Mobilization Strategies for Effective Community Development Projects in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

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Abstract- The central purpose of the study was to identify the mobilization strategies for effective community development in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted all the community-based organizations leaders in the thirteen communities that make up the area. The sample of the study was 370 community leaders selected through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire which has three clusters and was validated by two experts in community development was the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronback Alpha and the coefficient obtained from the three clusters respectively were 0.83, 0.81 and 0.85. Mean was used to analyze the data. Some of the findings include that the major ways people participate in community development projects include financial assistance and manual labour. Among the problems that militate against peoples' participation in community development projects are lack of funds, poor leadership, inadequate mobilization strategies, embezzlement of money. Some of the mobilization strategies include involvement of people in development programmes, formation of organizations use of persuasion, adequate communication, among others. Some of the recommendations include that people should be involved in all the stages of development, community organizations should be encouraged, etc.

Index Terms- Community Development, Mobilization, Strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mobilization is one of the basic strategies of community development (C.D). 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 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 and which need urgent attention. Awareness might take a form of educating the people on what they do not perceive as a problem. 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 (1992) 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 development itself. Therefore, it is clear that any community which fails to develop the skills and productive talents of her 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 (1999) 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 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 utmost capacity for community development.

Since independence 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. The indications are that given the directive nature of these governments initiated programmes, the institutional development dynamics for community development at the grass root levels should be well established by now.

Despite the efforts of the governments in introducing different national development programmes in the country, there is no evidence to show that a reasonable percentage of the people in rural communities in Igbo-Etiti local government area participate in community development projects. Experiences of the staff, especially those under community development unit in the local government have shown considerable and progressive deterioration of community development projects in many communities which has created a gap for non-involvement of people in development activities. This concern stem from the fact that while there are indications that some of the national development programmes have positively influenced community development in some areas, there are also indications that in some areas like Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area, active participation does not seem to be noticeable. Could it be that the mobilization strategies adopted by these government programmes were inadequate or that a lot of factors militate against the community development projects embarked upon? However, it is possible that if adequate mobilization strategies are employed in the area, the deterioration in people's participation in community development projects can be reversed, hence the need for this study.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions were posed to guide the study:
1. In what ways do people participate in community development projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA?
2. What are the problems that militate against people's participation in community development projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA?
3. What are the mobilization strategies for people to participate in community development projects in Igbo-Etiti L.G.A?

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted all the community-based organizations leaders in the thirteen communities that make up Igb0-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The sample of the study was 370 leaders selected through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire, which was developed in three clusters and validated by two experts in community development was the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Coefficient of 0.83, 0.81 and 0.85 were obtained from the three clusters respectively and they were adjudged highly enough. A criterion mean of 2.5 was adopted. This implies that items within the mean of 2,5 and above were accepted while those below 2.5 were rejected. The mean scores were also ranked from the highest to the lowest.

IV. RESULTS

Table1: Mean Scores of the leaders on the ways people participate in C.D projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA.

S/N	Ways of Participation	Mean	Rank
1.	Finacial assistance	2.78	1st
2.	Material assistance	2.16	3rd
3.	Manual Labour	2.56	2nd
4.	None of the above	2.06	4th

Table 1 revealed that items I & 3 were accepted by the respondents because the means were above the criterion mean of 2.5 while items 2 & 4 were rejected because their means were below the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that the people only participate in C.D projects through manual labour and financial assistance to execute the projects and no other ways again.

Table 2: Mean scores of the leaders on the problems militating against people's participation in C.D. projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA

S/N	Problems	Mean	Rank
1.	Lack of funds	3.53	6th
2.	Inadequate mobilization	3.62	3rd
3.	Poor leadership	3.66	2nd
4.	Lack of trained workers	2.84	12th
5.	Lack of people's involvement	3.46	7th
6.	Inadequate publicity	3.55	5th
7.	Conflicts	3.10	10th
8.	Lack of managerial known-how	2.98	11th
9.	Illiteracy/ignorance	3.12	9th
10.	Poor accountability/embezzlement	3.71	1st
11.	Selfishness of some leaders	3.40	8th
12.	Poor planning and implementation of projects	3.56	4th

Table 2 revealed that all the items 1-12 were accepted by the respondents. This was because all the means were above the criterion mean of 2.5 which implies that they are problems militating against people's participation in C.D. Projects in Igbo Etiti L.G.A.

Table 3: Mean scores of the leaders on the mobilization strategies for people to participate in C.D. projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA.

S/N	Mobilization Strategies	Mean	Rank
1.	Involvement of people in project processes	3.83	1st
2.	Formation of community-based organizations	3.56	3rd
3.	Formation of committees	3.30	7th
4.	Self-help efforts	3.58	2nd
5.	Promise of compensation	3.42	6th
6.	Use of persuasion	3.50	4th
7.	Face-to-face discussion	3.18	9th
8.	Use of mass media of	3.21	8th

	communication		
9.	Integrated rural development	3.48	5th
10.	Letters to the people on what they should do to benefit themselves	3.11	10th

Table 3 equally showed that all the items 1-10 were accepted by the respondents. This was because all the means were above 2.5 which is the criterion mean. This implies that all the items are mobilization strategies for people to participate in C.D. projects in Igbo-Etiti LGA.

V. DISCUSSION

The result in table 1 showed that people participate in community development project in many ways and that manual labour and financial assistance are most prominent. This is in agreement with Oduaran (1994) who said that the success and failure of community development depends to a considerable extent on the ability of the community to generate necessary funds for the funding of projects, services, administration and personnel. Fund raising provides an open door for mobilizing. The idea of participation also corroborate with Imhabekhai (2009) that citizen participation means active involvement of all the men and women in a community, irrespective of age, nature of citizenship, socio-economic status, political affiliation, religion, level of education, etc. in planning and implementing programmes and projects that are of benefit to the people. This implies that every body in the community should participate in one way or the other in community development programmes to engender desired development in the community.

The data on table 2 revealed many problems that militate against people's participation in C.D. projects ranging from lack of funds to poor planning and implementation of projects. These problems agreed with Abiona (2009) especially on lack of funds that many communities make efforts to embark on self-help programmes but cannot implement such successfully because of limited funds. Such communities sometimes depend on grants from the government to supplement what they have contributed but such assistance from government might not be forth coming or might come too late. This often leads to abandonment of good projects midway. Moreover, many members of the communities might not fully cooperate to meet their financial obligations to the projects due to poverty or lack of interest in the said projects. The author went further to say that the limited funds contributed by members of the communities may be embezzled by community leaders and others. This brings mistrust and kills the interests of the community members who are willing to participate in community development. In the same vein, Esenjor (1992) summarized the problems thus: notion and ideas about the programme, foundation of the programme, problem in regard to the unit of the community development, size of the unit and the problems connected with it, lack of trained or professional workers, flexibility of community development ministries/ agencies, misuse of powers, lack of adequate funds, lack of peoples' involvement, bureaucratic delays, overburdening of incompetent subordinate workers, poor leadership and poor accountability.

The data on table 3 also revealed a number of mobilization strategies that work when they are employed. Such strategies have worked in some areas depending on the situation in a given environment. This in conformity with Anyanwu (1987) that, at the grassroot level, the idea of mobilization can only be achieved by stimulating active participation of the entire citizenry through different methods which include: face-to-face discussion, letters to the communities telling them what they suppose to do, addressing a group of people, formation of committee in which the masses in all shades of opinions are represented, formation of organizations or unions and launching of the projects in different phases.

Onabanjor (1986) supports that "the most effective system which has been adopted and used by Kwara State Ministry of Local government for effective mobilization is the committee system". He maintained that, apart from its being a permanent forum for exchange of ideas, it is very instrumental in mobilizing the masses for self-help activities since members are the accredited representatives of the people to be mobilized. In the same vein, Abiona (2009) affirmed that communication network both internal and external is vital in mobilization. At every stage of mobilization, communication is the main tool of success, otherwise the programme will not take off. It is through communication that community members can be involved in the mobilization process. For mobilization to be effective, members of the community must have access to information which they need to identify and solve problems.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident that mobilization consists primarily the movement or campaigns to activate the masses into the process of change. This involves pooling of the human and material resources of the people for their betterment in their community. Through mobilization, people can participate in different ways in development of their community which come in form of financial, material and manual labour. Unfortunately, some people may be constrained because of some factors that may militate against their participation in community developments programmes. A number of mobilization strategies were therefore suggested to ameliorate the problems if employed to encourage popular participation in community development projects.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered.
1. People should be involved in identification, planning, execution and evaluation of projects in their communities. This will go a long way in making the people see the projects as their own and that they belong to the whole processes of development.
2. Government should provide the people with well trained community development personnel for proper direction of what the people are to be done.
3. There is the need to mount campaign or reawaken the peoples' consciousness on the importance of community

development. This will make them rethink from their former belief on community development.

4. Community organizations should be encouraged and committees set at the inception of any projects. This is to accelerate the rate of self-help efforts in the communities.

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