope of enterprises available for farmers has been made worse by the fact that NAADS discourages non-traditional enterprises. This reports also noted that in effect this approach excludes poorer and risk-averse farmers from participation. Stroud et al (2005) on the other hand observed that some minority interest groups have raised sentiment to the structure for not accepting the enterprises of their choice (Stroud et al, 2005:17). This raises the question as to whether the poor farmers have a voice to decide on their needs.

Stroud et al (2005) has raised similar concerns especially regarding Farmer Institutional Development (FID) under NAADS. The study notes that group formation tended to exclude poorer farmers and some groups that were formed by poorer farmers have since fell off. Further more, the study observes that most benefits accruing from NAADS to groups are controlled and taken advantage of by more resourceful and better of members. At Farmer Forum level, there is concern that the composition of the sub-county forum<sup>3</sup> more likely curtails farmer representatives on the forum from decision making. (Stroud et al, 2005).

It is no doubt that there are many factors that can hinder the poor farmers from benefiting from the PMA/NAADS programmes. However, considering that PMA/NAADS are grounded on the principle of participation of poor people, the issues raised above cast doubt as to whether the implementation of PMA/NAADS is participatory.

#### **1.4 Relevance and Justification**

The Uganda's poverty reduction interventions have been lauded by many observers as a success story (Hickey, 2004). On the other hand studies carried out on PMA and NAADS (ref. problem statement) since 2004 suggest that 'not all that glitters is Gold – poor farmers may not be benefiting. There are certainly many factors why the poor seems not to benefit from some of the interventions like PMA/NAADS. This study takes a particular interest in the implementation process of PMA/NAADS, a process presumed to involve and empower the poor farmers.

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<sup>3</sup> According to NAADS implementation guidelines, the sub-county farmer forum is constituted by three representatives of farmers and two government representatives. Stroud et al (2005) observes that this could reduce the influence of farmers in decision making.

Secondly, most of the studies referred to in this paper have focus on outcome of PMA/NAADS and not much into the process. This study, therefore, bridges the gap by analysing NAADS implementation.

Finally, the study took a case of Nebbi district which was rolled-in in the second phase of NAADS in 2004. The motivation was to find out whether there could be something different in Nebbi right from its early stages of implementation. PMA/NAADS programme in Nebbi district has not been as such studies at least as in other districts.

### **1.5 Research Objectives and Questions**

The main objective of this study was to find out whether the implementation of PMA/NAADS is participatory. The specific objectives are;

- To analyze how the farmer institutional development processes is under NAADS.
- To analyze the involvement of farmers in decision making processes under NAADS.
- To find out what constraint poor farmer participation in NAADS.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The central question addressed in this research was: “Is participation taking place in PMA/NAADS?”

Specific questions are:

- How are poor farmers involved in the NAADS programme implementation?
- How does the institutional arrangement affect poor farmers’ participation in NAADS?

Table 1: Links between Research Objectives and Research Questions

Research Objective	Research Question
To analyze how the farmer institutional development processes under NAADS.	How are poor farmers involved in the NAADS programme implementation?
To analyze the involvement of farmers in decision making processes under NAADS.	How are poor farmers involved in the NAADS programme implementation?
To find out what constraint poor farmer participation in NAADS.	How does the institutional arrangement affect poor farmers' participation in NAADS?

## 1.7 Methodology

This study used as its case study NAADS implementation in Nebbi district<sup>4</sup>. State the reasons why the 2 were finally selected. Two sub-counties were purposively sampled; Kucwiny sub-county has been participating in NAADS from 2004 and Nebbi sub-county joined NAADS in 2006. In each sub-county ten of the NAADS farmer groups were studied. Field work was conducted in August 2007. The study made use of both primary and secondary data.

### *Data sources*

#### Primary Data:

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with ten selected farmer-groups in each of the two sub-counties of study area. Some of the focus group meetings were held at NAADS implementation sites. The researcher benefited from the on-site meetings in two ways; by assessing the quality of participation of group members through observation and the recording of selected qualitative information on, for example, who speaks at meetings, does one person or group dominate the discussion, how are decisions made and farmer knowledge on technology adopted as well as awareness of the NAADS programme. Records of the groups were assessed to

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<sup>4</sup> Current NAADS coverage in Nebbi district: Erussi, Kucwiny and Nebbi sub-counties in Padyere county; Kango, Zeu and Paidha sub-counties in Okoro county, and Panyango and Pakwach sub-counties in Jonam county

establish the level of members' attendance of group activities and capacity of leaders to maintain good records.

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted separately with two service providers namely Action for Socio- Economic Development (ASED) and Caritas – Nebbi, and chairpersons of the Sub-county Farmer Forum and Sub-county NAADS Coordination Committees. The District NAADS Coordinator and the District Productions Coordinator were also interviewed.

#### Secondary Data:

Secondary data was mainly used to set the ground for primary data analysis. It was also the basis of evidence and background for the case study and triangulation. A number of documents, reports and records at group, sub-county, district and national levels were used to supplement interviews and focus group discussions. An analysis of NAADS structure/institution at sub-county level was done to find out whether it facilitates participation of poor farmers. The followings constituted the sources of secondary information;

- The Plan for Modernization of Agriculture Evaluation report 2005
- NAADS Progress Quarterly reports
- Poverty Assessment Reports: Poverty trends and baseline information
- Nebbi District NAADS Reports
- Sub-county NAADS report: identifying gaps
- Enterprise activity records of farmer groups, and
- Service Providers Report

### **1.8 Structure of the Paper**

The paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and general background of the study. It includes the study problem, justification, research objectives and question. The last part of chapter one presents the methods of data collection and sources of information. Chapter two is a discussion of concepts of participation and poverty. The chapter attempts to locate participation approach within poverty reduction interventions. The broader and varying perspectives of participation and poverty discussed in this chapter are intended to help lay the foundation for the theoretical and analytical framework used in the paper.

In chapter three, the theoretical and analytical framework is presented. Chapter four is an overview of poverty reduction policies in Uganda. The chapter presents the poverty trends in Uganda and the government efforts in reducing poverty. The chapter narrows down the poverty question to Nebbi district level where the study is targeted.

Chapter five is a presentation and discussion of findings, and chapter six is the conclusion drawn from the analysis of findings.





## Chapter Two:

### Locating Participation in Poverty Reduction: Concepts and Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

'Participation' as a concept in development discourses is not new. However, its re-emergence in the 1980s signifies recognition of the shortcomings of the traditional 'to-down', externally-driven; 'expert-oriented' approaches to development, (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). As alternative development approach, participation gained recognition way back in the early 1980s as influenced by the work of Robert Chambers and its practice gained more significance from the 1990s. However, in the last decade, commentators and critiques have questioned if participation is not just a "buzz word" (Cornwall and Brock, 2005) or "the new tyranny" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) or if it is not just an ambiguous concept (Parfitt, 2004). This chapter discusses the various theoretical and practical perspectives of participation in an attempt to draw on how the concept can be used in poverty reduction interventions with the poor. The main focus is question of whether participation is a means or an end or whether it is a process and on-going. How this can help to understand the nature of participation of poor people in poverty reduction programmes.

One of the major critics of participatory approach has been the Cooke and Kothari volume of 2001, *Participation: The New Tyranny?* that cast doubt on the future of participatory approach to development. They claim that the empowering, transformative and equity self-drive power associated with participatory approach has not matched the expectations. The volume suggests that "participation is simply another means of pursuing traditional top-down development agendas, while giving the impression of implementing a more inclusive project of empowering the poor and the excluded", (Parfitt, 2004:538). Cooke and Kothari (2001), further argue that "the proponents of participatory development have generally been naïve about the complexities of power and power relations", (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:14).

Three years later, Hickey and Mohan's collection, *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation; Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development*, attempts to "(re)establish [participation] as a legitimate and genuinely transformative

approach to development”, (Hickey and Mohan, 2004:3). They argue, genuine participation should encompass the institutional issues of governance and the intersection between state, private sector and civil society. What do all these mean for the poor and poverty reduction interventions?

## 2.2 Conceptualizing Participation

“Understanding whose meanings do and do not prevail – and the processes by which this comes about – punctuates much of the rhetoric of empowerment that accompanies current ‘participatory’ development projects: far from unsettling oppressive power relations, what passes for participation frequently serves to sustain and reinforce inequitable economic, political and social structures – to the detriment of marginalized groups” (Hildyard et al, 2004:56)

Participation is essentially a contested concept. Jennings (2000), for example, observes that “The meaning of ‘participation’ is often a rendition of the organizational culture defining it”, (Jennings, 2000<sup>5</sup>:1). Indeed, a short scan through the literature gives the impression that perspectives on participation vary greatly. For example, Oakley et al (1991:6) identifies the following definitions;

- (a) Participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the people in one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development, but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or criticizing its content (Economic Commission for Latin America, 1973)
- (b) With regard to rural development ... participation includes people’s involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in the efforts to evaluate such programmes (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977).
- (c) Participation is concerned with...the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control (Pearse and Stiefel, 1979).

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<sup>5</sup> This paper was prepared for the “Community Based Reintegration and Rehabilitation in Post-Conflict Settings” Conference, Washington, DC in October 2000

- (d) Community participation [is] an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish (Paul, 1987).

The above definitions imply different understanding of participation. While some view participation as means to achieve a predetermined development objective, other perspectives see it as an end in itself, yet others look at participation as a process which involve the people. There are other views that participation takes place in stages.

Jennings, for example, considers that “participation is involvement by a local population and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a program designed to change their lives”, (Jennings, 2000:1). He argues, participatory development must recognize “the importance of entrusting citizens with the responsibilities to shape their own future”, (Jennings, 2000:2). The overriding emphasis in this perspective is the local people’s capabilities and agency.

The World Bank, on the other hand views participation as “the process by which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policymaking, resource allocations, and/or program implementation”, (Klugman, 2002: 237). According to World bank, “participation of stakeholders in the selection and design of projects can improve decision making, strengthen ownership, and help poor and disadvantaged groups; and that systematic social analysis can help ensure that Bank operations achieve their objectives, that they are appropriately targeted and acceptable to the people intended to benefit, and that they are feasible within their social and institutional context”, (World Bank, 1994)<sup>6</sup> The World Bank idea suggest that participation is an input or a means to achieve certain objectives including that of the Bank programmes. However, important to note in this definition is the notion of participation as a ‘process’.

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank Social Assessment Guidelines, May 10, 1994

For Lane (1995), the important question to ask is not about participation but rather what type of participation one refers to. She identifies two dimensions of participation; participation as co-operation and participation as incorporation, and secondly, is the question of who should participate. In the first instance, participation is about the involvement of people in pre-determined activities. However, since this is only one of the stages in development process, greater participation requires involvement of the beneficiaries at all stages (decisions in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project). In the second case, all those who are affected by the project and its outcomes should be involved at all stages of the process, (Lane, 1995: 182).

Similarly, Paul (1987)<sup>7</sup> identifies four forms of participation; information sharing (agency informs intended beneficiary about the project, information flow and control remains downwards), consultation (more equal flow of information, agency makes use of local knowledge but controls the process), decision making (beneficiaries have relative control of the process) and initiation of action (beneficiaries take control over the process and information flow is upwards). In each of these forms of participation there is characteristically different relationship between the implementing agency and the beneficiaries (Lane, 1995).

Chambers refers to participatory approach as “handing over the stick” – a process in which people are let to do it themselves for themselves and take control over the process. “The participation for all development organizations is that at every level, ownership is pushed down, handed over and fostered. Beyond this, participation at community or group level is then not ‘their’ participation in ‘our’ programme, but our participation in theirs; and participation by the poor is not just in the design and implementation phase of projects, but also in identification, monitoring and evaluation, and policy formulation.” (Chambers, 1995a: 38).

However, recent debates have carried the concept of participation to a different level. At this level participation is viewed from a more political and right-based perspectives. Here participation of people is seen as a human right in itself and that it is political since it involves power relations between beneficiaries and imple-

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Lane (1995:183)

menting agencies (Gaventa, 2004; Hickey and Mohan, 2004, Kothari, 2001). Gaventa (2004), for example, argues that all the trends in participatory approaches and the different perspectives should help to extend the concept of participation to citizenship and to “recast participation as a right, not simply an invitation offered to beneficiaries of development”, (Gaventa, 2004: 29). The right-based approach to participation argued by Gaventa represents the element of human agency.

### 2.3 The case for participatory approach

“There remains a strong sense in the literature on participatory development that the proper objective of participation is to ensure the ‘transformation’ of existing development practice and, more radically, the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion” (Hickey and Mohan, 2004: 13)

Transformation is in itself a broad and usually not-easy to define concept. However, for the purpose of this paper, it should be taken as a process in which relations of power is reversed in favour of the powerless and as Williams et al (2003)<sup>8</sup> argues, this may include “strengthening the bargaining power of the poor within these relations”.

Theoretically, proponents of participatory approach argue that the approach is pragmatic and therefore increases the chances of success of interventions notably at beneficiary level. They also argue that with this approach, the beneficiaries take ownership of the intervention with increased benefits and sustainability. Further more, this approach is believed to legitimize external interventions, increased efficiency and sustainability. According to Chambers, in practice, participation denotes three things; as a ‘cosmetic label’ to brand proposed interventions, as a ‘co-opting practice’ to mobilize free labour and reduce intervention cost, and as ‘an empowering process’ where the people can take responsibility and ownership of defining their situations, take the lead and make decisions on how to solve their problem, (Chambers, 1995: 30).

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<sup>8</sup> Hickey and Mohan (2004:14) cites Williams et al. (2003) ‘Participation, Poverty and Power: Poor People’s Engagement with Indian’s Employment Assurance Scheme’, *Development and Change*, 34 (1): 163-92

In agreement with Chambers (1995), Karl (2000)<sup>9</sup> and Parfitt (2004) note that some of the common objectives and expected benefits of participation in development are improving the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and coverage of projects and programmes and promoting stakeholder capacity, self-reliance and empowerment.

According to World bank, “there is also a growing recognition that the participation of stakeholders in the selection and design of projects can improve decision making, strengthen ownership, and help poor and disadvantaged groups,(World Bank, 1994)<sup>10</sup>

Parfit, (2004) adds that, “participation is a problematic and contested ground, but one with potential to deliver real benefits to those who hitherto had been incorporated in the project of development as objects of the manipulation of development agencies”, (Partiff, 2004: 538). Chambers (1997) observes that:

“Empowerment, unless abused, serves equity and wellbeing. It is not static condition. It is a process not a product; it is not something that is ever finished. There is no ‘empowerment’ box which can be ticked as complete. It entails enhanced capabilities and wider scope for choice and action. Nor is it something that happens among the lowers. It is interactive, between lowers, peers and uppers” (Chambers, 1997: 220)

Another premise for participatory approach is that local people are able to shape their own future and that expert and outside imposition of knowledge and development interventions often is context-insensitive. Chambers emphasize that, “participation, empowerment and mutual respect enables lowers, and poor people in general, to express and analyse individual and shared realities’, (Chambers, 1997: 162).

Scepticism however exist that participatory development programming only reinforces the status quo. For example, it is argued that participation is not politically neutral and often used to extract local knowledge for off site programming, (Jennings, 2000). The “new tyranny” argumentation advanced by Cooke and

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<sup>9</sup>Published in <http://www.fao.org/sd/PPdirect/PPre0074.htm> (28/05/2007)

<sup>10</sup> World Bank Social Assessment Guidelines, May 10, 1994

Kothari (2001), has presented participatory development as yet another means of reinforcing the unjust and illegitimate power relations and not to emancipate the poor. Indeed, their justification is that promoters of participatory development have not been participatory as such (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Gaventa (2004) argues that “participation’ has been called on to perform a wide range of functions for differing purposes, ideologies and political project” (Gaventa (2004:9).

More over some critiques of the approach also argue that participation is a concept without any particular meaning. For example, according to Sunil, participation can be both a project and a political strategy, (Sunil, 1996: 248). Based on his study of the plantation sector of Sri Lanka, Sunil (1996), like Chambers (1995), argues that ‘participation’ may serve ideological and political purposes: first, as source of unpaid labour, attempts to promote self-reliance, strategy to create ‘Idyllic Villages’, and secondly, as a method of project management, (Sunil, 1996:249-252). He argues that participation is a strategy to deny poor people paid labour by disguising projects as people’s own and in the process people contribute free labour hence reducing state budgetary burden on welfare.

The promotion of self-reliance perspective argues Sunil, is grounded on the assumption that poor people are dependent and therefore participation helps them to become independent. Creating ‘idyllic villages’ is based on an egalitarian principle of the past where a community is perceived as living homogenously. According to Sunil, participation as a strategy to create idyllic villages attempts to make people who “do not have villages” to have their own ‘villages’ and be able to take care of their own problems rather than depending on other institutions, like plantation estate in the case of Sri Lanka. This is closely related to the group-formation types of project as a means of soliciting participation. As a project management, Sunil looks at participation as “getting the ingredients of correct process” seen as means to achieving project objectives rather than participation in its own rights, (Sunil, 1996: 252).

Frances Cleaver, one of the associates of ‘the tyranny’ argumentation however believes in the value of people-centred approach like participation, “I am not a complete pessimist about such approaches; rather I see them as promising but in-

evitably messy and difficult, approximate and unpredictable in outcome”, (Cleaver, 2001: 37).

In his earlier work, Robert Chambers observed one weakness with the participatory practices. For example:

“PRA<sup>11</sup> has become an instant fad, demanded by donors in projects and introduced in programmes of NGOs and government departments. It has been made to go to scale too fast. Label has spread without substance. Quality has suffered from the very top-down centralized system which PRA seek to modify and reverse. The old paradigm has co-opted and contorted the new. The behavioural, professional and institutional implications of PRA has not been understood, or if understood, not internalized” (Chambers, 1997: 211)

“The language of development rhetoric and writing changes fast. The reality and development practice lags behind the language”, (Chamber, 1995b: 30). Gaventa (2004) likewise, observes that the mainstreaming and scaling up of participatory approach, especially in project-based methodologies like participatory Rural Appraisal from NGOs, to national and international agencies and policy-making, has helped to blur the virtues of the approach (Gaventa, 2004:4).

## **2.4 Making participatory approach work**

“A first key challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the construction of new relationship between ordinary people and the institutions – especially those of government – which affect their lives” (Gaventa, 2004:25).

Gaventa (2004) observes that there is currently a growing gap between ordinary people, especially the poor, and the institutions of government. To rebuild this relationship, Gaventa (2004) argues that there is need to go “beyond ‘civil society’ and ‘state-based’ approaches, to focus on their intersection through a new form of participation, responsiveness and accountability”, (Gaventa, 2004:27). This, he argues requires, not only deepening democratic governance, but rather to strengthening the process of citizen participation and, accountability and responsiveness of the insti-

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<sup>11</sup> PRA is Participatory Rural Appraisal.



tutions and policies” through changes in institutional design, and focus on the structures of good governance”, (Goventa, 2004:27).

These arguments are important in so far as ‘citizenship participation’ enables the poor and the voiceless take advantage of the forms of inclusion, consultation and/or mobilization designed to inform and influence larger institutions and policies, on one hand and the need for responsiveness of government and how citizens engage and make demands on the state (Gaventa, 2004:27). This form of engagement between state and citizens, he further argues, need revisiting the meaning of participation that encompasses going beyond project-based and focus on local knowledge and action to an approach that links participation to political, community and social spheres (Gaventa, 2004:28-29).

Mohan (2001), also contends that even ‘outsiders’ like NGOs can still make a difference in dealing with problematic power relations and empowering local people in their reflexive engagement with them (Mohan, 2001:163)

Masaki in part has argued that “the ‘tyranny’ argumentation over generalizes the manipulative nature of participatory programs” (Masaki, 2007: 30). In his ‘post-tyranny’ debates, Masaki contents in the emancipative capacity of participatory interventions “depending on how local power struggles unfold”, (Masaki, 2007: 30). Masaki holds that human agency of the “target group” reshapes and re-orientes participatory programs and externally driven interventions to context specifics of the beneficiaries.

## **2.5 What participation for the poor?: A Concluding remark**

From all the above, there is a continued debate about the concept of participation. Whether the debates emerge from its theoretical founding or the practice of participation, what is clear is that there are divided perspectives on what the concept really means. Notwithstanding its short-comings and criticism, genuine participation is an important principle of democratic processes and a means to achieving poverty reduction goals. This paper focuses on participation as a process in as far as the approach is ‘external’ initiated with a view to invite the poor to progressively

articulate their views and eventually take control over and own the process of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies that affect their lives.

## 2.6 Understanding Poverty: An Overview of Poverty Debates

“The massive persistence of severe poverty is the great scandal of this globalized civilization and threatens its promised gains in peace, stability, and prosperity” (Pogge, 2007:1)

Defining poverty has increasingly become problematic. This is not to say it does not exist, rather it is because perspectives and dimensions of poverty has over the years widen. UNCDF has observed that while poverty dimensions are recognized to be widening, mainstream development agencies and governments continue to define and measure poverty based on income, (UNCDF, 2003:13). Not surprisingly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs<sup>12</sup>) that has greatly influenced country policies, project poverty reduction as measured by number of people who have crossed the poverty line (i.e, living on less than one dollar per day).

However, there is consensus on the typology of poverty as; ‘absolute poverty’ (defined as the minimum necessary to guarantee the physical efficiency of a person) and ‘relative poverty’ (defined as the average standard of living of a given society). Important to note is also the distinction between ‘structural poverty’ (a long term situation of poverty) and ‘transitional poverty’ (a temporary situation of people who otherwise can lead a self-sufficient life), (UNCDF, 2003:13).

*“Severe poverty today, while less horrific than that experience by the early American settlers, is fundamentally different in context and causation. Its persistence is not forced on us by natural contingencies of soil, seeds, or climate. Rather its persistence is driven by the ways that economic interactions are structured: by interlocking national and international institutional arrangements” (Pogge, 2007:3)*

In the recent years the poverty debate has taken a central stage in development policy and development cooperation. The United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) 2000, the World Bank policies as emphasizes in the Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs) and the initiative to relieve the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) of foreign debts are only three examples of the centrality of poverty as a global policy issue. What is even more central to the pov-

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<sup>12</sup> MDG number one is “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. It targets to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day.

erty debate is the question: why has poverty persisted in the face of massive global and country efforts to curb it down?

Grimm and Klasen (2007) argue that even though sustained high growth may lead to reduction in absolute income poverty, indicators suggest that the attained growth has come at the cost of rising inequality (Grimm and Klasen, 2007:1). According to them, there is need to focus on reducing inequality by accelerating “‘pro-poor growth’ that is growth that leads to particularly high increase in income of the poor” (Grimm and Klasen, 2007:2). They argue for analytical and methodological approach that will lead policy makers to focus on determinants of pro-poor growth.

In their hybrid methods and analytical tools for pro-poor growth research, Grimm and Klasen argue that a successful analysis for determinants of pro-poor growth must be context specific. For example, in the case of Ghana performance in the 1990s (Aryeetey and McKay, 2007) and Vietnam in about the same period (Bonschab and Klump, 2007), focus on regional inequality was central in the determination of pro-poor growth and poverty reduction. While in other cases, for example, Senegal between 1994 and 2002 (Azam, 2007), Burkina Faso (Grimm and Gunther, 2007) and Indonesia (Timmer, 2007), price shocks, policy reforms and political economy issues were central in defining factors in the determination of pro-poor growth and poverty reduction in the respective countries. In the case of Bolivia (Klasen et al, 2007) and Zambia (Thurlow and Wobst, 2007), a modelling simulation and pro-poor growth policies where quantitative tools were used to compare various policy option before and after, to compute the policy induced changes in macro-aggregates like prices, wages and employment.

Like Sen (1997) who looks at poverty as freedom, the Thomas Pogge collection of 2007 analyzes poverty from a human rights perspective. He acknowledges the deeper question of human right to freedom from severe poverty, (Pogge, 2007:4). The argument he echoes is that “poverty is an infringement of social autonomy and in this way a human rights violation that should be eradicated” (Pogge, 2007:7).

## 2.7 Dimensions of Poverty

Poverty is now perceived to be a multidimensional phenomenon more than just an income problem. Recent debates treat poverty as a dynamic and complex issue that cuts across social, political and economic divides. And as seen from Pogge (2007), poverty is a human right and moral issue. An extract from the World Bank describing the poor summarizes this dynamism and complexities of poverty:

“They often lack adequate food and shelter, education and health, deprivations that keep them from leading the kind of life that everyone values. They also face extreme vulnerability to ill-health, economic dislocation, and natural disasters. And they are often exposed to ill-treatment by institutions of the state and society and are powerless to influence key decisions affecting their lives” (World Bank<sup>13</sup>, 2001)

Sen (1999) presents further the multidimensional perspective of poverty when he argues that poverty is a capability deprivation and ‘unfreedom’. The premise for viewing poverty as ‘capability deprivation’ stems from the fact that individual must have “the substantive freedom he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has the reason to value”, (Sen, 1999: 87). Underlying the idea of substantive freedom is free and sustainable agency. “What people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives.

The institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people’s freedom, “through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of decisions that impel the process of these opportunities”, (Sen, 1999:5). Sen, the proponent of this approach, argues that development can be perceived of as “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” as opposed to the narrow view of development measured in terms of economic growth, increase in people’s incomes, industrialization, advancement in technology, or social modernization, (Sen, 1999:3).

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<sup>13</sup> This citation is taken from the World Bank World Development Report 2000/2001. The report can be access from the web site:  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/WDR/overview.pdf>

Sen identifies five distinct types of freedom as rights and opportunities he considers instrumental in enhancing people's capabilities; Political freedoms, Economic facilities, Social opportunities, Transparency guarantees and Protective security. He argues that each of these types of rights and opportunities are interconnected and complementarily re-enforce one another in fostering human capabilities, (Sen, 1999:10). In his argument, "development requires the removal of major sources of *unfreedom*: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well intolerance or over reactivity of repressive state, Sen, 1999: 3)

According to Sen, poverty can be seen as capability deprivation because the approach emphasizes deprivations that are "intrinsically important" as opposed to income that is "only instrumentally significant", and that real poverty (capability deprivation) is influenced by various factors, income being only one of them. Furthermore, the impact of income on capabilities varies with society, community, households, people and other conditions, (Sen, 1999: 87-88). This approach distinguishes the concept of poverty as capability handicap away from the notion that poverty is lowness of income. It therefore shifts analysis of poverty away from the narrow point of view of income (means) to wider perspective of the nature of the causes of poverty and deprivation as well as what people have reason to value in life (end) and the freedoms required to reach this end. As an agency-oriented approach, the enhancement of freedom to promote capabilities affirms the notion of humans as subjective and active individuals effectively able to shape their own destiny. And here lies the instrumental link between capability enhancement and participation that underpins the very significance of participation of the poor in poverty reduction.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Debates about poverty, what it is, what causes it and how it should be fought continue to dominate development discourses. Whether poverty is the lack of adequate basic needs like food and shelter, education and health, or whether it is social deprivation and/or exclusion by institutions of the state and society that lead people into powerlessness and low incomes, what is clear is that the poor should be al-

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lowed to define themselves and how to come out of poverty. The agency of the poor people is therefore instrumental in defining and eradicating poverty.

## Chapter Three

### The Ladder of Participation: Conceptual and Analytical Framework

#### 3.1 Introduction

The literature review and discussions in chapter two has provided various typologies of the concept of participation. Some commentators have argued that participation is rhetoric while others argued it is manipulative mechanism of maintaining the status quo. In general, participation has been perceived by other scholars as a means, while the proponent argue participation can be perceived as an end, yet other commentators view participation as a process or even an ever on-going process. In analysing participation as a process, this study used the Ladder of Participation as a theoretical and analytical framework.

#### 3.2 The Ladder of Participation as Conceptual Framework

Mikkelsen (2005) has summaries typologies of participation and the corresponding interests as shown in Box 1 below. This study used these typologies as the background for a conceptualising and analysing the process of participation.

Box 1: A Typology of Interest in Participation

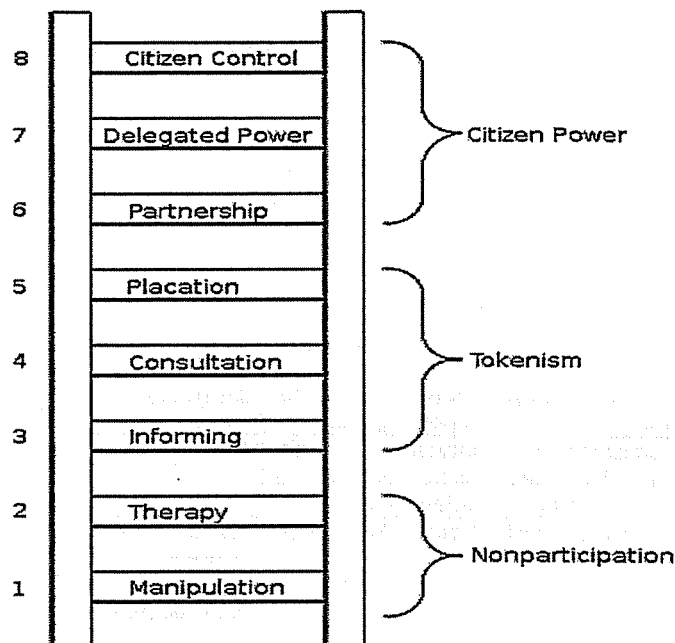
Form of Participation	What 'Participation' means to the implementing agency	What 'Participation' means to those on the receiving side	What 'Participation' is for (the purpose)
Nominal	Legitimization-to show they are doing something	Inclusion- to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency-to limit funders' input and make projects more cost-effective	Cost- of time spent on project-related labour and on other activities	As a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability- to avoid creating dependency	Leverage- to influence the shape of the project and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment- to enable people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action	Empowerment- to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

Source: Mikkelsen (2005:61)

Sherry Arnstein Ladder of Participation has been used in combination with Mikkelsen (2005) typologies of participation for both conceptualizing and analyzing participation of poor farmers under NAADS. T

Sherry Arnstein, in 1969 wrote about citizen involvement in planning processes in the United States, presenting the involvement in a Ladder of Participation<sup>14</sup> with eight steps. The ladder represents typology of eight rungs used to analyze participation of citizens in programmes initiated by other agencies. For illustrative purposes the eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern (figure 1) with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product of these programmes and 'participation'.

Figure 1: Eight-Rung Ladder of Participation



Source: <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.doc>

<sup>14</sup> Originally published as Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. The same article can be accessed on: <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.doc>



## Explanation of Arnstein's Eight Rungs-Ladder of Participation:

### *Non-participation*

The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power holders to "educate" or "cure" the participants.

### *Participation as Tokenism*

Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of "tokenism" that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by power holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Rung (5) Placation is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power holders the continued right to decide.

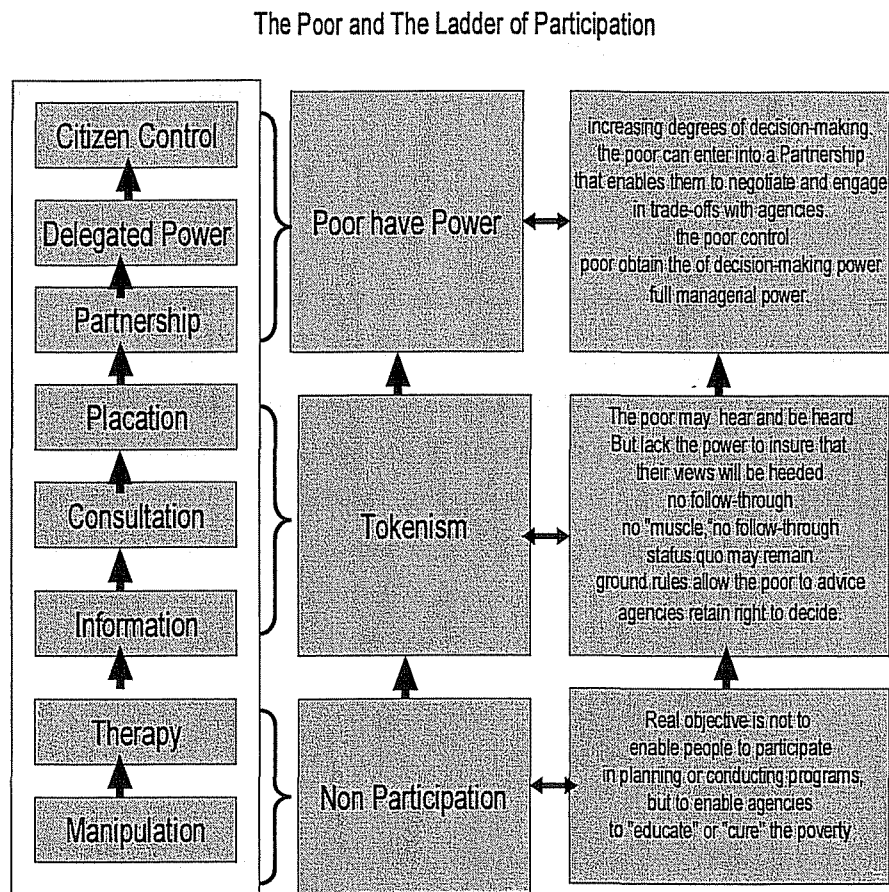
### *Participation as Citizen Power*

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power.

This framework is therefore relevant in the analysis of participation in NAADS because helps to understand that participation takes different forms. It also projects participation as a progressive process.

### 3.4 The Ladder of Participation as Analytical Framework

Figure 2: The Poor and Ladder of Participation



Source: Own construction based on Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation"

The ladder of Participation (Figure 1) shows at the first rung (bottom) there is no participation. However, up the ladder, there is progressively more participation and at the top of the ladder, the poor have genuine participation. It should however be noted that participation process may start at any of the level (rung), and not necessarily from Manipulation (rung 1). Figure 2 is a combination Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (figure 1) and Mikkelsen's Typology of Interest in Participation (Box 1) to form an analytical framework to show the roles and interests of agencies and

the poor (at different levels on the ladder) in programmes that externally initiated . In the case of this study, the agency is NAADS and the poor farmers represent the citizens. In the analytical framework (figure 2 above), the first column represent the nature of participation, the middle column represents the quality of involvement of the poor farmers and the last column represents the implications the nature and quality of involvement.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Overview of Poverty Reduction Policies in Uganda**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Uganda has undertaken a number of programmes and policies to reduce poverty. This chapter provides an overview of four closely related policy/programmes aimed at poverty reduction in Uganda namely; Poverty Eradication Action plan (PEAP), Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). Both PMA and NAADS originate from the mother policy framework for growth and poverty reduction, PEAP. The discussion in the chapter analyses the policy intentions of these programmes focusing on their objectives and strategies in an attempt to draw from them elements of participation and involvement of the poor in the process of implementation.

#### **4.2 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)**

PEAP is the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) and Uganda's grand planning framework on the basis of which all public sector policies and actions aimed at growth and poverty reduction are formulated. PEAP was drafted in 1997 and revised in 2000 and 2004, also adopted as a development strategy "in which government has resolved to reduce the population living in absolute poverty from the level of 44 per cent (1997) to below 10 per cent by the year 2017" (MFPED, 2004: 3)

It guides medium term, district plans as well as the national budget process. "The key principle of PEAP is that all public expenditures should contribute to the eradication of poverty" (MFPED, 2007:20). The planning framework is based on five pillars, the broad intervention points for public sector planning;

Pillar1: Economic Management, targets macro economic growth through multi-sector approach.

Pillar 2: Enhancing production, competitiveness and income; is aimed at increasing rural income through promotion of agriculture by improving productivity and mar-

ketability of agricultural products. Plan for Modernization of Agriculture is the framework designed to guide specific plans towards achieving the goal of this pillar.

Pillar 3: Security, conflict resolution and disaster management

Pillar 4: Good governance; focuses on reforms that enhances the rule of law, law and order, human rights, justice and, management of public sector, promoting public accountability and public-private cooperation.

Pillar 5: Human development focuses planning in education and health sectors, resource planning, sanitation and social development.

#### Box 2: The four main goals of PEAP

The four main goals of PEAP are:

- Creating a framework for rapid economic growth and structural transformation;
- Ensuring good governance and security;
- Directly increasing the ability of the poor to raise incomes; and
- Directly increasing the quality of life of the poor.

Source: MFPED, 2004

According to MFPED, (2004), for effective eradication of poverty under PEAP, the priority areas of actions are primary health care, roads network, primary education and rural water, and the transformation of agriculture. Agricultural transformation is considered to be the main pillar because it provides an opportunity to reduce poverty since it engages up to 80 per cent of Uganda's workforce, majority of whom are poor people (MFPED, 2004). The PEAP has been strongly supported by the donor community as the first beneficiaries of Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative for debt cancellation. Uganda received a debt cancellation of US\$347 millions in 1998 and US\$656 million in 2000 (NAADS, 2000). The resources saved from debt cancellation are now being channelled to social development with a particular focus to rural and agricultural transformation. Like in many other developing countries that benefited from the HIPC initiatives, The World Bank has been the major drive and funder of the Uganda PRSP and other poverty reduction programmes in Uganda.

### 4.3 Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA)

PMA emerges from the government core policy objective to eradicate poverty articulated in the PRSP – Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), whose main goal is to “provoke social transformation by raising income of smallholder communities”, (Stroud et al,2005:1). It recognizes the multi-faceted nature of poverty and its relative distribution in Uganda, “poverty differs in its nature, extent and trends between regions”, (MFPED, 2004:2) and that “poverty is about more than just income and expenditure data”, (MFPED, 2004:2).

#### *Objectives of PMA*

The overriding mission of PMA is “transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture” (MFPED, 2004: 28). This main objective is informed by the goal to eradicate poverty through transformation of agriculture and sustainable natural resource-based livelihood. PMA believes that “improving the welfare of the poor subsistence farmers will require that they re-orient their production towards the market”, (MFPED, 2004: 28). Although the PMA defines poverty as both lack of income and powerlessness, its goals and objectives target specifically the income aspects of the poor.

#### Box 3: Specific Objectives of PMA

##### Specific objectives of PMA;

- Increase income and improve the quality of life of the poor subsistence farmers through increased productivity and share of market production,
- Improve household food security through the market rather than emphasizing self-sufficiency,
- Provide gainful employment through the secondary benefits of PMA implementation,
- Promote sustainable use and management of natural resources

*Source: MFPED, 2004*

The government put in place NAADS as the institution to implement the agricultural sub-component of PMA.

#### **4.4 Northern Uganda Social Action Fund<sup>15</sup>**

The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) is a five-year government of Uganda project funded through an International Development Association (IDA). The project is being implemented in 18 original districts of the Teso, Karamoja, Lango, Acholi and West Nile (where Nebbi district is included) sub-regions. The project is intended to make available more resources to these sub- regions that have been disadvantaged by conflicts and underdevelopment and therefore poverty as compared to other parts of the Uganda, in order to uplift them to the level of the rest of the country.

NUSAF overall intervention strategy is anchored on participatory development approach, equitable and sustainable manner to promote reconciliation and contribute to poverty reduction in the region. The project aims at empowering communities by enhancing their capacities to systematically identify, prioritize, and plan for their needs, and implement sustainable development initiatives that improve socio-economic services and opportunities.

NUSAF design captures the following components as intervention area;

**Community Development Initiatives (CDI):** The component is intended to finance community-based efforts to construct and rehabilitate small-scale socio-economic infrastructure in a demand-driven manner to increase access of beneficiary communities to social economic services.

**Vulnerable Group Support (VGS):** This component is intended to finance targeted interventions to reduce vulnerability amongst disadvantaged members/ groups of the community thereby reducing poverty among vulnerable groups;

**Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management (CRCM):** This component targets innovative ways for community reconciliation, conflict management and prevention using both traditional and non-traditional approaches. Support in this area aims at facilitating social capital preparation and resuscitation.

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<sup>15</sup> Information about NUSAF can be sourced from the web site: <http://www.nusaf.go.ug/>



The management of the sub-project cycle is undertaken largely through the decentralised framework of local authorities using existing technical planning and approval structures at different levels of local government. This is further supported by the involvement of Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and NGOs who are contracted by respective project communities to facilitate the project cycle with the communities.

#### **4.5 National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)**

National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) is a government programme designed to and focused on increasing access to knowledge, technologies and information for profitable agricultural production. The aim of which is to contribute to generation of income through profitable agricultural-based enterprises development to reduce poverty.

##### **Box 4: Specific Objectives of NAADS**

specific objectives are to:

- increase the availability of appropriate advice and information to all the farmer types in an equitable and cost-effective manner;
- avail appropriate technologies in sufficient quantities to meet identified farmer needs;
- assure the quality of advice and information provided to farmers by service providers;
- enhance the capacity of private sector service providers to meet farmer advice and information needs;
- develop appropriate farmer-controlled institutional structures and processes for managing the NAADS at all levels.

*Source: NAADS (2000)*

The programme is designed to address the agricultural productivity enhancement of the PMA (MFPED, 2007; Stroud et al, 2005; NAADS, 2002). Built on the principles of participation, poverty reduction, strengthening farmer livelihood and reducing the level of environmental degradation, NAADS was launched in 2001.

#### Box 5: Principles of NAADS

- empowering the farmers in agricultural advisory processes and building demand for both research and agricultural advisory services
- targeting agricultural services to the poor farmers who constitute the majority
- mainstreaming gender issues
- deepening decentralization to bring the control of the services, research and advisory services, nearer to the farmers
- commercialization –including intensification of productivity and specialization
- participatory processes in planning, contracting monitoring and evaluation
- managing natural resource productivity
- increasing institutional efficiency through contracting out services, better linkages between research, advisors and farmers
- harmonisation of donor supported projects with PMA principles.

*Source: NAADS (2000)*

Based on its principle of participation, NAADS aims to “develop demand-driven, client-oriented, and farmer-led agricultural delivery system, in particular targeting women and the poor” (Stroud et al, 2005:6). NAADS is grounded on the Uganda government policy orientation like decentralization, liberalization and increasing participation of the people in governance (ibid). As a result, NAADS is viewed as a reform process that carries the macro policies to lower levels of governance. For example, Stroud et al (2005), notes that NAADS “is meant to assist in transforming the role of farmers through empowerment so they can gain access to and have control over agricultural advisory service provision, market information, and technological development...” (ibid). Hence the change of roles of actors in public and private sectors with a shift from public to private support and control

#### **4.6 Participation and Poverty Reduction under NAADS**

As has been discussed above, NAADS offers poor farmers the space for participation through farmer institutions. While it is farmer-led and demand-driven, there is need to study how the poor farmers are involved in these institutions. For example, who are the players and actors, who are making decisions, how are representatives selected, and how is the feedback mechanism? In assessing participation of the poor, the following variables are therefore significant; the availability and nature of the space (institutions), the availability of the poor in this space (representation), the capacity of the poor to participate (agency), the capacity to play their roles and

how democratic the process (legitimacy, whose voice and actions counts) within the space.

In analyzing participation of the poor farmers in NAADS, this study takes critical look at Farmer Institutional Development (FID), Advisory and Information Services and Participatory Planning, Enterprise Selection and Technology Development as key units of analysis against the backdrop of increase of income, increasing power and capabilities of the poor farmers.

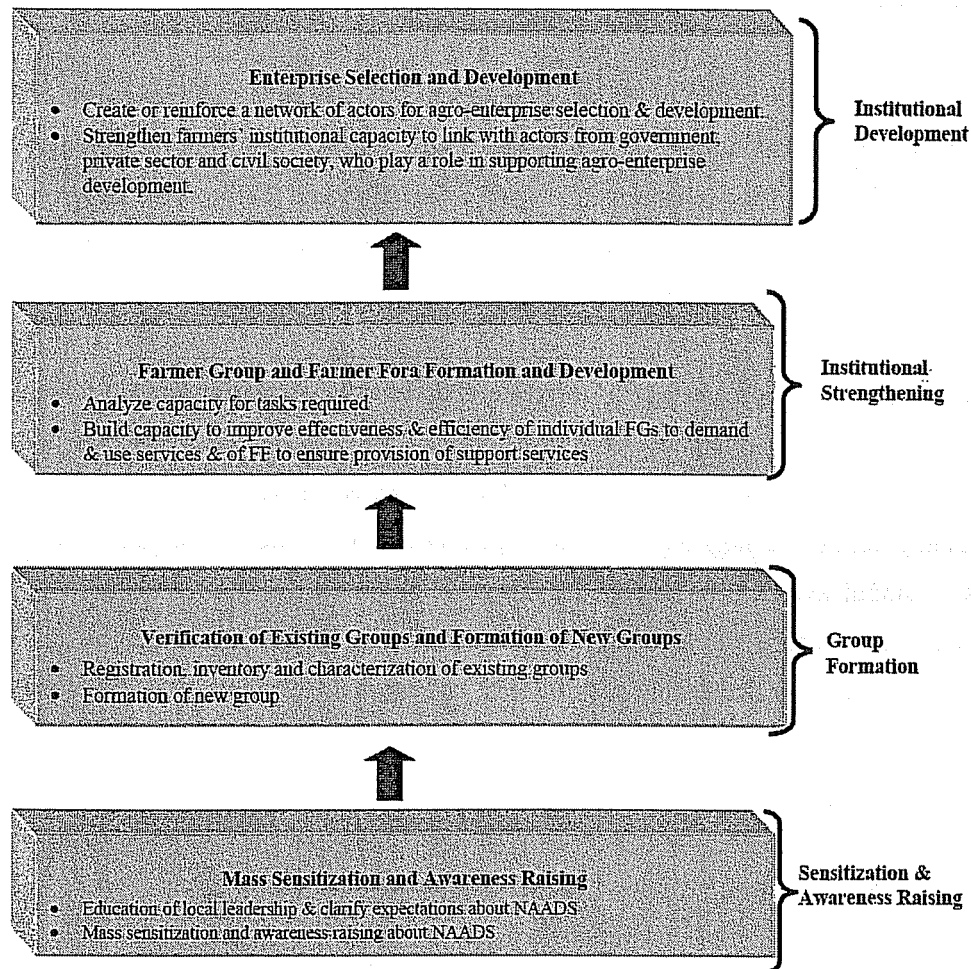
NAADS intervention strategy is to create and develop institution through which poor farmers can participate, As Stroud et al (2005: NAADS, 2002) observes, the NAADS approach to empower farmers through farmer institution is based on the assumption that farmers have a “real propensity towards collective action and this is a natural avenue for forging supportive relationship, (Stroud et al, 2005:9). Hence the encouragement of farmers to organize in groups and create decision making structures and taking control over development, policies processes and governance.

According to NAADS (2002), in order to transform poor farmers’ livelihood assets into desired outcomes, institutions or set of rule has to be put in place. It adds that “Failure to access control institutions is a primary cause of perpetuating powerlessness among the poor and the women” (NAADS, 2002:8)

The process of farmer institutional development and participation therefore takes four major steps (NAADS, 2002);

- Mass mobilization and sensitization of local communities and leaders,
- Group formation and development,
- Formation and development of Farmer Forums, and
- Enterprise selection and development.

Figure 3: NAADS Farmer Institutional Development process



Source: Adopted from Stroud et al (2005)

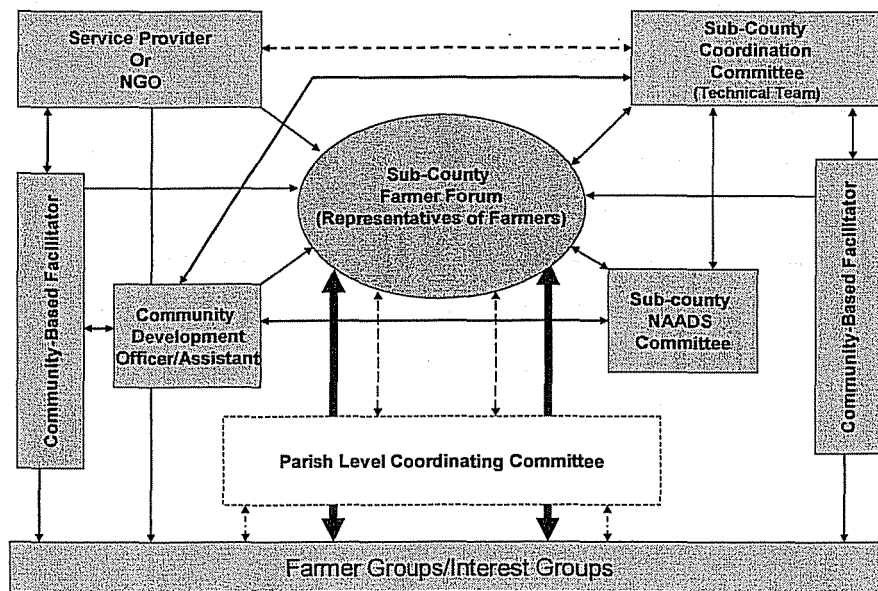
The four main stages in the process of creating and building structures and institutions for participation of poor farmers start with a mass mobilization in the communities as shown in figure 3 above. This involves awareness raising and sensitization activities involving local political and community leaders, and in some cases local NGOs.

The mobilization and sensitization is then followed by initiatives to form interest groups of farmers. Where there were already existing groups, they are argued to register as formal entities. At this stage private service providers are contracted to

facilitate the group registration process while the sub-county local authority does the selection of groups.

In the third stage, training need assessment of groups is done and various capacity building activities are undertaken to make the group functional. Basic training in group management, dynamics and record keeping are some of the capacity provided. In the mean time, an interim Sub-county Farmer Forum is instituted to begin sub-county level functions.

Figure 4: Farmer Participation in NAADS



Source: Own construction based on NAADS Guidelines

Figure 4 above is a framework that represents institutional mechanism for enhancing participation of farmers and other stakeholders in NAADS. Arrows in the figure show direction of information flow and collaboration between different structures and stakeholders.

As seen in the figure, at the bottom is farmer interest groups,

- Farmer groups or farmer interest groups elect members to the Sub-county Farmer Forum (SFF).

- Where there are so many farmer groups (more than 100) in a parish, a Parish Coordinating Committee (PCC) is constituted to link the farmer groups to the SFF.
- The SFF is the main decision making body of the farmers at sub-county level. Farmers' issues are raised to the SFF who make decisions and feed back to the farmers through farmer groups. There is information flow and coordination between SFF and all the other structures at sub-county level.
- Farmer groups appoint a community based facilitator (CBF) for day-to-day facilitation of the groups. The CBF is trained and backed up by the service providers and community development officer in key and technical matters other demands of farmers. CBF link up with the Sub-county Coordinating Committee (SCC) and Sub-county NAADS Committee (SCNC) in planning and reporting.
- NGOs and other service providers facilitate farmer institutional development and technical advice to farmers and the SFF.
- NGO and service providers are contracted by the SFF with technical advice of the SNC and the District Core Team (not reflected in the figure). They provide technical and professional advice to the SFF. The service providers are countable to the Sub-county Chief (head of sub-county local government) and copy and copy reports to SFF.

### **5.3 Nebbi District: The Location of Case Study**

Nebbi district is the location for the case study of this research. This section provides a contextual overview of the district regarding its location, the political and administrative structure and socio-economic characteristics. The section also provides some overview of factors that has given NAADS implementation in Nebbi district leverage.

**Location:** Nebbi district is located in northern region of Uganda. It is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Gulu district in the east and Arua district in the north.

**Administrative:** Under the Local Government Act -1997, Nebbi district is divided into three counties namely Okoro, Padyere and Jonam. There are nineteen lower

administrative/local government units (sub-counties) and three of which are town councils. There are 89 parishes in the district, 70 of which are rural and 17 urban.

Socio Economic: According to NAADS- Nebbi<sup>16</sup>, the district has a total population of 426,287 of which 203,719 (47.8 per cent) are male compared to 222,568 (52.2 per cent) female. Rural population in the district account for 84.9 per cent compared to 86.6 per cent national average. There are 88,057 households with an average of 4.8 persons per household. According to the Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2000, 86.7 per cent of the population of the district is engaged in subsistence agriculture (see table 2<sup>17</sup> below). The regional average is 82.5 per cent.

In table 2 there are selected socio-economic indicators for Nebbi district. The data indicate that Nebbi district is worse off in terms of poverty compared to the overall regional situation. For example, while the regional aggregate of households using wood fuel for cooking is 91.2 per cent, Nebbi district figure stands at 95.4 per cent. The housing conditions in the district and literacy rate for the district are also worse in relation to the regional conditions. These indicators show that Nebbi district is one of the districts with high level of poverty.

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<sup>16</sup> The statistics are based on the "Nebbi District Fact Sheet" presented by NAADS-Nebbi at the Regional NAADS evaluation workshop in Arua district in August 2007.

Table 2: Selected Socio-economic indicators of poverty by county for Nebbi district

Area Name	Distribution of households by main source of information Percent of Word of mouth	Distribution of households by rammed earth floor material Percent Total	Distribution of households by roofing material Percent Thatch	Distribution of households by type of fuel for cooking Number Firewood	% of HHs using wood fuel for cooking	Distribution of households by type of fuel for cooking Number Others	Distribution of households constructed with Mud and Pole wall material Percent Total	Literacy rate Percent Total	Average HH Size	Population size Number Total	Proportion in subsistence agriculture Percent Total
<b>NORTHERN REGION</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>929,100</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>10,824</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5,363,669</b>	<b>82.5</b>
<b>NEBBI</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>85,871</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>435,360</b>	<b>86.7</b>
JONAM	58.5	95.7	94.1	18,724	96.3	93	87.7	59.8	5.1	99,478	85.8
OKORO	65	95	93.3	34,767	95.0	228	89.2	54.2	4.6	169,048	89
PADYERE	57.6	94.6	93.4	32,380	95.2	312	57.7	62.8	4.9	166,834	84.6

Source: Uganda National Population and Housing Census, 2002



#### **4.7 Community Action Programme-West Nile and Participation in Nebbi District**

Nebbi district, like many other districts in Uganda has a long history of NGOs use of groups and project to deliver their programmes. This is the same for participatory approaches. However, one such programme with NGO which is unique to only West Nile sub-region was the Community Action Programme (CAP – West Nile). CAP was a sister programme to Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP) which was implemented in northern Uganda in the 1990s. While NURP interventions targeted rehabilitation of physical public infrastructure, CAP strategy was more community and group-based and extensively applied community and participatory approach for implementation.

CAP was implemented for seven years from 1993 to 1999. It promoted bottom-up approach that saw communities generate their own development plans, design their own projects and seek financial support from development agencies and government. This lead to a number of community-initiated infrastructure and income generating projects. It is this experience, among others, that should set a level ground for NAADS model of groups or institutions as a vehicle for participation of poor farmers in Nebbi district.

#### **4.8 NAADS in Nebbi District**

Nebbi district was phased in the NAADS programme in the financial year 2005/06 taking on board an initial four sub-counties; Erussi and Kucwiny in Padyere county; Kango in Okoro county and Panyango in Jonam county. This constituted 20 out of 89 parishes of the district. In 2006/07, NAADS rolled out to four more sub-counties; Nebbi in Padyere county, Paidha and Zeu in Okoro county, and Pakwach in Jonam county with a total of 17 parishes.

Table 3: NAADS Coverage in Nebbi District

Sub-county	Joined NAADS	No. of Parishes	No. of Households	Ave HH Size	No. Farmer Groups
Erussi	2005/06	7	8,941	4.9	41
Kango	2005/06	6	5,695	4.6	21
Kucwiny	2005/06	3	4,445	4.8	20
Nebbi	2006/07	3	3,463	4.9	20
Panyango	2005/06	4	61,96	4.9	20
Paidha	2006/07	6	5,363	4.6	21
Pakwach	2006/07	3	2,978	5	18
Zeul	2006/07	5	3,861	4.7	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>34,746</b>		<b>184</b>
<b>District Totals</b>		<b>89</b>	<b>88,057</b>		<b>184</b>

Coverage as % of District  
 Total **41.6** **39.5**

*Source: Own computation based on secondary (NAADS-Nebbi) and primary data*

Table 3 above shows NAADS coverage in Nebbi district since 2005. A total 37 of the 89 parishes were under NAADS at the time of field work constituting 41 per cent of parishes. Total number of households directly involved in NAADS programme is 34,746 accounting for 39.5 per cent of total number of households in the district. There were 184 farmers groups in eight sub-counties involved in NAADS programme at the time of field work. The details of groups involvement with NAADS is discussed in chapter five.

#### 4.9 Concluding Remark

Although the government effort to eradicate poverty in Uganda has come a long way, major policy efforts directed at micro levels have been significant from 1990s. NAADS and NUSAF in the northern region are two examples of recent government programmes directly targeting poverty reduction by directly involving poor people. While there have been remarkable positive trends in poverty reduction as recorded in the 1990s, an almost equal but downward trend has been witnessed since 2002.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This study was set to investigate whether the poor in Nebbi district were participating in the implementation of PMA and NAADS. NAADS is the institution established to implement the agricultural sub-component of PMA and with the participation of poor farmers. This chapter, therefore, presents and discusses the findings of the study. Analysis focused at how poor farmers have been involved in NAADS. The analysis looked at three strategic domains for understanding farmer participation namely; Farmer Institutional Development, Advisory and Information Services and Participatory Planning and Enterprise Selection. These domains are also significant in answering the research question: How is the farmer institutional development process under NAADS? And, how are poor farmers involved in decision-making process under NAADS?

The farmer institutional development process takes broadly four stages although some of the stages (see figure 3 above) may overlap. The main objective of Farmer Institutional Development (FID) is to organise farmers and create institutions that enable them participate in and influence decision making processes to improve their livelihoods, demand for services and develop their agricultural enterprises.

#### **5.2 Mobilisation and sensitisation**

NAADS started its programme in Nebbi district in 2005. The initiation, as is stipulated in the NAADS guidelines, started with orientation of district and sub-county leadership and setting of technical committees at the respective local government levels. Following the orientation of leaders in the district and sub-counties, a mass mobilisation and sensitisation drive of local communities was carried out by sub-county local government staff.

During the mobilisation, existing groups were encouraged to register with their respective sub-counties and farmers were called on to form more groups and register for selection to be carried later. Field findings reveal that although mobilization meetings were once-off events, they actually raised a lot of expectations. As a result, some elites from villages and neighbouring urban centres rushed to form groups in the villages. Most well-off

farmers and elites expected that NAADS would give out cash to farmers. Most 'elite farmer groups' were eventually selected to benefit from NAADS. For example, of the ten groups studied in Nebbi sub-county, eight are lead by former civil servants or local council chairpersons. In Kucwiny sub-county, five groups are lead by local council chairperson. Although these leaders are not necessarily 'rich', they contribute more resources to the groups and therefore take control over the group resources and decisions. NAADS also requires groups to pay registration fee to the sub-county in order to be considered for participation. Most groups could not raise this fee initially and the better-off farmers paid for the groups. The programme Officer of ASSED, one of the service providers observed that:

*"This registration fee levied on poor groups as a prerequisite to participate in NAADS is immoral. In effect it has side-lined real poor farmers instead of helping them to get involved"*

According to the Ladder of Participation, this stage of poor farmer involvement has not been participatory but only a matter of 'Tokenism' where the voices of the poor are not heeded to and their status remain the same or worse.

### **5.3 Group formation and development**

The call for groups generated a lot of interests in the communities. There were both old and new groups of elder, women, youth and mixed groups. However, as see above, there was elite capture of this process. Many elite members eventually became leaders of the farmer groups and forums. For example, a focus group discussion with three groups in Kalwang parish in Nebbi sub-county revealed that the chairperson of the Sub-county Farmer Forum was a newly laid-off Sub-county Chief who formed his own farmer group and moved through the selections to become the Farmer Forum chairperson. In one of the focus group discussion in Kucwiny sub-county, a woman said:

*"For us we don't know many things. These people [the elites] know because they live in town and they know the government officials. So they can lobby for more benefits from the government. They told us that if we elect them, they can lobby for more money from NAADS. So we elected them"*

This is compounded by NAADS guideline which stipulates that, "Farmers should be advised to choose a chairperson who is a good communicator and mobiliser, with good

interpersonal skills and a person of high integrity”, (NAADS, 2004a:3): Such predetermined criteria are some of the means by which poor farmers were eventually marginalized from leadership positions. This criterion also marginalized women for leadership positions.

Farmer group development entails capacity needs assessment and building such capacity gaps of groups to enable them seek required services and strengthen the group. This is one of the roles given to the service providers. Evidence from the field shows that, although participatory methods were used in needs assessments, the processes were done in a rush and sometimes ad hoc. For example, in many groups, there was only one meeting held for needs assessment while in other groups, ‘needs’ were imposed. The chairperson of Canmiyo Ryeko group in Jupangira/Pawong parish said:

*“They told us that we need to make a constitution, we need to know how to write report, how to keep records, how to conduct a group meeting. And then we need to have a profitable farming activity like rearing goats...”*

One facilitator from Caritas- Nebbi who carried such needs assessment in Kucwiny sub-county blamed the inadequate process on time factor. He claimed their terms of reference only limited them to specific time frame to handle a number of groups. The District NAADS Coordinator blamed it on the service providers whom he said were rushing to cover more groups in a shorter time in order to save money. This problem has also been highlighted in Nation NAADS report. For example it was observed that “there is tendency for more competition to provide services in smaller sub-counties with fewer parishes [...] due to pecuniary interest” (NAADS, 2004b:17-18). This therefore suggests that decisions reached in the assessment process were not reflecting the real needs and interests of poor farmers. Therefore participation of poor farmers was only limited to ‘hearing’ from the ‘experts’.

#### **5.4 Decision making: Formation and Development of Farmer Forum**

Farmer Forum is the main institutional link between the farmer groups, NAADS processes and government at various levels (see figure 4 above). NAADS structure at sub-county level consists of Sub-county Farmer Forum, Sub-county Executive Committee and Procurement Committee. There is provision in the guidelines that the composition of the various structures should reflect representation of various interest groups like women, elderly, youth, persons with disabilities and various enterprise categories. The Sub-

county Farmer Forum consists of fifteen members; the Executive Committee and the Procurement Committee have five members each.

According to the NAADS guidelines (2004), the forum is charged with the following functions;

- To plan, cost and contract advisory services, and monitoring and evaluation
- To determine priorities and allocation of resources, and performance evaluation of service providers
- To consider and approve NAADS work plan for onward inclusion in the sub-county development plans
- To provide information flow between farmers and farmer forum at different levels
- To assess the quality of service provision
- To influence policy direction in the agricultural sector

These roles are shared among the three structures of the farmer forum namely.

The emerging issues about the Sub-county Farmer Forum mainly relate to its capacity, inclusiveness and legitimacy. Concerning capacity, evidence from the field reveals that there is serious capacity problem with the members. The terms of reference of Sub-county Forum is more like government bureaucratic and technical tasks that members find themselves incapacitated to perform. For example, the role of the Sub-county Farmer Forum of monitoring and evaluation is one problematic area. Evidence from interviews with chairpersons of the forums show that there is no standard monitoring tool and they seemed to have no idea of what to monitor. It should be noted that monitoring and evaluation is one of the main mechanism for the forum for feed back and checking progress and performance of groups and enterprise development. This has therefore reduced the ability to influence policy and plan effectively. In an interview, the Programme Officer of ASSED, for example, observed that:

*“Most of the work of sub-county forum is now done by the sub-county government technical staff. What I see is that the sub-county staff write up the agenda for meetings, draw the plans and budget, draw work plans for the forum, write minutes...the members of the forum just come to sign and endorse. Even meetings are called by the Sub-county chief not the forum chairperson”*

Further more, the Sub-county NAADS Coordinator for Kucwiny said in an interview:

*“if you wait for them [ Sub-county Farmer Forum] to write report or make accountability, it will never come and yet the district demands accountability from us not them. So we have to do things if we are to move”*

In effect therefore the government bureaucrats have taken over the responsibilities of Sub-county Farmer Forum and have therefore alienating farmers from participation in NAADS.

As far as representation is concerned, NAADS guidelines do not stipulate formal mechanisms for Sub-county Farmer Forum accountability to the farmers and so and the members of the forum seem to have no obligation to account to their constituencies. Focus group discussions with farmer group generated a lot of sentiments about the Sub-county Farmer Forums. For example in Vurr parish – Kucwiny sub-county, a group member said:

*“we elected them two years ago and they have not come back to tell us what they have been doing. But the NAADS people always come here to see our project and advise us. Are they working for us or for the sub-county?”*

Feed back and accountability to farmers is therefore limited to informal networking. This is particularly evident with groups whose members sit on the Sub-county Farmer Forum. Many farmers however, feel disconnected with the Sub-county Farmer Forum and thereby not represented. The issue of limited accountability has therefore eroded the legitimacy of the Sub-county Farmer Forum. Most farmers feel more attached to NAADS staff and service providers than with their own representatives at the sub-county level. Considering that the Sub-county Farmer Forum is the strategic space for directing and influencing plans and policies, an outright hijacking of this role by the government officials, deliberately or otherwise, is to deny the poor farmers the opportunity to participate in NAADS. The evidence from this section suggests that poor farmers are not taking active part in the decision process and hence not participating.

### **5.5 Decision Making: Enterprise Selection and Technology Development**

Participatory planning under NAADS is primarily aimed at identification, selection and development of agricultural enterprises. This selection of enterprises is the entry point for farmer groups to participate and benefit from NAADS programme. The planning process starts at group level where groups, with the facilitation of service providers and technical personnel brainstorm, identify various enterprises, analyse the options, constraints and risks before arriving at three proposed enterprises. The proposed enterprises are then forwarded to the Sub-county Farmer Forum for further scrutiny. At the sub-county, the forum sits together with technical staff and the choices one enterprise for each group. The farmer groups are then asked to undertake the enterprises chosen for them by the Sub-county Forum.

The emerging issues from this process three fold. First, the enterprises that get selected at the group level in some cases did not reflect the interest of majority farmer. Either, they were imposed by facilitators or some dominating group members. As a result the rest of the group members felt their interests were not considered. The second issue is that farmers are assumed to have the necessary market information regarding the alternative enterprises. Or that the facilitators and the technical personnel are aware of the market opportunities. However, in reality this has not been the case as evidence suggests. Such enterprise, in some groups ended up failing because members disown them. An example was in Kalwang parish where a group abandoned their maize crop to wither saying they did not expect to benefit from the enterprise. They called the enterprise 'NAADS maize'.

Another emerging issue about enterprise selection is related to the role of Sub-county Farmer Forum. The final selection of enterprise which are done at sub-county level is also referred to as participatory planning. The farmers feel that the enterprises selected at the sub-county are imposed on them since they mainly do



not represent their interests. Although, the Sub-county Farmer Forum is ideally to represent the interest of poor farmers, evidence show that the institution has been hijacked by self-interest elites and the government staff.

This Therefore, based on the Ladder of Participation, this process is manipulative and not participatory and only save as therapy to the poor farmers.

Table 4: Number of groups by Enterprise by Parish for Nebbi and Kucwing sub-counties

Sub-county	Parish	Enterprise undertaken	No. of groups involved	Total no. of participants	
Nebbi	Kalwang	Cassava	3	60	
		Maize	2	40	
		Goat rearing	2	20	
		Ground Nuts	1	20	
	<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>140</b>
	Koch	Cassava	2	40	
		Maize	2	40	
		Goat rearing	2	40	
	<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>120</b>
	Jupangira/Pawong	Cassava	2	40	
		Maize	2	40	
		Goat rearing	4	80	
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>160</b>	
<b>Sub-county Total</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>420</b>	
Kucwiny	Vurr	Apiary	3	65	
		Maize	3	60	
		Cassava	1	20	
	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>145</b>
	Olago	Apiary	3	69	
		Maize	2	45	
		Cassava	2	38	
	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>152</b>
	Ramogi	Apiary	4	85	
		Maize	1	23	
		Cassava	1	15	
	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>223</b>
<b>Sub-county Total</b>				<b>520</b>	

Source: Nebbi and Kucwiny Sub-county Farmer Forum records

## **5.6 Constraint Poor Farmer Participation in NAADS**

Following the discussion above, there is evidence that the poorer farmers are constrained in various ways that limit their effective participation in NAADS. The institutions at both group and sub-county levels have not ensured that poor farmers' voices and demands in planning are taken care of. Some of the constraints are discussed below.

In some instances, interviews with advisory service providers reveal that, farmer groups selection were influenced by local politicians in their respective constituencies. For example in Nebbi sub-county, a district politician was reported to have formed a group out of his own family. In one of its reports, Nebbi sub-county reported as challenges the "many briefcase groups e.g. a family would form and group writing names of only family members". When the group was selected for support, the sub-county NAADS co-ordination committee objected to it and eventually dropped it. This suggests that some groups which were selected to participate in NAADS were not real poor farmers groups. At the sub-county level, we have

Although working with organized groups are effective for promoting participation, the field findings indicate that selection of farmer groups and formation of the Farmer Forum is one area where poor farmers have been marginalized more and have been excluded from participation. The NAADS procedure is such that in its initial stage of implementation, NAADS through the district and sub-county leaders, mobilized villagers and sensitized them about the programme. The critical issue here is about which group gets selected and who gets leadership position. Field findings reveal that mobilization meetings actually raised a lot of expectations. Most farmers and elites expected the traditional way of distributing cash for farm and agricultural inputs. As a result, some elites from villages and neighbouring urban centres rushed to form farmer groups in the villages. They eventually became leaders of the farmer groups and forums. According to NAADS guidelines, "Farmers should be advised to choose a chairperson who is a good commu-

nicator and mobiliser, with good interpersonal skills and a person of high integrity”, (NAADS, 2004:3). Such predetermined criteria are some of the means by which poor farmers were eventually marginalized from leadership positions. For example, Focus group discussion with three groups in Kalwang Parish in Nebbi sub-county revealed that the chairperson of the Sub-county Farmer Forum was a newly laid-off Sub-county Chief who formed his own farmer group and moved through the selections to become the Farmer Forum chairperson. In another sub-county, a law graduate found himself among the poor farmers. He was selected the secretary of the Sub-county Farmer Forum. He realized later that there was no such money he expected and abandoned the institution. This criterion also marginalized women for leadership positions. All sub-county farmers Forums studied, had male chairpersons.

Limited capacity on the part of facilitators and inadequate time for initial farmer involvement resulted in inappropriate decision and lack of ownership on the part of farmers

- Set criteria for group selection, leadership selection undermined the participation of poor farmers
- Generally mechanisms and guidelines promote participation but the application guideline and methods was not exhaustive



## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

In assessing the nature of participation of the poor in PMA and NAADS as a strategy to reduce poverty, this study analysed both primary and secondary data. A qualitative analysis was done to find out whether the poor were participating in PMA/NAADS. The study took critical look at Farmer Institutional Development (FID), Advisory and Information Services and Participatory Planning, Enterprise Selection and Technology Development as key units of analysis visa viz the objectives of the research. The study focus was about farmer institutional Development Processes under NAADS, involvement of poor farmers in decision making processes and constraint poor farmer participation in NAADS.

UNCDF (2003) has argued that to empower poor people and enhance their well-being requires the removal of all institutional barriers that prevent them from taking control over matters that affect their lives and strengthen their capacity to participate in development programmes and governance. (UNCDF, 2003:67). The findings and analysis of this study suggest that the instructional development process under NAADS in Nebbi district has been ad hoc and has not considered the diversity of interests and capacity within and among farmer groups and has hence that weaken group cohesion or marginalised other groups from effective participation.

The involvement of farmers in decision-making processes is not yet well backed by adequate institutional and resource capacity. The mandatory co-funding requirement and inadequate resource base of farmers is limiting their capacity to demand for services and to take control over the planning processes. The responsibilities and terms of reference of Sub-county Farmer Forum are too technical which makes it difficult to take necessary managerial tasks. This has opened the door for government officials to take over the planning roles of the farmers.

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Farmers' participation is further being constraint and influenced by self-interest elites and politicians. This has been found to have link with poor resource base and capacity of the poorer farmers that makes them more vulnerable to manipulation.

Even if the NAADS programme is intended to enhance the participation of poor farmers in planning and taking control over enterprise development, this study finds that the practices within the farmer institutions as well as services providers are largely manipulative and informative. The institutional processes have been hijacked and dominated by elites and government bureaucrats and have curtailed the participation of the poor farmers. NAADS implementation process in Nebbi district is therefore not participatory.

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