



Community Participation in Development- Oriented Projects Implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

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Abstract: *This study was carried out to investigate community participation in development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose intended, nine research questions were raised, while four were hypothesized and tested @ 0.05 level of significance. The study made use of the sequential explanatory mixed method of research which included qualitative and quantitative designs with a population comprising all the people living in the seven (7) local government areas in Edo South Senatorial District from which a total of Four Hundred and Fifty (450) respondents were selected from nine communities from the chosen three local government area where development projects execution have been carried out and more pronounced in the last three (3) years. Also, fifty (50) participants were selected from the sample size for the Focus Group Discussion. A self-constructed close-ended questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) instrument for data collection was used for the study. The instruments were validated by three experts in Community Development and Measurement and Evaluation. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was used to determine the reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) and the approach yielded a reliability index of .86, while the instrument (Focus Group Discussion) was triangulated. Data obtained from the study were analysed using frequency count, percentages, mean score, standard deviation, Spearman rank order and simple linear regression. Findings from the study revealed, amongst others, that the various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District include; renovation of schools, construction of town hall, construction of modern markets, provision of borehole facility, rehabilitation of access roads/paths, provision of skills acquisition centre and health centre. Also, it was revealed that the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District is low. From the findings of the study, recommendations were proffered which among others include that, the community needs to be involved in all project phases. Engaging community members throughout the project cycle can help to increase trust of community members towards those directly involved in the project.*

Keywords: *Community Participation, Development, Projects, Implementation*

Introduction

Community development can be described as a process where members of a community come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at the grassroots level and as partners in problem solving (Dellati, Sakinah&Naimi,2019). It is a process for helping the marginalized and excluded to gain self-confidence in joining others and, contribute to activities designed to change their situation and tackle the problems that face them as a community. It is also described as a process of initiating community activities planned and organized to increase the standard of living in the social, cultural and spiritual setting of the community with the active participation of citizens. The projects initiated are expected to be development-oriented activities executed by, essentially the people with minimal reliance or help from outsiders.

Community development-oriented projects are services volunteered by the government, concerned individuals or organizations to benefit a particular community or its institutions. Karamunya and Cheben (2017) on their part categorize community projects undertaken by various communities to include the following: first, community service and action projects which focus on improving the general physical characteristics of a community. These projects see a programme within a broader community perspective and they are more multi-purpose in nature. A good example of such projects includes road construction, modern markets, town-hall, recreational centres and lock-up stalls. Secondly, Health projects which focus on preserving and enhancing the physical and/or mental health of community including treatment of health problems, aftercare services and rehabilitation. Examples of these projects include: Health Education projects, Rehabilitation Mental Services and Community Health Care.

These projects are intended to improve the standard of living of the community members and bring about better quality of life and improved standard of living for the people. The successful implementation of community projects therefore is crucial to human existence. In all of this, the imperativeness of the involvement of the mass of the people in the planning and execution of the projects cannot be under-estimated.

Participation in community development stipulates that the local people should take part in the planning, execution, utilisation and assessment of the social amenities or facilities designed to improve their welfare. This idea, according to Anyanwu as quoted in Mela and Bello (2023),

portrays community development as a cooperation or partnership in progress. People's participation emphasises the initiative of the people as a means of stimulating the active involvement of all citizens in the work of community development. Participation of people can be viewed in many ways, for instance one participates in community affairs when one pays taxes or obey the law. In a participative process, participants work together to design a course of action that maximize their ability and resolve their differences. Although they may not agree with all aspects of the arrangement for the execution of the projects, consensus is achieved if all participants are willing to accept the "the total package"

Community Participation is based on the premise that when the people are involved in identifying their problems and finding lasting solution to same, they are more likely to propose a solution that will be more enduring and lasting. Participation could be voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary participation is a process or situation in which a people elect to be involved in local activities without any form of coercion while, involuntary participation is a situation where a deliberate effort is made to stimulate the interest of the people or encourage the people to participate in the planned process of change (Omoruyi, 2023)

Community participation in development process helps to improve decision making, increase support and reduce costs as pragmatic benefits of community participation. In addition to these, increased representation, empowerment of marginalized groups, increased trust and promotion of social learning could be achieved (Osore, Hassan & Morara, 2022). It is necessary therefore, that certain indices that encourage the participation of the people in the development of their communities such as felt-needs, project ownership, involvement in the initiation, planning, funding, execution and utilisation are not negated or discarded. Once those indices are in place, it becomes easy for the people to identify with and willingly participate in community development-oriented programmes.

Community Development Projects are projects that are intended to improve the standard of living of the community members. These community projects are designed to bring about better quality of life and improved standard of living for the people. The successful implementation of community projects therefore is crucial to human existence. In all of this, the imperativeness of the involvement of the mass of the people in the planning and execution of the projects or projects cannot be under-estimated.

Besides, the implementation of community development projects serves as a means of educating the people in the process of development. In the course of project implementation, the people learn about the strategies used in carrying out the projects, acquire the skills and knowledge on how to go about planning and execution of project or programme, sustain it and move it toward, productive end (Omoruyi, 2023). Above all, community development project implementation takes the posture of a determined effort or a course of action to which a people are wholeheartedly committed. In this wise, the active involvement of the people is secured in bringing their community to the path of progress. This implies that community development project implementation is primarily aimed at improving the social, economic and cultural conditions of communities in order to integrate them into the life of the nation, as well as, enable them to contribute fully to national progress or nation building. This shows clearly the importance of community development projects in the life of the people.

By the social interactions that ensue as a result of participation in community development projects implementation, the people are given the opportunity to bring about desired changes by expressing their desire, either individually or through a community groups. Also, participation in community development projects implementation affords individuals the opportunity to learn how to achieve desired changes, understand and appreciate the individual needs and interest of all community members as well as how to resolve conflicting interest for general welfare of the people.

Development in most rural communities in Nigeria is stunted despite government continuous claim of interest in rural transformation. It is a fact that laudable efforts have been made by the government to accelerate community transformation in the country in general and in rural communities in particular. Agbola (2019) noted that successive Nigeria governments had responded to rural problems by evolving poverty alleviation programmes to help stir developments activities simultaneously at the grassroots. These programmes include: the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Community Banks, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BLRD) and National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) etc. Despite these laudable programmes, poverty still persist in our rural communities. As most of the projects executed by these programmes failed because the people who were the major beneficiaries were not carried along in the planning, organisation and execution of these projects and/or programmes coupled with other socio-economic and cultural factors. In most rural

communities today, there is still high level of infrastructural decay, poor road network, hospital, school, recreational centres and markets among others. This situation has made many to migrate to urban communities in search for a better living condition.

As people move, one thing they carry along with them is their social and cultural background. However, as they migrate to urban settings, they meet with an existing urban cultural environment. Settling down therefore into urban life style, there is the rigour of blending the old experience of the rural milieu with that of the urban. Consequently, we see a kind of interplay of the two socio-cultural backgrounds in urban dwellers. Apparently, the blending of the urban and rural socio-cultural milieu to a large extent form their world view and attitudinal disposition to local activities in the community. Based on this fact, in heterogeneous urban settings, whenever people come together to make important decisions or decide a course of action, there is an interplay of several social cultural factors.

In the light of the foregoing, socio-cultural differences are viewed as attitudinal or behaviour divergences associated with differences in a stable social structure, processes and or values. In otherwords, socio-cultural differences relate to the shaping of individuals and collective behaviour by set of common characteristics, including ecology, climate, history, economics, politics and psychology (Ojo&Ako, 2021).

Awareness of socio-cultural differences is imperative and critical in the issues of participation because collaborative efforts to develop the communities require some understanding of what, how and why the viewpoints of various stakeholders may differ. Hence, to understand peoples' attitude towards participation in the development of their communities entails having an insight into public perceptions, and understanding perception in the people of community development process it is also critical in the understanding of the socio-cultural environment involved, and their possible influence on people's willingness to participate voluntarily in community projects implementation. There is however a knowledge gap about people's possible perception when it comes to participation in community development projects implementation in their communities. Corroborating this view, Culture Action Europe (2018:12) asserted

Knowledge gaps about other's cultural values (especially values underlying perceptions) makes it necessary to search for a framework by which we can at least know that we do not know and anticipate what happened when different socio-cultural groups come together to make decision.

Understanding the significance of socio-cultural factors in community development projects implementation, is important for two reasons. In the first instance, with the rapid growth and globalisation, no country can exist in isolation of others. Subsequently, for the Nigeria society to play effective role in the global community, there is the need for knowledge base of reliable socio-cultural differences in the way of thinking. Secondly, as long as societies exist, people will always think and act differently and the continuous existence of mankind is hinged, to a large extent, on the ability of people who think differently to act jointly.

The prevailing socio-cultural factors influence the thinking and the attitude of the people towards active participation in community development projects implementation. This is premised on the fact that the difference in the socio-cultural backgrounds of people naturally play out differently in community development projects implementation. For example, as a result of common misconception, especially among rural and urban dwellers, that planning, execution and sustainability of community development projects is the sole responsibility of the government, the people's participation level can seemingly be affected. This adjudged mind-set could also lead to a very low level of participation of the people in the planned process of growth be it urban or rural communities.

To ensure active participation in community development projects implementation, it is important that no one is left out of the planning and organisation processes simply because they have differing views. Rather, efforts must be made to carry the people along. This can be achieved by accommodating the various views of different categories of the people. Hence, Cook as quoted in Sebastian and Hassan (2017) opined that irrespective of the different socio-cultural factors, people's participation can legitimize a programme, its plans, actions and leadership. To legitimize mean the difference between success and failure of community efforts. The ability of the community leadership to carry the people along irrespective of their cultural, religious and ethnic affiliations helps to boost the positive attitude of the people towards participation in community development projects implementation. Corroborating this view, Kobani (2022) observed that community development relies heavily on local leadership to elicit the enthusiasm of the people and ensure participation of the people in projects and programmes designed to improve their standard of living. He further asserts that unsupported leader often discourages and drop interest of the people in activities that are potentially beneficial to the entire community. Voluntary

participation can help reduce the cost for personnel needed to carry out many of the duties associated with action. Without this support, the success of scores of worthwhile projects would never be achieved in many communities.

Involving the community members in project planning and throughout the project cycle enhances ownership of the projects by the community. It encourages creative and innovative solutions to complex problem by bringing diverse knowledge and expertise together to resolve issues. When used appropriately, participation of the community dwellers rewards expenditures in time and efforts by generating creative and lasting solutions to complex problem (Tandem in Ali, 2023)

Community development requires the participation of all and sundry in a given community irrespective of the diverse socio-cultural variables prevalent in such communities. The willingness or otherwise of communal inhabitants to participate actively, most of the time is based on the realisation that they would be beneficiaries of the outcome of the development process. In other words, people, irrespective of their socio-cultural affiliations, can commit themselves to ensure success of the planned process of growth if they are sure they will benefit from the outcome. If, however, in a “plura-cultural” community, some people become ostracised from the benefits of a given project or programme, or are not recognised as major stakeholders, on the basis of different socio-cultural milieu, the possibility of such committing self to its development becomes slim.

Another principal factor that influences community participation in community development projects implementation is the economic status of the community in terms of the scarcity of resources and the unlimited wants of the community. The poorer the community the more they are unlikely to participate in contributing to fund a development project or programme. The locality of the community whether it be urban or rural will also determine the participation level; urban populace tend to be more exposed and learn very fast compared to the rural dwellers, who tend to learn slowly. Besides, they tend to look at development projects implementation with great suspicion leading to low participation (World Bank cited in Ojo&Ako, 2021). It should be noted that there are variations in living standards around the globe just as economic growth rates and productivity varies from one nation to another. In determining how a person is doing economically, one would first have to look at the person’s per capital income. A man with high per capital income is more likely to afford basic necessities and maintain some appreciable level

of luxuries. Inadequate income is a strong predisposing condition for an impoverish life style and could also affects one's disposition to participate in community affairs.

Participation in community development projects implementation requires community dwellers to contribute resources based on their level of economic solvency. Nevertheless, the very poor in most cases are either reluctant or are unable to invest their scarce resources. Besides, many of them exhibit the unwillingness or reluctance to contribute to an endeavour they perceive as risky

Another dimension of factors that influence community participation in community development projects implementation is the issue of leadership. The successful execution of community development projects requires men and women who have adequate grasp of its objective as well as possess the necessary skills, knowledge and character for handling such projects. This means that those who manage community development projects implementation must possess the capacity to handle the task in such a way as to attain the target goals. They must therefore, be effective; efficient, reliable and committed to ensuring that the projects are successfully prosecuted for the benefit of the people. As leaders, they must be able to organize themselves and the community members in order to maintain and sustain the development processes in the community

Community development project planning, implementation and assessment relies greatly on effective leadership. This is because according to Omoruyi (2021), both the local leaders and the community development officer acts as agents of development at the community level. Besides, local leadership is expected to elicit the needed enthusiasm of the people. This explains why they are often regarded as the real agent of social change and improvement in their communities. Evidence abounds that support the argument of leadership either on the part of the local power structure or community development officers in the vital role they play in ensuring proper and effective planning and implementation of community development projects that are initiated.

Leadership as provided by the local power structure is therefore, a powerful resource to reckon with in the execution of community development project since it has the capacity to influence community members to be involved in the planning and execution of community projects. Leadership is crucial and central to community development organization and execution because all the activities or process involved help contributes towards successful community development process. The critical nature of leadership accounts for its indispensability in all

community development processes. The effectiveness and level of success of project implementation could be a function of leadership provided as well as the style of leadership adopted. In other words, in community development projects implementation, irrespective of the approach or structure adopted, leadership as a factor must be efficient and effective if the desired success is to be attained.

Also, preliminary observation by the researcher revealed that participation in community development as it relates to age, older adults tend to participate more in projects or programmes designed to improve their living conditions than younger adults. In the same vein, religion also influence the participation of women group especially those in the Northern part of the country where majority of women are placed in the purdah. This hinders their ability to operate in their full capacity in the course of planning and implementation of development project

Statement of the Problem

The success of community development projects implementation depends greatly on the participation of the people. This is because development projects execution revolves around the people. In other words, they are the pivots around which development activities revolves. Therefore, people should take active part in the planning, execution, assessment and utilisation of developmental projects designed to improve their standard of living. This is the only way the people can accept and utilise such projects.

In most communities in Edo South Senatorial District, most people don't want to participate in the planning and implementation or execution of community development projects dues to some social, cultural and economic factors. The government on the other hand, is expected to provide communities with essential basic infrastructure such as good roads, health care, electricity, modern markets and lock-up stores among others as part of their primary responsibilities. Most governments had not been able to do this. Often times, the failure of most projects initiated and executed by governments has been attributed to the non-involvement of the citizen or the people who are the major beneficiaries of the projects.

Nonetheless, the implications of community exclusion from development projects planning and delivery have debilitating effects on projects acceptance and utilisation. For instance, the exclusion of communities from development planning often leads to overlap of development priorities, duplication of resources, incoherent prioritization of needs, inconclusive decision-making and short-lived. Furthermore, empirical studies show that community projects often

collapse due to various factors; the most critical of which has been to be low or non-participation of the community members in decision making Community and Social Development Project (CSDP, 2018). The review of literature has revealed that in most cases, there is a tendency for core planning teams not to involve certain stakeholders in the community in the planning and implementation process. Marginalized groups such as poor household members, minorities and others are often left out because planners assume that these groups are not well informed or educated enough to contribute to the planning process.

The active participation of the people is therefore very important in community development project planning and execution process. This explains why it has become necessary to take a critical look at the issue bordering on extent of participation and the factors influencing community participation in development-oriented projects. Besides, the desire to complement research efforts in this area and generate empirical data on the issue is also a contributory factor to the desire or urge to explore this issue.

The review of literature revealed that there have been several researches on citizen participation in community development activities. There is however, a dearth of information on the extent of participation, factors influencing community participation in development projects and, especially the extent to which social, cultural and economic factors influence community members participation in community development projects implementation. It is against this background, that this study investigates extent of participation and the factors influencing community participation in development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State

Research Questions

This study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District?
2. What is the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District?

3. To what extent do social factors influence people's participation in various community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District?
4. To what extent do cultural factors influence people's participation in development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District?
5. What is the role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and they will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: Social factors will not significantly influence people's participation in community development oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Ho₂: Cultural factors will have no significant influence on people's participation in community development oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Ho₃: Economic status of the people will not significantly influence people's participation in community development oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Ho₄: People's participation will have no significant influence on the sustainability of community development projects executed in Edo South Senatorial District.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,686,021 all the adult citizens resident in communities across Edo South Senatorial District. According to Uwagboe (2017), there are five hundred and forty-three (543) communities across Edo South Senatorial District which include: Oredo (33 communities), Egor (13 communities), Ikpoba-Okha (59 communities), Ovia North-East (122 communities), Ovia South West (134 communities), Orhiomwon (67 communities) and Uhunmwonde (115 communities). The sample for the study comprised of 450 respondents selected from three (3) Local Government Areas (LGAs) out of the seven (7) LGAs in Edo South Senatorial District. This was done using the multi-stage sampling techniques. Below is the process of selection:

1. In the first stage, three L.G.A are selected out of the seven LGAs in the Senatorial District using simple random sampling techniques through balloting
2. In the second stage, three communities were selected each from the three LGAs through purposive sampling techniques. However, the selection was based on communities where development projects execution have been carried out and more pronounced in the last three (3) years.
3. In the third and final stage, fifty (50) respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique from each of the nine communities selected.

A total of 450 participants constitutes the sample for the study. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire is tagged: Community Participation in Development Oriented Projects Implementation Questionnaire (CPDOPIQ) and it consists of Eighty two (82) items. The questionnaire adopted a modified Likert-Scale measurement format. Each of the items was provided with a four-point rating scale from 4-1 measuring the extent of the participants' involvement on the item under consideration. Out of the four hundred (400) questionnaires that were administered, three hundred and ninety-one (391) were successfully retrieved while the other Nine (9) could not be collected back from the respondents. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics comprising mean score and standard deviation. The questionnaire was a Twenty (20) items instrument designed along the line of the modified Likert scale made up of four (4) levels of assessment namely Strongly agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly disagreed. The levels were weighted or assigned 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively. In validating the instruments, experts' opinion was adopted. Two experts in the area of psychometrics from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin helped to determine the face validity of the instrument. To determine the reliability level of the instrument in generating the required data, copies were pilot-tested through single test giving at a single sitting to thirty (30) respondents selected from the target population. The scores obtained for odd and even number items were correlated using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. A correlation index of 0.65 was obtained. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean score analysis, standard deviation and Spearman rank order were used to analyse research questions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 9, while Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 were tested using

simple linear regression at 0.05 alpha levels. Where P value is less than 0.05, a hypothesis was considered significant and where it is greater than 0.05, it is considered not significant.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District?

Table 9: Frequency distribution of various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District.

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage	Remark
1.	Renovation of schools	391	100	Agreed
2.	Establishment of community farm	32	8.2	Disagreed
3.	Construction of town hall	319	81.6	Agreed
4.	Construction of modern markets	367	93.9	Agreed
5.	Provision of borehole facility	376	96.2	Agreed
6.	Rehabilitation of access roads/paths	370	94.6	Agreed
7.	Provision of skills acquisition centre	273	69.8	Agreed
8.	Provision of health centre	278	71.1	Agreed
9.	Provision of rural electrification	168	43.0	Disagreed

Percentage Benchmark: 50% N=391

Data in Table 1 above shows the responses of the study participants on the various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 met the 50% benchmark and so were agreed as the community development projects undertaken. While, items 2 and 9 that did not meet the 50% criterion were remarked as disagreed. This means that various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District include renovation of schools, construction of town hall, construction of modern markets, provision of borehole facility, rehabilitation of access roads/paths, provision of skills acquisition centre and health centre.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean response of extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
1.	People are duly involved in the initiation of community development projects	2.61	.610	High
2.	The people are often involved in the planning and implementation of community development projects	1.81	.96	Low
3.	The people contribute financially towards the implementation of community development projects	1.71	.74	Low
4.	The people are encouraged to utilize their professional skills in implementing community development projects	1.85	.63	Low
5.	The people implement community projects through contracts	1.23	.51	Very Low
6.	Committees are set-up to represent the citizens in the planning, deliberation and implementation of community projects	2.01	.22	High
7.	The people always hold meetings with the government officials in the course of planning and execution of community projects	1.54	.52	Low
8.	The people are allowed to contribute to discussion on community projects to be executed	1.54	.42	Low

Mean Benchmark: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low, 1.51 – 1.99 Low, 2.00 – 2.99 High, 3.00 – 4.00 Very High

Data in Table 2 shows the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects. It can be seen from the Table that items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 had mean scores between 1.51 and 1.99 were remarked low, item 5 had a mean score of 1.23 and was remarked very low, while items item number5 and 6 had a mean score of 2.61 and 2.01 respectively and was remarked high, This means that the extent of people's participation in the planning and, implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District is low.

Research Question 3: Which of the social factors has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District?

Table 3: Spearman Ranking of Social Factors having the Greatest Contributory Influence on People's Participation in Community Development Projects

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1	Language Spoken	3.32	1 st

2 Membership of Social Organisation	2.98	2 nd
3 Education	1.42	3 rd

N = 391

It can be seen from data in Table 3 that the social factors have different means which corresponds to their level of influence on people's participation in community development projects and were ranked accordingly. Based on this, Language spoken had the highest mean score and was ranked first, while Membership of Social Organisation and Education were ranked second and third respectively. This means that language spoken has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District.

Research Question 4: Which of the cultural factors has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District?

Table 4: Spearman Rank of Cultural Factors having the Greatest Contributory Influence on People's Participation in Community Development Projects in Edo South Senatorial District

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1.	Shared Beliefs and Practices of Group	3.75	1 st
2.	Ethnic Affiliation	2.82	2 nd
3.	Historical Experiences	.64	3 rd

Data in Table 4 above shows responses of the study participants on the cultural factors that has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects. It can be seen from the Table that shared beliefs and practices of group had the highest mean and was ranked first, ethnic affiliation and historical experiences had means of 2.82 and 0.61 respondents and so were ranked second and third respectively. This means that shared beliefs and practices of group has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Research Question 5: What is the role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District?

Table 5: Mean response on the role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	My community leaders encourage community members to be involved in the decision-making process	1416	3.35	.58	Agreed
2.	In my community, leaders do entertain suggestions from community members during project planning	1405	3.32	.47	Agreed
3.	My community leaders allow community members free hand in community development process in the area	1394	3.30	.60	Agreed
4.	Leaders in my community help community members discover their potentials	1426	3.38	.49	Agreed
5.	Leaders believe that teams work is best when everyone is involved in taking decisions in community development activities	1464	3.48	.57	Agreed
6.	In my community, leaders are determined to push projects forward and get results	1485	3.52	.50	Agreed
7.	Leadership in my community enjoy working with committees, different groups/teams.	1454	3.44	.50	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

Data in Table 5 above shows that all the items met the criterion mean of 2.50 and so were agreed. This means that role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District include encouraging community members to be involved in the decision making process, listening and providing a suitable platform for community members to freely participate, operating a decentralized leadership style and providing result oriented leadership.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Social factors will not significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Social Factors' Influence on People's Participation in Community Development-Oriented Projects Implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

	R	R Square	F	Sig	Remark
Predictor (Constant)					
Social Factors					
	.13	.02	7.16	.01	Rejected
Dependent Variable					
People's Participation					

Data in Table 6 above shows the regression output of social factors influencing people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation with $r = .13$, $r^2 = .02$, $F = 7.16$ and $P = .01$. Since a P value of .01 is less than alpha at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that social factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.

H₀₂: Cultural factors will have no significant influence on people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Cultural Factors' Influence on People's Participation in Community Development-Oriented Projects Implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

	R	R Square	F	Sig	Remark
Predictor (Constant)					
Cultural Factors					
	.12	.02	7.32	.01	Rejected
Dependent Variable					
People's Participation					

It can be seen from data in Table 7 above that the regression output of cultural factors influencing people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation has $r = .12$, $r^2 = .02$, $F = 7.32$ and $P = .01$. Since a P value of .01 is less than alpha at .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that cultural factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.

H₀₃: Economic status of the people will not significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

Table 8: Regression analysis of economic status influence on people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District

	R	R Square	F	Sig	Remark
Predictor (Constant)					
Economic Status of People					
	.07	.00	1.64	.20	Accepted
Dependent Variable					
People's Participation					

Data in Table 8 above shows the regression output of the economic status of people influencing their participation in community development-oriented project implementation. It can be seen from the data that $r = .07$, $r \text{ square} = .00$, $F = 1.64$ and $P = .20$. Since a P value of .20 is higher than alpha at .05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that the economic status of people will not significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.

H₀₄: People's participation will have no significant influence on the sustainability of community development projects executed in Edo South Senatorial District.

Table 9: Regression analysis of the influence of people's participation on sustainability of community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District

	R	R Square	F	Sig	Remark
Predictor (Constant)					
People's Participation					
	.27	.07	30.66	<.001	Rejected
Dependent Variable					
Sustainability of Community Development Projects					

Data in Table 9 above shows the regression output of social factors influencing people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation with $r = .27$, $r \text{ square} = .07$, $F = 30$. and $P = <.001$. Since a P value of $<.001$ is less than alpha at .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that people's participation has significant influence on the sustainability of community development projects executed in Edo South Senatorial District.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study have been very interesting and intriguing. Certain issues related to developmental activities and projects in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State have been duly clarified from the findings of this study.

In the first place, it was seen from the study that various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District include renovation of schools, construction of town hall, construction of modern markets, provision of borehole facility, rehabilitation of access roads/paths, provision of skills acquisition centre and health centre. This finding is consistent with that of Veta (2022) who investigated youth participation in community development projects in rural communities of Delta State, Nigeria and found that schools, farms, town halls, markets, borehole water, roads/paths, skill acquisition, and health centres were the community development projects executed in the study communities.

Despite the fact that these structures are seen as developmental projects, it only speaks volume and lays credence to the level of development in many communities in Nigeria. It is sad to note that at this time of our national life, these structures that should, ordinarily be held as common, are still lacking in many communities. Considering the pace of development, it is only natural to doubt the possibility of a country like Nigeria meeting the global pace of development or competing globally.

Secondly, findings from the study indicated that the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District is low. This finding stands in contrast to that of Owakoyi, (2018) who noted that community participation provides major opportunities for the incorporation of their experiences and knowledge into development efforts. It also enables them to willingly contribute resources towards the success of development programmes. It also negates that of Lauwo and Mkulu, (2021) who stated that community members' participation in projects is essential because it may help to motivate members to accept the projects and being ready to support by supplying various inputs to the said project.

Participation is an integral aspect of community development and even project implementation. There is no doubt that active participation in community development activities brings about the spirit of ownership in community members. More importantly, it leads to sustainability of such projects which is even more crucial than starting and completing projects.

This is because without project sustainability, efforts directed at implementing any projects appears to be one in futility since the purpose of such projects becomes short lived.

Again, it was seen from the findings from the study that language spoken has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District. This finding is consistent with that of Ojo, (2017) who reported that the opinion of leaders of the association often affects the disposition of most if not all the people that speaks the language towards participation community development projects and programmes. Similarly, Keyata, and Abiodun, (2020) argued that active or passive participation of people in community development projects is sometimes predicated on the attitude of influential members of their group. Such a case is more pronounced if in that community people with same language belong to an association.

Language is a very important aspect or attribute of a people. In time past, it was one of the first and easiest way to identify and categorise a people. This is because most people who speak the same language were domiciled in a particular area and so one could easily tell the origin of a person by listening to him or her. The advent of intercommunal economic activities has seriously affected this characteristic of language since people can now learn and speak perfectly, the language of their host communities. However, in terms of mobilizing people towards participating in community activities, language still retains that strength and force because it guarantees a deep understanding of the information passed across, it also gives the impression that the mobilizer is a member of the community and touches the emotional sense of the people. Little wonder it was identified as the factor with the strongest influence.

Moreover, findings from the study revealed that shared beliefs and practices of group has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District. This finding negates that of Hasan, Nikmah, Nurbaya and Sudarmiatin (2023) who investigated cultural factors that support community participation in Village Development and found that consistency was the strongest influencer followed by involvement, adaptability and lastly mission. In spite of that, the finding shows that outside their findings shared belief, is a contributory factor to the level of their participation

One would have thought that culture should have the greatest influence, but the reality is that people's cultural experiences and perception may not be the same. Even with a group of people from same cultural heritage, there is bound to be some discrepancies in terms of their likes and

dislikes, acceptance and rejection of certain cultural practices. This may be due to education, modernization or exposure. In this case, it won't be surprising to see people of different culture, but with shared belief system and practices working more harmoniously than those of the same cultural experience. This probably explains the decision of the people to identify with shared beliefs and practices of group as having greatest contributory influence on participation in developmental activities.

It was also seen from the findings that the role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District include encouraging community members to be involved in the decision-making process, listening and providing a suitable platform for community members to freely participate, operating a decentralized leadership style and providing result-oriented leadership. This finding is related to that of Deekor, Abibo and Daniel (2023) who studied the influence of leadership styles on participation in community development activities among the Wakirikese People of Rivers State and reported that to a high extent, when a good leadership style is provided, community members participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated community development objectives; implying that to a high extent, good leadership style significantly influences community members to freely participate in community development activities.

Leadership is a critical factor in the advancement of any society. This is because it is the leadership that sets the pace that members follow. Just as children watch and copy their parents, community members also emulate their leaders and adjust to their principles and policies. Where a community leadership is capable of motivating the people towards developmental objectives, then much of that will be achieved but where the leadership is a *laissez-faire* in nature, then such community will experience several years of setback.

It was also seen from the findings that social factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District. This finding negates that of Kwena (2023) who studied factors affecting community participation in the management of development projects through Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plans and found that there was very low community participation In LASDAP process, limited awareness coming out strongly as one of the reasons for poor local involvement in the development projects.

Social groups are significant factors in every society and must be integrated into the life of their host communities. They can be used as avenues to communicate community programmes and the advantage of participating in such programmes and activities.

Additionally, findings from the study indicated that cultural factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District. This finding is related to that of Aw (2017) who stated that ethnicity also has a considerable influence on people's participation in community affairs. Otite (2014) argued that the influence of ethnicity in people's participation in Community Development Projects cannot be eliminated.

This again emphasises the place of culture in people's involvement in community activities. It is therefore obvious that the culture of a people should not be taken for granted but should be seen as instruments that can be used to enhance people's involvement community development programmes.

Furthermore, the economic status of people do not significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District. In relation to this finding, Akpune (2019) noted that people respond in different ways and view the world around them based on their level of income. Hence those that falls within a higher income level feel more comfortable participating in voluntary community development programmes than those with lesser income since they can conveniently suggest community development ideas and back such suggestions with their monetary contribution.

The economic condition of a people, no doubt, play a crucial role in their lives and circumstances. For this finding to state otherwise, especially in terms of community development projects, does not mean or imply a total absence of the effect of economic situation, it, however, suggests that certain efforts may have been put in place by the community leaders to ensure that project implementation are not negatively affected by the economic status of the people.

Finally, findings from the study revealed that people's participation will have significant influence on the sustainability of community development projects executed in Edo South Senatorial District. This finding is in agreement with that of Ofuoku (2018) who studied the effect of community participation on sustainability of rural water projects in Delta Central agricultural zone of Delta State, Nigeria and found that there was a significant relationship between participation and sustainability of water projects.

This emphasises the importance of participation in community programmes. It will be in the best interest of the programme planners and community members to get community members totally involved in the whole process of development. It will also be more praiseworthy if developmental projects and programmes go beyond serving immediate users to benefit future generations of the community. This is where the issue of sustainability comes in. sustainability, therefore will not be possible except community members are encouraged to participate actively.

Findings

Findings from the study revealed that;

1. The various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District include renovation of schools, construction of town hall, construction of modern markets, provision of borehole facility, rehabilitation of access roads/paths, provision of skills acquisition centre and health centre
2. That the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District is low
3. That social factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District
4. That language spoken has the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District
5. That cultural factors significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.
6. That shared beliefs and practices of group have the greatest contributory influence on people's participation in community development projects in Edo South Senatorial District.

7. That the economic status of people does not significantly influence people's participation in community development-oriented project implementation in Edo South Senatorial District.
8. That people's participation has significant influence on the sustainability of community development projects executed in Edo South Senatorial District.
9. That the role of leaders in influencing people's participation in community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District include encouraging community members to be involved in the decision-making process, listening and providing a suitable platform for community members to freely participate, operating a decentralized leadership style and providing result-oriented leadership.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it was concluded that the various community development projects undertaken or embarked upon in Edo South Senatorial District include renovation of schools, construction of town hall, construction of modern markets, provision of borehole facility, rehabilitation of access roads/paths, provision of skills acquisition centre and health centre. Furthermore, the extent of people's participation in the planning and implementation process of development projects in Edo South Senatorial District is low. This is because they are not fully carried along in the course of planning and implementation of community development projects and often time, they are not encouraged to utilize their professional skills in the course of implementing community development projects in their communities. The study also established that the extent to which social factors influenced people's participation in various community development projects implementation in Edo South Senatorial District is very high. Social organisations, especially legal and responsible ones, are expected to exert positive influence on their members. Such influence includes practicing virtues, avoiding vices or immoral behaviours, active participation in societal activities among others. Social factors such as language spoken by the people was identified to have the strongest influence. Mobilizing people towards participating in community activities, language still retains that strength and force because it guarantees a deep

understanding of the information passed across, it also gives the impression that the mobilizer is a member of the community and touches the emotional sense of the people

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions arising from this study, the following recommendations are proffered

1. As far as the extent of participation is concerned, it is evident that community participation in development-oriented projects implementation is highly pronounced of the initiation stage, but less involvement in planning and implementation stages. Thus, the community needs to be involved in all project phases. Engaging community members throughout the project cycle can help to increase trust of community members towards those directly involved in the project
2. Community members should be subjected to both formal and non-formal educations so that they can see the value of participating in the community-based development projects in the county. The education should be structured in a way that it takes care of every community member in relation to his/her ability and understanding of the sustainability of the community development concept.
3. Project implementers and strategists should at all levels employ democratic leadership as it favours or promote the community members' ability and willingness to participate in community projects implementation, so as it is to participatory leadership, transparency and accountability in leadership etc. Dictatorship leadership style should be eliminated at all the levels where possible as it discourages the community members from participating in community development projects implementation
4. There is the need for proper dissemination of information from the rulers to the followers, through documentation and dissemination of information. In this way, the followers can share the best practices and learn from each other.

5. Enlightenment and awareness Campaign: Government should constantly engage in enlightenment and awareness campaign because it is only when government embark on this that the community dwellers would be able to understand the efficacy of their involvement in developmental activities. In this process Mass Media and Town Criers should be employed in educating the people on the need to participate in project implementation

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