

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-HELP PROJECTS IN MKPAT-ENIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA-IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of Self-help projects on the socio-economic development of Mkpata-Enin Local Government of Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. Survey design method was adopted in the study in which fifty-one physical socio-economic development variables were collected from all the eighty-seven communities in the study area, using a well-structured questionnaire and observation methods to collect data. Simple regression analysis was used to analyse the data. Findings from the study revealed that self-help projects is significantly influencing overall socio-economic development in the study area. It was therefore concluded that self-help projects are beneficial, and as such should be used as one of the strategies for socio-economic development among rural communities.

KEYWORDS: Self-Help Projects, Socio-Economic Development, Rural Development, Rural Communities, Communities Development, Physical Socio-Economic Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Local Government establishment in Nigeria arises from the need to facilitate development in the rural areas through the delivery and development of infrastructures (Sehinde, 2008 in Lawal, 2014). Section 7(1) of the 1999

constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as quoted by Lawal (2014) had empowered local government to construct and maintain rural roads, waters and drainages, and other public facilities, yet what is the maximum impact that this tire of governance is

supposed to deliver is yet to be felt by the people. Rural development according to Adelakan (2013) should be a process to improve well-being and quality of people in the sparsely populated rural community. This means that rural development should be channelled towards self-sustained improvement of rural areas which is based on re-organization and mobilization of the people in order to enhance their capacity to cope with their daily task of their lives and changes consequent upon them (Mabogunje, 1981 in Enyi, 2014). Despite these provisions, lack of adequate, affordable, accessible and reliable infrastructural services still touches the life of most rural family in Nigeria (Lawal, 2014). Local Government was supposedly a scheme to better understand rural communities, and constraints of the rural folk (Samtiso, 2000). Local government was considered to be more successful in promoting local participations and empowerment of the people within the framework of the one-party system (Eyong, 2007). But the reverse is the case, the local government has remained inactive over the years as a result of excessive controls and various interferences exercised by the higher level of Government (Odoh, (2014). Ocheni, Atakpa and Nwankwo (2012) captured the problem of non-effect of developmental efforts on rural communities as they concluded that underdevelopment and perpetual hunger in the state of the local communities and can be attributed to inefficient utilisation of local government resources for rural development. Though, Koko (2012)

blamed the lack of impactful development drive of rural communities on failure of the establishment of institutional framework that could promote and project the socio-economic development of the rural populace.

Development according to Korten (1990, p. 67) is suppose to be "a process by which the members of a society increases their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvement in their quality of life, and consistent in their own aspiration". This emphasise the need for community involvement in development planning so as to improve quality of life. Therefore, neglecting the role of community participation in development can only, but create an unjustly distribution of resources. It is therefore necessary to review the relationship between community participation and socio-economic development. In this review, the term 'community participation, self-help and stakeholder's involvement will be used interchangeably to mean, people who are directly affected by developmental project (Ukpong, 2009).

Community participation or stakeholder's involvement have been widely discussed in extant literatures (Udensi, Igbara and Eyang, 2015; Bassey, Udensi, Daasi and Igbara, 2013 and Udensi, Udoh, Daasi and Igbara, 2012) especially in the area of rural development. Bamberger (1986) pointed out that active community participation may improve development

projects design through the use of local Knowledge, which will produce equitable distribution of benefit. Ukpong (2009, Pp. 247-248) supports the above assertion and observed that “public involvement is a tool for managing a two-way communication between the proponent and the public. This is to improve decision-making by actively involving stakeholders, which is set to improve viability and enhance its benefits to locally affected people”. Socio-economic development cannot be fully achieved if we neglect local knowledge in assessing socio-economic variables of a given region. Development experts are increasingly becoming aware of the limitations on the capacity of national and local government agencies to manage effectively the rapidly growing number of developmental Projects. The need for community participation in development and management is nonetheless accepted and recognized in professional literatures. Yet, there is no clear-cut agreement in the literature of community development on the nature of community participation or on a prescription to ensure it. It is on these notes that this study is directed to investigate the impact of community self-help development projects executed by rural communities on the overall physical and socio-economic development of Mkpato-Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The most important and complicated issue bearing on local level planning and development is community participation have been

widely attested to in literatures (Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee, 2013; Basse, Udensi, Daasi and Igbara, 2013; Ogbunga, 2014; Udensi, Igbara and Eyang, 2015). Effective community participation may lead to social and personal empowerment, economic development, and socio-political transformation (Kaufman and Alfonso, 1997). Patarchanova (2012) therefore opine that rural development largely depends on a combination of both specific regional and local factors for the attractiveness of cultural and natural environment. Hence, Sikiru (2000) cited in Lawal (2014) summarily put the complications and importance of community participation in self-help development approaches as he comments thus:

“Low level of people’s participation in their own development constitutes a big challenge to rural infrastructure delivery. From the colonial period of local government administration till date, much noise had been made about development from below “Bottom Up” approach to development, “Popular Participation” and other catch phrase to argue for people’s involvement in their development. There has been much noise than action. Local government prepares, estimates and projects for their revenue and expenditure without proper recourse to and due consultation with the people for whom the exercise is being carried out to know their needs, problems, and potentials” (p. 144).

The idea of self-help and communal assistance which form the basis for the present idea of community

and rural development among the rural dwellers is deeply rooted in the rich traditions of the African people in which evidences (Ekpomban, 1976 in Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde 2013; Cavaye, 2004) abound to how communities have, for generation successfully organized themselves to construct roads, build bridges, palaces, market stalls among others. Community development combines the idea of community and interaction by relying on interaction existing between people and joint action (Flora, Flora and Fey, 2004).

According to Ascani, Crescenzi and Iammarino (2012, p. 9), regional economic development processes are supported by context-specific social and institutional factors. These factors are crucial since they shape local capability to translate knowledge into economic wealth through a complex set of interactions and shared codes and practices. Clearly, spatial variations in the quality of such elements may determine a geographically uneven potential for economic development across regions leading to growing divergence among different locations (p. 9).

Community development involves group of people who reaches a decision by initiating a social action process to change their economic, social, cultural and environmental situation (Christenson and Robinson, 1989). Olawepo (1997) in Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) is of the view that it is rather development impetus originating neither from top to bottom, but development facet should be suggested and undertaken by the

communities for their own needs. Akinbode (1986) in Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) gave the definition of rural development that shows citizen participation as he made the following comments:

Rural development is that stage at which people in my village and other villages in Nigeria turn on their taps and get clean water inside or near their homes, have improved medical facilities, schools, markets, transportation etc. and participate in decision making that affects their lives with inner satisfaction and pride to remain in these rural villages. In essence, the rural people and their communities should be focus of development programmes (p. 33).

Barca, McCann and Rodrigues-pose (2011) are of the view that existing policy and tools should be reconsidered once the causes of economic development have been identified as a localised process. The above reviews shows that, both the government and the community are seen as playing a major role in determining variations in the socio-economic development of rural communities.

Ogunlade-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) studied the role of community self-help projects in rural development of Kwara State, Nigeria by examining the impact of self-help projects on rural development using Irepodun Local Government Area as a case study. The result revealed that self-help project is significantly related to rural development, but concluded that there are imbalance distributions of self-help

projects in the study area. This means that some rural communities have embarked on community self-help projects. And this could be an indicator to measure the level of socio-economic development in any rural community.

Francis (2013) further studied the socio-economic analysis of the benefits of a devolved decision-making process in Kenya. The study aimed at assessing devolved system and socio-economic development. Drawing data from both primary and secondary sources, the result of the findings shows that there is significant relationship between community participation and socio-economic development. The area of high correlation was in the area of educational level. They concluded that since a devolved system has a number of benefits to the process of development, it should be incorporated into development programs. It is therefore believed that when a community member develops an idea for rural development on the basis of self help projects, this idea tends to spread spatially and temporarily in a contagious diffusion patterns, until all members of the society becomes aware of the need for self-help-projects for rural development (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde, 2013). Given the foregoing scenario, replicating a clear-cut agenda to where community participation in self-help projects and socio-economic development in Mkpato-Enin becomes Sacrosanct.

Methodology

Mkpato-Enin is located in the South-Western part of Akwa-Ibom State and is a town and a Local

Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. It is located on a sandy plain which forms an undulation land with gentle slope and shallow depression. It is located between longitudes $7^{\circ}39^{11}$ and $7^{\circ}51^{11}$ East and latitudes $4^{\circ}31^{11}$ and $4^{\circ}50^{11}$ North (Essienobom, 2009). The LGA has an area of 488,959 km² (Essienobom, 2009). It is located within the industrial belt extending from Eastern Obolo, Etinan, Oruk Anam, Onna to Ikot Abasi (Akwa-Ibom State Government, 2016). The north is bounded by Uyo and Abak Local Government Area, North-East by Etinan Local Government Area, West by Oruk Anam Local Government and the South-West by Ikot Abasi Local Government Area (Essienobom, 2009). Also see map in appendix one.

Mkpato Enin has four clans namely: Ikpa Ibom with thirty-one villages; Ukpum Minya with twenty-four villages; Ibiaku clan with sixteen villages and Ikpa Ikono clan with sixteen villages. This makes up a total of eighty-seven villages. Mkpato Enin has fourteen political wards, the highest number of political wards in Akwa Ibom State (Essienobom, 2009).

The national population census of 2006 did not provide population figures for both Clans and Villages, both rather provided the population figures of Male at 89,283 males and 88,010 females (Essienobom, 2009). Therefore, the overall population of Mkpato-Enin is about 178,036 in 2006 national population census (Akwa-Ibom State Government, 2016).

The area is rich in oil and natural gas. Oil was discovered in Ikot

Akpa/Ekop as early as 1953. Forest reserves include timber and wood, palm produce. The following cultural events and tourism sites are as follows: Cultural Events: Ekpo Masqurade Festival. Tourist Site: Water confluence at Esa Ekpo Village, Ikot Abia beach in Ikot Abia Village in Ukpum Minya Clan, (Essienobom, 2009).

Survey design method was adopted for the collection of fifty one physical socio-economic variables from all the eighty-seven villages in the study area. This therefore corresponds to methods needed for the collection of the socio-economic development data which is extracted from the target population through the use of participant observations, interview and a well-structured questionnaire. Eighty-seven village heads/Representatives were chosen due to the nature of the socio-economic indicators under consideration in this study. A pilot survey was carried to test for the validity of the instrument. The test for reliability yielded Alpha Cronbach coefficients that ranged from .916 to .923 for all the variables. The data collected were extracted, tabulated and subjected to regression statistical analysis using SPSS (statistical package for social science) version 20 was used for data analysis. Data transformation technique was used to convert the fifty-one socio-economic development variables in a single index of socio-economic development. To examine the extent to which self-help project influences the level of socio-economic development in the study area, regression analysis was performed

using SPSS version 20. The regression analysis was express in graphical model represented as $Y = a + b_1X_1 + e$

Where:

- Y = the dependent variable (Overall Socio-economic Development)
- a = Y intercept
- X1 = the independent variable (Self Help Projects respectively)
- b1 = the regression coefficient of the independent variable
- e = the residual or random error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Self -help Project in this study is determined by summation of all self help projects for all the 87 villages to achieve composite index for each independent variable. To test for the influences of self help projects towards the overall development in Mkpato-Enin Local Government Area, the following hypothesis was formulated as follow:

Hypothesis

- Ho = There is no significant impact of self-help projects on socio-economic development in the study area
- H₁ = There is significant impact of self-help projects on socio-economic development in the study area.

Table 1 show the simple regression analysis result of level of the impact of the significance of self-help projects on socio-economic development of Mkpato-Enin.

Table 1: Summary of simple regression analysis of Government projects and Self-help projects on overall socio-economic development

Variable	Beta Estimate	T	Sig	Remark
Self Help Projects	.667	8.894	.000	Reject Ho
R	.900			
R ²	.810			
Adjusted. R ²	.802			
Standard Error	1.08035			
D-Watson	1.802			
F Value	179.052			

Source: Analysis by Author, 2016

The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that the overall fit of the regression model is good given the ANOVA F-value of 179.052 and significant at 0.05 critical levels. The Durbin Watson which measures the serial correlation of the variables shows 1.802, which is an indication that there is an autocorrelation among the successive values of the variables in the model since the value is greater than one. Hence, linear relationship exists between the dependent and the independent variables.

To determined the contributions of the independent variables on the overall socio-economic development in order to decide whether to accept or reject the earlier hypothesis through evaluation of the independent variables, the absolute value of the Beta estimate (β) is used. Table 1 show that the independent variable is a good predictor of achieving socio-economic development in the study area. At 0.05 level of significance, Self Help Project ($\beta = 0.667$; $t = 3.725$; $p < 0.01$) made significant contribution

(66.7%) towards predicting socio-economic development in the study area. This means that given one standard deviation increase in self-help project, socio-economic development will increase by 0.667 standard deviation.

Based on the result from Table 1, the general linear regression model estimator of socio-economic development is shown mathematically as follows:

$$\text{Socio-Economic Development (SED)} = a + \beta_1 \text{SHP} + e$$

Where:

- a = Constant
- β_1 is the regression coefficient
- SHP = Self-Help Projects
- e = Error term

The Regression Analysis as shown in Table 1 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance, Self-Help Projects ($\beta = 0.667$; $t = 3.725$; $p < 0.01$) influenced the overall socio-economic development level in Mkpato-Enin Local

Government Area. The result therefore means that self-help projects is beneficial to the overall socio-economic development in Mkpato-Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State, especially in addressing spatial inequalities and the unevenness in the distribution of socio-economic development facilities among regions. The result corroborates the idea of Kaufman and Alfonso (1997) that effective community participation may lead to social and personal empowerment, economic development, and socio-political transformation. Furthermore, the result corroborates the findings of the study by Ogunlade-Adetona and Oladinde (2013) and Akpomovie (2010) that self-help projects are significantly related to rural development. This means that self-help project approaches should be seen and incorporated as a tool for rural development by development planners and policy makers. It also confirms earlier study by Francis (2013) on the positive relationship between community participation and socio-economic development.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rural communities are plagued with problems of development as a result of spatial variations and unevenness in the distributions of socio-economic development facilities, as a result of regional inequalities among regions, and it is worsened by Government negligence. It has been widely believed that as a result of regrettable global economic recession, government alone cannot bring about development. Hence, we conclude that

self-help projects are beneficial, and are a strategy for socio-economic development among the rural communities in Mkpato-Enin Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State. Based on the foregoing conclusion, it is urgent to incorporate self-help projects together as one of development strategies that could address regional inequalities and boost community development in Nigerian rural communities.

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APPENDIX 1

