

# Citizen Participation and Service Delivery at the Local Government Level: A Case of Ise/Orun Local Government In Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## Introduction

Service delivery is an essential function in the relation between government bodies and citizens. According to Eigema(2007), Service delivery is the government's key task. The best yardstick to measure government performance of good governance is through service delivery to the people. A government is expected to deliver better services to its people, and the indices of measuring service delivery to the people include low inflation, better education, provision of improved health care at affordable rates, provision of clean water, provision of good roads and good road networks to the rural areas for the transport of agricultural products and raw materials etc. (Akanji et al, 2011). Despite Nigeria earning over \$800 billion in oil revenue in 56 years since oil was first discovered in the country in the South-South in 1956(Izuora,2013), poverty index remain very high. According to African Development Bank, "The proportion of people living below the national poverty line has worsened from 65.5 per cent in 1996 to 69.0 per cent in 2010. "Poverty is higher in rural areas at 73.2 per cent than in urban area at 61.8 per cent." ([theeagleonline.com.ng/news/nigerias-poverty-level-has-worsened-afdb/](http://theeagleonline.com.ng/news/nigerias-poverty-level-has-worsened-afdb/)).

The creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots. The importance of local government is a function of its ability to generate sense of belongingness, safety and satisfaction among its populace. The Nigerian state therefore created local government as the third tier of government whose objective is to ensure effective, measurable and efficient service delivery to the people (Arowolo, 2008). The need to improve local government service delivery cannot be overemphasized. Mathoho argued that government's service delivery is a response to moral obligation and is attached to the economic growth and the alleviation of poverty(Mathoho, M.).The demand for social service at rural level is on the increase because of the increase in population. More than 70 percent of the Nigerian population reside in the rural areas and are directly or indirectly affected by services rendered by the third tier governments(Agba et al, 2013).

One of the major reasons for establishing Local Government is to bring government to the local communities so that the local people can participate fully in the process of governance, in order to provide essential local services and thus speed up the pace of social, economic and political development (Amujiri, 2012). Following this fundamental purpose of local government, the Guidelines on the 1976 Local Government reforms makes community participation imperative on Local Government. The principal objectives of the Reform as provided by the Guidelines were to:

- (a). make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiative by devolving and delegating them to local representative bodies;
- (b). facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society, and to encourage initiative and leadership potential;
- (c). mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development;
- (d). provide a two-way, channel of communication between local communities and government (both state and federal).

Consequently, nations have been battling for the establishment of viable local government that will bring both government and development nearer to the people(ibid.).The establishment of Nigerian local government

system was with good intentions. Their major aim was for this third level of government to positively affect the lives of the people at the grass roots. But the system, unfortunately, has been ‘hijacked’ by politicians and senior bureaucrats for personal enrichment. Thus, local government in Nigeria can be sarcastically described as a place where the chairman and other key officials meet to share money monthly (Agba, et al, op cit.). Reasoning along this description, Agba (ibid.) succinctly argued that the provision of basic social services such as education, health, maintenance of roads, and other public utilities within the jurisdiction of most local governments in the country is both a myth and mirage; as the tenure of local government chairmen is primitively conceived as a period of wealth accumulation and not about service to the people. The problem of service delivery through local government appears to be an endemic one, with lack of development in most local areas. It has been argued that there is a general problem of accountability at the local government level in the use of public resources that are transferred from higher tiers of government, and about which local citizens may not be well informed. Others identified lack of transparency in the working of public institutions, poor implementation, non-participatory methods of designing policies, programmes and service delivery by the government institutions and the absence of effective institutions for checking corruption. (Adesopo, 2011:113; Mapuva, 2011; Okojie, 2009).

Anything that affect effective operation of local government, widely acknowledged as a viable instrument for delivery of essential services to the people will definitely affect adversely, the lives of the citizenry. It is one thing for services to be provided, it is another thing to provide services that meet the needs of the people. The need for political participation for effective service delivery at the local level cannot be over-emphasised. The people at the grassroots know what public services are needed, by whom, and how best to deliver them.

It is against this backdrop that this paper examines and analyses the need for grassroots participation for effective service delivery and community development. It examines the efforts of local government in provision of good roads, water, and healthcare service delivery in the state.

The study would be guided by the following research questions which constitute the basic research problem of the study:

- i. What social service has Ise/Orun Local Government undertaken between 2003 – 2012, whether completed or uncompleted?
- ii. How were social services like the provision of potable water, rural roads, health centres, selected and how are they relevant to the people?
- iii. Which factor(s) affected the effective and efficient delivery of social services mentioned in item ii above?
- iv. What are the best approaches to effective and efficient social service delivery by Ise/Orun Local Government?

### **The Study Area**

Ise/Orun is a [Local Government Area](#) of [Ekiti State, Nigeria](#). It has an area of 432 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 113,754 at the 2006 census. ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise/Orun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise/Orun)). Ise - Ekiti is the headquarter of [Ise/Orun Local Government Area](#), along with [Orun](#). Its geographic coordinates are 7°27'36"N 5°25'12"E. As of 2007 Ise Ekiti had an estimated population of 204,022 ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise-Ekiti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise-Ekiti))...Some farmsteads which include: Aba Onisu, Ajebamidele, Oladoyinbo, Obada, Ogbese, Kajola, Afolu, EgbiraEse and AbaOsogbo ([ekitistate.gov.ng/2013/01/iseorun-caretaker-chairman-charges-committee-on-maintenance-of-boreholes/](http://ekitistate.gov.ng/2013/01/iseorun-caretaker-chairman-charges-committee-on-maintenance-of-boreholes/)).

### **Gap- in- Literature and Contribution of the Study to Existing Knowledge**

The contribution of the present study to existing knowledge is that most works reviewed were too general and theoretical in approach. The works tend to discuss issues affecting local governments especially service delivery as if all the local governments are same in Nigeria without due reference to some of their peculiarities such as environment; rural and urban nature; financial capacity; leadership quality; level of governance awareness of the population; etc.

The present study is empirical in that it adopted survey method like questionnaire, interview, and personal observation, in studying the performance of Ise/Orun Local Government of Ekiti State from 2003 to 2012.

### **Operationalization of Key Variables**

The key variables of the study are operationalized in order to order to situate them within the context of our analysis make bear their ‘empirical indicators’ The variables operationalized in the study are: service delivery, accountability, participation, transparency, corruption.

**Service delivery:** In this study, service delivery refers to the provision of social services, such as potable water supply, good roads, healthcare delivery and electricity, intended to alleviate human suffering and by extension, enhance the quality of life of the citizens.

**Participation:** Political participation as used in this study refers totaking part of people in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies that affect them. The World Bank Learning Group on

Participation agreed with this understanding as they define participation as a .process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). From this perspective, participation could be seen in the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of a project cycle, from needs assessment, to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.

**Accountability:** Accountability in this study refers to the degree to which local governments have to explain or justify what they have done or failed to do.

**Corruption:** In this study, corruption refers to diversion of resources from the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of the community.

## Research Methodology

### *Research Design*

A survey design on the performance of Ise/Orun Local Government of Ekiti State, in service delivery from 2003 to 2012 was taken. Data were obtained primarily through, personal observation, interview and questionnaire administered on respondents selected from residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun Local Government Area. The data obtained were used descriptively on the variables studied.

### *Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

The population of the study consists of residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun Local Government. A total of 100 questionnaires was administered.

A sample size of 100 respondents consisting of 50 respondents from the local government headquarter and 50 from the villages under the local governments. This sample size was purposively or judgmentally selected to assess the overall development in the local government. However data gathered through questionnaire were complimented with personal observation and interview.

### *Methods of Data Collection*

Data for the study were sourced through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consisted of questionnaire, personal observation, and interview. The study used the following secondary sources: textbooks, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers, government publications and internet-based materials.

### *Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument*

To ensure the content validity of the research instrument (questionnaire), the researcher compared the items raised in the questionnaire with the research questions. Through this, it was ensured that the research instrument covered the variables investigated in the study. The research instrument was also subjected to professional scrutiny of the researcher's supervisor and other experts for the purpose of boosting its content validity.

Reliability was ensured through comparing the findings from the research instrument with similar study like Agba et al(2013). The result shows that the research instrument is reliable, as there are consistencies in the data supplied by the respondents with the findings of the previous similar study. There is therefore an acceptable and satisfactory validity and reliability.

### *Methods of Data Analysis*

Data from questionnaires administered are presented in tabular and pictorial forms followed by brief discussion. The research questions of the study were analysed using simple percentage statistical method. The results of personal observation, and interview conducted were also incorporated into the discussion.

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

Data presented and analyzed in this section were generated from personal observation, interview and questionnaire administered to 100 residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun local government who were purposively selected.

#### **Figure 1:** Sex Composition of Respondents

Male-49

Female-51

The female respondents from figure 1 above are slightly bigger than male composition. As female residents and indigenes, they are likely encumbered with family activities which can put them in a better position to assess the efficiency of social services.

#### **Table 1:** Awareness of Service Delivery of Ise/Orun Local Government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	66	66%
No	6	6%
Undecided	28	28%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents 66% are aware of the social service provision like potable water ,healthcare , good roads and electricity at Ise/Orun Local Government. While6% of the respondents said they are not aware, 28% were undecided in their position. It can be inferred that this high level of awareness among respondents is a strong potential that can be harvested for quality, effective and satisfactory service delivery in the local government.

**Table 2:** Access to regular electricity in Ise/Orun local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	26%
No	69	69%
Undecided	5	5%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 2 shows the rating of regular electricity supply in Ise/Orun Local government. The rating reveals that there is no regular electricity supply in Ise/Orun Local government. This is evidently seen in the 69% who supported the above rating. 26% respondents said there is regular electricity while 5% were undecided. The high percentage in support of no regular electricity supply shows the true state of electricity supply in the local government.

**Table 3:** What problems do you have with respect to electricity supply in your community?

	Problems identified	No of Respondents	Percentage
i.	Irregular electricity	70	70%
ii.	Low voltage	01	01%
iii.	Stealing cables	01	01%
iv.	Faulty transformer	17	17%
v.	Others	11	11%
	Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 3 shows that the problem of irregular supply is the major problem associated with electricity in Ise/Orun local government. 70% of respondents identified irregular supply as the problem, only 1% identified low voltage as the problem facing electricity supply while 1% also said stealing of cables is the problem , 17% said the problem is faulty transformer and 11% have other reasons. The high percentage identification of irregular supply of electricity reveals the actual situation of electricity supply in the local government.

**Table 4:** Accessibility of Health Centres to the people

Options	No of Respondents	Percentages
Close	70	70%
Far	27	27%
Not Available	3	03%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 4 reveals the accessibility of health centres to the people at Ise/Orun local government. The closeness of the health centres to the people is seen in the response of 70% of residents and indigenes living in the community. 27% of respondents said health centres is far from them while only 03% said health centre is not available.

**Table 5:** Quality of services-Availability of Drugs and other services

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	28	28%
Poor	31	31%
Average	40	40%
Others	01	01%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 5 shows the rating of the quality of services at local government health centres in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that the local government has not performed to expectation in the quality of services offered to the people and in the availability of drugs to the people. This is evidently seen in the response

of 31% who said the services is poor and the 41% who said the services is average. 28% of respondents said the services is good while 01% is of different opinion.

**Table 6:** Can you say the health centres is well equipped?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	34	34%
No	51	51%
Undecided	15	15%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 6 reveals that the health centres at the local government are not well equipped. This is seen in the 51% of response of indigenes and residents of the community. 31% said the health centres are well equipped while 15% are undecided. Despite the closeness of the health centres to the people, the availability of equipment and the quality of services is yet to meet the expectation of the people.

**Table 7:** Reliability of Public Roads in Ise/Orun local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	20	20%
Average	24	24%
Poor	55	55%
Others	01	01%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 7 shows the reliability of public roads in Ise/Orun local government. The rating of public roads in Ise/Orun local government is poor based on the response of 55% opinion of residents and indigenes. 24% rated the roads to be averaged while 24% said the roads are good. 01% is of different opinion. Obviously, results of interview and observation shows that the quality of public roads in Ise/Orun local government is not good enough, the tarred roads in the local government headquarters are sworn out and full of potholes while the interlinked roads to the surrounding villages are inaccessible. Some of the graded roads are usually impassable during raining season.

**Table 8:** Is there any incidence of waterlogging or deterioration of the local roads during heavy rain?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	76	76%
No	19	19%
Undecided	05	05%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 8 shows the rating of deterioration of roads at the local government level during heaving rain. 76% said there is deterioration of roads and incidences of waterlogging during heavy rain. This reveals the quality of roads which were not tarred and the quality of roads tarred with sub-standard materials. 19% said there is waterlogging and deterioration of roads during heavy rain while 05% were undecided.

**Table 9:** Has there been any repair of roads in your community?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	42%
No	52	52%
Undecided	06	06%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 9 reveals that repairing of roads in the local government is not effective enough. This is seen in the response of 52% who said there is no repair of roads while 42% said there is repair of roads while 06% were undecided.

**Table 10:** Involvement of community in repairing of roads

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	51	51%
No	40	40%
Undecided	09	09%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 10 shows average involvement of the community in repairing of roads in Ise/Orun local government. 51% of respondents said community were involved in repairing of roads 40% said community were not involved,

while 09% were undecided. The community from the above response play moderate role in repairing of roads in their community.

**Table 11:** Regularity of Potable Water Supply in Ise/Orun local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	10	10%
Average	17	17%
Poor	72	72%
Others	01	01%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 11 reveals the rating of potable water supply in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that Ise/Orun local government has performed poorly in the provision of potable water in effective, satisfactory manner. This is evidently seen in the response of 72% of residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun local government. 17% of respondents said potable water supply is average while 10% said it is good and 01% is different opinion. The report of SLGP Consultant No 202(2004:24) agreed with this, stated that ‘water supply is from Egbe Dam. Supply has remain nil over years. Most settlements are not connected’.

**Table 12:** How responsive is government at the grassroots in your area to the needs of the society?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	09	09%
Average	21	21%
Poor	59	59%
Others	01	01%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 12 shows the rating of the responsiveness of local government to needs of the society. 09% said the response of local government to society needs is good, 21% said it is average while 59% reveals that the response of local government to the needs of society is poor. Attendance evidence of the poor performance can be further supported in the inefficient provision of relevant social services in table 4, 6, 7 and 10 above.

Since Ise/Orun local government has not perform excellently in the provision of potable water, good roads and healthcare delivery in terms of quality and satisfaction, there is need to find out the factors hindering effective service delivery at Ise/Orun local government.

**Table 13:** Are people being involved in decision making on local needs?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Often	16	16%
Rarely	34	34%
Not at all	46	46%
Others	04	04%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 13 reveals the involvement of people in decision making on local needs. The response of 46% who said they are not involved at all and 34% who said the involvement of people in decision making is rare reveals that the lack of participation of the people.16% said they are involved while 04% are of different opinion.

Lack of participation may account for the failure of the local government to effectively meet the needs of the people. This is in line with Gaventa and Valderrama(1999) who believed that an increased participation of civil society in activities that traditionally formed part of the public sphere it will improve the efficiency of public services, that it will make local government more accountable, and that it will deepen democracy - complementing representative forms with more participatory forms.

**Table 14:** Do you often reach consensus with government at your local level on what is the best interest of the society?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	26%
No	44	44%
Undecided	27	27%
Others	03	03%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 14 shows the rating on reaching consensus with government at the local level on what is the best interest of the society. 26% said they often reach consensus while 44% said they do not and 30% are undecided. The rating shows it is not a common practice for the government to reach consensus with the people before taking decision on what is best for them.

This is contrary to The Guardian News(2013) which noted that working with citizens allows councils to fine tune services based on actual needs. It is one thing to provide services, it is another thing to provide the services needed by the people.

**Table 15:** Awareness of policies of government for local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	40%
No	49	49%
Undecided	11	11%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 15 shows the awareness of people about the policies of government for local government. The response reveals average in the awareness of people, 40% shows the people are not totally ignorant of activities in the local government level. 49% said they are not aware while 11% are undecided. This, perhaps may be because of non-involvement of the people at the stages of policy making and implementation.

**Table 16:** How often do your leaders give account of their stewardship?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Often	18	18%
Rarely	29	29%
Not at all	47	47%
Others	04	04%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 16 shows the rating of accountability of leaders of their stewardship. 18% of respondents said the leaders often give account. 29% said they rarely give account while 47% of the respondents said the leaders don't give account at all and 03% have different opinion. The above rating of leadership accountability reveals the failure of leaders to regularly give account to the people on programmes, implementation of policies and funding. Lack of accountability and transparency can create an avenue for corruption.

**Table 17:** Can you say corruption is one of the major causes of poor service delivery in your local government?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	65	65%
No	19	19%
Undecided	16	16%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 17 reveals the rating of corruption as one of the major causes of poor service delivery in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that corruption is one of the major causes of poor service delivery in Ise/Orun local government. The response of 65% residents and indigenes of the community attests to this. 19% said corruption is not one of the major causes while 16% are undecided. This is in line with Amujiri(2012) who posited that officials sometimes mis-appropriate funds meant for financing community welfare programmes. This act aggravates the problem of shortage of fund which has already been discussed. The findings of Agba et al(op cit.) also supported that corruption contributes to the state of service delivery in Nigeria.

**Table 18:** What do you think is the foremost reason for inadequate provision of social services in your local government?

	Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
i. Poor funding		09	09%
ii. Inefficient use of available fund		27	27%
iii. Lack of participation of people in policy making and implementation		13	13%
iv. Lack of accountability and transparency		47	47%
v. Others		02	02%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Obviously, table 18 shows there are factors responsible for inadequate provision of social services in Ise/Orun local government. From interview and the response to questionnaire, poor funding is identified as one of the factors. Insufficient use of available fund was also identified, pointing to the failure to judiciously use the available fund to meet the needs of the society. In line with the insufficient use of fund is the problem of lack of accountability and transparency which a larger percentage pointed to. Lack of participation of people in policy making and implementation is another noted factor for inadequate provision of social services in the local government. Others pointed to the insincerity of political leaders who only show up when their votes are needed but usually fail to re-surface or fulfill their promises.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Lack of political participation hinders effective service delivery and may as well create an avenue for lack of transparency and accountability that is necessary for efficient use of available funds for the benefits of the people in the society. Lack of transparency and accountability leads to corruption which may also be a reason for ineffective provision of social services for the people at the local level. Kjaer(2011) submitted that where a local authority is genuinely accountable to a local electorate, it will have more incentive to improve the services for which it is responsible. He believed that accountability is essential to improved performance and that accountability is stronger when authorities and those they govern are proximate. Dwellers in the villages find it difficult to market the farm products due to bad roads, thus deepening their poverty. Ogunleye(2012) maintained that good road is important for movement of people, goods and services. The available health centres are not well equipped to give the people good care despite the difficulty of getting potable water. As a result some do opt for private clinics as succor. When social services are delivered, the development of various units and communities is enhanced and the quality of life is improved (Popoola, 2011:211).

The following recommendations made in the study have the potentials of injecting the effective service delivery capacity needed in facilitating development in rural areas. The following recommendations are made in the study:

- i. Participation of the people in decision making, implementation and sustenance of projects at the local level should be employed.
- ii. Transparency and accountability should be ensured if the available resources will be judiciously utilized. Avenue should be created for leaders to account for their stewardship.
- iii. The government at the grassroots should be sincere in meeting the needs of the people at the local level. Opportunity to serve at the grassroots should not be seen as a privilege to amass quick wealth but as privilege to serve.
- iv. Corruption must be stamped out of the system. Honest and people of proven integrity only should be given the privilege to serve at the grassroots.
- v. Elections to local government posts should be free and fair from primary elections and should be handled by Independent Electoral Commission. The practice of chosen caretaker committee to oversee the affairs at local level should be avoided. Leaders should be elected and made to be accountable to the electorate, not to the House of Assembly.
- vi. There is need to cultivate the culture of maintenance of local government projects.
- vii. Any project to be carried out should be well monitored to ensure quality and durability of such projects.
- viii. Local governments should be given free hand to carry out projects needed in their locality. Political interference and dictation must be avoided..

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