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COMMUNITY EDUCATION AS A CORRELATE OF PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN IKWUANO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined community education as a correlate of participation in community development activities in Ikwuano LGA in Abia State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, while two research questions and two hypotheses were generated from the research objectives. The target population of the study comprised 2,238 members of community drawn from 10 communities. Proportionate sampling technique was adopted to select 30% (696) respondents and the instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Community Education Correlates of Participation in Community Activities scale (CECOPCDAS). The reliability index of the instrument was 0.82 determined through the use of Pearson Product moment Correlation Statistics (PPMC). The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study revealed that community education affected people's participation in community development activities in their communities (Mean = 2.7). It was also found that community education is a social engineering tool for citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano LGA (Mean = 2.5). It was further revealed that there was a significant relationship between community education and citizen participation in community development activities and levels of awareness on community development activities ($r=0.695$, $p<0.05$). In addition, it was discovered that there was significant relationship between community education and the level of citizens' participation in community development activities ($r = 0.510$, $p<0.05$). The study therefore recommended among others that community education should be

improved and given adequate attention to enhance sustainable development in Nigerian communities.

Keywords: *Community education, Community development, Participation, Ikwuano Local Government Area, Abia State*

Introduction

Education is a continuous process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, norms and habits of a group of people with a view of transmitting them from one generation to another. Education in its generic and global context is a strategic instrument for social and economic transformations (Igbokwe, 2015).

Gbadamosi and Ajayi (2018) explained that the educational system in Nigeria is tailored towards producing Individuals who can survive life hurdle, adapt to dynamic environmental conditions and ultimately become good, responsible and functional citizens. Hence, in the dire need for improving the quality of life in the community through participation of people in development process for community development informed the need for community education. According to Anyanwu (2002) maintains that community education has become a self – fulfilling prophecy which makes little difference whether we are thinking that its tenets are not written down on tablets of stone and handed down from on high.

Akande (2012) community education provides opportunity for local citizens, community, school, agencies and institutions to become active partners in addressing education and the community. In other words, community education embraces beliefs in education as a lifelong process for everyone in the community to share the responsibility to link the needs of the resources to improve their community. Furthermore, Abiona (2012) explains that globally, community education emphasises local relevance because of the peculiarities of communities. Community education reflects the expectations of the communities that it serves, links up with community development policy.

In the same view Anyanwu (2002) reflects that community education as a developmental concept practices to match with the needs of the community which it serves. No wonder Anyanwu (2002)

highlights that community education goes beyond conventional education. In other words, it is all about life long education as well as a sense of common ownership of education enterprise.

As society is changing rapidly and new demand are emerging to all for new type of education for social effectiveness. Community Education was therefore, a tool employed by various societies to improve the citizen's life and mobilization of communities for participation in their own development. In the traditional community education, it has always recognized education as the practical reflective of the way of life of a people, and had underlined the collective communalistic and largely democratic approach. Having discussed community Education, it is pertinent to explain the concept of participation in community development.

According to Orija (2013) participation presupposes that because members of the community are committed to specific goals arising from their common values interest and aspirations, it is only right that sense of belonging and ownership is engendered in them when any project is to be embarked upon so that the people can identify with such project, sustained and maintained it upon completion because it is seen as "our project" and it is "our interest" participation emphasizes the involvement of community members in the activities that are designed to enhance the development of their own community. In other words, community education is an essential approach in the process of community development.

According to Abdula'uf and Kuyello (2015), community participation has been advocated as a strong approach to improve the quality of community development programmes. Community participation has been long utilised in development projects nationally and internationally. This shows that people can device their own way in providing community needs if they are allowed to make their contributions. In this wise, Abiona (2009) says that participation of community members in community development creates a sense of belongingness, cohesion, solidarity and also fosters societal values According to Osuji (1993), the involvement of members of project communities in all stages of decision making relating to development programme in their areas would strengthen development activities. Further, Osuji (1992) emphasised that development programmes or

activities should not be imposed on the people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of development efforts.

Participation in community development activities could be viewed in quite a number of ways among which are:

- having knowledge of local issues in the community,
- attendance at public meetings related attempt to influence proposed measures through individual or groups and committees among others
- taking part in project monitoring and evaluation
- taking part in the mobilisation of resources and planning of projects to be undertaken in accordance with the identified needs.

Hence the involvement of people in development activities taking place in their communities is likely to result in better decisions participation would enable development to be built on the strength, tradition, beliefs and values of communities in their social organisations, indigenous skills, aspiration, local leadership and energy potentials. In effect community participation in development process would result to better delivery of services to foster accelerated and sustainable development from the forgoing, community education becomes a tool to enable people to evolve better living conditions in their communities, help people to respond to their needs and discover their roots so that they can reach out successfully for a new balance between tradition and innovation.

In the meantime, Anyanwu (1992) explained that community education, participating in research and popular knowledge are conditions for sustainable development in rural communities. Participatory method in communities has continued to achieve outstanding progress and success in terms of social investigation that affords the actors in community development process and integrate activities that enhances in development process. All citizens, government that were all involved in the development process are all clientele of community education, it is against this background the paper examined Community education as correlates of participation in community development activities in Ikwuano LGA in Abia State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Most communities in Abia State seem to have basic problem of education. It has been observed that Ikwuano Local Government Area has embarked on so many laudable self-help projects; ranging from, building of maternity centres, town hall, construction of road, building of market among others. Few of these development programmes seem to have been completed while others are abandoned due to the fact that the people for whom the programmes are meant for are not involved in selecting such programmes. Hence, their non-involvement will no doubt affect citizens' participation. This is as a result of apathetic nature of citizen participation towards development process. Other barriers to participation equally observed are lack of contacts, knowledge, education and position. Considering the above constraints towards attainment of community of participation in development process, there is need to adopt appropriate strategies that would be an eye opener aimed at raising people's consciousness towards development programmes. Therefore, this study examined Community education as a correlates of participation in community development activities in Ikwuano LGA in Abia State Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent to which community education affects people's participation in community development activities?
2. What is the effect of community education on participation in community development activities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between community education and citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State.
- Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between community education and level of citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study and the population of the study comprised 2,238 members of the community drawn from the Ikwano Local Government Area of Abia State. The sample size for the study was six hundred and ninety six (696) respondents which is 30% drawn from the entire population with the use of proportionate sampling technique to ensure equal representation. A questionnaire tagged Community Education Correlates of Participation in Community Development Activities Scale (CECOPCDAS) was used for data collection and it recorded a reliability index of 0.82. The data collected from the research questions were answered using mean (\bar{X}) statistics while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Relevant data to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses are presented on tables and discussed as follows:

Research Question 1:

What is the extent to which community education affects people's participation in community development activities?

Table 1: Responses on the extent to which community education affects people's participation in community development activities

S/N	Items	Responses						Remarks
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	MEAN (\bar{X})	
1.	Community education has nothing to do with development programmes.	231 (924)	158 (474)	249 (498)	58 (58)	696 1954	2.8	Agree
2.	Community Education has a way of enhancing successful implementation of development	142 (568)	176 (528)	304 (608)	74 (74)	696 (1778)	2.6	Agree

	programmes.							
3.	Education is only good for earning a living and not for implementing development programmes.	176 (704)	172 (516)	290 (580)	58 (58)	696 1858	2.7	Agree
4.	There is a reason why the citizens should be involved in development programmes.	243 (972)	169 507	267 534	17 (17)	696 (2030)	2.9	Agree
5.	The citizens' initiatives skills could enable successful implementation of development programmes.	122 (488)	170 (510)	296 (592)	108 (108)	696 (1698)	2.4	Disagree
	Grand mean (X)						2.7	

Table 1 revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agree with the statements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 with acceptable mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5 confirmed that respondents agreed these items show that community education affects people's participation in community development activities.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of community education on participation in community Development activities?

Table 2: Responses on the effect of community education on participation in community development activities.

S/N	Items	Responses						remarks
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean (X)	
6.	Citizens were not duly involved in the initiation of community development.	312 (1248)	132 (396)	238 (476)	14 (14)	696 (2134)	3.0	Agree
7.	Community development	148 (592)	152 (456)	384 (368)	12 (12)	696 (1828)	2.6	Agree

	programmes had been planned and successfully implemented by citizens in the community.							
8.	Community members normally hold meetings with the government officials in the course of planning development programmes.	110 (440)	157 (471)	423 (846)	6 (6)	696 1828	2.6	Agree
9.	Community education enables community members to identify their problems needs and aspirations in the community.	113 (452)	197 (591)	316 (632)	70 (70)	696 (1745)	2.6	Agree
10.	Community Education Increases participation	154 (616)	132 (396)	393 (746)	37 (34)	696 (1795)	2.5	Agree
	Grand mean (X)						2.5	Agree

Table 2 revealed that the respondents responded positively to the statements in the items 6, 7, 8 and 9 and 10 respectively recorded a grand mean score of 2.7 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This implied that the respondents agree that community education is a social engineering tool for citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano LGA.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between community education and citizen participation community development activities

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient(s) statistics on the relationship between community education and citizen participation community development activities

Ho1 variables	N	Mean	S.D	Df	R	P-value	Remarks
Community education	696	34.125	7.523	696	0.695	0.01	Sig.
Citizen participation	696	37.851	8.483				

From the result in table 3, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis which showed strong and positive relationship was accepted ($r=0.695$, $p<0.05$). This depicts that there was a significant relationship between community education and citizen participation in community development activities.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between community Education and level of citizen participation in community development activities

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient(s) Statistics on the relationship between community education and level of citizen participation in community development activities

Ho1 variables	N	Mean	S.D	Df	r	P-value	Remarks
Community education	696	34.125	7.523	696	0.510	0.00	Sig.
Citizens' participation	696	31.491	6.077				

The result of the analysis on the above table showed that there was significant relationship between community education and the level of citizens' participation in community development activities ($r = 0.510$, $p<0.05$). Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result on table 1 revealed that community education helps in facilitating successful implementation of development programmes. It addresses the multiple needs of individuals, families, organisations and communities; providing an array of services using the common thread of learning to prepare people of all ages for active involvement in development process in the community. All over the world, community education is being embraced as the basic education for life in the society rather than education merely for livelihood. It seeks to raise standard of living of people and to encourage social efficiency in community and national life.

Hence, it is pertinent to note that community education is germane for development programmes as it would facilitate sustainability of community development activities. The findings of this study is supported by Anyanwu (1992) when he opined that, it is through wide knowledge, exposure and experience the citizens gain from education that would assist them in their critical appraisal and acceptance of project, this would go a long way in promoting sense of belonging on the basis of cooperation and participation on community affairs. In the same vein, Abiodun (2015) supports the above result that community education which is also known as community based education encompasses all those occupations and approaches that are concerned with running education and development programmes within local communities. Additionally, Mbavai and Mahmud (2015) is in support of the result community education encompasses all those and approaches that are concerned with running education and development programmes within local communities, rather than within educational institutions. Many sectors of development use community education and training programmes for implementation of projects gearing towards improving the livelihood standard of the people.

The findings also revealed that community development programmes would be successfully implemented when beneficiaries of such programmes are involved in such development programme that have been designed by policy makers without due regards to the people involved in such programme.

This finding supported the assertion Anyanwu (1992) emphasizing that community education is the education that helps people to respond to needs and discover their roots so that they can

reach out successfully for a new balance between tradition and innovation. This findings is also in agreement with Abiona (2012) community education prepares citizens to take full advantage of the opportunities for full participation in the community. Community education is a veritable tool for improving citizen participation in community development programmes Onyenru (2008). In other words equipping people with relevant information would enhance their involvement in development activities. Education geared towards the development of the quality of life of the individuals within the community.

Table 2 showed the grand mean rulings of responses on effect of community education on participation in community development activities. It revealed that community education is a social engineering tool for citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State. This finding is in line with Abiona (2012) that community education promotes opportunities for continuous education, irrespective of age. Community education makes people realize the need to acquire knowledge and the skills for improvement of individuals and community. Also, the finding of Abiona (2012) agrees with this finding that community education enhances wellbeing of Nigerians; in this wise, community education is expected to develop the nation and make the citizens have a sense of belongings and reasonability.

The results also revealed that there was a significant relationship between community education and citizen participation in community development activities in Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State. This finding agreed with the finding of Abiona (2012) that community education serves, prepares citizen to take full advantage of opportunities for full participation in community development activities. In addition, community education is geared towards the development of the community, and promotion of lifelong learning activities. Furthermore, in community education every member of the community has a role to play. Community education reflects the expectations of communities which it serves, and links up with community development policy as a developmental concept whose practice has to match the needs of the community. Hence since community education caters for all aspects of programme in the

community, it means that participation of all members of the community is very paramount.

This finding agreed with Alese (2010) explaining that community education is the pillar of Empowerment in any nation. Entrepreneurial skills should be developed according to change and taste of the community in order to promote creativity.

Conclusion

This paper investigated community education panacea for participation in community development activities in Nigeria. The study has revealed that community education is paramount for citizen involvement in community development activities. In other words, community education will enhance sustainability of social developments in Nigerian communities. In the same vein, community education is to enhance the wellbeing of community members. Therefore, there is the need for community leaders, government and community development practitioners among others to give adequate attention to improving community education programmes for citizens' participation in community development activities.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, to ensure participation in community development activities the following recommendations were made:

- There is the need for community development practitioners to encourage community education in community development Associations (CDA's).
- There is need for adequate publicity on the importance of community education as a correlates of participating in community development activities.

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