

PERSPECTIVES OF AGENTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIMID II AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME IN BOTSWANA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the perspectives of policy agents on the implementation of the Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) Phase II agricultural programme in Botswana in the Mahalapye District. Using the qualitative approach, the paper examined the LIMID II that was not fully evaluated in 2010 and hence it was important to include other objectives that were left out by the first evaluation by getting the perspectives of participants. The participants were the agricultural officers, farmers, Heads of Unit in Agriculture at Headquarters and Mahalapye District. The research employed a case study strategy with the use of open-ended questionnaires and interviews for data collection. Data collection tools used were semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The findings of the study revealed a mixture of appreciation for its potential benefits and frustration with its flawed execution. The study underscored the importance of aligning theoretical frameworks with practical realities in policy implementation. The paper concludes that the implementation process should not be overlooked by decision makers but be given the attention it deserves to avoid divergent ways of implementing the same policy.

Keywords: Implementation; LIMID II, Agricultural programme; perspective; implementation process; agents

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the perspectives of policy agents on the implementation of LIMID II agricultural programme in Botswana. Policy implementation requires concerted efforts of stakeholders, decision makers and beneficiaries. All of the team members need to be educated about the goals and objectives of the policy before it can be implemented. Agriculture in Botswana is no exception to this, the LIMID phase II policy was introduced in 2010 and not effectively and fully evaluated. If a policy is not evaluated or fully evaluated, there is no way to hold those

responsible accountable for programme outcomes. Again, programme decisions made would not be based on evidence and measuring programme performance would be difficult. Therefore, the paper problematizes the issue of policy implementation in the agricultural sector on LIMID II by looking at the perspectives of the policy agents about its implementation. Their views were important for reflection purposes.

Effective policy implementation is crucial, and since independence, Botswana has worked hard to improve service delivery and administrative efficiency in implementing government policies and programmes. This effort reflects the government's concern about the repercussions of failed projects and programmes on its transformation agenda in the past. The transformation is underpinned by effective policies and developmental programmes, which are essential for Botswana's goal of becoming a high-income country by 2036, as outlined in Vision 2036. Nevertheless, the existence of developmental programmes alone does not guarantee success. Poor implementation of government programmes has been a longstanding concern. The National Development Plan 7 (1991, 80) emphasized that those who are tasked with implementation must first understand and should be seen to be committed to the policy or programmes that are being implemented. Furthermore, the statement below points out that, *“Commitment should be based on full understanding of the policy to be implemented and agreement with the purposes served by the policy. Blind obedience is a poor substitute for commitment, but ensuring dedicated performance is not a simple task”* NDP 7 (1991, 81). The implementer’s knowledge of the department mission and vision alone is not enough, as it is important for implementers to be committed to the organization’s direction. Hence, the perspectives of participants are shared in this paper.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Government of Botswana has long prioritized agricultural development as a means to achieve national policy objectives, enhance food security, and improve livelihoods. Despite the policies in place, the performance of the agricultural sector has faced challenges, primarily due to poor implementation and management. Effective policy implementation requires continuous evaluation and adjustments based on changing market conditions and policy requirements.

2.1 LIMID Phase I

Botswana’s LIMID programme, launched in 2007, aimed to improve food security and alleviate poverty. LIMID Phase I had five objectives: promoting food security through improved livestock productivity, enhancing livestock management, improving range resource utilization, eliminating destitution by providing resources to the poor, and providing infrastructure for safe poultry processing. The programme targeted citizens with limited livestock and offered various support packages. An evaluation of LIMID Phase I in 2009 revealed partial achievement of its objectives, with notable participation from women and increased small stock populations. However, low youth

participation and high contribution requirements hindered uptake of infrastructure development packages. The evaluation did not comprehensively address all programme objectives or implementation processes, hence evaluation not fully fleshed. The evaluation conclusions did not state anything on the two LIMID phase I programme objectives of improving range resource utilization and conservation, as well as the objective of providing infrastructure for safe and hygienic processing of poultry products, hence the programme being partly evaluated. The evaluation did not investigate the LIMID phase I programme implementation process that contributed to the performance of an agricultural programme. In this regard, it was necessary to make a full evaluation of the policy and dig out the views of implementers.

2.2 LIMID Phase II

LIMID phase I gave birth to LIMID Phase II. It started in September 2010, continuing the resource-poor support and infrastructure development components, refining the packages offered. LIMID phase II had five objectives which were similar to those of LIMID phase I. The infrastructure development component included poultry abattoirs, animal husbandry, and water development support, while the resource poor component provided tswana chickens and small stock. Notably, the programme provided once-off support, except for animal husbandry and fodder support, which allowed multiple sub-packages over different years. An evaluation of LIMID Phase II was done in 2015 and it also revealed partial achievement of its objectives. The evaluation did not address all programme objectives and the LIMID II implementation processes but focused on the programme output, hence not being a fully fleshed evaluation. The evaluation conclusions of LIMID phase II did not state anything on the two programme objectives of improving range resource utilization and conservation, as well as the objective of providing infrastructure for a safe and hygienic processing of poultry products, hence the programme was partly evaluated. The evaluation did not investigate the LIMID phase II programme implementation process that contributed to the overall performance of the programme. In the study conducted at Mahalapye District, the multiple views of participants were observed which form the core business of this article.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on Botswana's agricultural programme design and implementation has highlighted various challenges. Notable studies include Nthomang's (2018) investigation of the Ipelegeng programme, Diraditsile's (2017) analysis of youth intervention programmes, and Kaboyakgosi and Marata's (2013) evaluation of government programme's implementation challenges. These studies collectively identify a range of issues, from HIV/AIDS and economic diversification to youth unemployment, poverty, social inequalities, infrastructure deficits, project delays, and budget overruns. Kaboyakgosi and Marata (2013:312) emphasize the connection between effective programme implementation, governance, and socio-economic development. They argue that

successful public programme implementation is crucial for fulfilling governmental promises, delivering essential services, and creating economic value through infrastructure and resources.

Kaboyakgosi and Marata (2013) study highlighted persistent implementation challenges such as HIV/AIDS, economic diversification, youth unemployment, poverty, social inequalities, infrastructure deficits, project delays, and budget overruns (Kaboyakgosi & Marata, 2013:315). Keboneilwe and Madisa (2005) similarly identified challenges in Botswana, noting rapid urbanization, a declining economy, and growing urban poverty. However, both Keboneilwe and Madisa's (2005) study and Kaboyakgosi & Marata's (2013) research do not link these implementation challenges to the policy planning and implementation process. Scholars have noted challenges in the implementation process of policies. For example, Nthomang (2018) and Diraditsile (2017) pointed out challenges in the implementation of Botswana's Ipelegeng programme and youth intervention programmes, respectively. These challenges include unclear objectives, limited beneficiary coverage, exclusion of deserving poor, poor programme design, fragmented activities, lack of coordination, top-down management, absence of interdepartmental synergy, inadequate staffing, poor supervision, and resource wastage.

Mosha (2007) stressed the importance of consultation during programme ideation. He criticized the government's top-down approach, which limits beneficiary participation and ownership, leading to loss of funds and time. Mosha identified challenges such as funding shortages, poor departmental capacitation, and human resource deficits, all rooted in the programme design phase. Policies in Botswana operate in different micro and macro environments, which affect their implementation, therefore societal, economic, political, legal, health, and environmental factors influence programme implementation (Diraditsile, 2017; Frayne *et al*, 2014; Nthomang, 2018). Nthomang (2018) argued that programme impacts are enhanced when implementation is interlinked with the environmental and other economic empowerment programmes targeting the poor. Research agrees on the complexity of implementation, highlighting the need for multi-theory approaches (Signe, 2017; Arko, 2020). Hanekom *et al* (2001, 37) argued that the emergence of the integrationist model also referred to as bottom-up approach of policy implementation, moved from diverging trends of the classical model or top-up approach, into a direction of a converging of interests between policy making and policy implementation. Signe (2017) discussed the top-down models of implementation, and noted that they had largely fallen out of favor as they believe that centralized decision making is poorly adapted to local conditions. Top-down models are also discussed by researchers like Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) and Sabatier (1986).

Sabatier and Mazmanian's (1980) broad analytical categories were criticized for being cumbersome (Arko, 2020). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) focused on standards, policy resources, intergovernmental relations, personnel traits, socio-political factors, and implementers' understanding. Studies in Ghana and Kenya applied similar top-down frameworks to analyze

program implementation, but these models often exclude bottom-up insights crucial for understanding the implementation process (Arko, 2020; Matland, 1995). Edwards and Sharkansky (1978) highlighted communication, resources, implementers' disposition, standard procedures, and follow-up. Frawley (1972) identified goal interpretation, guideline development, delegation, operations, and monitoring as sources of error and slippage. Van Horn and Van Meter (1975) emphasized the political environment, economic conditions, policy standards, policy resources, implementing agency characteristics, implementer disposition, communication, and enforcement.

While numerous studies addressed policy implementation challenges in Botswana (Keboneilwe & Madisa, 2005; Schillinger, 2010; Wegener et al., 2011; Diraditsile, 2017), there is limited research on the processes taken by programmes like LIMID II and how they were implemented, the full evaluation especially making an in-depth investigation on the perspective of participants on the implementation was missing and hence the focus of this paper.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper employed policy planning and implementation to benchmark the views of the participants who were involved in the implementation process. For example, Gunn's (1978) theoretical framework of policy planning and implementation comprises distinct stages, each critical for the success of any policy. The reasons for using this framework is that it aligns the implementation process to the participants' perspectives. The framework informed the study in all the stages and processes that the implementation process goes through. The framework connects the readers to the data that informs this study hence making the readers see the gaps and flaws that could have been addressed by decision makers. Some of their views tally with what could have been done and not what was done.

The cycle begins with agenda setting, where a problem is identified, and an agenda is established to systematically address the issue. This stage sets the tone for the policy, such as LIMID II, ensuring that decision-makers are prepared, plan effectively, and address all necessary items without omission. The next stage is policy formulation, which involves developing potential solutions and selecting the best course of action through research, analysis, and stakeholder consultation. Policy adoption follows, involving negotiation, compromise, and coalition-building to garner support for the proposed policy. It demands ownership and understanding from all stakeholders to foster accountability and responsibility. Stakeholders need to collaborate and network about issues raised, ensuring that the programme is workable and implementable. If key stakeholders and implementers are overlooked, resistance and lack of ownership can hinder the adoption process. The implementation stage translates the policy into action. This involves allocating resources, setting up implementing teams, following guidelines, and monitoring progress. Effective implementation requires thorough induction of implementers, pilot testing, and

commitment from all involved parties. Challenges such as resource constraints, bureaucratic resistance, and unforeseen obstacles can arise. In the case of LIMID II, inadequate planning and training led to significant implementation difficulties.

Finally, policy evaluation assesses the policy's effectiveness and impact by measuring outcomes against objectives and identifying areas for improvement. Evaluation findings inform future policy decisions, programme adjustments, and resource reallocation, contributing to accountability, transparency, and learning. Gunn's framework emphasizes the importance of thorough planning, stakeholder involvement, resource allocation, and continuous evaluation to ensure successful policy implementation. The framework provides a systematic approach, outlines tasks for implementers, promotes accountability, encourages collaboration and networking, and emphasizes the importance of feedback and supervision. This was what the participants expected from the policy implementers before it could have been enacted. In this regard, some of the objectives were undermined and underestimated to realize the goals of LIMID II. Like scholars have noted, implementation can be a costly and demands training and a clear understanding of programme goals among implementers to avoid failure. The framework provided a coherent path to be followed when implementing the LIMID II programme by specifying the stages that could have been followed. The policy strongly advocates for education and strategies to be put in place before the implementation process. This was found to be lacking in the LIMID II implementation process. Also, the framework made the readers to look at the implementation process using a different lens that teases out the strengths and weakness of the decision makers. The conclusion was that the implementation process was overlooked and trivialized, hence the divergent outcomes.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology of the study that investigated the implementation of the LIMID II Agricultural programme. The research design for the study on the implementation of the LIMID II Agricultural Programme in Mahalapye District was meticulously crafted to align with the qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to facilitate the gathering of detailed and nuanced information directly from beneficiaries and programme implementers. By adopting the qualitative methodology, the researcher was able to delve deeply into the perspectives, experiences, and meanings of the participants in their natural settings, thereby enriching the data collected. The study was framed within an interpretivist research paradigm, which emphasizes understanding and interpreting the meanings derived from participants' responses. This paradigm was particularly suitable for investigating the implementation of LIMID II, as it allowed the researcher to uncover significant issues within the implementation process and gain an intimate understanding of the participants' viewpoints. The interpretivist approach facilitated a deep engagement with the participants, helping the researcher see events through their eyes and interpret their lived experiences. The research was exploratory in nature, aimed at evaluating the LIMID II

programme's implementation by seeking in-depth understanding and explanations of the process. The exploratory approach was selected to foster creativity, open-mindedness, and flexibility in exploring various sources of information and adopting an investigative stance. The objectives of the study were: a) to investigate the views of the programme implementers and beneficiaries on the implementation of LIMID phase II, from the period the programme started in September 2010 to March 2023; b) to find out measures that were put in place to facilitate implementation of LIMID II from September 2010 to March 2023; c) to explore the implementation challenges (if any) between September 2010 and March 2023 from the implementers and beneficiaries of LIMID II and d) to establish solutions to the above LIMID II implementation challenges observed between September 2010 and March 2023. In this paper only the first objective is discussed.

A case study strategy was employed, focusing on the LIMID II programme implemented in the Mahalapye district under the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Animal Production between September 2010 and March 2023. The case study strategy was deemed most appropriate for conducting an in-depth investigation and addressing the research questions comprehensively. Mahalapye district has diverse soil types, vegetation, rainfall patterns, and other environmental factors that influence livestock production and agricultural practices. This diversity provided a rich context for studying the implementation of the LIMID II programme. The population of the study included 16 key informants from the department leadership at both ministry and district levels, district stakeholders, and ten LIMID II beneficiaries who participated in a focus group discussion. Ministry and district implementing participants were selected using purposive sampling due to their rich knowledge and direct involvement with the LIMID II programme. The purposive sampling method ensured that those who had insightful data about the programme were included in the study.

The sampling techniques included purposive sampling for key informants and cluster sampling for LIMID II beneficiaries. Cluster sampling was used to manage the geographically dispersed population of beneficiaries across the Mahalapye district. The focus group discussion involved a diverse group of beneficiaries, while in-depth interviews were conducted with the key informants.

Data collection tools included semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires for focus group discussions, and in-depth face to face interviews. Open-ended questionnaires were used to gather firsthand information from participants on the implementation process. Focus group discussions facilitated unstructured yet focused conversations among beneficiaries, providing a rich understanding of their perspectives. In-depth face to face interviews allowed for intensive, detailed exploration of the experiences and insights of key informants, helping to uncover in-depth details and explore concepts further. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the study employed triangulation by using multiple data collection methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This approach helped minimize bias and verified the integrity of the

participants' responses. Additionally, supporting documents were gathered to provide further context and explain the attitudes and behaviors of the sample population.

For data analysis, the responses were organized according to the key research questions to ensure comprehensive coverage. The researcher began by transcribing the audio recordings into written documents, which were then read and re-read to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' views. This process facilitated the identification of major and minor themes within the data. The researcher initially performed manual coding before utilizing the data management software Atlas.ti9 to systematically code the transcribed data. The data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were then analyzed using content analysis to derive meaningful insights and conclusions. The research observed the ethical considerations to avoid any unethical practices in the research as there was a great need to protect research participants. In brief, the methodology followed dug out the views of the participants to make a strong case about the implementation process followed in implementing LIMID II in the Mahalapye District between September 2010 and March 2023. The research methodology assisted in defining a clear path to investigate the objectives and hence, the key research questions undoubtedly answered the niche and provided answers to the objectives that were overlooked in the initial objective. It was in this consistent and reliable manner that the perspectives of the participants were unearthed and now shared in the section below.

6. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the results of the perspectives of agents on the implementation of LIMID II agricultural programme in Botswana only.

6.1 First, the participants reported that they appreciated the LIMID II programme despite its flaws. Beneficiaries had varied experiences with the LIMID II programme. The critical issue that emerged was that most of the officers, stakeholders and farmers reported that they appreciated the LIMID II programme because it had good intentions had it been well coordinated. Those who received infrastructure development packages generally reported minimal challenges, while some faced technical problems and regulatory limitations. Elderly beneficiaries and passionate farmers reported significant improvements in their livelihoods, but the youth did not benefit as much. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of passion and good management for success by beneficiaries, acknowledging that while some beneficiaries thrived, the majority struggled to perform well. Some of the participants said:

Yes, there are success stories like I built a house, I bought a car, I took children to school, I am not poor anymore and many success stories of those who have graduated from LIMID to CEDA, YDF, NDB and doing well. Code 12

There are challenges here and there but for infrastructure, quite a number of them are not failing, and you realize that if you go for infrastructure you are talking about a certain level of people compared to those of poor resource. The poor resource objective has also achieved. I think both have progressively archived whatever their intended objectives were.

Code 1

The above verbatim implied that the LIMID II programme was well appreciated and could have improved the lives of farmers had it been closely monitored. The farmers' words suggested that not all was lost in the process had they been given the necessary support.

Second, most implementing officers reported that they appreciated that LIMID II achieved some of its objectives which assisted beneficiaries even though there were challenges in achieving some of the objectives. Some of the participants mentioned that:

I believe the programme is going well as we see some achievements... Code 4

The objective of Infrastructure development where people partly invest their money on those packages are very successful. The objective poor resources packages have many challenges due to its grant nature and makes implementation of the programme very hard and costly. Code 10

The above verbatim suggested that LIMID II implementing participants also appreciated that the programme partly achieved some of its objectives even though they were not sure about the overall performance of LIMID II programme in terms of achieving all its objectives. The results show participants measuring LIMID II performance using only the resource poor package and infrastructure development package uptake as performance indicators.

Beneficiaries of the LIMID II programme expressed appreciation for the initiative despite its flaws, acknowledging its good intentions and potential for positive impact. Implementing officers, stakeholders, and farmers appreciated the programme, particularly those who received infrastructure development packages, who reported fewer challenges compared to those who encountered technical or regulatory issues. Success was often linked to passion and good management, though many beneficiaries struggled. Despite these challenges, there were notable success stories of beneficiaries who improved their lives and advanced to other development programmes. Implementing officers also recognized that the programme achieved some of its objectives, particularly in infrastructure development, though they noted that the resource-poor packages faced significant challenges, making the overall success of the programme difficult to assess.

Third, all programme implementing participants noted the lack of resources as what made them fail to achieve programme intentions and portray implementers as non-performers. These

resources included adequate human resources to facilitate a district with 42 villages, adequate vehicles to cover the distance across the district from villages to main office in Mahalapye village, computers, printers, scanners, printing machines and stationery to facilitate implementation. All implementing participants stated that the programme was not well resourced from inception. Below are some of the answers from the participants:

When this programme started it had no computers, printers, scanners... Recently we requested funds for computers, printers and we share vehicles. If the programme was well resourced, we could have been far in terms of its performance. Code 10

From the beginning of the programme it came with no resources of its own and we were more manual and relied on the resources of the department to implement. Even the personnel or human resource to assist in implementation, there was no one and the programme relied on the department staff to implement alongside the LIMID officer." code 2

The above verbatim showed programme implementers pointing out that insufficient resources were a major obstacle to fulfilling the programme's objectives, contributing to a perception of underperformance. The participants stressed that the programme lacked adequate resources from the very beginning, which hampered effective implementation. They believed that with better resources, the programme could have achieved much greater success.

6.2 The participants also reported that what the theory said on paper was different from what was practiced in the field, hence, contradictory. This issue of theory versus practice was multifaceted. The theme manifested itself in various ways that indicated that there was a gap between what the theory expected and the realities of implementing the LIMID II policy.

Participants reported that the implementation of LIMID II suffered significantly from inadequate education and training for its implementers. Key departments, such as the Department of Animal Production, were excluded from the planning and formulation stages, leading to a poor understanding of the programme's objectives. This lack of initial involvement resulted in varied and inconsistent implementation across districts. According to the theoretical framework by Gunn (1978), this gap between policy intentions and actual service delivery is common, as policy implementation often appears straightforward in theory but becomes complex in practice. Implementers were not fully inducted, which meant they lacked the necessary knowledge and ownership of the policy, leading to a misalignment between the theoretical expectations and the practical execution of LIMID II. Some of the participants stated that:

It is a good programme, it just need us to pick it and align it. Code 12

We were never inducted, the programme was designed, guideline arrived and we were told to go and implement. Code 9

The verbatim above showed that implementers were aware that what was expected in writing and theoretically was not what they experienced while implementing the programme.

The other issue reported by participants was that the objectives of the programme were not clearly communicated for better understanding and actualization. A major shortfall in the LIMID II implementation was the failure to clearly communicate the programme's objectives to stakeholders. Some stakeholders said:

I haven't gone into what they do really but from observation they are more into running the agricultural programmes being the primary target programme they are running at the moment, and also they are looking more into the productive of the national herd of animals. Code 6

The above verbatim showed that stakeholders were not aware of the LIMID II programme objectives. Effective policy implementation requires that stakeholders understand and are confident about the objectives they are tasked with achieving. The study found that stakeholders were not adequately inducted, which undermined their ability to support and implement the programme effectively.

The participants reported that there was a significant oversight of budgeting for implementation costs including beneficiary training. LIMID II was funded under a development budget, which did not account for implementation and training costs. Some of the implementers stated that;

I have never seen them being trained. Usually when they come to collect their packages or vaccines, we take them to technical officers to brief them a little about their small stock or vaccines. It is not a thorough training with practicals. Code 5

The verbatim above indicated that implementers have never seen beneficiaries being trained but only briefed upon being packaged. As a result, the programme utilized recurrent budget funds for its implementation logistics and implementers as well as beneficiaries received minimal training, which was insufficient for effective programme execution.

The participants reported that, implementers lacked knowledge about the geographical layout of Mahalapye district, affecting their ability to allocate resources and plan effectively. Awareness of geographical factors is crucial for optimizing resource distribution and addressing local agricultural challenges. One of the participants stated that;

I don't know Mahalapye and surrounding areas confidently. The people in the district can know better... These are the people who can answer better on the areas and their coverage. I don't know the area and who covers them. Code 10

The verbatim above implies that some participants at department leadership and programme coordination level were not aware of the geographical distances between the villages within the district and the village distances to the district department main office. The lack of geographical knowledge among implementers led to inefficiencies in programme execution, resource distribution and hindered effective engagement with local communities.

The participants reported that the implementation process also neglected the different soil types in Mahalapye district, which were critical for determining suitable agricultural practices. Understanding soil characteristics is important for making informed decisions about land use and supporting agricultural activities. The lack of this knowledge meant that the programme did not fully address the agricultural needs of the region. One of the participants stated that:

Refer to the district, they can answer better. The soil type differs, loam soil, sandy depending on the areas you are at. Shoshong vegetation is good and has acacia species around and the rains are good. Code 10

The above verbatim indicated that some participants at department leadership and programme coordination level were not aware of the different soils within the 42 villages in Mahalapye districts. This led to application of a one size fits all programme regardless of the soil that influences the vegetation necessary for animal production.

Overall, the implementation of the LIMID II programme revealed significant gaps between theory and practice, as outlined in several key areas. First, many officers lacked induction and training on the programme's objectives, leading to uncertainty about their roles and inconsistent implementation. This gap between policy intentions and actual service delivery aligns with Gunn's (1978) theoretical framework, which highlights the challenges of translating policy into practice without adequate education and training.

Second, there was a clear disconnection between the Ministry of Agriculture's planning and the reality on the ground. Decision-makers did not provide sufficient support to ensure that the programme's objectives were realized, resulting in projects that did not meet expectations. The exclusion of key implementers from the planning stages further exacerbated these issues, leading to disparities in execution across districts.

Environmental considerations also illustrate the divergence between theory and practice. Implementers failed to account for local vegetation, soil types, and water availability, which are

critical for effective animal production. This oversight reflects a significant misalignment between theoretical guidelines and the practical realities of agricultural policy implementation.

Lastly, the lack of geographical knowledge among implementers affected resource allocation and programme effectiveness. The failure to understand the Mahalapye district's geographical layout led to inefficiencies, highlighting the importance of integrating local environmental and geographical knowledge into policy implementation to achieve desired outcomes.

In summary, the implementation of LIMID II demonstrated significant gaps between theoretical expectations and practical execution, highlighting issues with education, stakeholder engagement, budgeting, environmental considerations, geographical awareness, and understanding of local soil conditions. Addressing these gaps is essential for aligning theory with practice and improving the effectiveness of future agricultural programmes.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The participants' perspectives are discussed in this section. First, the issue of the participants' view is double folded: appreciation and lack of appreciation. The findings of the study indicated that participants appreciated the programme because there were significant improvements in beneficiaries and passionate farmers' livelihoods. Examples provided by beneficiaries indicated that one built a house, one bought a car and the other one took children to school, while one indicated that he is not poor anymore. They said:

Yes, there are success stories like I built a house, I bought a car, I took children to school, I am not poor anymore and many success stories of those who have graduated from LIMID to CEDA, YDF, NDB and doing well. Code 12

The participants showed positive signs of good yields that changed their lives one way or the other. This was an indication that to a certain extent, the policy realized its objectives because some beneficiaries provide positive testimony to this.

On the other hand, the perspectives of implementing participants showed lack of appreciation since there were some flaws from the administrative part noting a poorly resourced programme not planned for during formulation phase and not provided when implementation begun. While some beneficiaries thrived, the ministry implementers struggled to perform well due to a poorly resourced programme that affected implementation and portrayed implementers as incompetent. One of the participants said:

Currently the vehicle that is there is being shared, there are no vehicles at all to facilitate the programme to an extent that we sometimes use our own vehicles to assist implement

LIMID or any department roles. As for monitoring, we are not doing it totally as the transportation issue is serious and we use our own transport. Code 2

The verbatim above sends unpleasant messages that the implementation of the LIMID II programme was plagued by contradictory information among administrative officers and beneficiaries leading to significant challenges.

Most officers reported a lack of induction on LIMID II objectives, which made it difficult for them to follow and execute the policy effectively. This sentiment was echoed in their statements, with several officers indicating they had to rely on on-the-job learning and reading guidelines independently. This lack of structured training meant that officers were often uncertain about their roles and responsibilities, leading to inconsistent and inefficient implementation. Additionally, stakeholders distanced themselves from the policy, citing a lack of understanding of its objectives. This detachment hindered effective implementation and monitoring, as stakeholders did not fully grasp the programme's goals or their role in achieving them. The theoretical framework by Gunn (1978) argued that there is always a gap between policy intentions and the services delivered by implementers and beneficiaries. Implementers who were not aware of the policy directions or policy intentions negatively affected the output of the policy as services were delivered with no clear guidance. The situation was further complicated by inconsistent training experiences among officers. Some were familiar with the programme's objectives from its initial transformation from LIMID I, while others had never been inducted. This inconsistency resulted in varied levels of understanding and efficiency in implementing the programme. Overall, the lack of comprehensive training and induction led to a significant gap in knowledge among implementers, pointing to a failure by the Ministry of Agriculture to adequately educate the very people responsible for executing the policy. Gunn (1978) pointed out that policy implementation demands education to realize the intended goals. LIMID II programme could have gone through the same process of educating all participants for smooth implementation.

The findings also indicated that those who benefitted from the programme were elderly people and not the youth, hence seeing the programme as discriminatory. The participants said:

When we honestly talk about youth, there is no young person who we get to who can tell you their track record of what they have done or of benefit. You can only hear the elderly people saying success stories that they managed to buy cattle, built or roofed a house using small stock profits. Code 5

The above verbatim showed that participants observed contradictory experiences that were unpleasant stories to share about youth. Although the youth could have been part of the beneficiaries, it seems they were left out or their projects failed one way or the other due to lack of experience. Hence, there was need for better monitoring, mentoring, and resource allocation to

fully realize the programme's potential across participants. This mixed feedback underscores the critical importance of addressing logistical and structural issues to enhance the programme's effectiveness.

Second, the findings revealed the gap between theory and practice which is also multifaceted. The findings indicated that what was planned by decision makers was not what was realized. Participants highlighted that while the Ministry of Agriculture had good intentions with programmes like LIMID II, the actual implementation often fell short. The ministry did not provide sufficient support to ensure that what was on paper translated into reality. This disconnectedness meant that many projects that could have benefited farmers, youths and the ministry did not take off as expected.

Again, the findings revealed lack of collective effort between decision makers and implementers. Implementers were left out in the planning stage and this led to disparities in executing the LIMID II programme. According to the implementation theory by Gunn (1978), involving key personnel from the initial stages was crucial for effective policy execution. However, the findings reveal that implementers from the Department of Animal Production were not included in the planning stages, leading to a lack of understanding and inconsistent implementation across districts. This exclusion of critical personnel reflects Gunn's (1978) assertion that there is often a gap between policy intentions and actual service delivery. The practical implications of this oversight highlight the complexity of implementation, which is not as straightforward as theoretical frameworks suggest.

Further, environmental considerations represent another area where theory versus practice diverges in the implementation of LIMID II. Theoretically, environmental factors should be integral to policy implementation to ensure relevance and effectiveness. However, the findings reveal that implementers did not consider the suitability of local vegetation for animal production packages, and had a one size fits all programme regardless of difference in soil types, vegetation, area water table or quality of water as well as water availability. Turner and Hulme (1997) emphasize the impact of environmental conditions on organizational performance, underscoring the need for adaptation to local environments. The practical oversight of these critical factors illustrates a significant misalignment between theoretical guidelines and actual implementation practices.

Furthermore, the overlooking of different soil types in the Mahalapye district further demonstrates the challenges of aligning practice with theoretical expectations in agricultural policy implementation. It is important to understand soil types and environmental conditions for effective agricultural programmes, including those of animal production. However, LIMID II implementers were unaware of the various soil types, affecting decisions related to range management and livestock support. This lack of environmental awareness illustrates the gap between theoretical

guidelines and practical execution, highlighting the importance of integrating local environmental knowledge into policy implementation to achieve desired outcomes.

Also, a thorough understanding of the geographical context is a theoretical requirement for effective policy implementation, but geographical knowledge of implementation areas was lacking among LIMID II implementers. The findings indicated that implementers had limited knowledge of the Mahalapye district's geographical layout, affecting resource allocation and programme effectiveness. This gap between theoretical expectations and practical realities reflects significant variations in implementers' knowledge of local villages and distances, leading to inefficiencies. Understanding the geographical context is essential for tailoring interventions and optimizing resource distribution, but this was not achieved in practice. Turner and Hulme (1997, 39) stated that, “...size, composition and location of populations is vital information for policy-makers and administrators. It enables them to know what services are needed, how fast they should grow, where they should be located and what to expect in the future”. The overlooking of distances and locations within the district highlights another critical divergence between theory and practice. In practice, LIMID II implementers lacked comprehensive knowledge of the distances and locations of villages within the district, affecting the strategic resource allocation and services. This oversight underscores the challenges of aligning theoretical guidelines with practical execution, impacting the programme's overall effectiveness and the ability to serve local communities efficiently. This multifaceted interplay of factors needs to be addressed to ensure the programme's integrity and effectiveness.

Gunn (1978) posits that effective implementation translates policy into action through resource allocation, team setup, guideline adherence, and monitoring. However, literature and participant feedback indicated significant gaps in the practical application of these principles in Botswana. Nthomang (2018) and Diraditsile (2017) identified issues such as limited beneficiary coverage, exclusion of deserving poor, fragmented activities, and poor supervision. The unclear roles among implementers underscored the complexity of implementation and the necessity for thorough planning and preparation. Evaluation was crucial for assessing policy effectiveness and informing future decisions. However, the literature review suggests that many programmes in Botswana including LIMID II lack robust evaluation mechanisms. The studies by Frayne et al. (2014) and Nthomang (2018) stress the need for continuous feedback and adjustment based on programme outcomes. The mixed perspectives from LIMID II participants highlighted the need for systematic evaluation and the incorporation of lessons learned into future iterations of the programme.

The theoretical expectations and real life situations disconnectedness in policy implementation in Botswana point to several areas needing improvement. Firstly, stakeholder engagement should be enhanced from the initial stages of policy planning to ensure comprehensive understanding and ownership. This aligns with Gunn's (1978) emphasis on thorough planning and stakeholder

involvement. Secondly, training and induction of implementers should be standardized to ensure consistent understanding and execution of programme objectives. Thirdly, environmental and geographical considerations must be integrated into the planning and implementation phases to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Moreover, there is a need to bridge the gap between top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation. The integrationist model, which combines elements of both approaches, could provide a more adaptive and responsive framework. This model acknowledges the importance of centralized decision-making while incorporating local insights and conditions, as discussed by Hanekom et al. (2001) and Signe (2017). Similarly, Kaboyakgosi and Marata's (2013) evaluation of government programmes highlighted persistent implementation challenges like HIV/AIDS, economic diversification, youth unemployment, and infrastructure deficits. These issues were also present in LIMID I, where administrative officers faced difficulties due to contradictory information, insufficient training, and inconsistent implementation practices. According to Gunn's (1978) theory, effective policy implementation requires clear communication, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. However, the findings revealed that LIMID II failed to fully meet these theoretical requirements due to government's top-down approach and its impact on programme effectiveness. Theoretical frameworks stress the importance of environmental considerations, comprehensive training, and stakeholder involvement as these could lead to inefficiencies and unmet objectives if not considered. These observations will not only make the programme fail but can also contribute to the broader socio-economic development issues.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the views of programme implementers and beneficiaries on the implementation of LIMID II revealed a mixture of appreciation for its potential benefits and frustration with its flawed execution. While the programme had a positive impact on some beneficiaries, the challenges faced by the agents also hindered its success. The programme was appreciated for its improvement of beneficiaries' livelihoods at household level. However, the programme partially achieved its objectives due to resource constraints and poor coordination, highlighting the need for better monitoring, mentoring, and resource allocation. The discrepancy between theoretical planning and practical execution further compounded these problems. Addressing these issues through better coordination, clear communication, sufficient resource allocation, and knowledge of the area of implementation is crucial for enhancing the programme's effectiveness and ensuring that it achieves its full potential.

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