

Citizens Participation and Local Government Responsiveness in Enugu State, Nigeria (2008-2015)

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Abstract

Citizen participation entails transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness to enhance trust in governance through consultative and joint decision-making process in line with the wellbeing of citizens'. The paper portends that if citizens are allowed to partake in decision making, the system will respond satisfactorily to the collective preferences of its populace. Nigeria local governments are shrouded in secrecy without citizens' involvement in government activities. The drivers of local authorities carryout their functions without any sense of loyalty, responsiveness, and accountability to people at the grassroots but to governors and godfathers in Nigeria with particular reference to Enugu state. Secondary source of data were consulted and content analysis were employed to determine the relevance of the materials, theories were used to explain the relationship of the variables. The paper recommends that Nigeria local government need a well democratic structure of local authorities to enhance citizen participation in governmental activities. There need to be some legal mechanism in place for elected officials to

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involve citizens in planning, execution, and evaluation of programmes and projects in their area. This will serve as a fertile ground for community leaders and traditional rulers to contribute their own quota for national development at the grassroots.

1. Introduction

Citizen participation is a process where rural people are given opportunity to be involved or engaged in decision making of their area for sustainable development needs and suggest lasting solutions to those problems. This is an interaction between leaders (government) and followers (people), where government listens and responds to the needs and demands of the people. It involves active engagement of citizens in local level activities that engender transparency, service delivery and accountability with good policy outcomes, development, and social welfare of citizens. Local governments is the vehicle that has the capacity to promote participation, socio-economic development and bridge the communication gap between central and local level as it concerns rural dwellers in Nigeria (Wampler and McNulty, 2013). This is because local level is closer to people at the grassroots will serve as avenue in which rural populace will make meaningful contributions by participating actively in socio-political and economic decisions of their area. In essence, if citizens have the opportunity to exercise their democratic control over the decision of the polity, the system will equally respond to the collective needs of its citizens (Mutekede and Sigauke, 2009). However, Nigerian local governments have been noted for poor service delivery, non transparent and accountable. Due to non-performance of these local governments, citizens of the area have become laden in their effort to endure poor policy outcomes and expected atmosphere devoid of non development and social welfare (Adesopo, 2011; Mapuva, 2011). Many scholars have argued on the increase of inevitable change that will help revitalize the state of local governments in the area of citizen participation. Some argued that instead of scrapping local government level as lower tier government, there is need for autonomy to exercise and allocate resources in their area of jurisdiction (Osakede and Ijumakin, 2014). The scholars were of the opinion that local level being closer to people are in better position to be responsive to their peculiar needs, they determine the amount of resources used to attain to their aspirations. Some states that the reasons why government strategic policies and programmes have failed in the past is because citizens have been isolated from planning and execution at the local level due to hidden agenda from government (Abe and Monisola, 2014). Citizen has not been carried along in setting agendas, develop budgets, implement programmes or evaluate outcome. Scholars noted that most citizens in rural areas of Nigeria have no knowledge on the business especially at the local level, this has created vacuum in the minds of citizens that feed with government responsive mechanisms to place the needs of the populace at the center. The creation of local government in most parts of the world stems from the need to facilitate developments to people at the grassroots, close gap created by higher levels of government and allow people to participate in running their affairs (Ola, 2004). It exists to fill the gap which national government is too remote to fill; implement the ideals, objectives, programmes and aspirations of national government at the local level (Okoli, 2000). The importance of local government is to tackle socio-economic problems and manage grassroots development through provision of basic services (Mabogunje, 2011, Oviasuyi, 2010). The paper

states that citizen participation in the affairs of the grassroots will engender local government responsiveness to the socio-economic and political needs of citizens. The citizens have not fully participated in the governance processes of their area with high level of transparency and accountability in conduct of government business will help shape their wellbeing (Robinson, 2010). It is against this backdrop that the paper investigate how citizen participation in the affairs of local government level has make or mar service delivery and democracy dividend with particular reference to Enugu State, Nigeria (2000-2015)

2. Clarification of Concepts

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation has been approached from different perspectives, some described it as taking part as individual or community in decision making at every step of development process (ACPD, 2006). Citizen participation is a process in which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources that affect them (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). However, participation could be perceived in the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of development, from needs assessment, appraisal, implementation, monitoring to evaluation. Citizen participation is the involvement of the massive population in the choice, execution and evaluation of projects that are designed to bring out significant upward movement in the living standard of people. The argument is that if the people are involved in policy planning together with local level officials efficient policies that can address the plight of citizens can easily be identified. According to Chikerema (2013), local government officials is mandated and obliged to inform citizens on policies and programmes of the rural area to contribute and implement such rural policies. The paper will explore competitive election, participatory budgets and public hearing as an avenue in which citizens can exercise their participatory role at the grassroots governance. Election is significant in a democratic setting because it constitutes a forum by which individual express his or her view on situation at the local level. It is only when elections are being utilized that citizen determine the kinds of elected representatives that hold public office is weighed and assessed. According to Braun and Grote (2000), when citizens are allowed to elect their leaders without any interference makes government not only accountable but responsive to rural needs by involving citizens in decision making. Election is a platform for citizens to participate in the choice of candidates that represent them to best articulate their felt needs, citizens can participate in local governance through consultative forums and public hearings. Citizens are involved in local administrative matters by channelling their proposals and local needs through their elected representatives (councillor), people equally get feedbacks from their representatives. This process encourages citizens' initiatives that delete accountability and responsiveness of local authorities to the rural needs of the people through citizen participation (Aulich, 2009). The approach to citizen participation is participatory budgeting whereby citizens are given the access to make contributions and inputs that affect planning and development in their locality. Urban councils act (2006), describe participatory budget as a pragmatic effort to strengthen and decentralize local level participation in governance, accountability and transparency in public purse. In participatory budgeting, citizens make input in allocating and implementing the public budget; and equally make local government official to be more responsive to citizens and project them in activities of rural area.

Local Government

Local government is the system of political decentralization in which power base of decision making is not national but local, in this system functions are locally and directly executed by elected officials who have direct control over local affairs (Wunsch, 2008). This is the most

critical level of government in which the momentum to sustain national development can be created. According to 1976 guidelines, local government is a legally established representative council empowered to initiate and direct the provision of basic services to determine and implement projects to complement the activities of state and federal level in their areas. The council ensures that through devolution of functions, active participation of people and traditional institutions, such that local initiatives which respond to local needs are maximized. Local level is an avenue for rural people to participate in decision making within their area on issues for national development. It is at the local level that roads, water, electricity, health, sewage, education, and other facilities are provided. Montague cited in Adeyeye (2005) views local government as local bodies freely elected to super-intend national or state government, endowed with power, discretion and responsibility without control over their decisions by higher authority. They provide services and implement projects to complement state and federal level activities in rural areas through devolution of functions and active participation to maximize the needs of rural people (Awa, 2006). Aransi (2000) sees local government as administrative units closer to people in the grassroots. They act as agents of local service delivery, community mobilization based on human and material resources, organize local initiatives in responding to the local needs and aspirations and provide basic structures for grassroots participation in democratic process. The ability of local level is to attain the needs of rural dwellers in Nigeria is predicated on transparency and accountability of officials at the grassroots. The way to attain these positive variables from service delivery is to institutionalize the culture of accountability and transparency at the local level of Nigeria. Agba and Chukwurah (2013) describe local government as the third tier of government created to decentralize governance closer to people for service delivery and engender development. The creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. All political systems seek to attain efficient and effective service delivery as it affects day-to-day activities of people. Local government articulate and facilitate the needs of the rural dwellers through the application of needed human resources for the purpose of efficient and effective service in the localities (Ugwu, 2000). They are mandated constitutionally in Nigeria to provide social and other basic services to the people and ensure participation of citizens in governance (Nzekwe & Izueke, 2012). Local government are the prime movers of institutional development in Nigeria. Their importance on the well being of its citizenry cannot be over-emphasized. The people are intimately affected by the activities of local government daily. The idea of creating local government allows people in the grassroots to promote democratic ideals and coordinate development programme directly to rural areas. According to Ezeani (2005), local government is an agent of development through prudent management of financial resources to justify participation in the democratic process for people within and outside government circles to transform the lives of rural dwellers and promote rural development. The shortage of funds facing local government currently could be attributed to lack of creativity on part of the local level to seek alternative sources to complement revenue allocation from the federation account. Most local governments are suffering from overdependence on centre assistance which was a norm during military governance. The well being of most Nigerians either in rural and urban areas are inevitably affected by the activities of local government through the provision and non provision of basic services like water, roads, health and educational services. Local government are the focal points for promoting development and cultural revival through community projects, mobilization of human and material resources for rural developments. Onah (2006) states that local government is a strategic position to integrate rural communities with efficient and

effective utilization of financial resources to provide social services, participate in governance to enhance rural development. Consequently, local government operates within the lowest level of society established by law. It is a level of government closer to rural dwellers with an assigned function to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the people. Mill (1921) cited in Ajayi (2000) views local government as one institution that provides political education, a vehicle that promotes political training and leadership qualities fostered in young politicians at the local level. The need to catalyze development, boost citizens' involvement and government responsiveness compels the concept local governments (Lawal & Oladunjoye, 2010). Local government constitute an edifice that aid decentralization, national integration, competency in governance and sense of belonging at the grassroots. It is a mechanism that transmits ideas and elevates grassroots to superior level of government (Adejo, 2003; Agagu, 2004). According to Ikelegbe (2005) local government is a segment of constituent State of a nation established by law to provide service delivery and regulate public affairs within its jurisdiction for the interest of rural people by local representatives. Local government is a political sub-division in a federal State which is constituted by law to have substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or exact labour for prescribed purposes. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria established local government as the lens through which higher levels of government view people at the grassroots to feel the impact of governance (FRN, 1999).

Significant Role of Local Government

According to Ezeani (2004), local government plays significant roles in the development process to inculcate positive citizenship attitudes, provision of community services for social well-being, mobilization and management of community resources for rural development. Olowu (1988) had elucidated the rationale for the creation of local government as follows:

Reduction of Social Discrimination: local government constitutes ethnic and communal groups some of which share common cultural and historical antecedents while others are disparate (Uphoff and Esman, 1984). It behaves on the 774 local government areas in Nigeria to manage over 250 ethnic configurations often complicated by unclear ethnic and political boundaries. Local government provides effective mechanisms for conflict resolution; reduces social discrimination and elimination of relative deprivation (Mawhood, 1983).

Provision of Basic Services: local government is an efficient provider of services in the present day existence, the services are far better provided than other levels of government to improve the lives of people living in rural area (Mills, 1921). Some of these services in education, health and housing are central to the development as against measuring rapid increase in Gross Domestic Product (Wilson, 2011).

Promote Integration: local government is a fertile ground for political participation and interest articulation to achieve consensus, because it improves intra and inter-group relations, builds trust for mutual co-existence. It affords the opportunity for popular participation by training citizens for political leadership (Abubakar, 1993). This can be achieved to impose core values through the instrument of local government. It is not a foolproof system of preventing disintegration, an alternative approach with high dividends, the success of federal arrangement in local autonomy in unitary states are testimonies to this fact (Ola, 1988).

Channels of Communication: effective local governments mobilize human and material resources at the grassroots level through an effective communication channel that mediates between the local populace and higher levels of government. This requires a pluralistic and egalitarian society characterized by the culture of participatory democracy. It must be anchored on the primacy of rule of law, accountability, transparency, viable public policy output through

effective institutions that not only regulate behaviour but assures optimal investment on human capacity-building (Uzuegbunnam, 2014). This eliminates communication blockade that lead to prejudice and conflict when government activities are not properly understood.

Political Participation and Interest Articulation: instills good behaviour and positive attitudes, such as, consideration, self-control, community responsibility, identity and accommodation. Participation and inclusiveness foster a sense of unity and belonging while improving capacities for prioritizing local needs and allotting available resources. It also prepares citizens for selfless services in higher positions and responsibilities at the state and federal government levels. It is a training ground for grassroots politicians to inculcate their democratic values and ideals. This are derivations from various perspectives on local government as an instrument for democratic participation, provision of efficient services, machinery for development and means of devolution and localization (Ezeani, 2004).

Service Delivery: is a set of program aimed at achieving some objectives. It relates to the social system in the goals of social policies. All social policies are directed towards making some change not only in the structure of society for the living conditions of the people in the society. Social service programs are services provided by a governmental agency for welfare of persons or the community at large such as housing, child protection, free education and health care delivery. Social service programs and their delivery help the people with necessities of health, education and housing to attain self actualization and happiness. Social welfare is a wide concept which encompasses improvement in the social status of the people and society in general. It necessitates the provision of such services as health, education, housing, roads, portable water and electricity. It also encompasses reduction of poverty, improvement of women and workers”.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is “Democratic-Participatory Theory” as propounded by notable theorists: Mills J.S (1977), Panter-Brick, K (1954), Tocqueville, A (1969), Machenezie, K (1961), Langrods, G. (1953). Democratic-Participatory theory has it that local government exist solely for bringing about democracy and afford opportunities for political participation to citizens as well as socialize the people politically (Adamolekun, 1988). Local government is a prime element of democracy and demonstrates the intrinsic values of democracy to widespread participation. Most local government politicians target higher political offices using local government as a spring board in Nigeria (Tony, 2011). The theory reveals that democracy in the local level is maximized when people at the grassroots, elect their representatives and account for stewardship (Hills, 2008). However, accountability, transparency and effective representation contribute to realize participatory-democracy at the local level. The need for local level emanates from the desire to express distinctive identities through smaller, directly accountable self political units to the peculiar needs of the grassroot (Ikwueze, 2008). Local government allows for independent self governance of smaller constituent units of government directly and democratically responsive for their own electorates. Indeed, the proximity of the citizens to the elected representatives as it concerns local government level makes it easier to account for their stewardship. The participatory-democracy will be in place if rural communities that form the bedrock of grass roots politics participate fully in the political process to foster sense of ownership over common resources. Oviasuyi and Dada (2010), state that participation of citizens in rural governance promotes local government level, for instance, the chairmanship position, councillorship position, supervisory councillor position, personal assistants to chairman, secretary and other positions in local government widen the spectrum for grassroot participation. Some politicians do not participate in state or national politics but local government offers them

opportunity. Sharpe (1970) contends that participatory democracy creates opportunities for citizens to make meaningful development in politics through self government. It is through participation in self governance that individuals at the local level have a stake to appreciate the virtues of free government from the national level.

The tenets of democratic-participatory theory are that local governments are created to encourage political participation, a training ground for recruitment of leaders, channel of self-government and political education at the grassroots level (Chukwuemeka, 2014; Ani, 2013). In the works of Adeyemo, (2011), the idea of local government is a philosophical commitment for democratic participation in politics and self-government at the grassroots level. In Nigeria, President Shehu Shagari, Umaro Dikko, Ali Mongumu started their political careers at the local government level as demonstrated by Ajayi (2000). However, Fischer (1993) argues that representative democracy is considered participatory since citizens lack the time or will to contribute in policy making. In spite of the constitutional provision for local government in Nigeria and 1976 local government reform, it is sad that the manner in which local government is run clearly deviates from the stated objectives. Local government as an avenue for political socialization and participation has not been fully realized. The stated goals are not achieved as expected in some systems like Nigeria due to institutional factors. The relevance of the theory was noted by Aragon & Sanchez-Pages (2008) that participatory democracy at the local level can be successful, but not without problems as it helps to govern large communities.

Citizens Participation and Responsiveness in Nigeria Local Government

Responsiveness is the degree in which government listens to the dire needs of the people and acts on such policies and institutions to uphold their rights (Donk and Williams, 2015). This explains the type of responsiveness viz: shallow responsiveness refers to established, functioning and transparent communication related to internal reporting and accountability system within government to inform communities and citizens, while deep responsiveness is the development, by local authorities and citizens, deliberate democracy. Edwards and McGee (2014) states that government responsiveness to citizens engenders service delivery, accountability and transparency that have beneficial outcomes to empower citizens. In relation to this, Bertucci (2000) states that citizen participation not only serves as democratic control but strengthen responsiveness in local level. However, Nigerian Presidency (2014) highlight that corruption in most local governments is as result of alienating citizen participation that promotes service delivery, accountability and transparency. It has been noted that citizen participation enhances accountability and reduces corruption through information dissemination in which public awareness is created for the actions of government (Sikader, 2015). Scholars have argued that citizen participation cultivate a sense of ownership for policy decisions activities, increase their willingness to assist and pay for services of the local government. These help local authorities to be more responsive, accountable and transparent even as it delivers service to the people. Elekwa and Eme (2013) states that community participation increases demand for effective local government system, and open window to build capacity of citizens. It has been observed that local governments that are more open to constituent pressure deliver services more efficiently (Muriu, 2013). In the words of Michels (2012), citizen participation has a clear impact on policy and action of government through participatory governance. In Enugu State, local government performs political functions to facilitate citizen's participation at the local level, thereby bringing government closer to the grass roots. The peculiar nature of local government distinguished it from other levels of government because of all the structures of government that are present at the local level. Local government permits rural people the opportunity to have a say in decision

making. The system provides for electing local representatives in local affairs to enhance political accountability. Adelekan (2010) described political participation as the process through which an individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding the common goals of society and the best way of achieving these goals. According to Akamare (2003) political participation is an aspect of political behaviour that focuses on the way in which individuals take part in politics directly or indirectly. There are various ways by which people can be involved in political system are selection or election of political leaders, formulating policies, community activities and other civic engagements. According to Arowolo and Aluko (2010), the essence of political participation in any society is to seek control of power, acquire power and influence decision making. It is a means for one to contribute its quota to the political system for the overall development of the nation. Citizen participation is a sine-quo-non for democratic governance; this is why Adelekan (2010) states that in an ideal democracy individual participation in decision making involves one's life. Any claim to democratic state must embrace a high degree of competitive choice, open and enjoy political liberties of all groups in the society (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010). However, local government has been performing this function for ages in primitive, colonial and post-colonial eras in a lower magnitude. The functions became more pronounced during military era; as a way to reach out rural people and legitimize their government. This became part of political lives of the people by entrenching local council functions in 1979 constitution and other subsequent constitutions in Nigeria. Local government is perceived to be the platform for people to share their views in government and resolve their differences.

Citizens Participation and Visit Every Community Project in Enugu State (2007-2015)

The project visit every community (VEC) was initiated as one autonomous community one project to take development down to rural areas and ensure that no section of the state is left out in the ongoing development strides. The idea is for royal fathers, community leaders, town union leaders and civil society groups of each autonomous community to partake in executing projects that will impact directly on their lives. In order to articulate people oriented economic blueprint Governor Chime through 17 council chairmen embarked on the programme to find out the key development needs (KDNs) of every community for government to drive the 4-point agenda deeper to all the 472 communities in the state (Edeh, 2014). The report of visit every community (VEC) Key Development Needs (KDNs) projects is participatory governance in Nigeria. Onyegu (2015) declares that Nigeria suffers from a major deficit with respect to allocation and management of public expenditure. The monitoring and evaluation of Enugu state government key development needs demand-driven participatory governance initiative as a major tool for improving accountability and transparency in the process (Okoro and Essiet, 2015). About 1,888 VEC/KDN projects in 472 communities were spread across 17 local government councils of Enugu State. The report analyzed background information on development agenda of state government obtained through desk top and research. The status of every community project is ongoing, completed and abandoned, development potential, plan, economic resources, types of micro, small and medium scale enterprises, tourist sites, mineral deposit, political and economic structures were confirmed (Vision 2020, 2012). In the words of Onyegu (2015), the report will serve as a source of information to equip stakeholders with knowledge of what already exists and what needs to be provided.

The VEC/KDN development model is anchored on identifying people's need to reflect those needs in the budget. According to Edike (2009) the key development needs (KDN) revolves around provision of roads, water, power, health care, agriculture, education, erosion control,

markets, tourism and skill acquisition centres, security for good governance in 472 communities of the state (Olisa & Obiukwu, 1992). The VEC implementing agencies are MDAs, LGAs, community based organization and federal government of Nigeria without further duplications (Enugu vision, 2012). The visit took place in every community with traditional rulers, town union leaders, councilors, political and business class, and the entire members of the community were engaged in a town hall interactive session. The communities were sensitized on Governors 4-point agenda, FGN 7-point agenda, vision 20-20, MDGS, SEEDS and their civic responsibilities like payment of taxes, voters' registration, census, maintenance of peace, security of lives and property (Edeh, 2014). The VEC initiative prioritized all social and commercial needs of 472 communities as KDNs not limiting the projects to 472 communities to 1,888 as follows:

Roads Enugu state in partnership with local government councils embarked on the construction and grading of inter-local government roads. A number of 110.303kms urban roads were asphalted with 313kms drainage and 7.520kms culvert. Asphalted of 57.284kms rural roads with 38.32kms side drainage and 2.73kms culvert including construction of one bridge were completed within the period under review. The 17 council chairmen asphalted 120.32kms roads, graded 249.9kms rural roads with laterite, constructed 12 bridges and 9 culverts between 2007 and 2015. This indicates that a total of 287.907kms roads both rural and urban were asphalted within the period under review.

Water: were undertaken to complement the effort to provide potable water for the rural communities. Local governments constructed twelve new motorized boreholes and rehabilitated 4 dilapidated facilities within the period under review. The projects provided potable water for 377,500 persons in 263 communities, and increased the coverage rate from 58.97 percent to 68.9 percent within the period (Enugu vision, 2012).

Health: the free maternal and child care programme initiated were implemented in partnership with local level as one of the health components where major achievements were recorded within the period targeted towards reducing maternal and infant mortality rate (Gana, 1996). The programme increased the number of deliveries by skilled birth attendants from 5,019 in 2009 to 17,538 in 2011 representing 249 percent increment. The number of new ante-natal care attendance rose from 18,700 in 2009 to 46,314 in 2011 indicating 148 percent increase and the percentage of under-5 year old children sleeping under insecticide treated net rose from 10.6% in 2009 to 80% in 2011 within the period. This reduced prevalence under-weight among the children in state from 15% in 2009 to 10% in 2011. Local governments made substantial achievements by constructing 30 health centres and renovation of thirteen old ones including 4 doctors' quarters in some health centres (Enugu vision, 2012). Some council made progress to ensure sanitation in rural communities by constructing 10 public toilets situated at market places, water facilities and health centres to reduce water borne diseases in the state (Olokun, 2002). In order to enhance service delivery at the local level, primary health care checks were initiated to monitor recruitment of 32 doctors, 259 nurses, 25 pharmacy technicians, 18 medical lab assistants and 156 health workers to address manpower problem in primary health care, 17 planning officers were posted to 17 councils to ensure planning and budgeting for development in Enugu state (BECANS, 2007).

Housing: some achievements in housing sector support Housing Corporation in confronting housing challenges in the state. Oji River local government constructed 3 and 2 bedroom bungalow, 12 one bedroom apartments within the period under review (LG, Bulletin, 2012).

Education: A total of 31 primary school blocks were constructed and renovated as with one community library completed by the local governments within the period. About, 1,700 school desks were procured and distributed to primary schools in some local councils of Enugu state (NPC, 2004). The recruitment of 2000 volunteer teachers comprising retired male, female teachers and young graduates led to the reduction of average teacher pupil ratio from 1:23 in 2009 to 1:20 in 2011 despite the school enrolment that increased from 237,548 in 2009 to 242,219 in 2011 indicating 2 % increase within the period under review. The state in partnership with local governments explored to close such gaps in the average pupil classroom ratio that increased from 39:1 in 2009 to 64:1 in 2011 including the average pupil toilet ratio from 278:1 in 2009 to 287:1 in 2011 in the state and equally the classroom with insufficient furniture increased from 80.1% in 2009 to 82% in 2011.

Security: Enugu state in collaboration with local governments made huge investment in vehicles and communication gadgets (Enugu LG, Bulletin, 2012). Sixty five Hilux patrol vans were procured for police, military and civil defence for joint security in the state. In order to improve the administration at the grassroots, the state government brokered a loan through public private partnership to purchase 474 cars for traditional rulers.

Electricity: The Oji River water works dedicated three 33kva transformers to improve power supply and commission twelve electrification projects in twenty two communities, extension of power in three communities and rehabilitation of vandalized rural electricity in two communities' project. Local government procured six 33kva; six.200kva; thirty five.300kva and ten 500kva transformers in many communities (LG, Bulletin, 2012). Enugu state government in partnership with local governments purchased ten new fire-fighting trucks, 1 water tanker, five Hilux vans and twenty telephone lines and increased staff strength by 64 new staff to tackle the fire outbreak challenges. Also, six new fire service sub-stations were opened in six urban local government areas for efficient response to any fire outbreak in any part of the state. The communities with CSDP procured, installed and energized 780 high tension poles, 447 low tension poles, ten 200kva and sixteen 300kva transformers in eight communities to provide electricity in rural areas. They constructed one deep motorized bore hole, six classroom blocks for one secondary school, two culverts and 1 health centre with hospital furniture during the period under review (CSDP, 2012). The development status of 472 communities in Enugu state was grouped in accordance with Community Focused Projects (CFPs). Community Focused Projects (CFPs) is equal to Key Developmental Needs (KDNs) Projects plus other Community Development Needs (CDNs) Projects from 2007 and 2015. The report of visit every community (VEC) Key Development Needs (KDNs) projects is participatory governance in Nigeria. Onyegu (2015) declares that Nigeria suffers from a major deficit with respect to allocation and management of public expenditure. The monitoring and evaluation of Enugu state government key development needs demand-driven participatory governance initiative as a major tool for improving accountability and transparency in the process (Okoro and Essiet, 2015). About 1,888 VEC/KDN projects in 472 communities were spread across 17 local government councils of Enugu State. The report analyzed background information on development agenda of state government obtained through desk top and research. The status of every community project is ongoing, completed and abandoned, development potential, plan, economic resources, types of micro, small and medium scale enterprises, tourist sites, mineral deposit, political and economic structures were confirmed (Vision 2020, 2012). In the words of Onyegu (2015), the report will serve as a source of information to equip stakeholders with knowledge of what already exists and what needs to be provided.

3. Methodology

This methodology deals with data presentation, findings and discussion collected from the primary and secondary sources were presented on hypothesis formulated to guide the paper.

Hypothesis: Absence of citizen's participation affects local government responsiveness to the needs of the people at the grassroots of Enugu State, the data for testing the hypothesis are presented in table below.

Table 3.1: The t-test statistics of the mean ratings of the responses of respondents on how absence of citizen's participation affects local government responsiveness to the needs of the people at the grassroots of Enugu State 2000-2015.

SN	Item Statements	\bar{X}_M	SD_M	\bar{X}_F	SD_F	t-cal	t-tab	p-value	Rmk
1	Administrators are responsive to the popular needs of citizens in Enugu state	2.58	0.90	2.70	0.85	0.96	1.96	0.33	NS
2	Elected officials represent the interest of the citizens in Enugu state.	2.52	0.86	2.40	0.89	0.93	1.96	0.35	NS
3	The citizens express freely on the act of governance in Enugu State	2.67	0.96	2.26	0.89	2.19	1.96	0.01	Sig.
4	Local government officials involve citizens in project execution at the grass root.	2.60	0.79	2.45	0.81	1.17	1.96	0.23	NS
5	Elected officials run open and transparent in local government.	2.39	0.88	2.37	0.90	0.18	1.96	0.85	NS
6	Local government is an agent of higher level of government in Enugu State.	2.70	0.85	2.36	0.76	2.30	1.96	0.02	Sig.

Note: \bar{X}_M = Mean of males; SD_M = Std. Deviation of males; \bar{X}_F = Mean of Females; SD_F = Std. Deviation of females; Level of Sig. = 0.05; S^* = Significant at 0.05; NS = Not Significant.

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result of t-test presented in the table reveals that the t-calculated (t-cal) values of items 1, 2, 4 and 5 are 0.96, 0.93, 1.17 and 0.18 respectively which are all less than the t-tabulated (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance. This indicates that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of male and female respondents on the 4 items; poor participation of citizens affected local government responsiveness to the needs of the people at the grassroots of Enugu State (2000 – 2015).

On the other hand, the t-calculated values on the remaining two items, specifically items 3 and 6 are 2.19 and 2.30 respectively which are greater than the t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there are significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of the male and female respondents on the two identified items in the table. The null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents based on their gender or sex is rejected on the two items in the table.

The result of t-test presented in Table 4.7 reveals that the t-calculated (t-cal) values of items 1, 2, 4 and 5 are 0.96, 0.93, 1.17 and 0.18 respectively which are all less than the t-tabulated (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance. This indicates that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of male and female respondents on the 4 items; poor participation of citizens affected local government responsiveness to the needs of the people at the grassroots of Enugu State. On the other hand, the t-calculated values on the remaining two items, specifically items 3 and 6 are 2.19 and 2.30 respectively which are greater than the t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there are significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of the male and female respondents on the two identified items in the table. The null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents based on their gender or sex is rejected on the two items in the table.

4. Findings and Discussions

Data from In-depth Interview revealed that citizen's active participation encourages government responsiveness to the needs of the community. The findings of the study shows that many of the respondents agreed that poor participation of citizens in active political activities at the grass root level has greatly affected the responsiveness of local government to the needs of the people. In other words, absence of citizens participation in policy making at the local government level deprive them the opportunity to make input demand with expectation of government output in response to their demand. This finding as supported by Odo (2014) reveals that exclusion of citizens from grassroots participation is a challenge in development. Consequently, lack of community participation in the political process and people oriented development. For developmental needs to be meaningfully achieved at the local government level people must be its active agent and not passive beneficiaries. Many development projects in local government of Enugu State failed due to non-involvement of local communities in the conception, design and implementation of such projects. It has been noted that development programme that marginalizes the contributions of primary beneficiaries; hardly make serious impact on lives of the people. This is because rural communities which could have owned the project and continued from where the government stopped are excluded. Local government is people's government at the grassroots level that represents the interests of the people; the people should be involved in its affairs. The participation of rural areas in decision making of local authority gives local government the character of self government. Once rural areas do not participate in local affairs, they become alienated and would not support any development programmes of such councils.

Unqualified politician is another factor that undermines the increased participation of the people in development process at the grassroots in Enugu State. Odo (2012); noted that most qualified politicians do not vie for positions in local government levels, hence unqualified individuals are elected and appointed as chairmen, councilors, supervisory councilors and secretary to the local governments. As rightly observed in some local governments, school dropouts are councilors and chairmen. This caliber of people cannot conceive development programmes that will transform their areas. Excessive promotion of parochial rather than broad community interests is a major challenge for citizen's participation in development. It divides instead of uniting the diverse rural communities; this even affects modest progress at the grassroots level. Accordingly, instead of political parties making positive contributions to grassroots development through aggregating demands of the people, they acted negatively.

Based on our findings grassroots development requires mass participation and the re-structuring of the rural economy to grow from a dependent peasant to improved quality of life at the local government level. The bottom line of this is an improvement to the well-being and living

conditions of the rural people. Olusola (2011) reported that there are poor environmental states, deteriorating public school buildings, poor market facilities and ill equipped health facilities in Nigerian local governments. The provision of social services such as education, health, as well as maintenance of roads and other public utilities within the jurisdictions of local government in Enugu State is now a myth or mirage. The failure of local governments in service delivery was expressed by former president Obasanjo in 2003 as he lamented that what existed was abysmal failure of local government system in Nigeria and Enugu State inclusive.

These observations apparently show that the essence of creating local government all over the world is to facilitate rapid development at the grassroots. As a result of the abysmal failure of local governments in efficient service delivery due to non participation of local people, the citizens at the local level are beginning to lose trust in the existence or otherwise of local government councils in Nigeria. The paper established that exclusion of citizens at the grassroots in active political participation has negatively affected local government response to their needs. Non-input in the political process at the grassroot level has resulted in poor output by the government at the grassroots. In conceptualization grassroots development, the bottom line is that it is about improving the standard and living conditions of the rural people.

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

Government exists primarily to provide services that will improve the living standard of its citizens. The governance at the local level plays a crucial role to ensure provision of public goods to the vast rural population. The creation of local government in the world stems from the need to facilitate developments at the grassroots. All political systems seek the attainment of effective and efficient service delivery to people at the grassroots. Thus whatever is the mode of government, local government is regarded as path to national integration, administration and development. Unfortunately, Nigerian local governments have not been pragmatic in efficient and effective service delivery at the grassroots. This is evident in poor environmental state, deteriorating public school building, poor market facilities and lack of health centres. The provision of basic services like education, health, roads and public utilities within the jurisdictions of local government is now a mirage in Enugu state, Nigeria. The failure of local governments in service delivery was expressed by ex-president Obasanjo in 2003 when he lamented that it was on record that no time in the history of the country had there been the current level of funding accrued to local governments from federation account, yet the hope for rapid development had been a mirage as successive councils had grossly under-performed in their assigned responsibilities. Poor service delivery and non accountability at the local government level in Nigeria could be linked to non-participation of the grassroots in political activities impeded service delivery at the grassroots, and excessive empowerment of state government to oversee local governments. This has undermined effective grassroots participation at the local government level in delivery of dividends of democracy to Enugu state, Nigeria. The above observations apparently show that local governments in Enugu state have not really facilitated rapid development to people at the grassroots which is the essence of their creation. As a result of the failure of local governments in efficient service delivery, the citizens at the local government level are beginning to lose trust in the existence of local government system in the state. Absence of citizen's participation affects local government responsiveness to the needs of the people at the grassroots of Enugu State.

Based on the findings, the study recommended as follows:

- i. There should be urgent political education at the local government level in Nigeria. The political education should not be limited to school system; both formal and informal approaches should be

adopted to orientate the citizens on the need for active participation in the political system. Besides mass political enlightenment by the federal government on the media, adult education programme and civil liberty organizations should be organized to stimulate the citizens' consciousness on the danger of political apathy.

- ii. There is need for reform that promotes policies that entrench democratic ethos, financial autonomy, transparency and accountability in local government. The interference of state governors at the local level should be eliminated through constitutional reform to allow council heads to manage their natural resources using appropriate planning standards; design appropriate programmes suited to peculiar areas needs of the communities; and effective delivery of democratic dividends to the grassroots.
- iii. There should be pro-active capacity building for the institutional and system capacity that produces human capital committed to the indices of good governance in terms of transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity, justice, prudent management of public funds, strong leadership that is beneficial to the citizens.
- iv. There should be institutional strengthening at the local government level to various departments and units. This involves training local government staff in policy monitoring and evaluation, public participation, public service delivery, social mobilization in collaboration with the private sector.

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