

Community Participation in The Provision and Maintenance of Self – Help Projects in Michika Local Government Area Adamawa State, Nigeria

Alfred D. Mshelia

Department of Geography,
Adamawa State University Mubi, Nigeria

Email. alfredmshelia@yahoo.com

Njamba John Guli

Federal Road Safety Corps, Jos,
Plateau State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study investigated community participation in self-help projects in Michika Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprises 100 respondents from 5 selected district out of the 8 districts that make up the Local Government Area. The samples size were made up of 32 females and 68 males from the five districts drawn through stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured set of questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistical techniques which was summarize with the use of SPSS software. The result of the study shows the presence of facilities built by community self-help projects in Michika Local Government Area as affirmed by 98% of the respondents. The level of community participation is high (43% of respondents) with regards to engaging in self – help project in the face of government neglect or dwindling resources. The result also showed that the major constraints facing community self-help projects in Michika Local Government Area according to respondent is (48%) lack of government support (14%) and awareness (17%). The study recommend the need to create more enlightenment amongst the community with regards to their participation in executing self-help projects and the need for government to support these initiatives with finance and materials.

Keyword: Community; Participation; Provision, Maintenance self-help; Projects

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's rural dwellers are the most deprived when it comes to socio-economic infrastructure compared to the urban dwellers. They form substantial part of the Nations population but have the least access to modern infrastructure facilities and services. Provision of these services and facilities to the rural populace should be seen as one major goal of development. In so doing, the rapid rate of urbanization and

it associated problems taking place as result of the influx of youth to urban centers will be drastically reduced. The most – well known in physical project development in the rural centers (Roberts, 2003).

The neglect of rural areas by one sided government policies which tends to concentrate development in urban areas led rural dwellers to embark on self – help projects as means of developing their areas.

Nowadays increasing numbers of government as well as national and international development agencies have become aware of the importance of full community self-help participation in environmental projects skills knowing the fact that they can no longer finance all developmental projects, such as basic infrastructure like roads, electricity, drainages, water supply, health care etc. (ogunleye – Adetona and Oladande, 2013). Some of these agencies could really accelerate the overall development of communities or villages across the country (Blackman, 2003).

Representing what may perhaps be regarded as a conventional approach to community participation, in this respect, this study takes a cursory look at how some of the communities of Michika local government area of Adamawa State has taken up to some of these self – help project.

Like other parts of Nigeria, many communities in Michika local Government Area have initiated one project or other, or have rehabilitated or refurbish an existing project in the community. However, a study is yet to critically assess the participation of these communities towards the delivery of these project. It is import to evaluate the success of these community self – help project and their attainment problems. Consequence, the study is investigates how citizens participates in the provision and maintenance of self-help project in Michika Local Government Area, situated in the north eastern part of Adamawa State and located between latitude $10^{\circ} 36' N$ and $10^{\circ} 40' N$ and longitude $13^{\circ} 21' E$ and $13^{\circ} 35' E$.

According to the United Nation Report (2014), and Akpamunie (2010), participation is the process by which the effort of the people themselves are used to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of the communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to the national progress. On the other hand, some definition refers to it as the voluntary involvement of people in making and implementation of all decisions directly affecting their lives (Aniefiok & Undensi, 2016)

The community as a decision making body, many development agencies and program have re-emphasized the need for “button-up” approach that moves away from the services delivery or the dependency made approach. This is to allow community to identify its own development priorities, to which public sectors can then provide support (Frishchamann, 2007).

Self-help approach is new paradigm in the field or rural development. The specific objectives of the approach are to increase the well – being of the poor people, and provide infrastructural facilities. It is a voluntary and self – managed group of people belonging to similar socio-economic characteristics, who come together to initiate ideas that will promote sustainable community development. Self-help approach to community projects in the form of undertaking economic programmes provide employment, and infrastructures that a community can provide for themselves (Steve & Williams, 2012).

However, the present economic reality in the country has made communities find a lasting solution to the social and economic problems of their communities, through Community Development Associations (CDAs). The CDAs exist under different names and varying size and are scattered all over the country.

Members can be solely males or females, and sometimes mixed, depending on their predominant activities. The CDAs develop their rules and regulations themselves, plan and execute their programmes with very little or no interference from external bodies. Specifically, their activities involve holding meetings to discuss their programmes and projects, identification of their felt needs, participation in their community self-projects activities through supplying of labour, contribution of money and other materials (Akinsoroto & Olujide, 2007). They also accept donations to aid their project execution. It was discovered that women's association in selected local government areas of Osun state, Nigeria are very virile, and active at the grass root level, with popular goals being: financial assistance to members, supporting members during ceremonies, donating money and materials to the needy in the community (Ogbnoobe, 2000).

The projects in which CDA members can participate are many. Participation refers to construction and maintenance of self –help projects which include among others, health facilities (health center, maternity, and dispensary), market stalls, roads, schools, post office, wells, boreholes, pipe-borne water and electricity (Laah, Adefila, & Yusuf, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Primary data was acquired through administering set of questionnaire on community self-help projects. The questionnaire was structured with both fixed and opened ended type of questions to be filled by the respondent, whereas secondary data were collected from secondary material books and reviewed journals and reports.

Consequently five (5) out of the eight districts in the area were selected due to financial constraints of random by the hat and drop method where a total number of twenty (20) respondents was selected from the five districts each for questionnaire administration. A total of one hundred (100) respondents form the sample size for this research.

A reconnaissance survey of the five (5) selected districts was done to ascertain any community self – help projects which these communities have prosecuted, or any one on going. Data of sort was used to corroborate and augment those obtained from the questionnaire survey.

The stratified random sampling methods was used to select study sites where five districts formed a stratum each. Twenty (20) sets of questionnaire was administered in each stratum in the five selected districts.

Data generated or obtained from the questionnaires survey was summarized using table of frequency and percentages and analyzed with the aid of SPSS software package using descriptive statistical methods.

DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Data collected on sex distribution of respondents shows 68% of respondents are male, while 32% are female. This indicates that male are more dominant than the female folk when it comes to community self-help projects. The likely explanation may not be far fetched from the strenuous nature of the work

involved in the execution of these self-help projects, such as drainage construction, road maintenance, well digging, construction of classrooms which requires high energy input involving physical strength as most of these projects are executed manually. Besides, women in the area are more pre occupied with other forms of human endeavour such as child bearing, and farming to fend for the family as is practiced in the area.

Data on age of distribution of respondents revealed that 8% of respondents are between the ages of 20 and below, 39% are between 21-30 years, 22% are those whose age are between 31-40 years, 19% are between 41-50 years, while 13% are of the age 50 years and above. This means that most of the people that participate in community self – help projects are between the ages of 21-30, young men in their prime exuding the strength to contribute to mostly manually driven projects.

The marital status of respondents from data summarized shows 44% were single, 45% were married, 2% were divorce and 4% were widow /widower. Thus majority of the people engaged in community self – help project are married couples. The status of being married makes the respondents sedentary by being attached to their family, hence making the category more of people engaging in self-help provision of projects to their community.

Majority of people who contributes to self – help project in the study area has secondary education (36%), tertiary education (25%), primary education (20%), and those without formal education (adult education and Arabic teaching constituted 19%). On the average, community self – help projects are carried out by young men that have just completed their secondary education and still at home.

In another dimensions 21% of the respondent are civil / public servant, 21% are traders, 31% are farmers, 15% are students, and 12% are self-employed. This shows that farmers gainfully employed in rain fed agricultural production constitute the highest number of the respondents engaging in community self-help projects, owing to the fact that farmers have more time doing less activities during the dry season, a period where there is less to do in the rural areas. Hence the farmers engage in community self-help projects such as road maintenance, drainage construction, well digging, construction of classroom and repair of places of worships etc.

Community Participation on Provision and Maintenance of Self – Help Projects

Overwhelmingly, 98% affirms the presence of community self – help projects, ongoing and those already executed in their districts, while 2% are un aware of community self-help projects in their districts. This indicate there is community or citizen participation with regards to self – help projects in the study area, which goes to show a very high level of awareness by residents towards community self-help projects. Table1 shows the itinerary of some self-help projects undertaken by resident of the area where drainage represents 26% , road maintenance represent 30%, educational infrastructures represents 15%, water supply represents, 17% and others which were specified as health facilities represents 10% of self-help project undertaken by the community where road maintenance and drainages ranks higher. This could be due to the deplorable conditions of roads linking communities in the area mainly feeder roads to the rural areas. Construction and maintenance of drainages is also undertaken in the study area in order to control flooding

in the townships particularly Michika and Bazza and also to prevent erosion in the rural areas from destroying farmlands.

Table 1: Types of Community self-Help Projects in the Study Area

Type of project	Frequency	Percentage %
Drainages	26	26
Road maintenance	30	30
Educational infrastructure	15	15
Water supply	17	17
Others	10	10
Total	100	100

Data on the level of citizen's participation in the provision and maintenance of self-help projects is shown in table 2, where 23% of respondents highly participate in the provision and maintenance of community self – help projects, 43% of respondents participation is high; 22% is low, 7% is very low while 5% represents those that have not at all participated in any self- help projects whatsoever. This shows that there is a high level of citizen participation in the provision and maintenance of community self – projects in the study area.

Table 2: Level of Residents Participation in Provision and Maintenance of Self-Help Projects.

Type of project	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high	23	23
High	43	43
Low	22	22
Very low	7	7
Not at all	5	5
Total	100	100

According to data summarized on the perception of residents with regards to how community self-help projects foster development of their areas, 88% were affirmative that their communities are better off with such self-help projects while 12% of the respondents did not agree or are unaware of how self-help projects bring development to their communities / districts. The high level of perception amongst the community goes to suggest, a more reason why government should come in to support efforts of the community in the provision and maintenance of developmental projects, a dividend of democracy.

Problems Associated with Self-Help Projects

Data in table 3 shows that 48% of respondents affirm problems facing the execution of community self – help projects in the study area is finance, 19% affirms working implements, 17% see lack of awareness problem, 14% respondent view lack of government support as a problem while 2% see lack of monitoring

as a problem. This goes to show that the major problem facing the execution of self-help project in the study area is that of funds, which have resulted to uncompleted projects or out-right abandonment.

Table 3: Problems of self-help projects

Type of project	Frequency	Percentage %
Finance	48	48
Working implements	19	19
Awareness	17	17
Lack of government support	14	14
Others	2	2
Total	100	100

Associations/Social Clubs Providing Community Self –Help Projects Services

Data collected shows that 67% of respondents belongs to an association or a social club, while 33% do not belong to any association or social clubs. This goes to suggest that most community self-project are carried out by people that being to an associations or social clubs. Thus, government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropist can channel resources towards helping the various community self-help projects through these associations and social clubs.

From field observation by the researcher, there is the presence of community self – help projects in the study area. Some of the projects are half way completed while others are almost completed. Most of the projects seen to be undertaken in the study area are road maintenance, drainages, construction of school classrooms through parent Teachers Association (PTA). Others include rehabilitation and repairs of health care facilities, hand drugged-wells, construction of market stands and places of religious worships.

CONCLUSION

People in the study area show the will to develop their communities through community self-help projects with some measures support. Therefore government and non-governmental organizations, charity groups, religious groups and philanthropists should key into supporting such self-help development initiatives by channeling their supports through these community associations and social clubs to develop rural communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Government and non-governmental organizations should support the community through the provision of working implements especially in areas of road maintenance and drainages.
- ii. Community self –help project financing through fund raising by philanthropist or non-governmental organizations generate funds for project execution.

- iii. Women should be encourage to participate actively in community self-help projects as very few women participates in such social service provisions.

REFERENCES

- Akinsorotan, A.O & Olujide, M.G. (2007). Community development associations contributions in self-help projects in Lagos state of Nigeria. *Journal of central European of Agriculture*, 7(4), 609-618.
- Akpomunie, O.B. (2010). "Self-Help as a strategy for rural development in Nigeria: A bottom up approach" *Journal of alternative perspectives in the social science*, 2 (1), 88-111 pectrum publishers Ltd Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Aniefiok & Udensi (2016). Socio – Economic development and Self-Help Projects in Mkpato-Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. *Equatorial Journal of social sciences and Human Behaviour*, 1(1), 84-.
- Balackman R. (2003). In Ghazala, M. and Vijayendra, R. (2004), (eds) "Community-base and –driven development: *The world Bank research observer*, 19(1), 127-139. The international Bank for Reconstruction and development.
- Frishmann, B.B.M (2007). Infrastructure commons in Economic Perspectives, An Article Publish in First Monday 12 No.6200.
- Ogbuozobe, J.E. (2000). Community Based Organizations in the provision of social services in Ibadan Metropolitan Areas, *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 6(9), 49-76.
- Ogunleye – Adetona, C.I. & Oladeinde, C. (2013). "The role of community self-help project in rural development of Kwara State, Nigeria". *International Journal of development and sustainability*, 2(1), 28-45.
- Roberts, N.C. (2003). Direct Citizen Participation: Building a Theory. A conferences paper presented to the 7th National Public Management Research, October 9-11, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. <http://www.mranet.org/conferences/george+ownpapers/roberts.pdf>.
- Steve O.T. & Williams O.I., (2012). Community self-help projects and rural development in Ohafia local Government Area, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 14(4), 58-69.