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THE 3‘I’S PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE IN ONDO STATE: A STUDY OF OWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 2009 - 2014

Agagu, A. A. & Lawal, T

Department of Political Science, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti
&

Department of Public Administration, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo Ondo State,
lawtolous@yahoo.com

Abstract

Genuine rural development especially in developing societies to a large extent depends on the participation of the rural populace in policy making and implementation. Fundamentally, the rural people play a vital role in economic and political development of the nation. However, the much needed development has continued to elude the rural communities in spite of the various development policies carried out by successive governments in the state. The exclusion of rural communities from planning and implementation of facilities meant to benefit them, and the international debate on sustainable rural development led Ondo State government to re-think its rural development policy with a view to establishing more effective strategies for rural development. The 3 ‘I’s (Infrastructure, Institution and Industry) initiatives introduced in 2009 emphasizes the important role of communities in their own development. The study therefore, reviewed the 3 ‘I’s initiative of the present government in Ondo State with a view to knowing its impact on rural people. The study adopted both primary and secondary data. The paper submitted that 3‘I’s initiative has not impacted positively on the lives of rural dwellers in Ondo-State, most especially in the areas of infrastructure and integrated development. The findings also suggested that 3 ‘I’s initiatives is not hopeless, but needs a different kind of investment, for example introducing measures of accountability, addressing the politicization of the initiative and exploiting key principles of development and service delivery.

Keywords: Development, Infrastructure, Rural Development, Participation, Local Government.

Introduction

Participatory rural development has garnered considerable significance as a contemporary development paradigm in both developed and developing countries. In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the discourse is largely based on the assumption that rural communities can competently articulate their own needs and opportunities and that governments and development organizations can effectively respond to them. It is also assumed that both rural communities and development agencies can act in democratic and participatory ways in the process of development.

The rural areas of Nigeria are characterized by low level of socio-economic activities, low purchasing power and lack of infrastructure and social amenities (Abdulrahman 1999; Alabi and Oholi, 2010). In most rural areas in Nigeria, like any other rural setting in the developing nations, basic infrastructures, where they exist at all are too inadequate for any meaningful development. In spite of the fact that these rural areas serve as the source of food and raw materials for the urban areas, yet they have continued to witness increasing poverty and marginalization (Akinola, 2007; Egbetokun, 2009; Lawal 2014). The need to integrate communities into development activities in Nigeria has been necessitated by the realization that despite the huge amount of money expended on rural development most people in the rural areas still live below poverty line (Malinga, 2011; Gnade, 2013). One way to explain this is that although, since independence the government of Nigeria has placed emphasis on the provision of infrastructure and services as a deliberate move to correct imbalances between urban and rural areas, however, there has been no or limited involvement of rural people in the planning and implementation of these projects.

Literature on participatory development approach has, as its main tenets three prescriptive ideas; that poor people are creative and able, and can and should do much of their own investigation, analysis and planning; that outsiders have roles as convenors, catalysts and facilitators; and that the weak and marginalized can and should be empowered (Chamber, 1997). Consequently, in order to stimulate the participation of local communities in development activities, the government sought to conscientise them about their role in activities intended to benefit them. As a result, a variety of participatory development techniques, are being applied to assist in initiating, stimulating and sustaining community participation in the development process. Based on this, the government of Ondo State initiated a policy called 3 'I's initiative (Infrastructure provision, Institution development and Industry Creation) designed to ensure the participation of local people in development process and subsequently engender development in the rural communities.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives;

- I. To examine the impact of 3'I's initiative on rural and community development.
- II. To assess the extent of peoples' participation in the formulation and implementation of the 3'1's initiative projects.
- III. To examine the perceptions of people about the implementation of the 3 'I's initiative?
- IV. To identify the challenges of the 3'I's initiative

Research Questions

- I. What are the impacts of 3 'I's initiative on rural and community development
- II. Are people involved the formulation and the implementation of the 3'1's initiative projects?
- III. Are the people satisfied with the implementation of 3'I's initiative?
- IV. What are the challenges facing 3'I's initiative?

Concept of Development

The concept development includes not only social, economic and political changes, but a broad and all embracing transformation of the society. It connotes the totality of societal improvement, which of course starts in man himself. Development involves the structuring of society in such a way that will improve the quality the quality of lives as well as the satisfaction of psychological wants of members of any given society (Ugwu, 2003). According to Gboyega (2003) development implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, but everybody in the society. It demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances (Lawal and Ogunro 2012). Development is an overall process of transforming men and societies leading to a social order in which every human being can achieve moral and material wellbeing. According to (FAO, n.d) the ultimate purpose of development is to provide every one with ever increasing opportunities for a better life. It therefore requires an equitable distribution of income and other social resources in order to promote justice and efficient production, to raise levels of employment, sustainability, to expand and improve facilities for health, nutrition, housing and social and cultural wellbeing. In metaphoric expression, Esteva (1997:10) captures development as:

A favourable change, a step from the simple to the superior, from worse to better. The word indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and toward a desirable goal.

Rural development is defined as an overall improvement in the economic and social wellbeing of rural residents and in the institutional and physical environment in which they live (Shortall, 1994). It is a process aimed at improving the wellbeing and self realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective efforts. It is about improving living standards of the masses of the low income population residing in rural areas. These definitions clearly show rural development as an overall improvement in the economic and social wellbeing of rural residents. The focus in rural development is on the poor. The central concept of rural development is of a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the productivity and incomes of low-income workers and households (Lawal, 2014).

Participatory development is a process for the people and by the people through which the promotion of indigenous knowledge and relevant new technologies that mostly reflect the situations in the rural areas. Its proponents argue that the efficiency of participatory development is based on the principle that development assistance works best when it contributes to efforts that people are already attempting to carry out (Chambers, 1997, Sharma et al, 2011).

Since development is about people, planners and development initiators now appreciate that it is the involvement of people in the development process that ensures development. The whole purpose of development is being redefined so as to bring people to the central stage. According to Mansori and Rao (2004) participatory development aims at accomplishing certain specific functions, which includes but not limited to; identifying and eliciting development proprieties by the target community itself; strengthening the civic skills of the poor by nurturing community organizations; and enabling communities to work together for the common good.

Participatory development ensures that resources are allocated in a manner that is responsible to the needs of the poor; that investment in community infrastructure can be used and maintained by recipient communities in a sustainable fashion; that private benefit, such as welfare or relief are better targeted; that governments, local or national are made accountable and responsive in the provision of public goods and services; that local elites are prevented from capturing the

benefits of development programmes, and that the most disadvantaged in the community are able to participate in decision making process, reducing social exclusion within poor communities (Dipholo, 2002, Mansori and Rao, 2004, Dipholo, 2008).

Recently, the definition of participation in development has often been located in development projects and programmes, as a means of strengthening their relevance, quality and sustainability. In an influential statement, the World Bank leaving group on participation defined participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1995). From this perspective, participation could be seen in the level of consultation or decision making in a phases of a project cycle, from need assessment, to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evolution. While these participation projects could be funded by the state, participation within them is seen not as related to broader issues of politics, but as a way of encouraging action outside the public sphere. Moreover, the focus is often on direct participation of primary stakeholders, rather than indirect participation through elected representatives.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted “the attainment of objective model” as its theoretical framework. This model was essentially designed for programme evaluation. It assumes that the success of a programme can be determined by measuring programme outcomes against its own goals and objectives. According to Deshler (2006) a major proponent of the model submitted that an evaluation of a programme begins with clarifying measurable objectives and gathering of data that validate the extent to which these objectives have been met. Deshler sees objectives as efforts or actions that are intended to attain or accomplish in the nearest future. He defines goal as purpose toward which an action or endeavour is directed. Outcome, according to him, is the end result or consequence that follows from an action, that is, event that is produced as a result of a plan, effort, process or action.

In his submission, he came up with the basic tenets or principles of the attainment of objective model, he insists that for the model to be credible, the following tenets must be present; that the objectives must be clearly stated; that the objectives should be measurable; there must be field collection of data that will enable the outcome and objective to be measured and validated; the appropriateness of goals and objectives must be evaluated given the circumstances and needs of the beneficial or and users of such programme (Deshler, 2006). This model is adopted for this study because 3‘I’s initiative was designed to achieve some objectives in Ondo State in general and Owo local government in particular, such as; assessment of performance and impact of 3 ‘I’s initiative on rural development, extent of peoples’ participation and the challenges of 3 ‘I’s. And the study is set to measure the performance or outcomes of 3‘I’s initiative against its goal and objective to determine its success or otherwise.

Meaning and Implementation of the 3 ‘I’s Initiative

The 3‘I’s initiative is an initiative designed by the Ondo State government, which focuses on rural and community development using the participating, community driven, bottom-up with top down support approach. The first ‘I’ is an acronym for infrastructure, which aims at building confidence and trust, the government intends to implement several community projects in order to build infrastructure such as electricity, water, access to primary health care and education with rural communities. The second ‘I’ represents institution, which aims at empowering for sustainable development. The government intends to identify existing community institutions, encourage the setting up of new ones and support such institutions by building their capacities

and providing financial support for development. The third ‘I’ which represent industry aims at enriching the people of the state, the government intends to identify potential and viable industries within the communities that can be expanded to encourage commerce and generate income for the people (ODSG, 2009).

The 3‘I’s initiative is expected to be implemented in phases. Phase one focuses on getting preliminary information through baseline survey of all communities in each local government, consultation and engagements with key stakeholders, developing community needs assessment and community development plans and implementing confidence building projects within the communities. Phase two focuses on establishing holistic community institutions from within the rural communities in order to build the capacity of community members and existing community institutions. These institutions are expected to promote and drive the sustainable development of their communities. Phase three focuses on a longer term development strategy, which could run for a period of 4 to 8 years or more.

As part of efforts to realize the objectives of 3 ‘I’s initiative, Training and Projects Programme (TAPP) began in July, 2009, in which 99 persons consisting of 75 volunteer, 15 government, officials from the ministry of community development and cooperative services and 9 local government officials across 3 local government were trained in participatory Rural Appraisal and Sustainable Livelihood Approach (PRA/SLA) tools and techniques required for gathering needs assessment and baseline information from about 80 communities spread across the 3 pilot local government areas of Owo, Odigbo and Ifedore out of the 18 local government in the state (ODSG, 2009, Adepoju, 2012).

After the training, the trainees referred to as “community change agents” were dispersed into the communities to gather necessary information that will be used in state-wide development planning. Immediately the needs of these communities were assessed, government responded to those needs and provided infrastructure of various kind to the affected communities ranging from provision of portable water, electricity, construction of lockup shops and open markets, health centre, building of town halls, renovation of school to establishment of cottage industries. It is to be noted that those projects were termed “quick win projects”, that is, projects that can be executed within three month of conception. Between 2010 and 2012 the exercise was replicated in all the eighteen local governments, and over 300 communities in the state have benefited (Ministry of Community Development, 2012)

Research Methodology

TABLE 1: Design Outlay for Selecting Study Respondents

Zones	Selected villages/ Town in each zone		No of identified Groups in the communitie s	No of Respondent per each Group	No of respondent per each community	No of respon dent per each zone	Total No of respondent for the study
A	Emure ile	1	7	3	21	63	
	Amurin	1	7	3	21		
	Uso	1	7	3	21		
B	Ago Panu	1	7	3	21	63	
	Isuada	1	7	3	21		
	Agbowa-	1	7	3	21		

	Ajanaku						
C	Ipele	1	7	3	21	63	
	Iyere	1	7	3	21		
	Molege	1	7	3	21		
D	Sajiyán	1	7	3	21	63	
	Ajigbale	1	7	3	21		
	Osabiyan	1	7	3	21		
E	Odofin	1	7	3	21	63	
	Ehinogbe	1	7	3	21		
	Ijebu owo-Iib	1	7	3	21		
Total		15					315

Source, Field Survey, 2014

The study is focused on Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. In the execution and realization of the objectives of this study, both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. The techniques for data collection included oral interview and field survey (field visit and inspection), documentaries and the internet. Oral interview is preferred in this study because most of the people in rural communities are illiterates who can neither read nor write. In the course of generating data, thirty-three (33) communities that benefited from 3'1's initiative projects in Owo local government were grouped into five (5) zones using cluster sampling method based on geographical clustering (see table 1 for the thirty-three (33) communities). There were zone A, B, C, D, E. Three (3) communities were purposively picked to represent each zone. Fifteen (15) communities were studied by the researcher, the zone were used to represent the communities as follows; zone A represented Emure- Ile, Amurin, Uso and other communities in the area. Zone B represented Agbowo- Ajanaku, Isuada, Ago- Panu and other communities in the area. Zone C represented Ipele, Iyere, Molege and other communities in the area. Zone D represented sajiyan, Ajigbale, osabiyan and other communities in the area while Zone E represented Ehinogbe, Ijebu- Owo IIB, Odofin and other communities in the area.

Data collection was done through open-ended interview (Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview) and field visit and inspection. The oral interview was divided into two categories (A and B) category A was carried out with the key informants from the government circle to elicit information on the objectives and implementation of the 3'1's initiative. These key informants included, the commissioner for community development and cooperative services, the former Special Assistant to the Governor on community development, and the field coordinator of the 3'1's initiative from the ministry of community development and cooperative services. Category B interview was carried out with some selected groups from the fifteen (15) selected communities, these included Community leaders, Traders, youth, Leaders of community development associations, public servants, farmers and artisans. These respondents were randomly and purposively selected to ensure that the unit of observation is the group and not individuals who make up the groups and enable researcher elicit information on the existing infrastructure. These groups are the key figures and primary stakeholders in these community activities and their centrality in community development issues acquaint them well with the residents. As such they are in a much better position to know the development trends of their communities.

Three (3) respondents were picked to represent each group, making it twenty-one (21) respondents from each selected community. And sixty-three (63) respondents from each zone

and three hundred and fifteen (315) respondents from all the seven (7) identified groups in the fifteen (15) selected communities represented by Zone A-E (see table 2 for the outlay). They were interviewed using interview guide to ascertain the degree, effectiveness and performance of infrastructural facilities provided by 3'I's initiative. The information on the existing infrastructure in the study area was also authenticated via a field visit to the location of the infrastructure undertaken by the researcher himself. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews were also held with these identified groups in the various communities.

Data Presentation

Data presented and analyzed in this section were generated from personal observation (field visit) and interview conducted with the residents of the sampled communities in Owo local government who were randomly and purposively selected. In order to generate data for the achievement of the objectives of this study, some questions were raised in harmony with the objectives of the study. And questions were asked using interview guide to ensure coherence and valid results.

Some of the responses are presented and analyzed below; On whether the performance of the 3'I's initiative has brought positive changes to the communities? The majority of the respondents said that the 3'I's initiative has only come to raise their hope without fulfillment. According to them, all the promise made by the government to empower the youths, women and artisans have failed to materialize since 2009 when 3'I's was introduced. Some were of the opinion that government came to deceive them, while some believed that government was incapable to fulfill its promises due to financial constraint. A large number of respondents submitted that there have been no positive changes brought by 3'I's initiative to their communities.

Another question was raised on the nature of projects that were designed by the 3'I's and how the projects were implemented? The respondents mentioned the various projects executed by the 3'I's initiative, such as; provision of rural water, provision of health centre, town hall, cottage industry, and open market stalls e.t.c, however a reasonable number of respondents condemned the implementation strategy adopted by the government. Some them reported that the contractors that handled the projects did shoddy jobs and some of the infrastructure are presently moribund. It was also reported that the government had not supplied drugs to most of the health centre provided by the 3'I's since 2009.

On whether residents participate in 3'I's development activities? Most of the respondents agreed that the programme was participatory in nature. They submitted that rural residents were involved in the stages of conceptualization, that is, the rural people themselves made choice out of available alternative provided by the government. And the choices made were implemented, except on rare cases, where government felt otherwise as reported by the respondents.

There was a question on whether people are satisfied with the implementation strategy of 3'I's initiative? The respondents expressed dissatisfaction towards 3'I's initiative. Large number of respondents condemned the lukewarm attitude of government towards the repairing of the non-functioning infrastructures. According to them, government has not come back to check or monitor the performance of these infrastructures since 2009, even the community representatives set up by the government to ensure that the infrastructures are protected and sustained have found it difficult to liaise with government. The respondents felt bad about the present condition of the infrastructures.

Question was also raised on the challenges facing 3'I's initiatives? The respondents said that government had refused to maintain these infrastructures. And that the community

representatives set up by the government in different communities to liaise with government on the existing infrastructures have not been functioning. Most of their meetings do not get to appropriate channel, where it can be attended to. According to them, most meetings ended up at the local government secretariat.

Discussion of Findings

The study was basically set out to assess the performance of 3 'I's initiative and its impacts on rural development. The 3'1's is an initiative put in place to promote grassroots participation in development process and ultimately enhance rural development through provision of rural infrastructures. The infrastructure surveyed in the study included Health facilities, rural water supplies and cottage industry, as these constitute the major infrastructures provided by the 3 '1's in the study area. At this juncture, it is to be noted that the attainment of objective model, which serves as theoretical framework for this study stated that the success of a programme is a function of its outcomes when measured against its own goals and objectives. It is pertinent at this point to determine whether 3 'I's initiative has been able to achieve its goals and objectives, such as; availability of portable water, effective health care delivery system, empowerment of rural dwellers, rural development, delivery of rural infrastructure and grassroots participation, or not, having generated data that are necessary and capable of measuring and validating the outcome of the 3 'I's initiative against its objectives.

The study revealed that most of the sampled communities were not enjoying portable water. Some of the mono pumps and boreholes visited were already in state of disrepair. Many of the respondents from sampled communities expressed dissatisfaction about the condition of water facilities given to them, that many of these water supplies stopped functioning after 6 months, and since then, no repair had been carried out. Only few of these water facilities were functioning and some of them also rely on electricity, which was not always available. However, the respondents from government circle claimed that these infrastructures were in good condition, and that rural lives had been positively affected by these projects. This revealed the level of insincerity on the part of government.

It was found that the health facilities provided to these sampled communities lacked basic health requirement. The findings show that most of the health centres do not have adequate medical personnel and drugs. As a matter of fact, the study revealed that the supportive staffs in these health centres had not been paid since 2009, that the communities had been responsible for their allowances and upkeep. In one of the health centres visited, the medical equipment had been carted away by unknown people and no activity was taking place in the centre. The study discovered that essential drugs were not available in these health centres and many of the health personnel had voluntarily absconded from work for lack of payment of salary and allowances.

Further, findings show that the machine in the cottage industry in one of the communities had developed fault and was yet to be repaired, up till the period of visit, the machine was still lying in state of disrepair. Discussion so far confirmed that these infrastructures were not functioning as expected, hence the call for regular maintenance to ensure sustainability of these projects.

In terms of impact, these projects had not impacted positively on rural people, hence, 3 '1's initiative is not yet alternative to rural development. In spite of high volume of water projects executed in these communities, yet no water to drink, rural people still go to bushes to look for water from streams whose sources were unknown, and could aid infection and water born diseases. Health centres were just there as camouflage there were no drugs, no health care

dispensed, no maternal health service; rural people still travelled to urban centres for malaria, and other related diseases treatment. The study also revealed that the empowerment aspect of the programme was yet to be carried out. There had not been any financial support for development since 2009, and no industry had been created nor expanded to encourage commerce and generate income for the people. It is conspicuous that 3'I's initiative was yet to achieve its designed objectives in Owo local government in particular and Ondo state in general based on the poor outcomes, which were at variance with its goals and objectives.

In terms of challenges facing this initiative, the study shows that a wide gap existed between the community representative and the government. There was communication gap, most of their meetings and minutes ended at the local government secretariat. There was problem of maintenance, the projects were not maintained. The study further indicates that most of the projects were done in a hurry, not thoroughly supervised by professionals. And the contractors were politicians who were not field contractors in the real sense of it, and so, came up with shoddy jobs.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it could be concluded that 3 '1's initiative has not achieved rural development as envisaged, although ensured participation of rural people in development process. The foregoing discussions have shown that 3'1's initiative is not hopeless, but needs a different pragmatic approach to achieve rural development.

Recommendations

Provision of infrastructures serves as an incentive to increasing economic efficiency and productivity and rural infrastructures are very crucial to the growth of rural communities. Based on this, it is recommended that the 3 '1's projects should be regularly maintained by the government and not by the people. Government must ensure occasional visit to these communities to ascertain the status and condition of these projects as this will bridge the gap between the community representatives and the government and subsequently enhances project sustainability. Projects should not be politically motivated, there should be sincere and genuine intention to provide infrastructure on the part of government. Contract should be given to serious minded people (contractors) and such project must be supervised by professionals to ensure quality job. Government should see the payment of health workers' salary as obligation so as to ensure efficiency and continuity in the health centres. The community representatives must be chosen based on certain qualities like; credibility, transparency, integrity, commitment and hard work, that is, people who are ready to make sacrifice for the community. Participation should not merely become a legitimating process, it should be an essential component of a broad political programme in which local knowledge becomes a driving force for social transformation. Lastly, government should make rural roads part of the 3 'I's projects. Road is an asset to any rural setting as it provides the farmers access to their farms.

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