RURAL COMMUNITY SELF-HELP PROJECTS' IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES : A CASE STUDY OF EKITI SOUTH WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the community self-help projects' implementation procedures in Ekiti South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The study was carried out in 10 communities randomly selected out of 21 communities in the area. A sample of 41 farmers who had participated in self-help projects were purposively interviewed on 41 different projects. Frequency distributions and percentages were used in presenting the data.

The results of the study indicate that, residents of many rural communities in the area were not well structurally organized before embanking on self-help projects. The main channels of communication were a combination of meetings and home-visits (41.5%). Community subscription formed a major source (44.0%) of fund for the execution of many self-help projects in the area. The major problems encountered during project implementation were a combination of fund-raising and land acquisition (58.5%). To ensure maximum participation of community members in the projects, both positive and negative sanctions were imposed.

Key Words: Implementation, Community self-help

INTRODUCTION

Community development has been a global trend - since the beginning of civilization and a look into the achieves showed that, it was introduced in the United States in 1930's to indicate community participation in municipal planning. In the late 1940's, its use became world-wide to describe government programmes which stimulated local initiative to undertake development activities (Lane, 1978).

The term gained prominence in Nigeria during the colonial era, when the Social Welfare Officers aroused self-help to improve health, nutrition and general community welfare. The opponents of this system criticized it as useless and nebulous, primarily advocated by officials who merely wish to create an empire for themselves. This view is unfortunate. A sound rural community development can revolutionise rural life into the fast growing urban centres (Williams, 1978 and Adamolekun, 1991). Community development is a process of social action in which the people of a community organise themselves for

planning an action; execute the plans with maximum reliance upon community resources when necessary, with services and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community (Briddle et al., 1965).

The paramount aim of the rural communities in the developing nations is to attain basic amenities such as motorable feeder-roads, health centres, schools, good market centres, postal agencies, electricity, drinkable water and community centres, etc. (Murray, 1955; Askwith, 1960, and Gardiner, 1973). These amenities are needed for a meaningful agricultural production and better standard of living (Aminu, 1987).

It is however felt that, it is impossible in many developing countries to provide enough technical and financial assistance to meet all the social and economic development which are needed in many local communities (Milson, 1973). Many of such improvements must depend on the self-help rural community efforts by mobilizing their manpower and local ingenuity and enthusiasm for all kinds of needed improvement in rural area (Briddle, 1965).

Initiation is the first step in community decision making process. The initiation function is carried out by the initiators who call the attention of the rural people to any problem that arises and make them realise the gravity of such problem. There are different initiators for different actions. For example, in the case of a school building, the school administrator or a member of the community may serve as an initiator (Rogers, 1969).

Leadership selection and development requires greater community mindedness on the part of the extension workers and the people (Sanders, 1966). A leader is an individual whose ideas and actions influence the thought and behaviours of others or he is an accepted group member who moves the group toward its goal (Williams et al., 1984).

For effective implementation of rural community self-help projects, the people should be well organized in such a way that a specific role is performed by an individual or a group of people. It involves the selection of officers (such as the chairman, secretary, treasurer, public relation officer and financial secretary etc.) and the formation of committees (such as building and management committees etc.). This type of organization gives rise to division of labour and hence, efficient utilization of labour, money, time and materials which are at the disposal of the villagers (Askwith, 1960).

The main function of communication in community development is to open two channels for information on community needs and activities; and to provide further stimulation to local efforts. The possible channels of communication include radio, television, posters, meetings, home-visits, letters, village-criers and newspapers etc. (United Nations, 1955).

Sanction as an element of rural community self-help project implementation, is used as a punishment or a reward for a given performance. Within a community, we always find a set of people who are very active, dedicated, enthusiastic and ready to participate in community development projects at any given time. On the other hand, we could find people who are very passive and not willing to partake in any of the community projects. "Our labours, however, are continually rewarded and we receive happy encouragement ...". To maintain a maximum participation of every member of the community in the implementation of self-help projects, certain sanctions should be imposed (Gardiner, 1973).

The question, therefore, relates to the procedures commonly used in executing self-help projects in the rural communities. How is participation achieved? The purpose of this study therefore, was to make a case study on rural community self-help projects' implementation procedures in Ekiti South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the leadership selection criteria and the organizational structures used during project

implementation;
2. determine the communication channel(s) commonly used;
3. ascertain the sources of resources for the execution of self-help project in the area; and
4. determine the problem areas and the possible measures taken in order to achieve maximum participation of rural dwellers in self-help projects.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in 10 communities randomly selected out of a list of 21 communities in the area. The composition of sample and number of projects are shown in Table 1. A sample of 41 farmers who had participated in self-help projects were purposively interviewed on 41 different projects. The choice of number and type of project per community was based on the community size and project availability.

Interview schedule was designed, pre-tested with farmers from nearby communities (not included in the study) and administered to the respondents. Frequency distributions and percentages were utilized in data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Selection Criteria:

Data in Table 2 reveal that various criteria were used by the respondents for leadership selection while executing self-help projects in their communities. The majority (95.1%) of the respondents used old age as a criterion, while 51.2% of them used traditional chieftaincy title. Those that used level of education as a criterion accounted for 31.7%, while only seven percent of them reported to have used wealth as a criterion for leadership selection. The importance of old age and traditional chieftaincy title especially, among Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, can not be over-emphasized. It is generally believed in Yoruba land that the responsible old people are always full of wisdom, knowledge and understanding and hence, the respect accorded them (Adejumobi, 1991 and Warren, 1992).

Organizational Structures Used During Implementation of Self-Help Projects in the Study Area:

Table 3 shows the distribution of projects on the basis of organizational structures used during implementation. Majority (51.2%) of them were executed under the supervision of local leaders, elected secretaries, public relation officers and task-force committees, while 22.0% of them were executed through elected chairmen, secretaries, public relation officers and building/construction committees. Those that were executed under the supervision of elected chairmen, secretaries and treasurers accounted for 19.5%. Only seven percent of them were executed through presumed ideal organizational structures composed of elected chairmen, secretaries, treasurers, finance committees, construction/building committees, public relation officers and the planning committees. It is evident from these findings that over 90% of the projects were implemented without such ideal organizational structures and this could be one of the factors responsible for embezzlement, deviance and laxity on the part of some community members; and incompletion of certain self-help projects in the area as confirmed by the respondents.

Communication Channels Used in Implementing Self-Help Projects in the Study Area:

The respondents were asked how they spread information during implementation of the self-help projects in their communities. According to the data in Table 4, 17.0% of the respondents indicated that they used meetings only, while 41.5% of them indicated that they used a combination of meetings and home-visits. Seven percent of them said that they used a combination of meetings, home-visits, community-criers and letter writing. Those that used a combination of meetings and community-criers only, accounted for about 10.0%, while the remaining 24.4% of them used a combination of meetings, home-visits, and community-

criers. The implication of these find-
ings was that meetings formed the
major channel of communication during
implementation of self-help projects
in the area. Apart from meetings,
both home-visits and community-criers
were frequently used in the area for
the purpose of information dissemina-
tion probably due to the small sizes
of many of the communities and the
proximity of the people.

Sources of Resources Used During
Implementation of Self-Help Projects
in the Study Area:

a) Funds

Table 5 reveals that 44.0% of the
projects were funded mainly through
community-subscription, while 24.4%
of them were executed through the
combination of community-subscription
and donations from sons and daughters
outside the communities. Those that
were implemented through the combi-
nation of community-subscription,
launchings and the Local Government
grants accounted for 17.0%, while
the remaining 14.6% were funded
through community-subscription and
Local Government grants only. It is
evident from the analysis that the
rural farmers from the study area
were committed and therefore, able
to contribute meaningfully to the
development of basic infrastructural
facilities due to the importance
attached to them.

b) Labour

It could be observed from Table 5
that 12.2% of the self-help projects
were implemented through both com-
munal and hired labour, while two
percent of them were executed, using
hired labour only. Those that were
executed through communal labour
only, accounted for 34.1%, while
majority (51.3%) of them were imple-
mented through the combination of
hired, communal and the Local
Government labour. The implication
of these findings was that, communal
labour was the most common source
of labour in the area. In situations
where expertise was required and it
was not readily available in the com-
munities, external sources were
sought.

c) Materials

Table 5 also reveals that, majo-
rity (82.9) of the self-help projects
got materials for their execution
from both within and outside the
communities, while the remaining
17.1% of them got materials from
within the communities only. The
implication was that, materials
which were not available locally
(within the communities), were pur-
chased from outside the communi-
ties. Materials that were readily
available locally (within the com-
munities) in the area included sand,
water, sticks, earth, logs and ropes
etc., while materials such as corru-
gated iron-sheets, cement, nails,
iron-rods and asbestors etc., which
were not readily available within
the communities were purchased
from outside of many communities
in the area.

Problems Experienced While
Executing Self-Help Projects
in the Study Area:

The data in Table 6 reveal that,
about five percent of the respon-
dents indicated that they only
encountered leadership selection
problems, while 29.3% of them
encountered only fund-raising pro-
blems. Seven percent of them had
only land acquisition problems, while
majority (58.5%) of them indicated
a combination of fund-raising and
land acquisition problems. This
points to the fact that, majority
of farmers from the area were low
income earners like most other
peasant farmers in Nigeria. They
did not only lack funds but had
problems in raising funds for mean-
ingful rural infrastructural and/or
agriculural development. Besides,
they attached a great importance
to land; hence, the problems of land
acquisition. This finding lends a
support to the assertion made by
Famoriyo (1980), that land tenure
problem is one of the problems
militating against effective agricul-
tural production and rural develop-
ment in Nigeria.

Measures Taken to Achieve Maximum Participation of Community Members During Implementation of Self-Help Projects in the Study Area:

According to Table 7, two types of measures (rewards and punishments) were taken to achieve maximum participation of community members during project implementation. The nature of the punishments imposed on the deviants included: seizure of domestic animals from the deviants' houses and/or houses of their in-laws (19.5%), rebuking of non-participants by the elders (100.0%), fining of the deviants (68.3%), and seizure of the deviants' valuable goods (29.3%). on the other hand, the nature of the reward component involved: showering of praises on the outstanding participants by the elders (100.0%),exemption of the active participants from any subsequent minor community work (43.9%), and allowing the outstanding participants to take more food and/or palm-wine than others (78.0%).

CONCLUSION

Old age was the major criterion used in the process of leadership selection while implementing self-help projects in the study area. The farmers were not well structurally organized before embarking on many of the projects. A combination of meetings and home-visits formed the main channels of information dissemination. The primary source of funds for the implementation of the projects was community subscription. Fund-raising and land acquisition were the major problems faced by farmers. Both positive and negative sanctions were imposed to maintain participation of members in the execution of the projects.

For effective implementation of self-help projects in the rural areas, people should organize themselves structurally enough so as to avert the incident of embezzlement, laxity and deviance on the part of members; and the possibility of abandoning certain meaningful projects half-way. Government should intensify its degree of involvement and participation in rural community self-help projects in order to alleviate the problem of fund inadequacy. People should be willing to give out pieces of land for the purpose of self-help development projects. Land donors should be paid compensation fees if and when necessary.

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Table 1: Composition of Sample and Number of Self-Help Projects Selected per Community

Communities	Projects						Feeder Road	Total Number of Projects	Total Number of Respondents
	School Building	Postal Ageney	Health Centre	Market Centre	Community Centre				
Igbaraodo	3	–	1	–	1		6	11	11
Ilawe	3	1	–	–	1		3	8	8
Ogotun	2	1	1	1	1		1	7	7
Bolorunduro	1	–	–	–	1		1	3	3
Omuaran	1	–	–	–	1		1	3	3
Olorioko	1	–	–	–	–		1	2	2
Ilupeju	·1	–	–	–	–		1	2	2
Afuremu	1	–	–	–	–		1	2	2
Ajegunle	1	–	–	–	–		1	2	2
Abaosun	–	–	–	–	–		1	1	1
Total	14	2	2	1	5		17	41	41

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Criteria used in Leadership Selection

Criteria	No[+]	%[+]
Traditional Chieftaincy Title	21	51.2
Old Age	39	95.1
Wealth	3	7.3
Level of Education	13	31.7

+Checked more than one criterion

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 3: Distribution of Projects on the basis of Organizational Structures used during implementation

Organizational Structures	No	%
Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Committee, Construction/Building Committee, Public Relation Officer and the Planning Committee	3	7.3
Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer	8	19.5
Chairman, Secretary, Public Relation Officer and Construction/Building Committee	9	22.0
A Local Leader, Secretary, Public Relation Officer and a Task Force Committee	21	51.2
Total	41	100.0

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 4: Distribution of Projects on the basis of the Communication Channels used during implementation

Channels of Communication	No	%
Meeting only	7	17.0
Meetings, Home-Visits, Community-Criers and Letter Writing (Combined)	3	7.3
Meetings and Home-Visits (Combined)	17	41.5
Meetings and Community-Criers (Combined)	4	9.8
Meetings, Home-Vists and Community-Criers (Combined)	10	24.4
Total	41	100.0

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 5: Distribution of Projects on the basis of Sources of Resources used during implementation

FUNDS Sources	No	%	LABOUR Sources	No	%	MATERIALS Sources	No	%
Community Subscription only	18	44.0	Hired	1	2.4	Within and outside the Community	34	82.9
Community Subscription and donations from sons and daughters outside the community	10	24.4	Communal	14	34.1	Within the the Community only	7	17.1
			Hired, Local Government and Communal	21	51.3			
Community Subscription, launchings and Local Government grants	7	17.0	Communal and Hired	5	12.2			
Community Subscription, launchings and Local Government grants	6	14.6						
Total	41	100.0		41	100.0		41	100.0

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of problems
experienced while executing the Projects

Problems	No.	%
Leadership selection only	2	4.9
Fund-Raising only	12	29.3
Land acquisition only	3	7.3
Fund Raising and Land Acquisition (Combined)	24	58.5
Total	41	100.0

Source: Field Data, 1992.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of measures taken to
achieve maximum participationu of community members during
implementation of Self-Help Projects in the study area

R E W A R D S			P U N I S H M E N T S		
Type	No.[+]	%[+]	Type	No.[+]	%[+]
Showering of praises on the outstanding participants by the elders	41	100.0	Seizure of domestic animals from the deviants' houses and/ or houses of their in-laws	8	19.5
Exemption of the active participants from any subsequent minor community work	18	43.9	Rebuking of the passive members by the elders	41	100.0
Allowing the outstanding participants to take more food and/or palm-wine than others	32	78.0	Fining of the Deviants	28	68.3
			Seizure of the deviants' valuable goods	12	29.3

Source: Field Data, 1992.