The Doctrine of Citizens' Participation in Organisation and Implementation of Community Development Projects

By

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Abstract

This paper assessed the doctrine of citizens' participation in the organization and implementation of community development projects through self-help in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Oyo State of Nigeria. The study helped to determine factors that motivates citizens' participation in community development through self-help projects and explain the contribution of citizens to community development through self-help projects. It also examined the extent to which citizens are involved in self-help projects.lt highlights the factors that motivate citizens to participate in organisation and community development. A descriptive research design and self designed questionnaire was used in collecting data from a sample of 400 respondents for the study. Data collected were analysed using Chi-square. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between citizens' participation in community development through self-help projects(X^2cal= 121.162 is greater than X^2crit= 8.543 at 0.05 significant). The findings also revealed that there is significant relationship between citizens' derived benefits and their participation in community development through self-help projects (X^2cal=149.122 is greater than X^2crit= 8.543 at 0.05 significant). It is therefore, recommended that citizens need to be involved in every stage of the life-cycle of a project so as to ensure utilization, sustainability and benefit derivation. Beside, the development agents should find out the felt-needs of the community before embarking on them.

Introduction

Peoples' participation in development has assumed the centre stage as an important condition for achieving accelerated and sustainable development. This can be viewed globally, as central element of the people-centred development strategy. In this regard, many development practitioners and agencies have emphasised the need to secure active support and participation of the citizens in the developmental process. In Africa, the importance of peoples' participation in community development has also been acknowledged and documented (SIL, 2011). The improvement of life should be reflected in increase in the level of economic, social and human development indices - the growth of human capabilities and potential. It is, therefore, important that the role that citizens' participation plays in community development projects is analyzed to be able to pinpoint the contribution of participation to development projects and their determinant factors.

Development principle advocates community participation in community-based projects because it has long been seen and recognised as an effective means of assisting people to mobilise their numerous and otherwise untapped resources available within them towards improving their community. Community participation in community development ensures the achievement of developmental objectives. It is also a recognized way of making basic amenities and services available and accessible to the beneficiaries.

Olaleye (2004) argues that this development not only brings about progressive reduction of material deprivation and social inequalities, but also promotes the growth of human capabilities and potential. Lucas (2010) and UNDP (1999) assert that, between the 1950s and the 1960s, these initiatives cumulated into the process of community development, which then sought to involve citizens in the efforts to develop their communities. UNDP (1999) further notes that

community development during this era sought to build community-based organizations, which were intended to serve as vehicles through which the local people could get actively involved.

The World Bank (2004) asserts that this era was largely dominated by efforts towards promoting citizens' participation in community development, which would require a fundamental shift in attitudes and in methodologies, thereby breaking the top-down non-participatory practice. In view of this, since the 1990s, several major international agencies, such as Food and Agricultural Organizations (FAO).

The World Bank, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP) as well as numerous Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been championing the participatory developmental approach having evaluated the unpleasant consequences of non-participatory approach to the developmental processes.

Community projects have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of various parts of Nigeria. They have been effectively harnessed to provide social services in the rural areas. Community projects which have been playing a significant role in alleviating poverty at the grassroots level will continue to provide amenities which the government, with all its resources, is unable to provide as quickly as they are needed by the people (Olaleye, 2004). There is need to identify and encourage the various factors that enhance the citizens' participation in self-help projects so as to ensure the citizens' continual participation in community development projects. This will aid the development of our various communities which will consequently reduce the rural-urban migration rate to the barest minimum in Nigeria (Okafor, 2000).

Anyanwu (2002) claims that community development is a conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities recognize their needs and assume increasing responsibilities for solving their problems thereby increasing their capacities to participate fully in the life of the nation. Community development emphasizes, self-help by the citizens and also initiates a people-directed process that is based upon their perception of their needs.

Egenti (2002) also sees community development as the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nations, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. The development aspect of community development involves the stimulation of self-help and citizens' active participation in community affairs (Imhabekhai, 2009).

The international health agencies then began to promote and finance it on an international scale. Several groups working with the poor people and disadvantaged groups have been able to establish projects in areas where these neglected groups had little or no access to government welfare programmes, by sharing an awareness that citizens' supports and participation is important and crucial for success (Egenti, 2002). Citizens' participation is an educational empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify their needs and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control, and assess the collective actions that are necessary based on shared interest on what one can do best. Community participation emphasizes total control by the community members; de-emphasizes a less degree of government imposition of projects on the people (community)

Okediran (1998) refers to citizens' participation as an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of developmental projects rather than merely receiving a share of project benefits. This implies the need for people's conscience to be sensitized towards active participation in community development projects as a tool for mobilizing new and additional resources, which hitherto would have been wasted or untapped. Abiona (2003), opined that citizens' participation

make people to respond to developmental programmes. He sees citizens' participation as a process of giving information on development programmes that could in turn elicit the desired awareness in community members for effective community development processes. It aids peoples' wisdom or the power of the people to solve their problem, which is peculiar to them using resources available at their disposal.

Also, Osuji (2004) views citizens' participation in terms of development as the engagement in project by community members in all the various decision-making on development programmes in their areas. Citizens participation is not just all about getting people involved in decision-making process. The principle of citizens' participation implies that the workers have to supply the necessary and needed stimulus for the success of the project (Anyanwu, 1999).

One of the determinants of citizens' participation in self-help projects is assistance, especially from the government, since the government controls all resources available within the communities and in the entire country. Publicity is another determinant of citizens' participation, especially by the project initiators (Adedokun, 2011). The leadership style adopted by the head of the community influences its community -development efforts. It has been accepted and documented that the success of any development programme depends largely on the involvement and actual participation of the people themselves.

However, some communities have taken it upon themselves to change their conditions for the better and are succeeding, while many others could hardly start any stage of developmental process. Based on the foregoing, this study therefore sought to fill the gap by investigating the doctrine of citizens' participation in organization and implementation of community development through self-help project. Also the study aimed to determine factors that correlate with citizens' participation in community development projects.

The present study was conducted with the broad objective of identifying and exposing the determinants of citizens' participation in community development towards self-help projects. The specific objectives include: to ascertain the citizens' participation in community development towards self-help projects; to assess the contribution of citizens to community development through self-help projects; to determine the factors that correlates with citizens' participation in community development through self projects.

Research Questions

RQ_1 What is the relationship between these factors (giving some form of assistance to your community, (financial involvement being within one's ability, having dynamic and trustworthy leaders of the entire community) and citizens' participation through self-help projects?

RQ_2 What is the relationship between citizens' participation and community development self-help project?

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study to elicit information on citizen's participation and self- help projects for organization and community development in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

Based on the information gathered during pilot study, the target population for this research is 400 respondents.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample from among the population. In doing this, Ogbomoso South Local Government Area was stratified along the axis of the existing five communities that had self-help projects as at the time of the study. Ogbomoso South was divided into five wards namely; ward A, ward B, ward C, ward D and ward E. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select eighty respondents from

each community. Thus four hundred respondents were selected for the study.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire tagged "citizen's participation and self-help projects for organization and community development" (CPSHPOCDQ) carefully designed for the participating respondents. A modified four-point Likert rating scale was adopted to elicit responses to the questionnaire and 407 copies of the questionnaire were distributed while 400 copies were retrieved as properly filled.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Prior to its being administered, the questions were scrutinized by some experts in community development, social work, rural and extension services. Based on their comments, some items were reworded, while some were modified to ensure that there were no ambiguities. Cronbach Alpha and Kuder Richardson (KR21) were used to provide reliability estimate of the instrument. KR21 was used for items that were dichotomously scored, while Cronbach Alpha was used for 3 and 4 point items scales. In order to achieve this, a pilot study was carried out with a sample of 80 subjects in Atiba Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The result of reliability coefficient was r = 0.73. This result indicates that the instrument used for data collection is reliable.

Analysis of Data

Chi-square (X^2) was used to analyse the data to measure the relationship, using a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Analysis of the Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Items	Variables	Frequency	%
1	Sex	Male	260	65.0
		Female	140	35.0
	Total		400	100
2	Age	Below 21 - 25yrs	130	32.4
		26 - 30yrs	125	31.3
		Above 31yrs	145	36.3
	Total		400	100
3	Marital Status	Single	120	30.0
		Married	255	63.8
		Separated	12	3.0
		Divorced	8	2.0
		Widowed	5	1.2
	Total		400	100
4	Religion	Christianity	175	43.8
		Muslim	216	54.0
		Traditional	9	2.2
	Total		400	100
5	Educational Qualification	Pry/Koranic	128	32.0
		Secondary	208	52.0
		Tertiary	64	16.0
	Total		400	100

Table 1 shows that, 260 (65%) of the respondents were males while 140 (35%) were females. The age bracket of the respondents below 21 to 25 years were indicated as 130 (32.4%), 26 to 30 years were analysed as 125 (31.3%) while 31 and above were indicated as 145 (36.3%) respectively. This goes a long way to show that the majority of the respondents are between 21 years and above.

On the marital status of the respondents, 120 (40%) were single, 255 (63.8%) were married, 12 (3%) respondents were separated; 8 (2%) were divorced while 5 (1.2%) were widowed. The religion of the unemployed youths shows that 175 (43.8%) were Christians,

216 (54%) were into Muslims and 9 (2.2%) were traditional believers. This indicated that majority of the respondents are still married. On the educational attainment level of the respondents, 128 (32%) had primary/Koranic education while those secondary school education were 208 (52%) and tertiary education had 64 (16%) respondents.

Discussions of Results

The results are discussed under the research questions.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between these factors (giving some form of assistance to your community, your financial involvement being within your ability, having dynamic and trustworthy leaders of the entire community and citizens' participation through self-help projects?

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation and Chi-Square Analysis for Research Question1

Item	SA	A	SD	D	Total	X^2Cal	Df	X^2Crit	Remark
Form of assistance given to your community	10(2.5)	40(10)	21(5.6)	3(0.8)	74(18.5)				
Financial involvement within your ability	25(2.5)	60(15)	38(9.5)	3(0.8)	126(31.5)	152.455	3	8.543	Sig
Leaders were very dynamic and trustworthy	125(31.3)	55(13.8)	5(1.3)	6(1.5)	191(47.8)				
Total	40	116	114	130	400				

Table 2 shows that the calculated X^2cal= 152.455 is greater than X^2crit= 8.543 at 0.05 significant. This implies that there is a strong relationship between those factors and the respondents' involvement or participation in community development through self-help projects. Citizens' participation could be enhanced with very dynamic and trustworthy leader. Table 1 show that 72% felt their leaders was dynamic and trustworthy while only 28% believed otherwise. Proper leadership training could be given to these leaders so that they would understand their citizens' expectations of them so as to win the confidence and trust of their people.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between citizens' participation and community development through self-help projects?

Table 3: Cross-Tabulation and Chi-Square Analysis for research question 2

Item	SA	A	SD	D	Total	X^2Cal	Df	X^2Crit	Remark
ensures proper need identification and execution	20(5)	35(8.8)	87(21.6)	57(14.3)	199(49.7)				
Increase project effectiveness	10(2.5)	15(3.8)	47(11.8)	29(7.2)	101(25.3)	121.162	3	8.543	Sig
Enhances project sustainability	10(2.5)	10(2.5)	26(6.5)	54(13.5)	100(25)				
Total	40	60	160	140	400				

Table 3 shows that the calculated X^2cal= 121.162 is greater than X^2crit= 8.543 at 0.05 significant. Consequently, it is indicated that there is significant relationship between the increase project effectiveness; ensures proper need identification and execution; enhances project sustainability and citizens' participation in community development self-help project.

Discussions

The result in research question one indicates that there is a significant relationship between giving some form of assistance to your community, initiators sensitizing you through publicity, your financial involvement being within your ability, having dynamic and trustworthy leaders, involving all categories of disadvantaged groups and project solving a specific bad situation of the entire community and citizens' participation through self help project. The finding is in line with the findings of Anyanwu (1999) asserts that publicity is a determinant of citizens' participation, especially by the project initiators, if the project is not identified by the people. The leadership style adopted by a community influences its community development efforts.

It was also discovered in research question two that there is a significant relationship between citizens' participation and community development through self-help projects. This is supported by the findings of Okafor (2000), that there is need to identify and encourage the various factors that enhance the citizens' participation in self-help projects in Nigeria.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that the act of negotiation and persuasion and the act of members coming together to work for a common purpose denotes a significant relationship to the citizens' participation in self-help project towards community development. Another implication of the findings for community development planners, policy makers, non-governmental agencies, and other stakeholders is that it will contribute to their level of awareness of factors that correlate with citizens' participation in community development self-help projects. Furthermore, it enables their community to develop the ability to link up with other communities or agencies for assistance in citizens' community development efforts.

Conclusion

The study has provided further empirical reinforcement on the process of citizens' participation that is derived from in organization and implementation of community development project through self-help. The study has established that self-help project is an organ of national and community development programme, which has contributed to improvement in the standard of living of our communities especially the rural communities. The study has equally established the fact that citizens' participation serves as a major method for sustainable development and improvement in the standard of living of the people. This implies that citizens' participation is a method that enables projects to be built around the felt-needs of the citizens through the citizens' mobilization of both human and material resources within themselves and their communities for the development of their communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. Proper leadership training should be given to community leaders so that they would understand their citizens' expectations from them in order to win the confidence and trust of their people.
ii. Furthermore, there is need to sustain citizens' participation spirit for continuous improvement.
iii. Government should make use of community social workers in assisting their members at various stages of their project implementation, especially in

training and evaluation of these projects

iv. Community members should be always allow to be involve in design, planning and implementation of all infra-structural facilities required in their localities with appropriate assistance from government.

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