



Determinants of participation in Community and Social Development Projects in Nigeria: a case study of Imo State.

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Abstract

The study analyzed the determinants of participation in Community and Social Development Projects in Imo State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 216 respondents from the state. Data were collected from the respondents using a set of structured questionnaire and were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Results showed that majority (68.1 %) of the respondents were male; a greater proportion (38.9 %) of the respondents were aged 41 – 50 years with a mean age of 49.0 years; farming (37.5 %) was the dominant occupation; majority (63.4 %) earned 30,200 – 40,000 Naira per month with a mean of 38268 Naira; the people participated in water projects (94.1 %), market construction and store fencing (64.9%) and community roads and culverts (61.6 %) while drainage system (88.4 %), erosion control (88.4 %), health centre (86.6 %) and construction of classroom blocks (83.3 %) were perceived as effective projects in the area. Determinants of participation in CSDP were social cohesion, payment of counterpart fund, release of fund, managerial ability and the perception of projects by community members. It was recommended that CSDP should be scaled up and sustained.

Keywords: Determinants, participation, CSDP, Imo State, Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

Community development is a 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 the communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress (Ekong, 2003). Community development involves all the members of the community and requires their fullest participation in first making and then implementing the decisions (Adebayo, 1991). Normally, community development activities and actions are aimed at promoting, sustaining and maintaining community actions. Such activities and actions involve a broad range of issues including housing, information acquisition and dissemination, provision of social services (like water, roads, hospitals etc), establishing and sustaining financial institutions etc (Agbola, 1994). Pyakuryal (2008) maintains that the distinctive features of community development is the participation of the people by themselves in efforts to improve their levels of living with reliance as much as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make them more

effective.

The advocates of community participation believe that it brings many lasting benefits to people instead of being only a means of getting things done. They associate citizen participation with citizen power and control as the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. They also explain that participation is inherently good and that it brings people together in creating and making decisions about their environments. Since people are actively involved in the process, participation helps promote sense of ownership and control among the people (Zadeh & Ahmad, 2010). According to Breuer (1999) participation offers new opportunities for creative thinking and innovative planning and development. It also promotes efficiency, effectiveness and equity and can reduce the risk of failure and the cost of project.

From the precolonial era till date, several projects and services have been embarked upon to alleviate poverty and promote rural development in Nigeria by successive governments (Ekong, 2003). However, majority of the projects and services never yielded desired results because of the top-down, supply-driven and non-participatory mode of

delivering services to communities. The search for service delivery mechanisms that are demand-driven, covering multiple sectors and depending on specific community-determined needs, therefore became increasingly necessary (Gombe State Community and Social Development Project, GCSDP, 2011). This led to the introduction of the community and social development project (CSDP). CSDP is a developmental strategy, which is anchored on Community Driven Development (CDD) approach which offers the opportunity to fill the critical gap of achieving lasting and immediate results at the grassroots; it is participatory and based on bottom-up approach (Imo State Agency for Community and Social Development, 2010). One of its cardinal points is to tackle development problems of the rural populace since meaningful development can take place through active participation of the people joined with technical assistance from government or other development agencies (Synder, 2004).

CSDP aims at empowering communities to plan, part-finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectoral micro-projects, facilitate and increase community/LGA partnership on human development-related projects, increase the capacity of LGAs, state and federal agencies to implement and monitor community-driven development (CDD) policies and interventions; and leverage federal, state and local government resources for greater coverage of CDD interventions in communities (GCSDP, 2011). The community members take the bulk of the decisions regarding choice of projects to be executed in their community, manage and ensure their maintenance for sustainable use (Imo State Agency for Community & Social Development, 2010). The project has since inception been used and promoted as an approach to rural development in Nigeria. While the project has gained widespread acceptance among development practitioners, literature is still lean with reports on it and it is against this backdrop that this study seeks to determine factors influencing peoples' participation in it in Imo State of Nigeria. Achieving this requires the provision of answers to the following research questions; what are the socioeconomic characteristics of the community members, how do they participate in the projects and what is their perceived effectiveness of the project. The major objectives of this study are;

- identifying the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents;
- determining their participation in the various

projects; and assessing the perceived effectiveness of the projects.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Imo State which is among the five states in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. Administratively, it is divided into three geopolitical zones namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe and is made up of 27 local government areas. It lies within latitude $4^{\circ} 45'$ and $7^{\circ} 15'$ N and longitude $6^{\circ} 50'$ E and $7^{\circ} 25'$ E. It is bounded on the east by Abia state, on the west by Delta state, on the north by Anambra state and on the south by Rivers state and covers an area of about 5,100 square kilometer. The population of the state stands at 3,934,899 (National Population Commission, NPC, 2006). The state has two distinct seasons, the rainy which lasts from March to October and the dry season which lasts from November to February. The annual rainfall varies from 1,900 mm to 2,200 mm and the mean temperature is about 20°C . The relative humidity is about 75°C (www.imostate.gov). The vegetation is dominated by economic trees like iroko, mahogany, obeche, gmelina, bamboo, rubber and oil palm. Livestock kept include sheep, goats and local fowl (Umunakwe, 2011).

Respondents' participation in the various projects was achieved by providing a list of all the CSDP projects available in the area and asking them to indicate whether they participated or not. Perceived effectiveness of the project was assessed by providing a list of all the CSDP projects in the area and asking the respondents to assess their effectiveness on a nominal scale of low, moderate and high.

Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The first stage was the purposive selection of two local government areas (LGAs) from each of the three geo-political zones to give a total of six LGAs. This was done in order to ensure that all the LGAs participating in the project (i.e. CSDP) were captured in the study. The second stage was the selection of three communities from each of the six LGAs using simple random sampling technique to give a total of 18 communities. The third stage involved the purposive selection of 12 members (the chairman and secretary and other 10 members) from each community giving a total of 216 members which constituted the sample size. Data were elicited from the respondents using a set of structured questionnaire and were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The hypothesis was tested using ordinary least square

regression analysis model represented implicitly as follows:

$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, E)$ where

Y = participation in CSDP by community members (measured by the number of projects participated in by the people)

X_1 = Payment of counterpart fund (Dummy: Prompt payment = 1, Otherwise = 0)

X_2 = Release of fund for CSDP (Dummy: Early release = 1, Otherwise = 0)

X_3 = Community cohesion (Dummy: Presence of cohesion = 1, Otherwise = 0)

X_4 = Managerial ability of members (Dummy: Satisfactory = 1, Poor = 0)

X_5 = Level of monitoring and evaluation (number of times projects were monitored and evaluated)

X_6 = Perception of projects by community members (Dummy: Positive = 1, Negative = 0)

X_7 = Level of elite capture (Number of times elites interfered with projects).

E = Error term

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows that majority (68.1 %) of the respondents were male while the remaining 31.9 % were female, majority (79.2 %) were married, a greater proportion (47.2 %) spent between 7 and 12 years in school with 9.3 years as the mean number of years spent in school, implying that majority of the respondents were educated up to secondary school; a greater proportion (38.9 %) were within the age bracket of 41 - 50 years and the mean age was found to be 49.0 years. The result further shows that farming (37.5 %) was the dominant occupation of the respondents; majority (63.4 %) of the respondents earned between 30,200.00 and 40,000.00 Naira monthly with a mean monthly income of 38,286 Naira and a greater proportion (47.7 %) of the respondents were financial members of social organizations.

The dominance of male participants in the

project could be attributed to local customs which interfere with female participation in social activities. Igbokwe (2011) reported the prevalence of certain customs in rural parts of Nigeria which limit female participation in social and economic activities. Marriage could induce the propensity to participate in socio-economic activities. For example, in some rural societies, marriage is viewed as the 'beginning of the period of maturity and responsibility'. It is observed that this perception influences the assignment of responsibilities and offices as unmarried people are considered 'socially immature' to be entrusted with certain responsibilities. Education has been noted to exert a strong influence on participation in social and economic activities (Ekong, 2003). Access to education may be related to access to information. However, access to information has been reported to be worse in rural areas in developing countries (Adebayo, 1991). Ani (2004) and IFAD (2003) confirm the limited access to knowledge among women in rural areas of developing countries. This might have accounted for the dominance of males in the project. On the other hand, the acquisition of formal education promotes management, leadership and organizational skills in community development projects (Dorsner, 2004)

Furthermore, the mean age of the participants suggests that they are still in their economically active ages. Young people are physically strong and innovative (Adesope, 2007) and this could enhance their participation in the project. The earning of monthly income by the members could encourage their participation in community development projects. Dukeshire & Thurlow (2002) identified access to finance as a major factor determining the success of community development projects. Certain community projects involve the payment of levies by community members (Ekong, 2003). Income earning capacity of community members could serve as a leverage for their participation in projects.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to socioeconomic characteristics

Socioeconomic characteristics	%	M
Sex		
Male	68.1	
Female	31.9	
Marital status		
Single	7.9	
Married	79.2	
Separated	0.4	
Divorced	1.9	
Widowed	10.6	
Number of years spent in school		
0	2.8	
1 – 6	18.1	9.3
7 – 12	47.2	
13 – 18	29.6	
> 18	2.3	
Age (Years)		
≤ 30	3.7	
31 – 40	12.0	
41 – 50	38.9	49.0
51 – 60	34.7	
≥ 60	10.7	
Occupation		
Farming	37.5	
Artisan	17.6	
Civil servant	11.6	
Fashion designer	8.8	
Trader	24.5	
Monthly income level (Naira)		
≥ 10000.00	1.4	
10200.00 – 30000.00	25.0	38286
30200.00 – 40000.00	63.4	
> 40000.00	10.2	
Membership of social organization		
Ordinary member	6.9	
Regular member	12.0	
Financial member	47.7	
Committee member	22.7	

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

3.2 Participation of respondents in the projects

Result in Table 2 reveals that the respondents participated in several projects in the area. However water projects (74.1 %), market construction and store fencing (64.9 %) and community roads and culvert construction (61.6 %) got the highest participation. Conversely, construction of civic centres (5.8 %) and information communication technology (6.5 %) were the least participated in. These results show that the respondents participated

in some projects more than the others. However, overall performance was poor as a few projects recorded above average participation. It could be that those projects that recorded higher participation had a bearing on the people's livelihood. Ekong (2013) contends that projects embarked upon by a community is a function of many variables most especially the severity of the absence and deprivation of that service to the community at that time. Rono & Aboud (2003) argued that peoples' low participation in projects could be linked to poor

sensitization regarding the benefits of projects. Even at that, as rationale beings, humans are more likely to participate in projects that they perceive as having more potentials of bettering their living

standards. This concurs with the view of Ogunleye-Adetona & Oladeinde (2013) that people are likely to participate in programmes that would improve their situations. According to Olawepo (1997) rural peoples' participation in rural development covers such areas as road construction, building of primary schools, clinics and dispensaries.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to participation in the various projects

Types of Projects	% (*)
Community roads and culvert construction	61.6
Renovation rehabilitation of new school building	50.9
Construction of new school building	55.6
Rehabilitation of rural feeder roads	63.9
Water project	74.1
Rural electrification projects	48.7
Agro-processing cottage industries	46.2
Erosion control	42.7
Drainage systems	36.0
Private and public sanitation facilities	54.2
Solid waste management	25.9
Market construction and store fencing	64.9
Fish/snail farm projects	20.3
Product storage facilities/equipment	28.8
Healthcare programme	29.5
Bus stop	31.0
Information communication technology	6.5
Construction of civic centres	5.8

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014, * Multiple Response

3.3 Perceived effectiveness of CSDP

Table 3 reveals that drainage system (88.4 %), erosion control (88.4 %), health centres (86.6 %) and construction of school blocks (81.5 %) were perceived as most effective projects in the study area. Rural people tend to value and participate more in projects that meet their needs. According to Ekong (2003) for any meaningful development to be achieved in rural communities, the projects should target to meet the peoples' needs. The result however, implies active involvement in all the stages of the projects by the people. A study on the

determinants of households' participation in rural development projects by Ngugi *et al.* (2003) reported that majority of the respondents that did not participate in the projects cited inability of the projects to meet their interests as the reason. Weak participation in projects leads to unsuccessfulness of projects and ultimately peoples' disempowerment (Chifamba, 2013).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to perceived effectiveness of projects

Community development projects	Perceived Effectiveness		
	Effective	Moderate	High
Lock up stores	23 (10.6)	69 (31.9)	124 (57.5)
Market structures	15 (6.9)	32 (14.8)	169 (78.3)
Rural electrification	28 (12.9)	35 (16.2)	153 (70.9)
Water boreholes	6 (2.8)	19 (8.8)	191 (88.4)
Erosion control	7 (3.2)	22 (10.2)	187 (86.6)
Health centres	6 (2.8)	34 (15.7)	176 (81.5)
School blocks	8 (3.7)	28 (13.0)	180 (83.3)
Construction/rehabilitation of roads	16 (7.4)	29 (13.4)	171 (79.2)
Community farm projects	37 (17.1)	62 (28.7)	117 (54.2)
Modern oil mills	6 (2.8)	19 (8.8)	191 (88.4)
Drainage systems	11 (5.1)	18 (8.3)	187 (86.6)
Solid waste management	73 (33.8)	65 (30.1)	78 (36.1)
Bus stop	42 (19.4)	93 (43.1)	81 (37.5)
infoma Information communication technology centres	83 (38.4)	104 (48.1)	29 (13.5)
Construction of civic centres	75 (13.3)	98 (22.4)	43 (64.3)

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

Table 4: Result of regression analysis showing relationship between participation in CSDP by community members and some selected variables

	Linear Function	Semi-log function	Double-log function	Exponential function
X ₁	16.0387 (1.0738)	16.0387 (1.0738)	0.0207 (4.0048)*	0.0021 (3.6667)*
X ₂	13.0319 (1.0889)	13.0319 (1.0889)	0.0109 (4.7064)*	0.0061 (1.1739)
X ₃	3.1905 (4.4825)*	3.1905 (4.4825)*	0.0107 (2.9719)*	0.0013 (3.7692)*
X ₄	14.1168 (1.0648)	14.1168 (1.0648)	0.0206 (3.3689)*	0.0073 (1.1644)
X ₅	18.0334 (1.0649)	18.0334 (1.0649)	0.0169 (0.0213)	0.0028 (3.3214)*
X ₆	4.0217 (4.4539)*	4.0217 (4.4539)*	0.0213 (4.3991)*	0.0018 (3.2778)*
X ₇	15.0133 (- 1.0957)	15.0133 (- 1.0957)	0.0614 (-1.2101)	0.0051 (- 1.3529)
F –	29.4762	29.4762	79.5495	45.4061
R ² value	49.52	45.02	72.39	60.39

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014 P < 0.05

Table 4 shows the result of the four functional forms; linear, semi-log, double-log and exponential functions. The double-log function was selected as the lead equation because it has the highest number of significant variables, the highest F-value and the highest value of coefficient of multiple determination. The result show that with an F-value of 79.5495, the independent variables accounted for about 72 % of the variations in the dependent variable. Significant variables included payment of counterpart fund (t = 4.0048), release of fund (t= 4.7064), community cohesion (t = 2.9791), managerial ability of CPMC members (t = 3.3689) and perception of project by community members (t = 4.3991).

Many developmental projects in rural areas of developing countries are partly funded by international agencies. As a project funded by different partnering bodies, the compliance with the payment of counterpart fund by the participating bodies might facilitate the success of the project. However, non-compliance or withdrawal of any of the partnering bodies could frustrate the success of the project. For example, Madukwe (2008) reported that the withdrawal of the World Bank from the funding of agricultural development projects in Nigeria contributed to the ineffectiveness of the programme. Similarly, the release of fund is crucial

for the success of any developmental project. However, funds should be timely released to facilitate their meaningful utilization.

Social cohesion has been identified as contributing to a variety of development outcomes (Grootaert & van Basterlaer, 2002; Easterly et al., 2006; Ferroni et al., 2008). Putnam (2007) argues that diversity may alienate people and push them towards isolation and segregation which reduces the possibility of collective action, mutual help and cooperation. Absence of cohesion in a community could frustrate developmental efforts as it is about the capacity of a community to live and work together (Community Development Foundation, 2006).

Managerial ability is another vital issue in the success of projects in communities. Such skills include planning, organizing, leading, coordinating, delegating and budgeting. According to Chechetto-Salles (2006) it is the duty of a leader (manager) to ensure that the aims and objectives of an organization are achieved. In the case of community projects, resources both human and material should be effectively and efficiently mobilized for the project. Most importantly, community members are individuals who are sometimes difficult to mobilize. Thus, the leader's possession of sound managerial skills is essential for the success of the projects.

Similarly, the way community members perceive developmental projects plays a key role in the success of the projects. For example, when they perceive projects as meeting their needs either social or economic, they are more likely to support it. Also, when they perceive projects as participatory in which case they are involved in all the stages of it, they are bound to embrace the project as theirs which will be demonstrated through active participation.

4.0 Conclusion

As a strategy to promote community development, CSDP was adjudged effective in the study area. It encouraged the participation of the people in projects in their community. However, not all the projects embarked upon were effective. The most effective projects were road construction, building of schools, erosion control and waste management. This implies increased rural development and better living of standard in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that CSDP should be up-scaled and sustained in the country. This could be achieved through the inclusion of more states in the project and the timely provision of the counterpart fund by all stakeholders. Also, the rural people should be properly guided in the choice of projects so as to boost their participation and avoid misuse of resources.

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