

Community Participation and Infrastructure Development: A Case Study of Akure City, Nigeria 2016

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Abstract

Infrastructure development is the bane of any economy and it is an important factor for the improvement of wellbeing and quality of life. Many nations are struggling with meeting the increasing demands for infrastructure while devising different approaches to meeting supply. However, the focus of the Nigerian government is more towards the development of the urban and rural areas while the suburban areas are often neglected.

The aim of the study is to assess the impact of community participation on infrastructure development. The study is carried out to understand the institutional framework for road and water infrastructure provision and how community participation contributed to adequacy of infrastructure in the suburban areas of a medium size city. The study was carried out in five (5) suburban communities within Akure city, Nigeria. Using a range of qualitative methods, the study examined the role of government in the provision of road and water infrastructure in the selected suburban communities. It also examined the participation of the local residents and contribution of community self-help projects to adequacy of infrastructure development in these communities.

The study established that there is lack of planning for infrastructure development in Akure suburban areas while more emphasis are put on the urban and rural areas even though there are multiple agencies involved in the provision of road and water infrastructure. There are overlapping responsibilities as regulatory institutions are also major providers of the provision of road and water infrastructure in Akure suburban area. The study further revealed the preference of top-down approach to infrastructure development as only few agencies make use of bottom-up approach while there is little relationship and no exchange of information between the state-based and local-based agencies and the regulating agencies.

Lastly the study showed that community self-help projects contributed little to adequacy of road and water infrastructure. Community participation contributed more to availability and accessibility of road and water infrastructure while their qualities did

not improve. There is enhanced local participation and ownership of water infrastructure while road projects are through collective actions.