



Community Participation for Sustainable Community Development Projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone of Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate community participation for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone of Bauchi State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was one thousand five hundred and three (1503) members of the registered forty-six (46) community development associations (CDAs) in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. The sample size for this study consisted of three hundred and sixteen (316) members of the CDAs in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Community Participation for Sustainable Community Development Projects Questionnaire (CPSCDPQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronchbach Alpha statistical tool to obtain the reliability coefficient value of 0.85. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making and planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone was low. Based on these findings, it was recommended that, the government should organize seminars and workshops for community members; these will help in influencing the attitude and orientation of community members towards participation in community development projects that has direct bearing on the community.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: July, 2021

Received in revised form: August, 2021

Accepted: August, 2021

Published online: December, 2021

KEYWORDS

Community Participation, Community Development, Sustainable community development projects.

INTRODUCTION

Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them. Ekong (2003) defined participation as playing active though not

necessarily direct, roles in community decisions, knowledge of local issues, attendance at public meetings, related attempts to influence proposed measures through individual and group actions, belonging to groups and committees and financial contributions towards communities



programmes. World Bank (2004) stated that participation is conceived as a process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives, the decisions, and resources which affect them in the community. Participation is seen as a way of reducing the risk of project failures and the cost of risk on the project.

Participation is aimed at actively involving the communities in the identification of problems, formulation of plans and implementation of decisions over their lives. Wehn and Evers (2015) viewed community participation as an active, passive or interactive process. Active participation is open and community members take part actively in all stages of the project. This means that decision making as well as other vital activities, such as management as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects, are done by the people. On the other hand, passive participation is concerned with lack of broad based community participation they are told what is going to happen or what has happened already. Interactive participation is when people take part in joint analysis as well as the planning process and the members of the target community improve their existing structures as well taking charge of their development process (Chaskin, Khare, & Joseph, 2012).

However, community participation is seen in two perspectives as a means or as an end. As a means, participation as a vehicle directed at achieving predetermined goals. As an end, participation is seen as a vehicle that recognises the direct involvement of the people in shaping, deciding and taking part in the developmental process. It is 'bottom-top' oriented. Unlike the former which is 'top-bottom', participation as an end entails a process of achieving greater individual fulfillment, personal development, self-awareness and some form of immediate satisfaction (Hogan, 2016). The characteristic feature of this type of participation is that people are given the chance to 'formulate' their development, to influence or to 'have a say' in the decision-making process regarding the programme or project initiated for them. Olukontun (2008) buttressing this type of

participation observed that development is meaningless if it does not harness the potential of the beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders. It is, therefore, the active involvement of these primary stakeholders in the project of their own that sustainability in community development projects is achieved.

Community participation is a concept that tends to bring different stakeholders together for problem-solving and decision making. Ekong (2003) stated that community participation is a social process whereby specific groups with shared needs, often but not always living in a defined geographical area, actively pursue identification of their needs, make a decision and establish a mechanism to meet these needs. Putnam (2000) referred to it as people's engagement within the community that plays an essential role in promoting quality of life. This definition sees community participation as the involvement of people in a community in projects to solve their projects with little or no external assistance for an enhanced standard of living. Thwala (2010) explained that for community participation to be successful, the project must include special components such as recruiting villagers in all phases of designing, implementing, monitoring, supervising and evaluating the project. Recruiting villagers within the context of this study entails engaging the community members' in the identification of their felt needs through several forms of interaction, approaches toward achieving these needs, and strategies to sustaining them. This recruitment is characterized by the active involvement of community members in addressing their needs.

Ordinarily, community participation is difficult to define. The social, economic, educational and other conditions of a community differ from those of other communities; as such their forms and degrees of involvement in development activities vary. It is, therefore, a continuum of involvement of people in decision-making and planning processes. Nweke (2014) asserted that, unless the community is allowed to participate in the development of interventions designed to improve their livelihood, they will continue to miss the benefits of any intervention. Okafor (2005) concluded that when communities



participate in their project, the following are usually observed: empowering community improves efficiency; local participation yields better projects, better outcomes; greater transparency and accountability enhances service delivery, and encouraging donor harmonization.

Most communities in the developing countries, including Nigeria and Bauchi State in particular are poverty stricken. Over the years, development efforts aimed at sustainable community development projects have not included community members into the processes of community participation of such projects. This has often resulted in non-sustainability of many development efforts. Olukotun (2008) observed that development is meaningless if it does not harness the potential of the beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders. It is therefore, the active participation of these primary stakeholders in project of their own that sustainability in community development project is achieved.

Nigeria has witnessed the proliferation of community development programmes aimed at developing the communities. UNICEF (2015) noted that in spite of the colossal amount of money that have gone into implementing community development projects and the proliferation of community development agencies one after the other, not much impact has been made. He maintained that in spite of pious official pronouncements, and declaration of intentions as contained in the development plans, as at the end of each plan period community life remained unchanged. Each plan came with new promises and raised hopes that were never fulfilled. The authors further asserted that one of the reasons why some of these community development programmes failed to achieve the desired result is the use of top-down approach to community development projects in which a group of government professionals, experts or administrators come together to deliberate on the community needs and decide on projects to be embarked upon without the consent and involvement of the community members. This was evident in many past community development programmes and it greatly reduced the participation of the community members in

projects and programmes execution and also the sustainability of such projects and programmes (Uche, Okoye & Uche, 2014). The essence of involving the people in their project is for sustainability.

Sustainability is central to all community development efforts. Without it, investment in the community development efforts are short-lived and of no effect (Nwankwo, 2010). Consequently, community participation is conceived as a tool capable of increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of community development projects. There are various processes used in community participation for sustainable community development. Some of these processes are the decision-making process and planning process.

The decision-making process is the stage at which community members come together to participate in a systematic discussion of their felt-needs and develop plans and strategies to meet the needs. Townsend (2013) defined decision making as the ability to choose or decide about things in a clear and definite way without much hesitation or delay, or it is the process of coming to a conclusion or determination about something. In this study, decision making is the process through which community members participate in deciding what they want and embark on a community development projects to bring about desirable or positive changes in the community. In addition to decision making, planning process promotes community participation for sustainable community development.

The planning process involves the preparation of several specific plans to be carried out to achieve objectives. Onah (2012) defined planning as the process of setting goals, developing strategies and outlining tasks and schedules for achieving goals. While singer (2011) viewed planning as "what comes before action". Planning is done to achieve some goals; community participation in the planning process helps in sourcing information that will lead to come up with a good project plan. In this context, planning is the process of pondering about and organizing activities required to achieve the desired goal or objectives of the community



development project. Addressing the above processes involved in community participation will further ensure sustainable development.

Sustainable development has become highly popularized as a development process. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This definition emphasizes the meeting of needs, as opposed to wants, and places a clear focus on intergenerational equity. It implies the need for making development decisions on behalf of those not yet born and unable to participate in the process, but who will nonetheless be affected by the outcomes of the process. With the release of the Brundtland Commission's report in 1987, the concept of sustainable development became a well-established and recognized concept worldwide. It became common knowledge that without the protection of the environment, development will not be sustained, but also that sustainable development cannot happen if certain social and economic factors do not support it. It is also not unlikely that a development sustained in the society may be seen as sustainable community development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of community participation for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone of Bauchi State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. examine the extent of community participation in the decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone;
2. examine the extent of community participation in the planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone;

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does community participation influence decision-making

processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone?

2. To what extent does community participation influence planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence decision-making processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. According to Nworgu, (2015) descriptive survey research design is the one in which a group of items or people are studied by collecting data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Survey research is considered appropriate for this study because it will afford the researcher the opportunity of collecting data on community participation for sustainable community development projects from a sample of community development associations (CDAs) in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone who are considered to be significant representative of the entire population.

RESULTS

The results of the data analyses were presented in the order of research questions and hypotheses posed for the study.



Research Question One: To what extent does community participation influence decision-making processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Extent to which Community participation influence decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

SN		Male = 166		Female = 150		Overall N = 316		Dec.
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1	Participating in needs assessment	1.77	0.42	1.75	0.43	1.76	0.43	LE
2	Participating in negotiating priorities with donor agencies/government organization	1.90	0.73	1.95	0.70	1.92	0.72	LE
3	Participating in identifying community resources and constraints	2.00	0.73	1.95	0.70	1.97	0.72	LE
4	Participating in identifying project activities	1.93	0.70	2.03	0.70	1.98	0.70	LE
5	Participate in deciding the site/location of the project	3.12	0.93	3.19	0.88	3.15	0.91	HE
Cluster Mean		2.14	0.40	2.17	0.35	2.16	0.38	LE

The finding of the study as presented in Table 1 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. Result shows that community participation in the decision-making process on the following to a low extent, these include; needs assessment ($\bar{x} = 1.76$, SD = 0.43), negotiating priorities with donor agencies/government organization ($\bar{x} = 1.92$, SD = 0.72), identifying community

resources and constraints ($\bar{x} = 1.97$, 0.72) and identifying project activities ($\bar{x} = 1.98$, SD = 0.70). On the other hand, result reveals that community participates in determining the site/location of the project to a high extent ($\bar{x} = 3.15$, SD = 0.91). The cluster mean of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.38 implies that community participation in the decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone to a low extent.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female respondents on the Extent to which Community Participation influence Decision making Process for Sustainable Community Development Projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone.

Gender	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Df	Sig.	Dec
Male	2.14	0.40	-0.66	314	0.51	NS
Female	2.17	0.35				

Note: NS = Not Significant

Result in Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence decision making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. The result shows

that a t-value of -0.66 with a degree of freedom of 314 and a significant value of 0.51 were obtained. Since the significant value of 0.51 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the hypothesis, this means that the result is not significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference



between the mean ratings of male and female on the extent to which community participation influence decision making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is therefore not rejected. Inference drawn is that the difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence decision the making

process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is not statistically significant.

Research Question Two: To what extent does community participation influence planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Extent to which Community participation influence planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

SN		Male n = 166		Female n = 150		Overall N = 316		
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
1	Setting projects' goals and objectives to be achieved	2.23	0.58	2.23	0.57	2.23	0.58	LE
2	Participating in sequencing project activities	2.23	0.54	2.22	0.60	2.22	0.57	LE
3	Preparing budget for the projects to be undertaken	2.12	0.42	2.13	0.42	2.12	0.42	LE
4	Assessing facilities, equipment and services for carrying out the project	2.08	0.56	2.06	0.53	2.07	0.55	LE
5	Participating in developing time-frame for activities	2.12	0.32	2.14	0.34	2.13	0.33	LE
6	Organizing fund raising committee for the projects	3.10	1.22	3.15	1.18	3.12	1.29	HE
7	Participation in assigning financial responsibilities to Groups/individuals	2.21	0.40	2.18	0.38	2.20	0.39	LE
	Cluster Mean	2.29	0.29	2.30	0.32	2.30	0.31	LE

The finding of the study as presented in Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which community participation influence planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. Result shows that community participate in the planning process on the following to a low extent, these include; setting projects' goals and objectives to be achieved ($\bar{x} = 2.23$, $SD = 0.58$), sequencing project activities ($\bar{x} = 2.22$, $SD = 0.57$), Preparing budget for the projects to be undertaken ($\bar{x} = 2.12$, $SD = 0.42$), Assessing facilities, equipment and

services for carrying out the project ($\bar{x} = 2.07$, $SD = 0.55$), developing time-frame for activities ($\bar{x} = 2.13$, $SD = 0.33$) and assigning financial responsibilities to Groups/individuals ($\bar{x} = 2.20$, $SD = 0.39$). However, result shows that community organize fund raising committee for the projects to a high extent ($\bar{x} = 3.1$, $SD = 1.29$). The cluster mean of 2.30 with a standard deviation of 0.31 implies that community participation in the planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone to a low extent.



Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female respondents on the Extent to which Community Participation influence Planning Processes for Sustainable Community Development Projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

Gender	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Df	Sig.	Dec
Male	2.29	0.29	-0.04	314	0.96	NS
Female	2.30	0.32				

Note: NS = Not Significant

Result in Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. The result shows that a t-value of -0.04 with a degree of freedom of 314 and a significant value of 0.96 were obtained. Since the significant value of 0.96 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the hypothesis, this means that the result is not significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female on the extent to which community participation influence planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is therefore not rejected. Inference drawn is that the difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influence planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is not statistically significant.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

The extent to which community participation influenced decision-making processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

The finding of the study showed that the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making process on the following to a low extent, these include; needs assessment, negotiating priorities with donor agencies/government organization, identifying

community resources and constraints and identifying project activities. On the other hand, result shows that community members participated in determining the site/location of the project to a high extent. The overall finding of the study showed that there is lack of broad based community participation in decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone to a low extent. The finding from the test of hypothesis one showed that the difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influenced decision making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is not statistically significant. This implies that male and female respondents hold the same opinion on the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making process for sustainable community development projects. The result of the study is consistent with Mak, Cheung, and Hui, (2017) who carried out a study on community participation in the decision-making process for sustainable tourism development in rural areas of Hong Kong, China and found among other things that the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making is to a low extent. Mark, Cheung and Hui also found that strategies for promoting community participation activities were not efficient and should be made better in order to reach out to various stakeholders. The overall finding of this study therefore shows that the extent to which community participation influenced decision-making process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone to a low extent.

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The extent to which community participation influenced planning processes for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone

Findings based on this segment of the study showed that the extent to which community participation influenced planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone to a low extent. These planning processes include; setting projects' goals and objectives to be achieved, sequencing project activities, preparing budget for the projects to be undertaken, assessing facilities, equipment and services for carrying out the project, developing time-frame for activities and assigning financial responsibilities to Groups/individuals. However, result indicated that community organizes fund raising committee for the projects to a high extent. The finding from the test of hypothesis two showed that the difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent to which community participation influenced planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone is not statistically significant. This also implies that male and female respondents hold similar opinion on the extent to which community participation influenced planning process for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone. The finding of the study is somewhat not consistent with Njoku (2015) who carried out a study on assessment of youth organizations in the planning and implementation of community development projects in Abia state, Nigeria and found among other things that youth organizations to a great extent participate in the planning and implementation of community development projects in Abia State. However, the result agrees with Njoku (2015) who found that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female members of youth organizations on the extent youth organizations participate in the planning of community development projects in Abia state. The overall finding of the study therefore revealed that the extent to which community participation influenced planning process for sustainable community development projects in

Bauchi South Senatorial Zone was to a low extent.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it is concluded that there is lack of broad based community participation for sustainable community development projects in Bauchi South Senatorial Zone of Bauchi State. This further implied that any development programmes and projects that did not involve beneficiary community in the processes of the programme and project would certainly continue to be unsustainable especially after the exit of donors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The government should organize seminars and workshops for community members; these will help in influencing the attitude and orientation of community members to participate in community a development project that has direct bearing on the community.
2. The Local Government Area which is the closet tier of government to the community should always carry the community members along during decision making and planning processes. This will help to overcome some factors militating against active community participation for sustainable community development projects.

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