

# Assessment of Community Participation in Self-Help Projects in Taraba State, North-East, Nigeria

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**Abstract:- Community participation in self-help development projects in Taraba State was assessed. A sample size of 250 respondents were sampled from the Five Local Government Areas out of the Sixteen, drawn through random sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured set of questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which was summarized with the use of SPSS Software. The result of the study shows the presence of projects executed by community self-help, as affirmed by (90%) of the respondents. The level of participation in self-help projects was high (60%) of respondents. It was revealed that community sourced their funds for self-help projects mostly through membership contribution as affirmed by (48%) of the respondents, while (26%) sourced from government assistance. The finding revealed that inadequate finance (50%), inadequate equipment (20%) and lack of credit facilities (14%) of the respondents are the major constraints. The finding of the study recommends that Government and NGOs need to give more support in terms of technical and financial assistance. Also the Philanthropist and other Private Sectors need to demonstrate their commitment in self-help projects, as well as the Commercial Banks to give credit to the community for self-help projects at minimum interest rate. These would strengthen the community to participate in self-help projects in the study area and Nigeria at large.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Successive government in Nigeria have attempted introducing programs that were meant to serve the rural community, such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Nigeria Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Fadama Program (FP) Bank of Agriculture (BOA) and Youth Empowerment and Social Support Operation (YESSO) (Bashir, 2022)

An evaluation of the above programs towards rural transformation revealed that most of the programs were not properly implemented. Some of the reasons could be associated with the fact that the target rural people as the beneficiaries were never consulted. Most often top-down approaches were adopted, in effect the rural communities hardly participate (Blair, 2022).

In most areas in North-East, Nigeria, and indeed Nigeria rural areas are still characterized by prevailing poverty, unemployment and insecurity. Basic physical infrastructure such as schools, health centers, water supply, electricity, veterinary services and other agricultural services are inadequately provided, This necessitated people to embark on self-help projects that addresses their felt-needs (Robert, 2003).

The government at all levels (Federal, State and Local Government) have acknowledged that their stance on community development need re-thinking especially on the provision of social amenities such as Schools, Road, Health Centers, Water supply, Electricity among others.

Community participation is the process by which the efforts of the people are united with those of the government to provide social amenities such as Schools, Health Centers, Water supply, Roads, Market Stalls among others. Thus, community development may be said to involve comprehensive changes in the cultural, economic, social, education, and political affairs of the people, designed basically to address the projects felt-needs of the community (Ogubuezobi, 2022).

Third National Development Plan(1999) emphasizes that, the main objective of community participation is to sustain self-help effort and faster a more lasting development consciousness among the common masses and especially for the purpose of raising the quality of life of the communities, reviving their income and securing self sustaining development to support government effort. A community must be an organized body before participating in any development process. This enables them to identify their needs, rank them, develop confidence plan and mobilize resources towards achieving such goal. It is through their responsible and active commitment to the solidarity of their community that their personal goals are fulfilled; such a responsibility is possible only when people at the grassroots can express their view and have saying in whatever changes they want and expect (Third National Development Plan 1999 as amended).

## II. METHODOLOGY

Primary data was acquired through administering set of structured questionnaire with questions items on community self-help projects. Each item was assigned a four-points of ticket rating scale, where as secondary data were obtained from existing literatures, records and reports.

Consequently, Random sampling method was used to select five (5) local government areas out of the sixteen (16). Two-hundred and fifty (250) Registered Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the study area were used as sampled size.

A reconnaissance survey of the five (5) Local Government Areas selected was done to ascertain the presence of community self-help project. Data of sort was used to corroborate and augment those obtained from the questionnaire administered.

Data generated from the questionnaire survey was summarized using table of frequency and percentages and analyzed with the aid of SPSS Software package using descriptive statistical methods.

## III. DISCUSSION

### ➤ Socio-Economic and Demographic characteristic of respondents;

Data collected on sex distribution of respondents shows that 73% of respondents are male, while 28% are females, this indicates that male are more dominant than the female; when it comes to community self-help projects. This likely explanation may not be far-fetched from the strenuous nature of the work involved in the execution of these projects such as Drainage construction, Road maintenance, Well digging, Construction of classrooms which requires high energy input involving physical strength as most of those projects are manually executed.

Data on age distribution of respondents revealed that (15%) are the ages of 20 and below, (42%) are between 21 – 30 years, (30%) are those whose age are between 31 – 40 years, while (13%) are of the age 50 years and above. This mean most of the people that participate in community self-help projects are between the ages of 21 – 30 years (42%), young men in their prime exuding the strength to contribute to mostly manually driven projects.

The role of the respondent’s occupation in the study area has a positive correlation with his participation in self-help projects. In the course of the field survey, it was revealed that about 75% are in the informal sector like farming, trading, driving, carpentry, building and blacksmith, while 25% were civil servants. These types of occupational structure afford people more time to participate in the self-help projects than the civil servants.

Income is a major determinant of and development project in any area. The higher the income of the people the more they contribute to the development of their environment (Freshman, 2007). This study revealed that (28%) earns between ₦10,000 – ₦20,000, those that earns ₦21,000 – ₦30,000 constitute (52%), those that earns between ₦31,000 – ₦40,000 were (12%) and those that earns more than ₦41,000 they constitute (8%). With this types of income distribution, it is likely that more people will be able to contribute financially to the self-help projects that the community embark upon.

Majority of the people contribute to self-help projects have secondary education, (56%, tertiary education (14%), primary education (20%) and those without formal education (10%). On the average community help-help projects are carried out by young men that have completed their secondary school and still at home.

### ➤ Community participation on provision and maintenance of self-help projects.

Greatly, (75%) of the respondents confirmed the presence of community self-help projects in their areas, while (27%) are unaware of such projects. This indicates that there is community participation with regard to self-help project in the study area.

### ➤ Analyses of community participation on provision and maintenance of self-help projects.

Community participation is a participatory role that involves actively the populace in subjecting their developmental problems to a collective effort (Ogunleye and Oladeinde, 2013). In this research, it was discovered that the community in the study area participated in various self-help projects as shown below;

**Table 1: Community self-help projects Proposed Estimate Cost**

Types of project	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Schools	35	14
Health Center	30	12
Boreholes	42	17
Electricity	27	11
Roads	33	13
Market Stalls	28	11
Drainages	30	12
Others	25	10
	250	100

Source = field survey (2023).

In the course of the survey, the respondents submitted that recent self-help projects embarked upon by the community includes; Boreholes which constituted (17%), followed by Schools that constituted (14%), Roads (13%), Health Centers (12%), Drainages (12%), Electricity (11), Market Stalls (11) and others constituted (10) (Table I).

**Table 2: Level of Community participation in Self-help Projects.**

Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Membership contribution	120	48
Assistance from Government	66	26
Launching	17	7
Contribution from NGOs	32	13
Others	15	6
	250	100

Source = field survey (2023).

The Tab. 2 above showed that (48%) of the respondents sourced their fund through membership contribution, (26%) sourced from Government, (13%) from NGOs, (7%) from launching and (6%) from other sources. This result showed that self-help projects done by the community got assistance from various sources for effective implementation of the projects.

**Tab 3: Level of Community Participation in Self-help Projects.**

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	65	26
High	150	60
Low	30	12
Very Low	5	2
	250	100

Source = field survey (2023).

The Tab 3, showed the level of citizen's participation in the provision and maintenance of self-help projects. Where (60%) of the respondents highly participated, (26%) very high, (12%) indicated low participation, while (2%) very low in participation. This shows that there is a high level of citizen's participation in the provision and maintenance of self-help projects in the study area.

**Tab 4: Problems of Self- help Projects.**

Problems	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate finance	125	50
Inadequate equipment	50	20
Lack of credit facilities	35	14
Inadequate support from government and NGOs	25	10
Others	15	6
	250	100

Source = field survey (2023).

Data in Tab 4, shows that (50%) of respondents affirm problems facing the execution of self-help projects is inadequate finance, (20%) affirm inadequate equipment, (14%) lack of credit facilities, (10%) inadequate assistance while (6%) affirm other problems. This indicates that the major problems are inadequate of funds and equipment that hindered much more self-help projects in the study area.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

There is strong evidence that communities are putting in their best in self-help projects, thereby reducing the absence of social amenities in their areas, despite the fact that majority of the members are low income earners. It is important to note that the Government and NGOs provide technical and financial assistance, these assistance have strengthen the community by providing a sense of belonging and ownership of their conceived self-help projects that addressed their felt-needs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Government and NGOs need to give more support in terms of technical and financial support.
- Philanthropists and other private sectors need to demonstrate their commitment in self-help projects.
- Commercial Banks and other financial institutions need to give credit facilities to the community for self-help projects with minimum interest rate.

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