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Factors Which Promote Community Participation in the Community Driven Development Approach

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Abstract

Community participation in development hardly takes place in a vacuum. There are motivating, militating as well as catalytic factors which propel the community to take part in community development. As much as development initiatives meet the needs of beneficiary communities, occasionally, there are other intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate communities to participate in development processes and discourses. These factors range from financial to non-financial, material to non-material, and short to long term factors. The study sought, among other objectives, to establish factors that promote beneficiary community participation in development in the community driven development approach. The study found out that key factors which make beneficiary communities to participate in development in the community driven approach are benefits (financial and material), development interest, development need, previous development experience, wanting to belong, to serve the community and project meets needs respectively. The implication of these findings to policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders is to design strategies that can divorce short term benefits and expectations as propellants for participation by beneficiary communities in development and instead, inculcate ownership and responsibility as core motivating factors.

Key Words: Approach, Beneficiary, Factors, Community, Development, Driven.

1.Introduction: Participation is the heart that pumps the community's life blood (Reid, 2000). Participation refers to the inclusion of diverse sectors of community members in an on-going community development process (Schafft & Greenwood, 2003). Participation is a dynamic process which is molded by community members desires to be part of affairs that affect their lives. Participation is also considered an evolutionary process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects as active participants and not just mere recipients of project benefits (Bamberger, 1988). It means some form of involvement of people, with similar needs and goals, in decisions affecting their lives. Community participation is a cyclical process and cumulative in nature thus becoming the locus of community empowerment (Samah & Aref, 2009).

Participation is an important concept in development and because of its wide application, it means different things to different people (Barasa & Jelagat, 2013). Further, the concept of community participation is considered ambiguous, meaning that there is no specific or right way to ensure community participation in the development process (Alli, N1 & Emery, nd). Where participation is interpreted as a means, it generally becomes a form of mobilization to get things done by the people themselves for their total good.

Participatory rural community development paradigm projects have become increasingly popular in the last 40 years (Østergaard et al., 2003). Participatory development approaches currently occupy a prominent and important position in community development practice and discourses (Schafft & Greenwood, 2003). There is a growing increase in the demand for community participation in development projects, with its resultant challenges, advantages, disadvantages and benefits (Alli, N1 & Emery, nd). Participation is a matter on which there is considerable disagreement among development scholars and practitioners. However, it is considered to be an active process by which beneficiary groups influence the direction and execution of a development project (Paul, 1987).

Participation as a concept occupies a central place in development with resultant potential to influence, challenge, and change and modifies the state of affairs for the benefit of all community members (Barasa & Jelagat, 2013). Participatory approaches are closely linked to sustainable and decentralized development, and community involvement is a cardinal duty of funding and implementing agencies, including governments. There are resultant benefits of active community participation in project processes and discourses including increase in project acceptability, production of more equitable distribution of benefits, promotion of local resource mobilization and project sustainability (Bamberger, 1988).

Community participation is undeniably vital in the development process (Østergaard et al., 2003). Community participation in development is advocated for various noble reasons but it is often permeated by empty rhetoric and little impact (Botes & Rensburg, 2000). Beneficiary community participation, apart from enhancing cost-effectiveness for project implementation and resources distribution to a wider coverage of weaker sections of society, is a crucial strategy of ensuring that responsibility and benefits trickle to the beneficiaries too (Barasa & Jelagat, 2013).

Community participation does not just happen neither is it an idle principle, rather it needs some form of strategy and planned approach, resources and time allocation and commitment to the course (Burns et al., 2004). Samah and Aref (2009) observe that participation in community development activities means individuals are not only involved in initiating, deciding, planning, implementing and managing development processes and its activities, they are also subjects in meeting their collective needs and expectations to overcome their common development challenges. Communities that have chosen to participate in development discourses not only derive more satisfaction from the joy that comes from involvement, they also achieve more results, more rapidly, and with greater benefit to the community as a whole. Communities who participate in development initiatives report better success than those that only pay lip service to this important principle (Reid, 2000).

Beneficiary community participation in development discourses and processes is considered critical to the success of the community wellbeing because it is valued as one of the key ingredients of empowering development (Reid, 2000). It can greatly contribute to effectiveness and efficiency of projects as well as help to improve the living conditions of low-income communities (Botes & Rensburg, 2000).

Community-driven development approach has control of the development processes, resources and decision making, responsibilities and resultant benefits directly placed in the hands of beneficiary communities and community groups and in this approach, beneficiary community participation is a central principle, philosophy, fundamental and tenet.

2. Problem Statement: Successful community development approaches, including the community driven approach have been implemented over the years with mixed results. Community development initiatives are often demonstrated to be participatory if they can be shown to incorporate community perspectives and represent community concerns (Schafft & Greenwood, 2003). Participation does not occur by chance (Samah & Aref 2009). Hardly can development initiatives and processes succeed without mainstreaming community participation as a principle, fundamental and tenet of people driven development. There are usually intrinsic, extrinsic, catalytic, militating as well as promotive factors which drive beneficiary community participation in development agenda. However, beneficiary community participation poses a major challenge to scholars in development studies, development practitioners and policy makers. This is because it is a rigorous and time-consuming process, which results in most development practitioners camouflaging it with quick fix consultations and pseudo-participatory gimmicks to justify means to the end.

With the already documented empirical evidence of beneficiary community participation in development, there are underlying motivating as well as militating factors for people's participation. However, there is not much documented knowledge on factors that motivate community members to participate in development in the community driven development approach specifically in the Kenyan context, a gap that informed the problem statement and necessitated need for this study.

3. Objective: The objective of the study was, among others, to establish factors which promote beneficiary community participation in the community driven development approach.

4. Study Design, Methods, Sampling and Locale: The geographical and administrative locale of the study was Gatunyaga Sub-Location, Gatunyaga Division, Thika East District, Kiambu County, Kenya.

The study employed a descriptive, ex-post facto cross-sectional survey research design, being carried out after an intervention (a multi-sectoral community driven development project). It was descriptive since it described the status of community participation as per the time of the study. Non – probability (quota) sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample size for the individual interviews was 90 (N=90) and 5 focus group interviews (N=47) community interest groups (CIG) members. The breakdown of 90 was drawn from 9 sectoral groups with the quotas having been proportionately allocated (for purposes of representativeness). From the total 2304 CIG members, the calculation of quota proportionality was based on the size of each sector divided by the total of CIG members (from the 9 sectors) multiplied by 90. The 47 participants for the focus group interviews were randomly selected from the 9 sectors, with each interview having 8-10 participants proportionally drawn from the 9 sectors. The choice of 90 participants and 5 focus group interviews was discretionary.

Mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) were used for data collection. The method used to collect quantitative data was individual interviews while qualitative data was collected using focus group interviews. The reason for the choice of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was to enhance corroboration, diversification, verification and enrichment of the data collected through multiple methods. The tool used to collect quantitative data was a structured questionnaire, and an interview schedule with thematic topics was used to collect the qualitative information. Quantitative data was organised, processed and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (univariate) were computed to generate frequency outputs. For qualitative data, refined themes were categorised and codes used to create thematic impressions and patterns that formed the basis of analysis and interpretation.

5. Results: This section presents, interprets and discusses findings on factors that promote community participation in the community driven development approach. Among the possible factors that are expected to promote community participation in development on the community driven approach include material (benefits), development interest, development need, previous development experience, wanting to belong, to serve the community, project meets needs and peer pressure. The respondents were required to give a yes or no for each response to each option and yes response was taken to be the highest percentage.

5.1 Socio-demographic information of the study participants: Socio-demographic information of the study participants is as follows. On the variable of gender, 56.7% of the study participants were female while 43.3% were male. Age of participants (categorized on a likert scale) recorded the following results: 20-30 years was at 4.4 %, 31-40 years at 23.3%, 41-50 years at 30.0 %, 51-60 years at 18.9 % and 61 years and above at 23.3%. The marital status of the participants was 11.1% single, 86.7% married, while 2.2% reported being widows/widowers. Education level of the participants was as follows: 62.2 % of the respondents reported having primary education, followed by secondary at 30.0 %, none at 4.4% while college at 3.3 % was the least category. Occupations of the participants ranged from farmer at 72.2 %, business at 23.3% while musician, mason, adult teacher and pastor were all at 1.1 %.

5.2 Factors which promote beneficiary community participation in the community driven development: The study sought to find out factors which promote community participation in the community driven development approach. The factors which were most mentioned by respondents in the individual interviews mentioned were development need as the highest at 88.9% followed by development interest at 85.6%, wanting to belong at 76.7 % and project meets needs at 75.6% respectively. The least mentioned were financial benefits at 14.4%, previous development experience at 21.1%, to serve community at 23.3%, material benefits at 32.2 % and peer pressure at 0.0% respectively (as indicated by table 5.1).

From the focus group interviews, it was evident that several factors similar to those identified by the individual interviews were mentioned. Among the factors mostly mentioned were development gap, previous bad experience with other approaches, positive experience with the community driven

development approach, development interest and wanting to belong. The least mentioned factors were financial and material benefits or desire to serve the community.

On development need as a factor, a respondent from the focus group interviews said the following:-

'The community participates since it expects to benefit through skills development and attitude change as well as the need to address development gaps'- Community Interest Group member .

About wanting to belong together, one of the focus group interviews had this to say:-

'The need to belong together makes the community to participate in projects'- Community Interest Group member

On financial and material benefits, a focus group interview participant had the following to say:-

'Some of the community members participate because they expect to get provision of poultry'- Community Interest Group Member

Table 5.1 Factors that promote community participation in development

Category	No	Yes	Total
	%	%	%
Financial benefits	85.6	14.4	100.0
Material benefits	67.8	32.2	100.0
Development interest	14.4	85.6	100.0
Development need	11.1	88.9	100.0
Previous development experience	78.9	21.1	100.0
Wanting to belong	23.3	76.7	100.0
To serve the community	76.7	23.3	100.0
Project meets needs	24.4	75.6	100.0
Peer pressure	100	0.0	100.0

6. Discussion: Community participation in development hardly takes place in a vacuum. This is usually motivated by different factors which include tangible and non-tangible benefits as well as short and long term gains. Various factors promote community participation in development, including motivation by projects that cater for their needs and give benefits as returns. Participatory development paradigm is embedded on and associated with people and their aspirations to change their own lives, resulting to promotion of equity, legitimization of decision-making processes, strengthening self-determination and predisposing beneficiary communities to more democratic development (Barasa & Jelagat, 2013). Moreover, community participation is not an idle principle, rather it is based on what the community derives from involvement, in achieving more results and with greater benefit to the community as a whole (Reid, 2000).

Several factors motivate beneficiary communities to participate in development. Such factors range from direct benefits (financial, material or otherwise), tangible or non-tangible to long or short term, among others. Other factors such as culture, history, government policy and social, political and economic structures influence community participation (Botes & Rensburg, 2000).

6.1 Financial and Material and Non-material benefits: Goodman et al., (1998) posits that a community's sense of benefits and costs associated with participation can determine if they participate in development or not. Maraga et al., (2010) argues that there was a strong positive relationship between community participation and the benefits farmers obtained from afforestation projects. Further, Bowen (2007) indicates that material incentives prompt communities to participate in the community subprojects. Further, expected personal or group benefits can promote participation in development (Chitere and Mutiso, 1991; Okinda, 2009). Other forms of non-material benefits account for beneficiary community members wanting to participate in development. As a process, participation gives experience to individuals which provides and equips them with insights, confidence and skills to solve existing problems, which is crucial in achieving individual and

communal goals (Samah & Aref, 2009). There are also social benefits which help in the empowerment of people to take charge of their development processes. The above observations correspond with the study findings.

6.2 Development interest, development need, project meets needs, previous development experience and to serve the community: Masanyiwa and Kinyashi (2008) in a study in Tanzania observe that community members participate effectively when they perceive that interventions being undertaken by a project address their immediate needs as identified in community consultation processes. Further, Bhatnagar and Williams (1992) observe that people support and participate in projects that account for their needs. Beneficiary communities participate collectively to take initiative for their own socio-economic development which results in empowerment through asset and capacity building (IFAD, 2009). People's participation can be based on the fact that people have the ability to carry out activities suited to their needs by becoming empowered to develop themselves in a collective effort to improve living conditions in the community which is dependent on the people determining their wants and needs and how to do it (Samah & Aref, 2009). The study findings therefore indicate that in the community driven development approach, development interest, project meets needs, previous development experience, to serve the community and development need contributes to participation by beneficiary community in development.

6.3 Wanting to belong and peer pressure: Wanting to belong, compounded by peer pressure can make beneficiary community members to participate in development. As Botes and Rensburg (2000) argue, a critical factor influencing the motivation to participate is often the composition of a community. Moreover wanting to belong, based on existence of traditional forms of community cooperation, makes individuals to collectively give priority to the goals of the larger group they belong to which often results in actions of individuals leading to service to the community or society (Bamberger, 1988; Ardichvili, Maurer, Li, Wentling, & Stuedemann, 2006). Similarly, participation of community members in any organization is dependent on the opportunity that the organization provides for inclusion (Goodman et al., 1998). Further, community acceptance of one another by offering each member the safety of knowing that they are accepted for who they are can be a militating factor in community participation as a way of wanting to belong (Reid, 2000). Working on the old adage of unity is strength, participation is a means of exerting influence or bargaining power which motivates communities to work collectively in development processes because it serves to enhance social cohesion and it makes communities recognise the value of working in partnership with each other (Khwaja, 2004; Burns et al., 2004). The above observations agree with the study findings.

7. Conclusion: It is evident from the study findings that benefits (financial and non-material) are key factors that make communities to participate in development. Specifically, it can be concluded that factors that promote beneficiary community participation in the community driven development approach include development need, followed by development interest, wanting to belong and project meeting needs. Other factors include community member's felt need and burden to serve their communities. It can further be concluded that financial benefits, previous development experience, to serve community, material benefits and peer pressure do not necessarily motivate communities to participate in development in the community driven development approach. The implication of the findings to policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders is to design strategies that can divorce short term benefits and expectations from beneficiary communities and instead inculcate ownership and responsibility as core factors why communities should participate in development processes and discourses.

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