

# Community Participation in Sustainable Rural Infrastructural Development in Riyom Area, Plateau State of Nigeria

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## Abstract

Community participation has long been associated with rural development. Regional developers believe that for projects to succeed, communities need to actively partake in designing, implementing and sustaining the projects that affect their condition of living. This study assesses community participation in sustainable rural infrastructures in Riyom Local Government area of Plateau State, Nigeria. It investigated spatial variation in the distribution of infrastructural facilities, level of participation, contributions to sustaining the infrastructure and the challenges facing the community participation in the projects. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The study made use of 174 sampled population through the administration of questionnaire which constituted the major research instrument for the study by adopting a multi-stage sampling techniques. In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted among the community based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community leaders. Documented materials were collected from official gazettes, research reports, unpublished theses, journals and text-books. The descriptive statistical method was adopted involving calculation of percentages, mean, frequency and tabulation of data. Also, inferential statistics as employed namely, the Chi Square and Z-score analytical techniques. The F-test value of 23.380 is found to be greater than the critical value of 21.03 hence, there is a significant difference in the levels of community participation in infrastructural sustainability among the rural people in the study area at .05 probability level. The Z-score result showed varying degrees of infrastructural distribution such that four areas namely, Hoss, Tse/Gura, Riyom and Bum communities dominated the facilities with scores ranging from (14.40), (13.58), (4.63) to (0.03) respectively while Sharubutu (-3.50), Wereng (-3.92), Fangroi (-4.98), Fang (-7.25) and Tom-gangare (-7.90) communities were under-privileged in infrastructural development. The study revealed that community participation is confined to receiving information and some consultation thereby showing lower level of participation. The infrastructures are being sustained by mounting local security guards, established central maintenance committee and raising funds towards the repair of damaged infrastructure. On the basis of the findings, we recommend among other things, there should be an increased level of awareness and enlightenment about communal participation through mass media, and regular meetings with traditional authorities. Also, involvement of rural people in project formulation, planning and implementation should be encouraged. Moreover, government should create enabling environment where the people at the grass-root will participate actively in decision-making process that affect their condition of living and by so doing, it could stimulate the relationship between government and rural people as partners in progress.

**Keywords:** Participation Community Sustainability Rural infrastructure Development

## 1. Introduction

Participation and other related concepts like sustainability and empowerment are at the center of development discourse (Blackman, 2003) and it may be argued that participation is as old as democracy itself. The rural people are most deprived and neglected in that they have least access to essential services such as health, education, housing and other services. In essence, infrastructural and institutional arrangements are deficient at the local level where most people who need them live.

Access to quality services informs the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and preserving the fundamental human rights. There is clear evidence to show that poor people in many developing countries are still facing negative consequences of weak development outcomes (World Bank, 2003; 2004). However, in Nigeria implementation of rural development projects has been impeded as observed by the centre-down approach in which the rural people were not involved in project conception, planning and monitoring which often led to failure and abandonment of many valuable projects. Of recent, infrastructural approach to development remains a vital instrument to reach and assist poor communities in the developing countries (UN, 2005). Development interventions in the past have tended to focus on resource and knowledge transfer to

beneficiary communities through the stale centre-down approach (FAO 1991; Creighton, 2005)). Having realized the weakness of this approach, it has paved way for the adoption of the 'bottom-up' approach to development. Since the 1970's, there have been deliberate government efforts towards mobilizing the people for rural development. The integrated rural development, river basin development authorities, community development and institutional strategies constitute integral parts of concerted efforts geared towards socio-economic transformation at the grass-roots.

However, inspite of the clamour for 'bottom-up' approach to rural development, project beneficiaries are still being deprived of participating in the identification, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects that are meant to improve their welfare (Blackman, 2003; Akpomunje, 2010)). Even when an element of 'participation' is built into projects, it is often largely in terms of local investment of labour and not necessarily participating in decision-making. Beneficiary communities are only informed after plans have been made and this is done through formal meetings where the officers justify their plans but modification is not considered (APO, 2002; Thwala, 2010).

## 2. Conceptual Framework

There are some fundamental concepts that need clarification because of their technicalities in the way they have been used in this study and they include the concepts of community participation, sustainability and rural infrastructure

### 2.1 Community Participation

One of the cornerstone of democracy is the participatory decision making process which is required by those in government (Tshabalala, 2006:40). Kumar (2002:23) states that participation means different things to different people. The way participation is defined largely depends upon the context and background in which participation is applied. Aref and Redzuan (2009) asserted that participation requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in contributing to the development effort; sharing equitably in the benefits derived there from and decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programmes.

Reid (2000) viewed participation in terms of power sharing and organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions. In this sense, participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking and deliberations over which they exert effective control. Raniga and Simpson (2002) remarked that participation might mean that communities are allowed direct and ultimate control in taking decision concerning their affairs. The involvement of people in electing people of their choice into political power, attending public meetings, and contributing money to community development projects - form parts of community participation

Community participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community (Reid, 2000:1). Community participation occurs when a community organizes itself and takes full responsibility for managing its problems. Theron (2005:12) pointed out that there are different shades of opinion on either citizen or public participation and it related to the process of giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities by empowering them to mobilize their own creative potentials, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives. UN (2005) viewed community participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development. People's participation is essential in order to establish economic and political relationship within the wider society and it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather the process by which rural people are able to organize themselves, ability to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action (Kumar, 2002:24).

### 2.2 Sustainability

While individuals can and should have their own points of reference and areas of interest regarding sustainability, a single project needs to have a broad, clear and well-defined concept of sustainability to guide implementation and serve as a basis for evaluation. Theron (2005:12) remarked that community participation should lead to sustainable development. Community participation and sustainability involves local choice because people are the local experts, in line with the idea of an indigenous knowledge system.

Sustainable development is seen as development that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. The main concept behind the idea of sustainable development is an ethical imperative of inter-generational and intra-generational equity, which has evolved from the development paradigm of equitable growth (Marais, et al 2007).

The major issue confronting rural development programmes in Nigeria was absence of sustainability that is driven by participation of programme beneficiaries. Cheetham (2002) opined that a very strong positive relationship between participation and sustainability exists. The more rural people were involved to address their own development, the more the confidence and success level associated with such programmes. The rural people claimed of non-participation especially women in projects meant for their development. Sustainability of the

process depends on individuals and institutions to continue providing those same services after the assistance and subsidies of a project end. More often than not, a project seeks and expects this type of sustainability, which depends on the viability of institutions, their capacity and potential for survival. In addition, it relates to sustainability of resources. This refers to the extent to which activities promoted by the project will preserve the resource base for future use.

### 2.3 Rural Infrastructure

Infrastructural facilities refer to those basic services without which primary, secondary and tertiary productive activities cannot function. In its wider sense, infrastructural facilities embrace all public services such as education, public health, transportation, communication and water supply (Thwala, 2010). In other words, infrastructural facilities are elements in the package of basic needs which a community would like to procure for better living. Raniga and Simpson (2002) asserted that infrastructural facilities can be classified into three main types namely: physical infrastructure such as roads, water, irrigation, rural electrification, ware-house, bans and processing facilities; social infrastructure include health, education, community centres, fire and security services and institutional infrastructure such as cooperatives, community based organizations, financial institutions and agricultural research facilities.

Gebreindhin (2002) viewed rural infrastructure as a system of physical, human and institutional forms of capital which enables rural residents to better perform their production, processing and distribution activities as well as help to improve overall quality of life such as storage facilities, markets, research extension services including schools and colleges that engage in training a variety of skilled agricultural workers. Rural infrastructure can be better understood as those specialized elements in the development process that bring about improvements in the socio-economic welfare of the rural dwellers. They are catalysts of development and at the same time their presence can serve as indicators of development.

FAO (2005) observed that rural infrastructure plays a crucial role in poverty reduction, economic growth and empowerment for the African rural poor. The lack of adequate and reliable infrastructure touches the life of every rural African family daily. The infrastructural approach to rural development is one that commonly adopted by most developing countries. It is perceived that the adequate provision of infrastructural facilities will enhance the introduction and adoption of innovative ideas towards the betterment of quality of life in rural areas.

### 3. Studies in Community Participation: An Over-View

Community participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community (Reid, 2000:1). Community participation in rural development process is an important element and a sure way to speedy socio-economic transformation of the rural areas in Nigeria and thus is well documented in development studies (Bailur, 2007; Davids et al. 2005). Indeed, the role of participation in community development cannot be over emphasized. It is obvious that community participation can be successful in cases where the community has genuinely been part of the process.

Mansuri and Rao, (2004) viewed rural development as the participation of the people in a mutual learning experience involving them, their local external change agents and outside resources. People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves by participation in decision and co-operation activities which affect their well-being. Nampila (2005:8) agrees that community participation in rural development has been negatively affected. The implementation of socio-economic enhancement infrastructures in rural areas is grossly inadequate.

Moreover, the efforts made in the past to improve rural living conditions, the situations have not changed positively rather, it has further deteriorated. The failure is attributed to development process that hitherto embraced a top-down approach whereby the community did not have a stake in any decision-making that often affect their state of well-being. Development was initiated by the state, centrally planned, and influenced by the elites and bureaucrats (executive arm of government). As a result, this approach failed to equitably benefit rural dwellers, particularly the poor who are excluded from the planning process (Nyaba (2009).

It is a consensus among rural developers (Steve and Olufemi, 2011; Olaleye, 2010; and Olukosi, 2002) that participation is an important determinant of success in project performance and sustainability. Steve and Olufemi (2011) investigated the prioritizing of community participation strategies on health development among some rural communities in Kogi State, Nigeria. The findings highlighted the existing participation strategies in the study area to include: - provision of free labour for construction and maintenance of health unit, payment for selected services and Ad-hoc fund raising respectively.

In the same vein, Olaleye (2010) examined the determinants of citizens' participation in community development through self-help project. The study established that self-help project is an organ of national and community development programme, which has improved the conditions of rural communities. Kwaja's (2001) asserted that projects managed by communities are more sustainable than projects managed by government because of better maintenance. Kwaja (2001) found a strong association between participation and sustainability, although he did not establish causal directions. Also, in an in-depth study of the sustainability of projects, Kleemeier (2000) examined Malawi rural piped-water project and discovered that half of the oldest schemes

were performing poorly, while the newest ones were performing better. The weak performance stemmed largely from the lack of institutional support from external agencies.

#### 4. Null Hypothesis

This null hypothesis is posed:-

- (i) There is no significant difference in the level of community participation in infrastructural development among rural people in the study area.

#### 5. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to assess the level of community participation in sustainable rural infrastructural facilities in Riyom local government area of Plateau State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:- (i) examine the spatial variations in the distributions of rural infrastructure in the study area (ii) assess the level of participation of rural people in sustaining rural infrastructures; (iii) examine the influence of community participation on the sustainability of infrastructural facilities; (iv) assess the challenges to community participation in infrastructural development.

#### 6. Methodology

##### 6.1 Reconnaissance Survey

A reconnaissance survey was carried out in order to get acquainted with the study area, to identify and assess the existing infrastructural facilities within the communities.

##### 6.2 Data Selection

The study of this nature demands for a careful selection of variables required for a meaningful research results. The following variables have been considered and they include:-

- (I) Schools' facilities (II) Health-care facilities (III) Availability of water (IV) Transport infrastructure (V) Market facilities (VI) Sports and recreational facilities (VII) Agricultural facilities (VIII) Community hall/town hall (IX) Community head palace

##### 6.3 Sources of Data

The study used both primary and secondary sources and generated the data needed. Secondary sources included documented materials from official gazettes, annual reports, research reports, journals and newspapers, published conference proceedings, unpublished articles, books and on-line materials. The primary sources of data were collected through administration of questionnaire as a major research instrument for the study. In addition, focus group discussion were conducted among various stakeholders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs) and traditional leaders.

##### 6.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study area has a human population of 72,581 (NPC, 2006). Using the growth rate of 2.8% per annum, the projected human population is 85,661 people. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. First, a purposive sampling approach was adopted to select the communities based on the number of infrastructural facilities being acquired. The sample size for each of the nine communities vary with the population size thus, Riyom (30), Hoss (28), Weren (13), Gangare (18), Sharubutu (10), Afang (12), Gura-Ganawuri (21), Fangroi (26), and Bum (16) with 174 sampled population altogether. A random sampling technique was used to select respondents in each community. In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted among the communities in order to complement any weakness that might arise from the questionnaire survey.

##### 6.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical technique was employed in the analysis of the data. It helped in the summarization of the data into tabular forms, averages, means, percentages and frequency distribution. The inferential statistics such as Chi-square was adopted to measure the significant difference that may exist among levels of community participation in sustainable rural infrastructures in the study area. In addition, the Z-score technique was adopted to examine spatial variation in the rural infrastructural distribution. The method is simple, elegant and gives opportunity to rank the unit areas according to their performance in infrastructural development. The score of each community on infrastructure is standardized into Z-score to attain zero mean and this forms the base line for comparison of scores of observation on each variable. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) programme was used for processing and analysis of data.

#### 7. Data Analysis and Discussion

##### 7.1 Socio-Demographic Traits of the Respondents

The study examined the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the result is presented in Table 1. Considering the gender status, the males constituted (72.4%) while the females are (27%) of the sampled population. The low percentage of females might be attributed to the fact that men are more sensitive to

communal developmental issues. The age distribution of community respondents varied between -20 and over 51 years.

Table 1: Socio-economic Traits of the Respondents

Traits	Riyom		Bachit		Ganawuri		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Gender								
Male	51	68.0	21	70	54	78.3	126	72.4
Female	24	32.0	9	30.0	14	20.3	47	27.0
No response	-	-	-	-	1	1.4	1	0.6
Age-group								
0-20	-	-	2	3.3	4	5.8	5	2.9
21-30	27	36.0	12	40.0	28	40.6	67	38.5
31-40	24	32.0	14	46.7	25	36.2	63	36.2
41-50	21	28.0	-	-	9	13.0	30	17.2
Above 50 years	3	4.0	3	10.0	3	4.3	9	5.2
Marital Status								
Single	25	33.3	13	43.3	25	36.2	63	36.2
Married	44	58.7	14	46.7	42	60.9	100	57.5
Widow	1	1.3	3	10.0	-	-	4	2.3
Divorced	1	1.3	-	-	-	-	1	0.6
No response	4	5.3	-	-	2	2.9	6	3.4
Level of educ.								
Non-formal	-	-	4	13.3	-	-	4	2.3
Primary	4	5.3	2	6.7	4	5.8	10	5.7
Secondary	16	21.3	8	26.7	10	14.5	3	19.5
Tertiary	54	72.0	13	43.3	52	78.4	119	68.4
Level of Educ	Riyom		Bachit		Ganawuri		Total	
Adult educ.	-	-	3	10.0	2	2.9	5	2.9
No response	1	1.3	-	-	1	1.4	2	1.1
Occupation								
Farming	16	21.3	8	26.7	7	10.1	31	17.8
Civil servant	25	33.3	12	40.0	32	46.4	69	39.7
Artisan	4	5.3	-	-	3	4.3	7	4.0
Trading	6	8.0	6	20.0	4	5.8	16	9.2
Others	17	22.7	4	13.3	22	31.9	43	24.7
No response	7	9.3	-	-	1	1.4	8	4.6

Source: Authors

Of these respondents, only 2.9 percent of community members fell below the ages of 20 years; (38.5%) of the respondents fall between the ages of 21 to 30 years and (36.2%) were between the 31 to 40 years; (17.2%) respondents were also between 41 and 50. The fact that more respondents fall between 21 to 30 and 31 to 40 interval of age simply explains the full involvement of the active age group in this study on community participation. Regardless of this point, however, all respondents revealed a positive attitude towards community participation irrespective of age group. As also reflected on that table, (57.5%) of the total sample reported that they are married along side (36.2%) of the sample not married.

The Table 1 presented (68.4%) of the total sample to have attended tertiary institutions with about (19.5%) with secondary education. This goes along to explain the level of literacy in the study area, even though this categories were the ones that were more capable of filling the questionnaires. The researcher understands that the general level of education of the people has a significant relationship to their perception of community participation. Also, majority (39.7%) of the respondents are civil servants which explain the high number of respondents that had attended up to tertiary educational level. Very important was the (24.7%) and (17%) that constituted artisan and farmers respectively.

## 7.2 Spatial Variation in Infrastructural Facilities

The study examined variation in the distribution of infrastructural facilities in the study area and the result is presented in Table 2. The Z-score analytical technique was adopted to investigate the spatial infrastructural distribution. The first column indicates the names of the communities selected for the study, the other ten columns show the Z-score values for each community and the last column presents the composite scores. The study showed that 9 communities are advantaged while the other 5 areas are under-privileged as far as infrastructural distribution is concerned.

The composite score values of the advantaged areas range from 0.03 to 14.4 while Bum community enjoy the least of the facilities with a score of 0.03, Hoss community in Riyom district enjoyed the maximum benefits from the infrastructural facilities with a score value of 14.40. Tse/Gura in Ganawuri district ranks second in the order of infrastructural distribution with a score value of 13.58 while Riyom community came third with a score of 4.63. Of considerable importance is the scores of Hoss and Tse/Gura communities which are in multiple of folds compared to other communities. It is Hoss that solely advantaged in terms of sports and recreational facilities while Tse/Gura is advantaged in agricultural facilities. It is equally worth noting that no community has positive scores in all the infrastructural facilities, in other words communities are disadvantaged in at least two of the infrastructural categories.

Table 2: Infrastructural distribution by Z-score Values

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Σ	Rank
Hoss	0.17	0.39	0.10	0.07	3.18	4.09	-1.03	4.44	3.19	14.40	1
Tse/gura	0.48	0.77	0.58	1.97	3.18	-0.46	9.23	-1.11	-1.06	13.58	2
Riyom	0.23	0.75	-0.20	0.52	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	4.44	1.06	4.63	3
Bum	-0.23	0.00	-0.02	0.76	3.18	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	-1.06	0.03	4
Sharubutu	-0.06	0.00	0.16	-0.70	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	1.06	-3.50	5
Wereng	0.00	-0.39	0.04	-0.67	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	1.06	-3.92	6
Fangroi	-0.17	-0.19	-0.26	0.66	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	-1.06	-4.98	7
Fang	-0.28	-0.39	-0.14	-1.42	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	-1.06	-7.25	8
Tom/ganga	-0.17	-0.58	-0.20	-1.93	-1.36	-0.46	-1.03	-1.11	-1.06	-7.90	9

Source: Authors

On the aggregate five of the communities suffered different levels of under-privileges in terms of infrastructural distribution. The affected areas include Sharubutu, Wereng, Fangroi, Fang and Tomganga with scores ranging from -3.50, -3.92, -4.98, -7.25 and -7.90 in that descending order of performance respectively. It is observed that Fang and Tomganga are found to be disadvantaged in all the infrastructural facilities and are the least advantaged communities all from Bachit district. The study showed clearly the varying degrees of infrastructural distribution in the study area.

### 7.3 Community Participation in Infrastructural Development

The study investigated different levels of community involvement in infrastructural development in the study area and the result is presented in Table 3. It is interesting to note that about (26.4%) gained enlightenment about the communal infrastructures. While (23.6%) of the sampled population engaged themselves in consultation with people in political powers in order to lobby them to assist in the developmental projects. It is quite regretted that some (17.2%) of the respondents did not participate in any form. This suggests that some people are more concerned about their personal welfare than that of facilities that can benefit the entire community. The people that jointly planned for infrastructural development constitute just (6.3%) of the sampled population. This is quite discouraging. It is obvious that collective bargaining and execution of projects would assist the community to achieve greater heights.

Table 3: Level of Participation

Levels	Districts						Total	
	Bachit		Ganawuri		Riyom			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Assume control	5	16.7	4	5.8	1	1.3	10	5.7
Delegation of authority	0	0	13	18.8	12	16.0	25	14.4
Joint plan	1	3.3	5	7.2	5	6.7	11	6.3
Pieces of advice	2	6.7	5	7.2	4	5.3	11	6.3
Consultation	10	33.3	16	23.2	15	20.0	41	23.6
Enlightenment	8	26.7	11	15.9	27	36.0	46	26.4
None participation	4	13.3	15	21.7	11	14.7	30	17.2
Total	30	100	69	100	75	100	174	100

Source: Authors

Of equal strength are those that reported that they usually sought for technical advice and that is (6.3%). The category of respondents that reported of taken control of the facilities are just (5.7%). This level of participation should be encouraged at the grass-root where the community can build their capacity in maintaining existing infrastructures. A cross-examination of the districts indicated that level of participation in infrastructural development is rather low in the study area.

### 7.4 Contribution to the Sustainability of Infrastructure

The study examined the ways and means the communities assist in infrastructural sustainability. The result is presented in Table 4. It appears that raising funds towards the maintenance of the infrastructural facilities

outweigh other areas of assistance.

Table 4: Mode of sustaining the infrastructures

Means of Sustaining Infrastructural Facilities	Frequency	%
Provision of adequate security	24	13.8
Raise maintenance committees	21	12.1
Guidance on proper use of facility	26	14.9
Raise funds for maintenance	58	33.3
Completing abandoned projects	19	10.9
Other areas of assistance	5	2.9
No response	21	12.1
Total	174	100.0

Source: Authors

Perhaps the major source of maintenance and sustaining the infrastructural facilities is by raising funds through levy, launching and donation from philanthropists towards and this constitutes about (33.3%) of the sampled population. This is strictly followed by provision of adequate security which accounts for (13.8%). The communities do engage local professional hunters who help in keeping surveillance on the infrastructures against theft and damages. Sometimes, communities do raise central working committee to ensure maintenance of the infrastructures and this amounts to about (12.1%) and of equal strength some of the respondents remain silent it.

#### 7.5 Constraints to Effective Community Participation

Further-still, the study investigated the various bottle-necks for effective community participation in infrastructural development. The result is presented in Table 5. A larger part of the respondents about (29.9%) expressed their heart-felt opinion that there was little or no encouragement from the government even when it was entrenched in the national development plan that government would give technical and financial assistance to communities that embark upon projects.

Table 5: Constraints to Community Participation

Major Constraints	Frequency	%
Inadequate awareness	23	13.2
Poor and inefficient leadership	33	19.0
Illiteracy	24	13.8
Insufficient funds	29	16.7
Lack of encouragement from government	52	29.9
Others	13	7.5
Total	174	100

Source: Authors

Some (19.0%) of the respondents attributed the problem to poor and inefficient leadership on the part of community leaders. This is particularly true to situation where the leaders are corrupt and out to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. In case of low level of education which amounts to (13.8%) of the sampled population, it is obvious that rural populace suffer from high level of illiteracy representing a cancer worm eating deep into the rural economy not only in the study area but also in the country at large. Kakumba and Nsingo (2008) had earlier remarked that lack of sustainability in development projects occurred as a result of low level of education and poor management abilities. One may add that lack of political will and instability of government equally affects development of infrastructures.

#### 7.6 Result of Chi Square Test

The study examined the significant difference in the level of community participation in rural infrastructural development. The F-test of (23.380) is greater than the critical value of (21.03), the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 probability level, and hence, there is a significant difference in the level of community participation in infrastructural development in the study area.

### 8. Policy Implication of the Study

A cursory look into the study there are various information that could be beneficial to the socio-economic planners and policy makers. The findings of the study showed clearly that there is localization of the infrastructural facilities in some local government areas such as Hoss and Tse/Gura make such communities to be privileged at the expense of other communities that stand to be disadvantaged. Both physical and socio-economic planners have to cooperate and work together such that while the economic planners allocate the resources, the physical planner should be at the best position to site project sites and by so doing, it will ensure a balanced infrastructural distribution not only in the study area but also applicable to other parts of the country.

The findings indicated that there was low community participation in development process. Most community development activities meant to improve quality of life in the rural communities are often high jacked by

privileged elite few without the involvement of community members. The situation does not give the community an opportunity to have a say in development process that is meant for their welfare. In this regard, to achieve effective community participation, development partners should ensure a process whereby rural communities should become more conscious of their own situation, carefully understand rural socio-economic reality around them, have mutual understanding amongst community members, knowing their problems, the causes of these problems, and what measures they themselves can take to begin changing their situation. A holistic approach to development at the local, national and international levels should be followed to tackle the challenges of community participation. The recognition and mobilization of the potential of all stakeholders and the people themselves can make a significant contribution to achieving effective community participation.

Government should create enabling environment for rural participation by addressing the factors influencing community participation.

### **9. Recommendations**

There should be concerted efforts towards strengthening community participation in infrastructural development now that it is realized that it could be yet another strategy to transform the rural communities. There is need to mobilize and create awareness through mass media, seminars and workshops about the need for community participation. Also, tapping the creative potentials within the rural setting in terms of the talents, skills, and resource endowment and direct such resources towards changing the rural environment for the better is advocated.

There is need to involve the communities at the grass-root in project formulation, planning and implementation. It is obvious that projects embarked upon by community themselves could be better managed and sustained. Members of the community can be employ to work hand-in-hand with the project developers and allow them to handle some aspect of the projects and by so doing, the capacity building of the rural people.

The Fadama projects initiated by United Nations in conjunction with the Federal government of Nigeria is a right step in the right direction since communities are given the latitude to choose the project that best suit their environment and supported by the external agency to develop such projects. The local communities are working as partners in progress with experts in such field and it can lead the rural people to be self-reliant in managing and sustaining facilities that are made available for them.

One should remain the government of the national policy of egalitarianism which is entrenched in the third national development plan that no man shall be discriminated against either by tribal, religious, political affiliation or location. If this is the guiding principle, then local projects should not be embroiled with local politics that often lead to abandonment of essential infrastructural facilities resulting from political instabilities.

### **10. Concluding Remarks**

It is obvious that governments at all levels and development partners have not really succeeded in mobilizing and creating desired awareness on how community participation should be addressed and achieved. Understanding the fact that participatory models have neither imposed any task upon governments nor other development agency but effective community participation is unlikely to occur without serious attention from the government. Proper channels towards implementing necessary community participation strategies should be strictly adhered to in order to deal with the prevailing challenges.

Nekwaya (2007:25) observed that community participation is the bedrock of rural development. In other words, limited community participation in the implementation and management of infrastructures means that the infrastructures have few chances of survival. Experience from the developed economies has shown that a sound rural development policy must be sustainable, efficient and affordable. The World Bank (2004) asserted that the present era is largely dominated by efforts towards promoting citizens' participation in community development, which would require a fundamental shift in attitudes and techniques, thereby encouraging planning with the communities at the grass-root

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