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Influence of Mobilisation of Community Members on Effective Participation in Community Development Programme

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to ascertain the influence of mobilization of community members on effective participation in community development programme in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State. The major instrument for data collection for the study was the questionnaire. A sample of 432 respondents was randomly selected and used for the study. Data collected

were analysed using simple percentage and frequency counts as well as chi-square statistics. Data analysed revealed that mobilization has influenced greatly the level of community members' participation in community development programmes and mobilization has also influenced members' participation in terms of increasing the number of projects executed in the area. It was also discovered that mobilization has influenced remarkably community members' participation in community development project implementation. Based on the findings it was recommended that there is a need to strengthen the mobilization process in order to ensure that the entire community members actively participate in the community development process in the area. Also, there is need to educate and enlighten the people about community development projects and planned processes of change, which will to help ensure that all the members of the community are aware of what is going on and understudy their roles in the planned process of change.

Introduction

Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritizing the actions of the community and their perspective in the development of social, economic, and environmental policy. It seeks to empower local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities of interest and communities organizing around specific policy initiatives. Community development facilitates the process of the development of any nation. It builds the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organizations and interest and the capacity of institutions and agencies to work and dialogue with citizens to shape and determine a change in their communities.

Jarvis, cited in Imhabekhai (2009) defines community development as a "process of enriching the social, economic, political and cultural life of a geographically demarcated area often through the process of actions, community education and development education". The emphasis here is on adding value to the quality of life of the members of a community through social awareness, economic emancipation, introduction of new economic trends and political education in the form of highlighting the needs and values of active participation in the

political activities that affect them. Community development occurs when members of a community participate in the process of community development.

Good community development is an action that helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potential and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs that they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It promotes opportunity for people to learn and develop their own skills, reaches out to and involves those who may be excluded or disadvantaged, helps communities create organizations that can tackle their needs and represent their interests, work to promote engagements and dialogue between communities and agencies that affect their lives (Ugwu & Mbalisi, 2016)

Community development is a process of enriching the social, economic, political and cultural life of a geographically demarcated area. The people in the community need to be aware and make informed choices in taking active participation in issues that affect them. This requires learning from people and their leaders how to make such issues socially acceptable and having insight into people's underlying attitudes can help to

change their views(**Omoruyi, 2013**).Hence, mobilization of community members towards their active participation in the development of their community is very germane to their effective participation in the process of developing their community. This is more important because most rural communities are characterized by reliance on traditional knowledge and production systems based strictly on what has worked for several years. This has led to a view that rural communities are resistant to change, even though their traditional wisdom may not sustain the level of development in the society. So, there is a need to mobilize the existing channels in the communities such as church organization, various age-grade associations and other existing organizations to effect positive change in the various communities (Oshodi & Imasuen, 2008).

Mobilization is therefore an essential ingredient in any process of development particularly in the area of change in knowledge, attitude and behaviour of people towards community programme. Mobilization is also seen in terms of involving the people in taking part actively and freely in discussions and decisions affecting their welfare. Again, mobilization means empowerment participation and democratization in the activities that affect the welfare of the people of a community. This

study investigated the influence of mobilization of community members on effective participation in community development programme in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta.

Statement of the Problem

There is a need to mobilize community members so as to appreciate the idea of getting actively involved in community development because it is a process towards empowerment both at the individual and community level. This empowerment has the capacity to strengthen the process of mobilization.

Community members are likely to support programmes if objectives are clear and they are sure that they will derive some benefits from them. This underscores the need for proper enlightenment. However, in seeking to mobilize the people some measures are taken. Influential leaders in the community must be identified and they will relate more with the people. They will carry the people along through proper enlightenment. One major problem among many others is inadequate funds for the process of mobilization of the people for participation in community development projects most especially when the aim of government at meeting people's needs is politically motivated.

However, a preliminary assessment of the situation shows that the level of the peoples involvement has been appreciated as shown by the increased community mobilization process that yields the desired result. The fundamental question is, what have been the major forces or variables that account for the impact being witnessed? This study, therefore, investigated the influence of mobilization of community members on effective participation in community development programme in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta.

Research Questions
This study will be undertaken with the following research questions.
1. What is the extent of the influence of mobilization on community member participation in community development?
3. Has community mobilization remarkably influenced the member's participation in community development project implementation?

Hypotheses
Ho: Mobilization will have no significant influence on the level of participation of rural and urban dwellers in community development programme implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the following:

1. To find out the extent of the influence of mobilization on community member's participation in community development.

2. To determine if community mobilization has a remarkable influence on the participation of the indigenes in community development implementation.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Community Development

The crux of community development is a change which can be deliberately induced or purposefully modified through the co-operation of the people of the community. It is ideally democratic in its philosophy which is the reason it is usually tied up with the ultimate control of the people. The idea of this philosophy is that people themselves should be actively involved in the planning and execution of programmes affecting them.

Community development involves a conscious effort to change in social, economic, political and technological products as well as planned social change within a community. It also involves a project that has local

importance that can be planned and carried out by community members with external help for both materials and personnel if the local ones are not adequately available for its implementation. Adegboye cited in Ijere (1992) sees development as the development of the rural people in such a continuous manner as to enable them to most effectively and efficiently utilize their intellectual, technology and other resources for further development for both themselves and their resources.

Community development is seen as a process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about influencing the power structure to remove the barrier that prevents people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Hence, Community Development Exchange (2009) sees community development more as an enlightenment programme which removes prejudice that hinders development among the people of a given community.

The main factor in community development, therefore, is raising the quality of life of rural dwellers through the provision and improvement of infrastructures and amenities. Community development has grown into a

priority in the development not merely by the provision of the basic human needs of the rural people but also by sustainability raising their consciousness and condition of living. This approach is very relevant for effective participation of people in the socioeconomic and political growth of their communities. The belief of the people to accept the fact that there is a deliberate intention to study and act to overcome such limiting conditions of life as poverty, inequality and injustice is one of the ideals in the ongoing process of educational alternatives which community development represents, bringing about desirable change in the quality of people on a communal basis, constitute the main task of community development. These changes are only possible when people can identify what is best for them in order to alleviate their condition of living in various communities.

The concept also provides access to capital to assist small and medium enterprises and social enterprises or to help entrepreneurs to create more businesses. It also supports community-based projects and special initiatives by collaborating with other partners in the public sector and civil society to implement strategic community projects or deliver special initiatives targeted to communities (Mezirow, 1997). These projects would vary

considerably from one community to another and could exist on a wide range of local initiatives in areas such as tourism, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities for specific client groups that exist among women youth or projects which respond to specific challenges facing communities, such as downturns in important industries (Laogun, 2002).

Community Mobilization

Mobilization is one of the basic strategies for community development. According to Imhabekhai (2009), mobilization is the process of putting people into readiness for active service or of arousing the interest and consciousness of a group of people in a programme, which would be of benefit to them. There is an assumption that the intended participants have not become aware of the existence, the objectives or the advantages to be derived from the programme. Mobilization, therefore, is providing sufficient information about a programme's contents and objects in order to elicit the support and participation of the people in the programme. Abiona (2009) noted that mobilization involves creating awareness of certain problems existing in the community which need urgent attention. Awareness might take the form of educating the people on what to do. It means they have to be informed of the

problem and told at the same time that the solution lies in their hands as they have the capacity to do this. Moreover, they need to know and understand that there are benefits to be derived if the problem is solved.

Esenjor cited in Ewelum & Mbara **(2015)**, noted that most development centred around people and this is why one of the most persistent concerns in development literature is about ways people may be mobilized for given programmes or for the resolution of given problems that impinge on the development itself. Therefore, it is clear that any community, which fails to develop the skills and productive talents of its people and to effectively mobilize and utilize such skills to transform that community economy, will be unable to achieve real development. This is why mobilization is relevant to the community development projects. Anyanwu (1992) defined community development as the process in the life of a community, by which the people plan and act together for the satisfaction of their felt needs. Its primary purpose is to bring about change for better living, through the willing cooperation of the people.

A successful mobilization hinges on citizen participation in order to create new ideas and resources in the

community. This entails involvement of the local people in the decision-making, planning and execution of the project. Mobilization helps in galvanizing the local people to participate in developing their community, using local initiatives. The active participation of the people will foster success in any project which they embark upon. It encourages self-help and utilization of human and material resources to the utmost capacity for community development.

The need for mobilization according to Adedokun (1998) can be said to be derived from the desire to carry the people along in all government activities since the people are the ultimate beneficiaries of these activities. Although they are the ultimate beneficiaries does not mean that they will always cooperate and support government in such programmes of development. Their resistance may be due to various reasons that include ignorance, distrust, communication gap or divergent interests. They may also be ignorant of available facilities or resources in their environment and or how to utilize them. In such instances, there is a need for mobilization.

Since independence in 1960, successive Nigerian governments had made specific provisions for

community development in the national development plans because development through communal initiative and efforts is officially recognized as a rewarding and desirable complement to the elaborate plans for integrated development. To give a strong expression to community development, Nigeria has witnessed a number of government initiated national development programmes with embedded and inherent community development goals and objectives. Some of them include; The Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme (FSP), among others. All these national and State Programmes involved mobilization of people for development at groups and community levels (Ewelum & Mbara, 2015).

Community mobilization touches on the lives of individuals within a community thrusting its message into communities to make them aware of the problems around them and focusing on the result which is a solution to the identified problems. This move must involve series of engagement with different sectors of the community such as the religious leaders, community

leaders, Age-grade, associations, town unions and non-governmental organization. Mobilization can thus be seen as changing the heart and minds of not just individuals but of the community as a whole. This will lessen the narrow approach of programme implementation and develop a broader vision of social change (Olaleye, 2019).

At the community level, mobilization is so critical to accelerate or change the process of economic political and socio cultural development. This process has to start with identifying community in order to establish key contacts between the agency and the community. This has to be carefully done to ensure that all community members or sectors are represented. The community members need to be mobilized adequately so as to get involved in the political process that might select their political leaders.

Effective mobilization helps people to participate actively in the development process by getting them involved in the identification of their felt needs and be in a better position to take part in decision making, implementation and sustenance of the programme. Mobilization, therefore, is important and needed in programme implementation because it makes for an

effective rapid result. It brings about change in knowledge, attitude, behaviours and increases awareness, knowledge and the ability of the people to organize themselves independently to achieve their own target goals aimed at improving their environment.

Kobben cited in Oduaran (1994) mobilization consists of movement or campaigners to activate the masses into the process of change. This implies that the masses who are supposed to be the vehicle of change are not alive to their responsibilities. Therefore, there is a need to motivate them to be aware and sensitive to what is expected of them. Mobilization hence is a great technique in men and gingers them up to get involved in the process of developing their communities.

Generally, mobilization helps people to participate actively in the development process, for everything should not be left to government, but the reality is that government is more likely to assist if there is an impetus from the people. This will help the government in identifying community needs instead of government imposing needs or priorities on communities. Mobilization is therefore important and needed for it enables effective rapid results.

The implications of this is that for effective mobilization for positive change all the social and political leadership structure in the communities should be involved in the transmission of relevant information toward project implementation. This means that community mobilization is very important in seeking people's selfless participation in a community development programme. With adequate mobilization aided by community education people will realize the need to be actively involved in community development programmes implementation.

Perspective on the Influence of Participation and Project Execution

Community projects have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of various parts of Nigeria. They have been effectively harnessed to provide social services in the rural areas. Community projects which have been playing a significant role in alleviating poverty at the grassroots level will continue to provide amenities which the government, with all its resources is unable to provide as quickly as they are needed by the people (Ejiogu, 2001).

Nduka (2008) asserted that building a sense of community is easy but maintaining this sense of

community is difficult in the modern world. Community organizers generally seek to build groups that are open and democratic in governance. Such groups facilitate and encourage consensus decision-making with a focus on the general health of the community rather than a specific interest group. The three basic types of development programmes are grassroots development programme, coalition development, and "institution-based community development," (also called "broad-based community development" (Olaleye, 2019).

Participation is a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in deciding factors that affect their lives in formulating and implementing policies in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve changes. Community members will be involved actively in any sustainable development that will have a positive means on their lives and change their environment. They will get involved in the decisions making processes and implementation of a successful project.

Participation in community development projects means the involvement of people in the planning and decision-makingrather than merely contributing labour or money.

Community participation, therefore, is the involvement of community members as a whole in the need assessment planning and execution of community development projects. When people are involved in the decision-making of a project that will affect them it will influence greatly their participation in the overall implementation and maintenance of such project.

Consequently upon this the main element of community participation is participating in decisions which directly affect their living conditions. Community participation is a means to facilitate project execution. If the authorities prepare for a project and educate the people about its means and objective the community will more easily comply with the project and this will facilitate its implementation. The objective of community participation is project efficiency (Abiona, 2009).

Lack of community participation leads to the failure of most of the projects and with the dwindling economic resources of the government and the increasing social needs of the people community participation is supposed to compensate for this deficiency in rural development project implementations. Consequently, participation is a collective effort to increase and exercise control over resources and institutions on the part of groups and

movements of those hitherto excluded from control. This suggests that effective participation dissuades the minds of community members from believing that government health and social service are beyond their control because decisions are no longer exclusively being made outside of their community by unknown bureaucrats and technocrats. It makes the local people to start having an inclusive sense of participation in development programmes. Effective participation of community members right from the needs assessment, planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project increase the influence they will have in any development programme. This ensures that people are treated with respect, and listening to them and learning from them go a long way in building a successful programme, saving time and resources in the long run and contributing greatly to programme sustainability. In other words, community development agents who expect community members to be grateful for their presence in their community without recognizing and empathizing with them as a people may only satisfy their own egos with little or no positive effect on the life of the community (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

In summary, people will fully accept a community development programme, if they are recognized and

involved right from the planning stage.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because of its ability to investigate issues in their natural settings. The population of study covers the total number of people in the twelve (12) communities in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State, with a sample size of four hundred and thirty-two (432) respondents. From the twelve communities, thirty-six (36) respondents were selected from each community using the simple random procedure.

S/N	Community	Sample -Male	Sample Female	Sample size
1.	Bolou-Ndoro	18	18	36
2.	Ojobo	18	18	36
3.	Torugbene	18	18	36
4.	Tamigbe	18	18	36
5.	Tebegbe	18	18	36
6.	Tuomo	18	18	36
7.	Okpokunou	18	18	36
8.	Enekorogha	18	18	36
9.	Orugbene	18	18	36
10.	Burutu	18	18	36
11.	Odimodi	18	18	36
12.	Kiagbodo	18	18	36
	Total	**216**	**216**	**432**

The data needed for this study is a questionnaire titled Influence of Mobilization of Community Members for Effective Participation in Community Development Questionnaire (IMCMEPCDQ). The instrument was face and content validated and the reliability of the instrument … was used. The correlation index is 0.76. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprising simple percentagesand the hypothesis is tested using chi square statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Result

Research Question 1. What is the extent of the influence of mobilization on community members' participation in community development?
Table 1: Data on the extent of the influence of mobilisation on community members' participation in community development.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Greatly	332	76.85
Fairly	80	18.52
Marginally	20	4.63
Total	**432**	**100**

Results in Table 1 above reveal that 322 of the sample respondents represent 76. 85 per cent indicated that mobilisation has greatly influenced the community members' participation in community development. 80 of the total sampled respondents or 18.52 per cent were of the opinion that mobilization has fairly influenced members' participation in community development. 20 others or 4.63 per cent of the total sampled respondents stated that mobilization has influenced community members' participation in community development marginally. This means that mobilization has influenced greatly the level of community members' participation in community development.

Research Question 2. Has community mobilization on community remarkably influenced members' participation in community development project implementation?

Table 2: Data on whether mobilization has remarkably influenced participation in community development project implementation.

Options/level of Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Yes	330	76.39
No	102	23.61
Total	**432**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork

Table 2shows that 330 of the total respondents used in the study said mobilization has influenced remarkably community members' participation in community development project implementation. This represents 76.39 per cent. 23.6 per cent did not agree on the issue. This means that mobilization has influenced remarkably community members' participation in community development project implementation.

Hypothesis

Ho- mobilization will have no significant influence on the level of participation of rural and urban dwellers in community development.

This hypothesis was tested using chi-square statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The finding is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of the influence of mobilization on rural-urban dweller's participation in community development.

Variable/Options	S/A	A	DA	SD	Df	Cal X^2	Crit X^2
Mobilisation has influence on participation	80/(100)	70/(75)	651(50)	351(25)	3	12.83	7.81

• Significant @ p<0.05

The data in Table 4.8 above reveal that the calculated X^2 is 12.83 at 0.05 level of significance with 3 degrees of freedom. The table value is 7.815. The calculated X^2 value is greater than the table X^2 value. The hypothesis tested is therefore rejected. This means that mobilization has a significant influence on the level of community members' participation in community development.

Discussion of Result

Results from the data analysed have been quite revealing and instructive. The data obtained on the extent to which mobilization influences community members' participation in community development revealed that it has greatly influenced their level of participation. This finding confirms the views expressed by Oduaran (1994), Anyanwu (2001), Omoruyi (2013) & Imhabekhai (2009). These scholars in their various submissions argued that mobilization is capable of stimulating the interest of the people and ginger them to participate actively in community local affairs or matters affecting their wellbeing.

It was also discovered that there is a strong relationship between mobilization and the numberof projects executed in the area under study. This shows that mobilization has been used to get people involved in

development activities. This has helped to boost their interest. The success has probably propelled them to continue to initiate projects. Hence, there has been an observed increase in the number of projects executed. This again shows that the success observed in terms of development project implementation is attributable to the mobilization process. This is understandable because scholars have repeatedly argued at different fora. Effective mobilization is an effective strategy in making communities that have become apathetic towards the planned process of change become active again in the process of community development.

Furthermore, the study also found out that among the rural and urban dwellers they strongly believe that mobilization has remarkably influenced the level of community members' participation in community development project implementation. This has demonstrated clearly that mobilization can be effectively employed to ensure that members of any community are actively involved in the planned process of change or development activities initiated to improve their well-being or standard of living.

Conclusion
Based on the findings arising from the analyses of the

data collected, it was concluded that mobilization has had a great influence on the level of participation of the community members in community development activities. It was also concluded that the process of mobilization of the people can be strengthened through a democratic process, integration of efforts of those involved and education/enlightenment about community development projects.

Recommendations

Because of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered.

In the first place, there is a need to strengthen the mobilization process in order to ensure that the entire community members actively participate in the community development process in the area.

Secondly, there is also the need to educate and enlighten the people about community development projects and planned processes of change. This will help ensure that all the members of the community are aware of what is going on and understudy their roles in the planned process of change.

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