

Examining the Effects of Local Government Participation in Economic Development Planning of Sabon-Gari Local Government Area in Kaduna State

Yusuf Birisan Lawal, Lukman Omomeji Shehu & Yusuf Ibrahim Ajao

Department of Politics & Governance

Kwara State University

Corresponding author: birisan.lawal@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract

Development strategies, efforts and programmes are more and more being designed to induce local participation towards ensuring economic development. It is on this basis that the study examined the relationship between local government participation and economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government. The study adopted qualitative research design relying solely on Face-to-Face interview to generate data for the study with the population comprised of six (6) respondents comprising Local Government Chairman, Vice Chairman, LEEDs Coordinator, Sabon-Gari and Desk Officers (I, II & III). The information from interview section was corroborated by secondary data from relevant documents. Some of the relevant documents reviewed include NEEDs Document, (2005) and LEEDs Implementation Manual, 2005. The data generated from the interviewees were thematically analysed. From the presentation and analysis of data, the study concluded that Local Government participation in NEEDs through LEEDs has promoted economic empowerment and development through a more articulate, forward looking, progressive and radical strategy with its inclusive participatory nature (involving government, private sector and the people) in managing the resources of the country for the benefit of the teeming population. However, many factors have stood against the dreams of this strategy including weak leadership at the centre, debt burden etc. The study therefore, recommended among others the need for Nigeria as a nation through its government should fight for debt relief and the need for a monitoring agency to be established that would help in the service delivery of the NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs programmes.

Keywords: Economic Development, Local Government, Implementation, Monitoring, and Participation

Introduction

The synergy between local development and enhanced national development is gaining currency; this is so because of the attention given by scholars to the study. Also, development strategies, efforts and programmes are more and more being designed to induce local participation towards ensuring economic development. With an increase in the performance expectations on governments' globally, local government by constitution can bring mass of citizens into intimate contact with the persons responsible for decisions and its executions. Arising from the above is that local government has become a necessary unit of development all over the world regardless of type, nature and character of the political system.

Despite the spirited protestations of Nigeria's officialdom, it is yet to be empirically settled that national economic development has been on the predominance in the Nigerian State. On the

other hand, evidence abounds that local government in Nigeria is a neglected paradigm of national developmental mobilization (Abada, 2012; Idike, 2013; Eze and Muanya, 2013; Uzuegbunam and Nwofia, 2014). Successive governments in Nigeria have adopted development plans as appropriate strategy to address development challenges in the country. Tordoff (1993) observes that there is a general consensus that the instrument of both diagnosis and remedy to development is the “development plan” In the same vein Adedeji (1989) opines that the economic aspirations of Nigeria since independence are perhaps best exemplified by her various development plans. Since the past four decades, Nigeria has embarked on series of development plans to fasten the rate of economic growth and improve the standard of living of the people. It is noteworthy that Nigeria has gone through four national development plans in her post-independence history, (the fifth National Development Plan did not materialize).

These plans are: First National Development Plan (1962), the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), Third National Development Plan (1975-80), and Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85. Apart from the five-year National Development Plans, the Federal Government has also embarked on three year rolling plans between 1990 and 1998 and long term perspective planning in her endless efforts to search for appropriate developmental strategy. The federal government introduced another ambitious programme between 2003 and 2007 known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was a medium term planning which focused on wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value orientation. Recently Vision 20:2020 was launched. Vision 20:2020 is a perspective plan which aims to make Nigeria a fully developed economy by the year. The general objective of this study therefore, is to examine the relationship between local government participation and economic development planning (e.g. agricultural development plans, youth empowerment plans, women empowerment programmes etc.) in Sabon-Gari Local Government.

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative research design relying solely on Face-to-Face interview to generate data for the study; it described the role of Local Government participation in terms of implementation and monitoring to economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area. The target population of the study comprised of six (6) respondents comprising Local Government Chairman, Vice Chairman, LEEDs Coordinator, Sabon-Gari and Desk Officers (I, II & III). The information from interview section was corroborated by secondary data from relevant documents. The data generated from the interviewees were thematically analysed.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Local Government

Local Government is grassroots government recognized by law. It is defined severally by authors and bodies. Some scholars (Olowu 1988, Adeyeye, 2005) have distinguished Local Government depending on the political arrangement of the nation, i.e. unitary or federal system. Adeyeye (2005) defines Local Government in the unitary state as "non-sovereign community possessing the legal right but which are essentially administrative agents of the central government". On the other hand, the United Nations Office for Public Administration sees Local Government as:

A political subdivision of a nation (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose

taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected.

All over the world, the Local Government system is the tier of government that is closest to the people. It is designed to bring governance and development to rural and underserved communities. It is also an avenue for deepening democracy and decentralizing power through greater citizen participation in electoral processes and decision making. It also serves as an arena for political development at the grass-roots level. Thus, Section 14(4) of the constitution states that: The composition of Government of a State, a Local Government Council, or any of the Agencies of such Government or Council, and the conduct of the affairs of the Government or Council or such Agencies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the Federation. Similarly, the Guideline for Local Government Reform (FGN, 1976) defines Local Government as:

Government at local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial power to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and to ensure, through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutes , that local initiative and responses to local head and conditions are maximized.

The implications of the above definitions are in four dimensions; these include:

- i. Local Government must be a legal entity distinct from the state and federal government.
- ii. Local Government must be administered by democratically elected officials.
- iii. Local Government must have specific powers to perform a range of functions assigned it by law.
- iv. Local Government must enjoy substantial autonomy to perform array of functions, plan, formulate and execute its own policies, programmes and projects, and its own rules and regulations as deemed for its local needs. This autonomy includes power to control its finance, recruit and discipline its staff. It could also be added that it also implies that the Local Government must process a definite territory and a population over which it exercises its authority. Section 7 (1) of the 1999 constitution allude to these when it states that;

The system of Local Government by democratically elected local council, under this constitution guaranteed; And accordingly, the government of every state shall, subject to section 8 of this constitution, ensure their existence under a law which provide for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such council.

Perhaps, it was from the above understanding that Ntiwimka (2011) Argued that the creation of Local Government in many countries stem from the need to felicitate development at the grassroots and to decongest the functions and burden of central government, to bring about democratic climate of operation, to serve as a ledge against over concentration of power” (cited in Ohiole and Ojo 2014).

Concept of Participation

Participation is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. The way participation is defined also depends on the context in which it occurs. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, practice; for still others, an end in itself (World Bank, 1995, para 3). Indeed, there is merit in all these interpretations as Rahnema (2002) notes ‘Participation is a stereotype word like children use Lego pieces. Like Lego pieces the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions, they have no content, but do serve a function; as these words are separate from any context, they are ideal for manipulative purposes. ‘Participation’ belongs to this category of word (p.116). Often the term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as community participation, citizen participation, people’s participation, public participation, and popular participation. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as “to have a share in” or “to take part in,” thereby emphasizing the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate. Arnstein (1969) states that the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (2001), defined participation as a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence. It is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power. However, it can also be a method to co-opt dissent, a mechanism for ensuring the receptivity, sensitivity, and even accountability of social services to the consumers. The World Bank’s Learning Group on Participatory Development (1995) defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them” (World Bank’s Learning Group, para 4).

Typology of Participation

There is a wide range of literature relating to the typology of participation. These typologies will bring us to a common stage in understanding rungs of participation. The following review summarizes the relevant literature.

Table 2.1 Typology of Participation by Jeffrey and Vitra

Jeffrey and Vitra (eds) (2001), presented eight category typology of participation which is closely linked to those presented by CARE and David Wilcox as follows:

Typology	Characteristics of Each Type
Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretense.
Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. Process does not concede any share in decision-making, and are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for Material Incentives	People participate in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Local people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.

Functional Participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project.
Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local groups or institutions. Learning methodologies used to seek multiple perspectives, and groups determine how available resources are used.
Self-Mobilization (Local Organizational Empowerment)	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Adapted from Jeffrey and Vitra (eds) 2001.

Economic Development Planning

The concept of development planning can be better comprehended by explaining the concepts of development and planning separately. Every nation strives after development. It used to be seen as synonymous with economic growth. After taking many formats and going through many forms, it is now usually defined in broad terms. It certainly includes growth but it should lead to a significant and continuing improvement in the quality of life of people, particularly the poor. It is essentially a process whereby the real per capita income increases over time. It is growth accompanied with change in condition of living of people in general. Whether rich or poor, all human beings are constantly engaged in the search for means and opportunities to better conditions of life. In virtually all countries, this search for better conditions takes place at community level, at individual level, and at national level (Jumare, 2007).

This quest for a better quality of life is what has come to be labelled as development and efforts to define it, and the conditions under which it can be realized identified by a number of scholars. This was the preoccupation of development theory during the post-Second World War (II) period and following the process of decolonization. Development theorists has attempted to shed light on the causes of economic transformation in human society, as well as spelling out what governments can do in order to stimulate the process of economic growth. Those who argued along this trend have followed the modernization theories, the famous ‘stages economic growth’ by Rostow in the 1960s, which major focus was on the role of savings in development. Arthur Lewis’s focus on what he called the ‘dual economy’ writing about what he called the ‘modern’ and the traditional ‘sector’. Lewis (1955) advocated for a shift from the traditional sector to a modern sector as a key activity that would increase savings and lead to growth. There were indeed other theorists such as Gunder Frank (1967) on the dependency theory, and the subsequent Brandt Report whose focus was on the relations between the wealthy countries of the North and the impoverished South and how these relations perpetuated the situation of the South (Jumare, 2007).

Seers (1960) called into question the thinking of the time particularly concerning the link between growth and development. He was among the first to indicate that in order to understand whether development is indeed taking place in a country, the questions to ask about a country’s development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? He indicated that if these had been

decreasing, then we could say a country had indeed experienced development. Seers contends that:

If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result “development” even if per capita income doubled (Seers, 1969 cited in Todaro and Smith, 2015, p. 17).

This assertion was neither idle speculation nor the description of a hypothetical situation. A number of developing countries experienced relatively high rates of growth of per capita income during the 1960s and 1970s but showed little or no improvement or even an actual decline in employment, equality, and the real incomes of the bottom 40% of their populations. By the earlier growth definition, these countries were developing; by the newer poverty, equality, and employment criteria, they were not (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p. 17). Todaro (2015), has attempted a reformulation of the definition of development as

Development must therefore be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and evolving aspirations of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (p. 18).

The purpose is to be broadened and put into a more concrete focus, Seer’s enduring questions. Todaro suggests that the three questions can be reformulated into objectives as thus:

- i. To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health, and protection
- ii. To raise levels of living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and human values, all of which will serve not only to enhance material wellbeing but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem
- iii. To expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states, but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p. 24).

Todaro (2015) contest that if for a given nation the achievement of aforementioned objectives is in affirmative, then it can be concluded that nation under reference has undergone a process of structural and institutional change or development. If, however, only the first objective can be seen in the affirmative, then it means that the country can be “economically more developed but remains underdeveloped in a more fundamental sense” (Todaro and Smith, 2015, p. 24). The central issues which the vital question/objectives posed/stated by Seers and broadened by Todaro essentially address what another writer; Goulet (1971, p. 17) calls “the core values” of development. These include:

- i. **Life-sustenance (Economic Dimension):** Life-sustenance is concerned with the ability to meet life-sustaining human needs include food, shelter, health, and protection. When any of these is absent or in critically short supply, a condition of “absolute underdevelopment” exists. A basic function of all economic activity, therefore, is to provide as many people as possible with the means of overcoming the helplessness and misery arising from a lack of food, shelter, health, and protection. To this extent, we may claim that economic development is a necessary condition for the improvement in the quality of life that is development. Without sustained and continuous economic progress at the individual as well as the societal level, the realization of the human potential would not be possible.
- ii. **Self-Esteem (Social Dimension):** A second universal component of the good life is self-esteem – a sense of worth and self-respect, of not being used as a tool by others for their own ends. All peoples and societies seek some basic form of self-esteem, although they may call it authenticity, identity, dignity, respect, honor, or recognition.
- iii. **Freedom from Servitude (Political Dimension):** A third and final universal value that we suggest should constitute the meaning of development is the concept of human freedom. Freedom here is to be understood in the sense of emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from social servitude to nature, other people, misery, oppressive institutions, and dogmatic beliefs, especially that poverty is predestination. Freedom involves an expanded range of choices for societies and their members together with a minimization of external constraints in the pursuit of some social goal we call development.

Planning

Planning is deciding what actions to be taken in the future for the purpose of achieving organizational goals, it involves thinking ahead, initiating and taking a predetermined course of action and deciding in advance what should be done, how, when and by whom. Without planning, the activities of organizations, institutions, societies and nations may well become a series of random actions with meaningless objectives (Datta, 2010). According to Cole (1993), planning is an activity which involves decisions about ends as well as means and about conduct as well as result. Planning is deciding what to do, how to do it and who is to do (Koonzt, Donnel and Weihrich, 2006). Nwachukwu (1998) observes that planning entails determination of control, direction and methods of accomplishing the overall organization or national objective. Plans must be directed and controlled towards achieving desired objectives. Todaro (1992) conceptualizes development planning as the conscious governmental effort to influence, direct and in some cases, even control changes in the principal economic variables of a country over the course of time in order to achieve predetermined set of objectives”. From the above it is obvious that without adequate planning, no meaningful development can take place in any system or State.

Development planning as long-term programme designed to effect some permanent structural changes in the economy is connected with the involvement of government in the economy whereby it set out objectives about the way it wants the economy to develop in future and then intervenes to try to achieve those objectives (UNPD, 2008). Development planning involves processes which ensure that national policies and strategies are realized and development concerns at all levels are fully integrated into the overall national development thrust (Datta, 2010).

Economic Development

Economic development is the development of economic wealth of countries or regions for the well-being of their inhabitants. Economic growth is often assumed to indicate the level of economic development. The term “economic growth” refers to the increase (or growth) of a specific measure such as real national income, gross domestic product, or per capita income. The term economic development on the other hand, implies much more. It is the process by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social wellbeing of its people (United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization ‘UNESCO’, 2018).

- a. **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The gross domestic product or Gross Domestic Income (GDI) is one of the measures of national income and output for a given country’s economy. It is the total value of all final goods and services produced in a particular economy within a country’s borders in a given year.
- b. **National Income:** The income earned by a country’s people, including labour and capital investment. It is the total value of all income in a nation (wages and profits, interests, rents and pension payments) during a given period, (usually one year).
- c. **Per Capita Income:** The total national income divided by the number of people in the nation. This is what each citizen is to receive if the yearly national income is divided equally among all.
- d. **Agricultural Growth:** This has to do with the per capita average food grain production resulting from availability of extensive irrigation facilities and intensive use of fertilizers.

Review of Empirical Studies on Development Planning

Iheanacho, (2014) conducted a study titled “National Development Planning in Nigeria: An Endless Search for Appropriate Development Strategy” the study aims to examine critically various development plans in Nigeria and identify those problems that hinder successful implementation of development plans in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data, as its source of information. Based on the findings that development plans have been accepted as a suitable strategy to address development challenges in Nigeria, this study concludes that the efficacy of our national development plans would be enhanced and serve as a viable instrument of sustainable development if the problems that confront the National Development plans are properly addressed.

Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) also conducted a study titled “National development in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and prospects”. The paper discussed the problems affecting national development as well as strategies for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper adopted secondary data as sources of information. The paper concluded that faithful implementation of development plan, commitment on the part of the leaders and absence of corruption are required for the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Mwiru (2015) also conducted a study titled “The importance of community participation in development projects at local level: A study of Dodoma Municipal Council”. The researcher employed case study type of design. Namely, observation, interview, questionnaire and documentary review. The collected data was analyzed by both qualitative and quantitative methods; qualitative method was based on explanatory statements and quantitative method involved the descriptive method of using percentages and tables. The findings revealed low level of community participation as a result of some socio-economic factors. The study also noted the

challenges of poor citizen participation in development projects; such as poor leaders (personal interest), ignorance and lack of dissemination of project related information. The study recommended among others, the need to involve the community to a greater extent in decision making and development project.

Theoretical Framework: Social Movement Perspective by Soule and King (2006).

The "Social Movement Perspective" defines participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution. This perspective identifies the goal of participation as an empowering process for people to handle challenges and influence the direction of their own lives. Empowerment Participation is when primary stakeholders are capable and willing to initiate the development process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision-making about what should be achieved and how? While outsiders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are *primus inter pares* i.e. they are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, quoted by Soule and King, (2006) states that;

Community development is an empowering process emerging from a combination of people's resources and the state efforts that enable the participants with reliance on their own initiative and mutual self-help, to achieve and improved social, economic and cultural condition of communities with finally contribute to their general societal growth (p. 27).

In other words, community development is a joint effort between the community people and the government. The government has a duty to create an enabling environment for development to take place. From the above definition, community development is a "process of helping people to help themselves" (Groenewald, 1989). In other words, community development helps communities to gain self-reliance through people's participation and mobilization of local resources. Swanepoel (1992), agrees with his argument that in community development, communities aim to achieve their concrete objectives but at the same time through participation they realize abstract gains such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency and human development.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The major aim of the study is to examine the relationship between local government participation and economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government. This section presents and analyze of data. It presented, analysed and discussed the data collected through Face-to-Face interview complemented by few secondary data. The major findings of the study were discussed afterward. Face-to-Face-interview was conducted with six (6) Staff of Sabon-Gari Local Government with in-depth knowledge on a selected economic development programme where they participated in the implementation and monitoring of the programme planning.

Analysis of Interview/FGD Responses Using Thematic Analysis

Respondents Category	Population	Code	Date
Local Government Chairman	1	R ₁	11/01/2025
Vice Chairman	1	R ₂	11/01/2025
LEEDs Coordinator, Sabon-Gari	1	R ₃	11/01/2025
Desk Officers (I, II & III)	3	R _{4, 5 and 6}	12/01/2025

Source: Researcher's survey 2025.

Theme I: Preamble Questions

Sub-Theme I a. An example of economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government

According to the respondents, there are many economic development plans that ought to be designed by Sabon-Gari Local Government but it was hijacked by the higher tiers of government (State and Federal Government). A good example is Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDs) with State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDs) and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDs) at State and Federal levels of government respectively (R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, and R₆).

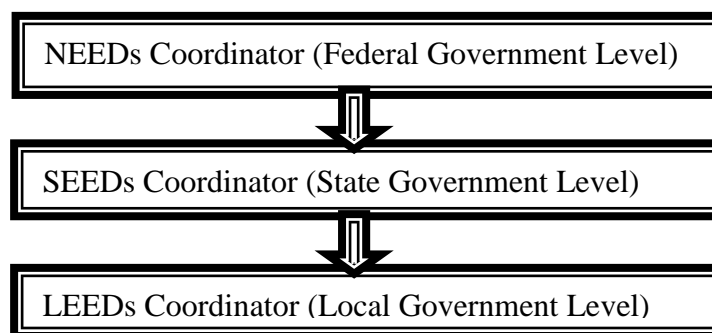
Theme II: Local Government Participation in Implementation and Economic Development Planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government

Sub-Theme II a. Level of Sabon-Gari Local Government's financial contribution during economic development planning

There is divergent opinion among the respondents on the level of Local Government's financial contribution during economic development planning as majority of the respondents stated thus:

Financing of LEEDs is the sole responsibility of the Federal government. Allocations were set aside for the programme right from the Federal level, to State level and to Local Government level. In addition, the Local Government coordinator is in charge of the programme planning who is answerable to the State coordinator on SEEDs. In the same vein, SEEDS coordinator is answerable to NEEDs coordinator at the Federal level (R₃, R₄, R₅, and R₆). The following figure simplify the assertion the respondents.

Figure 1 Organizational Hierarchy of LEEDs, SEEDs and NEEDs Coordinators



Source: LEEDs Implementation Manual, 2005.

This is affirmed by the broad programme goal of NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs – to promote economic empowerment and development through a more articulate, forward looking, progressive and radical strategy. Government was determined to empower people and reduce poverty through the NEEDS package; government, private sector and the people were

participatorily involved in managing the resources of the country for the benefit of the teeming population (NEEDs Document, 2005).

On the contrary, few of the respondents felt everything was just from Federal Government by stating that “Local Government participation was just ‘tokenistic’ i.e. the Local Government is sent finance and taught how to utilize it” this is in line with the passive typology of participation according by (CARE, 1994). (R₁, and R₂).

Sub-Theme II a. Material contribution of Sabon-Gari Local Government during any economic development planning

The respondents unanimously agreed thus:

Materially, Sabon-Gari Local Government was in charge of materials used during planning of LEEDs programme. Materials like drawing board for orientation of the beneficiaries on ways to design Local Development Plans; writing materials (e.g. Books and Biro); refreshments etc. were the full responsibility of the Local Government (R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, and R₆).

Theme III: Local Government Participation in Monitoring on Economic Development Planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government

Sub-Theme III a. Describe the collaborative effort in monitoring economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government

The monitoring activity according to the respondents was entirely the responsibility of State Government. This entirely indicates that monitoring is non-participatory (R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, and R₆).

Theme IV: Overall Question

Sub-Theme IV a. Comment on the contribution of LEEDs to economic development in Sabon-Gari Local Government

The respondents echoed thus: NEEDS is a nationally coordinated framework of action in collaboration with State and Local Governments with their State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDs) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDs), as well as other stakeholders to consolidate on the earlier achievements of the democratic dispensation as well as building a solid formation for the attainment of Nigeria’s long term vision of becoming the largest and strongest Africa economy and a key player in the world economy. Its goals include wealth creation; employment generation; poverty reduction and value reorientation. However, many factors have stood against the dreams of this strategy. Some of the challenges are:

- i. **Weak Leadership at the Centre:** The government does not use the enabling laws of the land to punish those who do not abide by the rules of engagement in the country.
- ii. **Debt Burden:** Nigeria has borrowed a lot of money from the international donor agencies and servicing of these debts has really taken a toll on the nation’s economy. Resources that were supposed to be used to expand social services for the benefit of the people as articulated through NEEDS are used in debt servicing and payment.

- iii. **Population Explosion:** According to NEEDs reports, the Nigerian population is rapidly growing at a 2.83percent rate per year. This has made it difficult for the nation to increase its per capital income. Resources and programmes that were articulated to benefit a targeted population end up not being able to meet with the ever increasing population. This affects the NEEDS plan towards development.

Discussion of Major Findings

The study examined the relationship between local government participation and economic development planning in Sabon-Gari Local Government. From the presentation and analysis of data, the study arrived at the following findings:

- i. The study found out that Local Government participation in the implementation of LEEDs has helped in economic development planning as stipulated in sub-theme II (a) of the study that the Local Government coordinator is in charge of the programme planning who is answerable to the State coordinator on SEEDs. In the same vein, SEEDS coordinator is answerable to NEEDs coordinator at the Federal level. This was supported by NEEDs Document, (2005) which reported that Government was determined to empower people and reduce poverty through the NEEDS package; government, private sector and the people were going to be participatorily involved in managing the resources of the country for the benefit of the teeming population.
- ii. In respect to the participation of Local Government in monitoring in Sabon-Gari Local Government, the study also discovered that “monitoring activity according to the respondents was entirely the responsibility of State Government” as captured in sub-theme III (a). This entirely indicates that monitoring is non-participatory.

Conclusion

A nation cannot be believed to be recording increases in national developmental indices when human and material resources in its component local government areas remain immensely immobilized. Development is all about improved living conditions for citizens who reside in the various local government areas of a nation-state. From the presentation and analysis of data the study concluded that participation of Sabon-Gari Local Government at the level of monitoring is tokenistic in nature but that Local Government participation in the implementation of LEEDs has helped in economic development planning of Sabon-Gari Local Government Area though with some challenges as mentioned overhead.

Recommendations

These observations are strongly positioned to give life to the strategy and make the programme functional.

- i. There should be a monitoring agency that would help in the service delivery of the NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs programmes. The notion that government activity must suffer because it is not a personal issue should be eschewed and this agency would take up the responsibility of monitoring that every bit of resource devoted to NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs is judiciously and properly managed.

- ii. The Government of the nation should ensure that the NEEDS, SEEDs and LEEDs programme should be adequately captured in its budgets. As finance remains the resource to ensure implementation of projects and it should be noted that government has the responsibility to ensure that finance is allocated to programmes which are strategically articulated for the development of the nation.
- iii. Nigeria as a nation through its government should fight for debt relief. This has reduced the cash flow and strength of the nation's currency. Resources are seriously diverted for debt servicing. Debt relief would ensure more foreign direct investment, strong financial base and create substantial resources inflows which would form part of the financing for the NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs programme.

References

- Abada, I. (2012): "An overview of local government and rural development in Nigeria: 1999-2010". *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*. 8 (2) 169-182
- Eze, C and Muanya, C. (2013): "Between democratic and the caretaker committee approach to Local Government administration in Nigeria: Revisiting the Anambra experience, From 2006 to 2013. *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*. 6(-)172-188
- Goulet, D. (1971); *The Cruel Choice: A new concept in the theory of Development*. New York, Antheneum
- Idike, A. (2013): "Gender and participatory democracy in the Local Government system in Nigeria: A case study of Ebonyi State (2001-2011). *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*. 6(-) 371-380
- Igbuzor, O. (2011): "Peace and security education: A critical factor for sustainable peace and national development". *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies* 2 (1) 1-7.
- Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy Implementation Manual, 2005.
- National Planning Commission (2005), *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) Abridged* Abuja: NPC, Reproduced by CBN.
- Sabon-Gari Local Government Performance Appraisal report, (2018).
- Seers, D. (1972): "The meaning of development" in Uphoff, N & Kchan, W; (eds). *The political economy of development*, University of California press, pp.123-134
- Thirwall, A. P. (1982), *Growth and development with special reference to developing countries*, 2nd edition, English Language Book Society and Macmillan, London.
- Todaro, M.P., & Smith, S.C. (2003). *Economic development* (8th Edition). Pearson.
- Todaro, M.P., & Smith, S.C. 7th ed. (2012). *Economic development* (8th Edition). Pearson.