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ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS' LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CSDP) IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the assessment of community member's level of participation in community development project (CSDP) in Enugu State, Nigeria. descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, one research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study was 3,960 persons comprising all community project management committee (CPMC) while the sample of the study was 480 respondents selected through proportionate random sampling technique. The researchers design questionnaire titled: Assessment of community member's level of participation in community and social development project questionnaire (ACMLPCSDPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three research experts. Data collected was analysed using mean and statistics. The study revealed that respondents were of the opinion that community participated actively in part-financing of community and social development project micro projects in Enugu State at a high level. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that there is need to carry out proper base line investigation and properly understand the socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental context of communities before carrying out any intervention projects in communities by CSDP in Enugu State.

Keywords: Community members, participation, social development, projects

Introduction

Poverty in Nigeria is a pervasive phenomenon, especially in the rural areas which are characterized by low levels of income and acute deprivation (World Bank, 2020). Social and economic indicators at the national level are poorer than standards recommended by global institutions like the United Nation. These indicators are far much poorer for the rural areas where majority of the citizens reside. Successive governments (Federal, State, and Local) have embarked on different forms of poverty alleviation projects such as the construction and rehabilitation of roads, schools, hospitals and health centers, the provision of portable water and a host of others (Kolawole, 2021).

However, the projects have not yielded the maximum desired results, largely because they were not properly focused and directed. These included the Green Revolution 1982, War Against Indiscipline 1984, National Directorate of

Food, Roads and Rural infrastructure 1986, National directorate of Employment, Operation Feed the nation 1991, Family Economic Advancement Programme and Family Support Programme to mention but a few. During these periods poverty indicators, according to World Bank records, showed that mortality rate of children was high, life expectancy was very low, adult literacy was low, unemployment rate was high, percentage of pupils in primary school was low, access to portable water was low, HIV/AIDs prevalence was high, which all helped to aggravate poverty in our land (Abag, 2015). Many of the supposed beneficiaries of the above-mentioned government programmes did not benefit reasonably; neither did they have the feelings of ownership of the projects. Most projects also had low survival rate and lacked accountability. Even though poor communities have potentials to contribute to, identify, implement and sustain projects; they lacked the requisite skills and funds especially in the rural communities. The rural communities are faced with challenges of backwardness in all its ramifications like in non-existing and decaying infrastructural facilities, declining food production, poor transportation system, poor healthcare delivery, rural –urban migration, high rate of illiteracy, unavailability of power supply, poor rural market facilities among others (Ogwumike, 2001).

The UN Social summit in Copenhagen 1995 established consensus to place people at the center of concerns for sustainable development and pledged to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment, and foster social integration to achieve stable, safe and just societies for all (UN, 2005). A follow-up Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 2000 reiterated these commitments, and the concept of social development (UN, 2005).

According to Oboqua and Odenigbo (2023) social development is a qualitative change in the structure and framework that help the society to better realize its aims and objectives. It is a holistic approach towards providing and improving on infrastructure that help people live happily and healthy in their societies and communities. Community in this context, is a group of people who lives in an environment, considers themselves as a member of a community in form of "I, you" and "we" interrelationship, these community members come together to investigate, evaluate problems, successes and make timely decision in respect to developmental projects that concerns them in an orderly manner.

Laah, Adefila and Yusuf (2013) is of the opinion that since the advent of the internet and information technology, the concept of "community" no longer connote geographical limitations. A community which is a collection of persons can often be involved in sharing a single interest and communities can be linked by geographical boundaries to the extent that they can also communicate with each other regardless of physical location. Based on this idea, Oboqua (2021) did not view community as only a community of living human beings, one which usually have geographical boundaries but as super organisms that

belong to and is part of culture, composed of interactions between people.

A community is thus a conscious organization of individuals within a geographical area with definite and legal boundaries which support primary institutions and use some facilities within the area (Brown & Wocha, 2017). A community can also be defined as a class or group of people with common interests and in the context of this study it is a group of people living together in a well-defined geographical area under a head, recognized by government and working with community-based organizations to address the problems of under-development in the communities. Enugu State is comprised of more than 200 communities as stated by Oboqua and Odenigbo (2022). Most of these communities have a number of people living in abject poverty and not being able to cater for their basic human needs. The challenge of poverty reduction in Nigeria is of different order and requires different strategies. One of the strategies of addressing poverty reduction is through the community and social development.

The community and social development project (CSDP) is a conceived development intervention in Nigeria that builds on two existing poverty reduction oriented programmes namely: community-based poverty reduction project (CPRP) and Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) merged. CSDP is the outcome of the merger between two successful World Bank Projects in Nigeria-LEEMP and CPRP. It is anchored on Community Driven Development (CDD) approach, where community members are on the driver's seat. They prioritize, choose, co-finance, implement, monitor and maintain their projects. The Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) is therefore an intervention project that builds on structures to effectively target social and environmental infrastructure at community level, as well as improve Local Government Area (LGA) responsibility to service delivery.

The World Bank Assisted Community and social Development project (CSDP), took off in Enugu State following the passage of the Enugu State Agency for Community and Social Development Project by Law No.2 of March 30, 2009, by the Enugu State House of assembly, which was later signed into law by His Excellency, Governor Sullivan Iheanacho Chime. The Government followed it up with the payment of 100 million naira as counterpart fund to the agency, with an annual commitment of the same amount for the subsequent five years. In addition, the government constituted the agency board, made up of notable men and women from both the public and private sectors, and charged with the responsibility of formulating its policy guidelines. Since its inception CSDP in Enugu carried out advocacy visits to the headquarters of all the 17 local government areas in the state. If Local Government Area are to be efficient and effective in their service delivery responsibilities to their community members, the communities must be involved in playing leading roles in the identification, prioritization, design, implementation and monitoring of their

development initiatives which happen to be the exact platform in which CSDP is operating, considering the objective of CSDP which is to empower communities to plan ,part-finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectored micro-project; facilitate and increase Community-Local Government area partnership on human development related projects; increase the capacity of Local Government Areas, State and Federal Agencies to implement and monitor CDD policies interventions; leverage Federal, State and local government resources for greater coverage of CDD interventions in communities. (CSDP Information hand book 2011) This work will center on the level of community participation in the planning, part-financing, implementing, monitoring and maintaining sustainable community socially inclusive multi-sectored, micro-project.

In the CSDP manual (2011), it is evident that the area of linkage between the present Nigeria's development focus and CSDP are those which address Community Driven Development (CDD) which are socially inclined engendering social inclusion through gender equality, peoples' participation, job creation opportunities and wealth through the provision of support for various income generating activities. Besides, CSDP ensures improved service delivery to all rural dwellers through training of stakeholders (Community project management committee/Sub-committee members) and capacity building, participatory budgeting, and financial management in key development sectors. The focus of CSDP and the linkages with the National Development expectation is however targeted at the rural dwellers, where Community and Social Development needs respectively are to be guided by basic underlying principles of CSDP development works namely: Community participation in project identification, design, implementation and monitoring; empower communities and local government to take charge of their developmental needs; amelioration of environmental degradation processes with the active participation of rural communities; Sustainable management of natural resources to enhance income of rural people; encourages transparency and accountability in project management and good governance at all levels; poverty alleviation at the grass root level; creation of employment opportunities for the people, ensuring that donor support are appropriately targeted at the community level; and mainstreaming gender and vulnerable into the development agenda of communities (CSDP Manual, 2011).

It is then obvious that these underlying principles are geared to enhance accelerated community and social development at the grassroots level, where developments have been limited over the years by absence of community participation, lack of resources, lack of accountability and transparency in governance among others. Meanwhile, one needs to underscore community participation according to Mansuri and Rao (2004) as an active involvement of a defined community in aspect of project design and implementation. They said that community development occurs at many

levels of project implementation and that the key objective is the incorporation of local knowledge into the project's decision-making process.

Abiona, Bawole and Domfer (2013) highlighted that the improvement in the living condition of people through community participation is central to rural development, on which community and social development project (CSDP) is anchored. Therefore, community participation serves as pivot for whatever successful process Community and Social Development is trying to achieve in rural communities in Enugu State. Community participation can be thus defined as the involvement of people in community projects to solve their own problems. People cannot be forced to 'participate' in projects which affect their lives, but should be given the opportunity where possible. This is held to be a basic human right and a fundamental principle of democracy. Community participation is an effective driver of rural development in emerging economies, while community development committees (CDCs) are the key players in implementing rural development programmes in communities. Participation means contribution, association, involvement, partaking. Participation does not simply mean being involved in the construction of facilities; it means contributing funds (part-finance), ideas (plan), making decisions and taking responsibility (implement, monitor and maintain)

Part-finance involves the community members contributions towards the funding of the community selected project, it's also a strategy to participate in the funding with kin interest on the project financing and executing of a well-structured project because community members ask questions where needed to ensure effective planning of projects in their communities. Planning is a discipline for stating how to complete a project within a certain time frame, usually with defined stages and with designated resources. Planning divides the activity into: setting objectives which are measurable, planning the schedule, making supporting plans. Here, participants were expected to be part of the planning team in which they were supposed to map the direction of the project. The research used the number of participants who contribute in defining the project activities for effective implementation. Implementation involves putting the project plan into action. It's here that the project manager will coordinate and direct project resources to meet the objectives of the project plan. The implementation phase is where project implementation team actually does the project work to produce the deliverables. Participants in this phase were supposed to be part of team to be directly involved in the various activities though with the help of experts in the field of construction since most of the activities were technical. However, the research looked for the involvement of the local people in such activities as ensuring the security of the materials, carrying various materials to the project sites, project implementation and execution and overall management of the project.

Community member's level of participation in the implementation of rural development projects is one of the greatest

challenges facing many rural dwellers at present in the execution and implementation of rural community projects. Although Community and Social Development project (CSDP) have already executed and still have some ongoing projects at implementation for rural development in Enugu state, the mode, pattern and level of community participation in CSDP projects are yet to be appreciable. Odoyo (2013) is of the view that the rural community members have not really participated effectively in the sharing of the numerous benefits from the various development intervention effort of the government in the last three decades in proportion to their needs.

There is need for rural community members to be given opportunities to participate in executing of rural community projects in which Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) is mapped out to improve their standard of living and empowerment, on the level of spatial inequalities of communities, towns, states and nations will tend to increase. It therefore becomes the research interest to an alyze the processes involved in the provision of rural community projects by the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in Enugu State. Therefore, the inadequate community members participation in projects execution may be a factor in the under achievement of the desired objectives of (CSDP) in the state and this calls for the present study on community members participation in Community and Social Development projects.

Community and social development projects in its approach involves the community development Association or Town Union which is an existing umbrella in which community-based organization oversees the development needs of the entire community. It is made up of all the indigenes of the community and it's the framework for implementing all community development efforts e.g., organizing self–help groups, contributions for part-financing of projects, conducting sanitations, building of schools etc. and construction of roads, amongst others. This development Association assist community in identifying the leadership qualities embedded in the community members. This permits community members in selecting via voting in the presence of all the community members their community projects management committee (CPMC). The CPMC shall be responsible for the facilitation, formulation, implementation and management of CDP. In communities where vulnerable groups are beneficiaries of targeted social safety nets mechanized the later would be responsible for implementing them while CPMC would supervise and monitor the implementation of micro-projects. The CPMC is made up of Chairman, vice chairman, Treasurer, Financial secretary, secretary, public relations officer, Auditor and Assistant secretary. Female community members are encouraged to be well represented with not less than 25% membership being made up of women. The members of this committee are selected through representational participation to ensure that various arms of the community participate in development.

However, CSDP projects are executed by the state government in the collaboration of both federal government and World Bank. The state and federal government obtained financial assistance from the International Development Agencies (IDA) of the World Bank. The financial support was to assist in the selection, Planning and implementation of CSDP project anchored CDD initiative. This aids the ability of community members and their major stakeholders the right & authority to implement and maintain their project by active involvement of community members. In CSDP projects, a great deal of transparency and accountability is encouraged among rural dwellers (Enugu state Agency Board, 2016).

In Nigeria as a whole, 27 states are currently involved in implementation of CSDP projects of which Enugu State is one of them. Enugu state & CSDP projects are implemented in 16 out of 17 local government Areas of the state with up to a hundred communities benefiting (State Agency Board on CSDP, 2016). Lots of projects are executed in these communities like construction of bridges, classroom blocks for both primary and Secondary schools, Secondary school science laboratory, Health centers, Health workers quarters, market stalls, Water boreholes, Electricity transformer installation/extension, Building of Roads and rehabilitation, building of culverts, Skill acquisition centers, community toilets etc In CSDP template each benefiting community is entitled to a maximum budget of 10 million naira to enable them implement their social inclusive prioritized projects, subjects to their ability to pay the necessary counterpart contribution of 10% of the entire sum (State Agency Board 2016).

Meanwhile, Community members take decisions on the projects before it would be executed, thereby putting their community development needs in their own hands. It is estimated that over Two hundred and eighty (280) projects across Enugu State have been completed and are in use, while several others are still ongoing (Enugu CSDP News, 2018). Moreover, going by the amount of the fund and the advert of the paradigm shift of bottom-up approach of community driven development (CDD), where the communities are on the driver's seat and are in charge of CSDP projects being put in place for these communities. It is based on these claims that the researcher now decides to go to the field to determine the level of community members participate in execution of CSDP projects in communities.

The research is based on the knowledge that the concept of community participation as widely advocated by the participatory development paradigm has not lived up to its billing of ensuring the practical and meaningful involvement of the local community members in development project in rural communities. It is clear from evidence in Enugu state that Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) has not brought the results expected of it due to inadequate participation of community members from partaking in community project selection, implementation and utilization.

Community participation has been largely rhetorical and has remained elusive in the realm of practice in rural development projects in Enugu state. Notwithstanding its theoretical popularity in the discourse of participatory development, the concept has been over-used, over-rated and over sold by development agents of whom CSDP is part of and governments in developing countries like Nigeria. These have fallen into the trap of taking the phrase community participation at face value yet in pragmatic terms it has grossly been deficient in CSDP project implementation. What is even more salient is the realization that community participation activities are gradually and explicitly degenerating into distanced undertaking where community members have mostly become recipients of pre-designed programmes or projects, often becoming a product of administrative manipulation.

Therefore, it is against this background that the research aims to untie and redefine the level of community members participation as it relates to, decision making in selection, planning, part-financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CSDP projects by targeted community members/beneficiaries through exploring the challenges that could be militating against these realms of participation and utilization of CSDP assisted projects in various communities. The study will seek to review community participation with a view to suggest specific remedies to inform dialogue and empowerment at the community level. The research shall evaluate whether the extent of community members participation in Community and Social Development in Enugu state is promotive of local participation and suggest numerous conceptual and people centered development theory that CSDP officials and the local community members should adhere to, for the institutionalization of effective involvement of community members in CSDP project development initiative. Community member's participation in CSDP project will ensure that the projects are put to use after CSDP assistance but if community members do not participate in the project selection and execution the projects will die immediately CSDP exits the various communities after their project execution as most projects are seen scattered uncompleted or not in use across the length and breadth the State.

In other words, the researcher wants to check if the "Bottom-Up approach" to governance where community members are used in planning, execution and utilization is better than the usual "Top-Down approach" to governance where by projects are executed in communities without the knowledge and participation of community members.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess community member's level of participation in Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in Enugu state. Specifically, the study sought to: Determine the level of community participation in part-financing of CSDP micro-projects in Enugu State.

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Research Question

1. What is the level of community participation in part-financing micro-projects in Enugu State?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the responses of CPMC members from zone A and that of CPMC members from zone B communities participate in part-financing of CSDP micro-projects in Enugu state.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design and the population of the study was 3,960 community project management committee in the study area. The sample was 480 respondents selected through proportionate sampling technique. The instrument used for collecting data from the respondents was researchers designed 6 items questionnaire titled: Assessment of Community Member's Level of Participation in Community and Social Development Project Questionnaire (ACMLPCSDPQ). It was divided into two sections (section A and B) section A sought the opinion of the respondents on their background information, while section B was structured on a modified 4-point Likert scale types of Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Low Level (LL) and Very Low Level (VLL) to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies and one expert from measurement and Evaluation Unit to ensure both content and face validity. Their corrections were used to modify the final copy of the instrument before administration to the respondents.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of community participation in part-finance micro-projects in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean response score of CPMC/Sub-committee members from selected communities in Enugu East senatorial Zone, (Zone A) and Enugu North Senatorial Zone, (Zone B) on the level community participated in part-finance CSDP micro-projects in Enugu State.

Item		Enugu East Senatorial Zone (Zone A)			Enugu North Senatorial Zone (Zone B)		
S/N	**Community participated in;**	**Ẋ**	**SD**	**Dec**	**X**	**SD**	**Dec**
1	Kind contribution	2.98	0.88	HL	2.97	0.86	HL
2	Labour contribution	2.99	0.94	HL	2.98	0.74	HL
3	Cash contribution	3.02	0.99	HL	3.13	0.84	HL
4	Kind and Cash contribution	3.03	0.93	HL	3.21	0.70	HL
5	Labour, kind and Cash contribution	3.13	0.85	HL	3.28	0.70	HL
6	Labour and kind contribution	3.00	0.92	HL	3.10	0.82	HL
	Cluster Mean	**3.03**	**0.92**	**HL**	**3.11**	**0.78**	**HL**

Data presented on Table 1 shows that the responses of the respondents were at a high level. However, the mean for Zone A ranged from 2.98 to 3.13 while those of Zone B ranged from 2.97 to 3.28. The cluster mean are 3.03 for Zone A and 3.11 for Zone B and standard deviation are 0.92 for Zone A and 0.78 for Zone B respectively. These imply that the respondents were generally of the opinion that community participated in the part-finance of CSDP micro-projects in Enugu State to a high level.

Hypothesis

Table 2: Summary of T-test analysis of differences in the mean rating of Zone A and Zone B on the level to which community participated in part-finance CSDP micro projects in Enugu State

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Zone A	240	3.03	0.92	478	0.70	1.93	Do not reject
Zone B	240	3.11	0.78				

Table 2 above shows that the calculated t-value is 0.70 at 0.05 level of significance and 478 degree of freedom while the critical t-value is 1.93. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is, therefore, not rejected. This means that there is no significant differences in the mean score of zone A and zone B on the level to which community participated in part-finance of CSDP micro projects in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that the respondents were of the opinion that community participated actively in part-financing of CSDP micro projects in Enugu state at a high level, from the finding CSDP ensured that communities carried out many roles and responsibilities in part-financing micro projects in their communities in Enugu State like payment /contribution of community kind, cash and labour contribution. The finding is in line with Echeme, (2009) who stated that in his study of the Impact of Project Funding on the Implementation of LEEMP Development Projects in Imo State: A Situational Study. The study revealed that community contribution played a significant role on successful project implementation.

Hypothesis one which was on how community participated in part-finance CSDP micro-projects in Enugu State indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean score of Zone A and Zone B on the level to which community participated in part-finance of CSDP micro projects in Enugu State. The findings showed that village and personal interest, non-equal distribution of projects in some communities, political affiliations, non-equal representation in CPMCs members, cultural factor resulted in the conflicts that led to the delay or even abandonment in the implementation of micro-projects in some communities in Enugu State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study as presented, analyzed and discussed, the following conclusions were made. From the findings of this study as shown in research question two and hypothesis two, the research subject agreed that community participated actively in part-financing of CSDP micro projects in Enugu State at a high level.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested based on the finding of the study.

1. The study recommends improved funding by encouraging the benefiting communities to pay their counterpart funds promptly.
2. There is need to carry out proper base line investigation and properly understand the socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental context of communities before carrying out any intervention projects in communities by CSDP in Enugu State. There is need for continuous outreach, sensitization and mobilization of community member, need to embark on self-help projects without waiting for government assistance.

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