

DETERMINANTS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: A CASE OF GARISSA SEWERAGE PROJECT, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of community participation in the implementation of development projects a case of Garissa Sewerage Project. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The sample comprised of 138. Data were collected through questionnaire and interview guide. Findings revealed that community members were unaware about the of the Sewerage project. The local members were of the opinion that the development projects undertaken in their locality had not been implemented through the participation of all. The study also found that even the local leaders were not involved in project planning and implementation. It was also revealed that donors made decisions about developmental projects while the local members disagreed that they felt dissatisfied with the decisions made by the management of the development projects. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there were factors affecting community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects. The study also concluded that members did not participate in planning of Garissa development project. The study also concluded that even the local leaders were not involved in project planning and implementation as indicated by majority. It was also concluded that community members viewed that opinions of every one were not heard and respected. The study also concluded that decision making influence community participation in Garissa Sewerage development project. The community around were not involved in the management of Sewerage development projects.

Keywords: community participation, project management, development, self-sustenance

INTRODUCTION

People's participation is the sine qua non for development. by unknown bureaucrats and technocrats" (Constantino, 1982). The notion of people's participation in their development has been gaining momentum in the process of human empowerment and development. Contemporary development scholars have been advocating the inclusion of people's participation in development projects as they believe the avowed objectives of any project cannot be fully achieved unless people meaningfully participate in it. Stone (1989) argues that people's participation in development projects may help bring effective social change rather than impose an external culture on a society. Similarly, referring to the experience of rural development programs.

The concept of community participation originated about 40 years ago from the community development movement of the late colonial era in parts of Africa and Asia. To colonial administrators, community development was a means of improving local welfare, training people in local administration and extending government control through local self-help activities (McCommon, 1993). Today, it has developed as one of the major models of development especially related to grassroots community development initiatives and viewed as a basis for project success. It has also received wide acclaim, but also criticism. The World Bank (2004) considers participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affects them. While Cleaver (2006) is critical that, "Participation has become an act of faith in development: something we believe in and rarely question."

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of community participation in the implementation of development projects a case of Garissa Sewerage Project.

Objectives of the Study

- i. Establish how involvement in decision making influence community participation in Garissa Sewerage development project.
- ii. Determine how social factors affect community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects.
- iii. Establish the influence of managerial involvement on community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects.
- iv. Establish challenges faced by the community in participating in Garissa Sewerage development projects

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of community participation, community participation and development, factors affecting community participation and sustainability of projects, influence of decision making on community participation in development projects, effects of social factors on community participation in education, influence of managerial involvement on community participating in development projects, review of empirical literature

Often the term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as community participation, citizen participation, people's participation, public participation, and popular participation. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as "to have a share in" or "to take part in," thereby emphasizing the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate. Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) defined participation as a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence. It is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power. However, it can also be a method to co-opt dissent, a mechanism for ensuring the receptivity, sensitivity, and even accountability of social services to the consumers.

Armitage (1988) defined citizen participation as a process by which citizens act in response to public concerns, voice their opinions about decisions that affect them, and take responsibility for changes to their community. Pran Manga and Wendy Muckle (Chappel, 1997) suggest that community participation may also be a response to the traditional sense of powerlessness felt by the general public when it comes to influencing government decisions: "people often feel that health and social services are beyond their control because the decisions are made outside their community. Involvement or community participation has become one of the important conditions and is essential for the implementation of programmes and projects and also a fundamental condition to attract projects and programmes. It is also considered as a method capable of solving problems of maintenance of essential services that some of our communities meet like inadequate access to water and sanitation and lack of public funds.

The community development approach emphasizes self-help, the democratic process, and local leadership in community revitalization (Barker, 1991). Most community development work involves the participation of the communities or beneficiaries involved (Smith, 1998). Thus, community participation is an important component of community development and reflects a grassroots or bottom-up approach to problem solving. In social work, community participation refers to "the active voluntary engagement of individuals and groups to change problematic conditions and to influence policies and programs that affect the quality of their lives or the lives of others" (Gamble and Weil, 1995).

Active community participation is considered as the single most important determinant of overall quality of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) projects implementation. There are so many success stories worldwide to prove the value of community participation. However, the level of community participation varies depending on the project implementation mechanism adopted by the project. Extent and effectiveness of community participation is also depend on other factors such as prevailing socioeconomic situation, local institutional support arrangement, level of project support staff intervention and existing WSS situation (Dahanayake , 2004).

Water and sanitation facilities provided without the active participation of the beneficiaries in planning and management are often not properly operated and maintained and hence are unsustainable” (NWP, 2002:21). Ownership of the facilities including water wells is neither perceived to be, nor legally vested in user communities. These factors lead to a lack of commitment to maintenance of the facilities by the users. Communities should be empowered to initiate, own and manage their water schemes including water wells.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Orodho (2005), “descriptive survey design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. (Best & Kahn ,1993) postulates that descriptive survey design is the most appropriate design in the behavioural sciences as it seeks to find out factors associated with occurrence of certain events and conditions of behaviour. Using this design the investigator does not control any variables but only describes the situation as it is at a particular point in time. This design therefore enabled the researcher to explore the determinants of community participation in the implementation of development projects a case of Garissa Sewerage Project.

Data collection instruments

Data was collected through questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaires were used for the community members and interviews with the local leaders were highly structured and were guided by questionnaires. However, unlike those in the community, these interviews took place under extreme time limits set by the local leaders. To supplement the questionnaire, interviews were conducted to get more information on how the project was planned, organized, implemented and how were the people involved.

Data Analysis Approach

The data were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). All themes discussing the same research questions were presented and analyzed together. The analysis of data was presented in both tables and figures and narrative explained.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Response rate

Questionnaire return is the proportion of the questionnaires returned after they have been issued to the respondents. Out of the 138 local community members and local leaders sampled in the study, 135 members returned the questionnaires which were deemed adequate for data analysis.

Table 1: Distribution of the local community members by gender

Gender	F	%
Male	57	42.2
Female	78	57.8
Total	135	100.0

Majority 78(57.8%) of the local members were female while 57(42.2%) of local members were male. Table 2 tabulates age of the local community members. The data shows more representation of females than males but it will not have effect on the findings.

Table 2: Distribution of local community members by age

Age /years	F	%
25 – 30	63	46.7
31 – 35	33	24.4
41 – 45	24	17.8
51 and above	15	11.1
Total	135	100.0

Data shows that 63(46.7%) of the local community members were aged between 25 and 30 years, 33(24.4%) of members were aged between 31 and 35 years, 24(17.8%) of members were between 41 and 45 years while 15(11.1%) of the members were above 51 years. The data shows that community members participating in the implementation of the project are relatively young and hence deemed as energetic and hence could positively be involved in the project. When asked to indicate their education status, they responded as Table 3.

Table 3. Local community members' education status

Education	F	%
primary education	60	44.4
secondary education	35	25.9
Degree and above	17	12.6
Illiterate	23	17.0
Total	135	100.0

Table 3 shows that 60(44.4%) of the members had primary education, 35(25.9%) of members had secondary education, 17(12.6%) of the members had acquired bachelor's degree and above level while 23(17.0%) of the members were illiterate. The data shows that majority of the community members had lower level of education (primary) which could hinder their effective participation in the implementation of the project.

The study further sought to investigate the occupation of the local community members. Table 4 tabulates their responses.

Table 4. Occupation of the local community members

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Pastoralists	82	60.7
Business Service/Trade	32	23.7
Unskilled labors	9	6.7
Skilled	12	8.9
Total	135	100.0

Data shows that majority 82(60.7%) of the Local community members were pastoralists sector, 32(23.7%) of the members were in business services sector, 9(6.7%) were in labor while 12(8.9%) of the members were in education sector. The data shows that majority of the community members were pastoralist which is a dominant economic activity in the area.

Factors affecting community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of community participation in the implementation of development projects a case of Garissa Sewerage Project. The participants in the study were therefore posed with a number of research questions that they were required to respond to. To establish the factors that affect community participation in Sewerage development projects, the researcher sought to establish whether the community members knew anything about the functions of the Sewerage project. Table 5 presents their responses.

Table 5. Local members' responses on whether they knew anything about the functions of the Sewerage project

Response	F	%
Yes	97	71.9
No	38	28.10
Total	135	100.0

Data shows that majority 97(71.9%) of the community members were aware about the of the Sewerage project. When asked whether the development projects undertaken in their locality had been implemented through participation of all. They responded as Table 6.

Table 6. Participation of the local community member's in the implementation of development projects

Response	F	%
Yes	30	22.2
No	105	77.8
Total	135	100.0

Findings shows that majority 105(77.8%) of the local members viewed that the development projects undertaken in their locality had not been implemented through participation of all. The data shows that members of the community were not involved in development projects. To establish whether the members participated in planning of development project, they were asked to respond to the same item.

Table 7. Community members' responses on whether they participated in planning of Garissa development project

Response	F	%
Yes	21	15.6
No	114	84.4
Total	135	100.0

Data shows that majority 114(84.4%) of the members did not participate in planning of Garissa development project. The study also found that even other local people were not involved in project planning and implementation as indicated by majority 81(60.0%) of the community members.

The study further sought to establish the local leaders understanding by community participation. The community leaders indicated that it means involvement of the community, in the project functioning and its implementation. They further said that it was a process of involving the local community in contributing to the project either in cash or in kind through consultation, changes in behavior, involvement in administration, management and decision-making.

The researcher posed question to local leaders asking them to indicate the role of the community in planning stage at the village level. They indicated that the community members if approached at the grassroots or bottom- up to approach solution to the problem would be reached easily. The local members were asked whether the opinions of every one were heard and respected. Table 8 shows their responses.

Table 8. Community members' responses on whether opinions of every one were heard and respected

Response	F	%
Yes	50	37.0
No	85	63.0
Total	135	100.0

Majority 85(63.0%) of the community members viewed that opinions of every one were not heard and respected. The study further sought to investigate the rate of participation of members of the community to the development project. This further implies that they were not fully involved in the implementation of development projects in the area. The community members were asked to respond to the same item. Table 9 shows the findings.

Table 9. Members ranking on the level of participation of community people at development project

Response	F	%
Lowest	95	73.0
Medium	37	24.8
Highest	3	2.2
Total	135	100.0

Majority 95(73.0%) of the community members ranked the level of participation of community people at development project being low, 37(24.8%) of members said it was medium while a significant number 3(2.2%) of members said it was high.

Influence of decision making on community participation in Garissa Sewerage development project

To establish how involvement in decision making influenced community participation in Sewerage development project, the local were asked how long it took to put the people into discussion given their low level of understanding. The local leaders said that a lot of time needed to put the people into discussion as the most locals were illiterate and took time to understand the project was not provided.

The study further sought to establish whether the community around were involved in the management of Sewerage development projects. Table 10 tabulates local member's responses.

Table 10. Community members responses on whether community around were involved in the management of Sewerage development projects

Response	F	%
Yes	42	28.5
No	93	71.5
Total	135	100.0

Majority 93(71.5%) of the local members indicated that the community around was not involved in the management of Sewerage development project.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants of community participation in the implementation of development projects a case of Garissa Sewerage Project. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. Research question one sought to establish how involvement in decision making influence community participation in Garissa Sewerage development project. Research question two aimed at determining how social factors affect community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects. Research question three sought to establish the influence of managerial involvement on community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects while the last research question aimed at establishing challenges faced by the community in the participation in Garissa Sewerage development

projects. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The sample comprised of 138. Data were collected through questionnaire and interview guide.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there were factors affecting community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects. The community members were not aware about the of the Sewerage project. The development projects undertaken in their locality had not been implemented through participation of all. The study also concluded that members did not participate in planning of Garissa development project. The study also concluded that even the local leaders were not involved in project planning and implementation as indicated by majority. It was also concluded that community members viewed that opinions of every one were not heard and respected. The study also concluded that decision making influenced community participation in Garissa Sewerage development project. The community around were not involved in the management of Sewerage development projects. The Sewerage development project was run by people from other areas while the local people did not appreciate community development and their attitudes towards participating in community development projects were not favorable.

The study also concluded that there were social factors that influenced community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects. The local members indicated that education level influenced the participation of the community in the development projects at a high extent. It was also concluded that managerial involvement influenced community participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects. The local members indicated that they were not involved in the operations and running of the Sewerage project. It was also revealed that donors made decisions about developmental projects. There were challenges faced by the community in the participation in Garissa Sewerage development projects revealed that members said that there were problems encountered in participation of the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following were the recommendations of the study-

The study has revealed that the community was not involved in decision making. The main contention behind people's participation in development is that real development must be people-centered. As Jazairy (1989) notes that projects conceived and implemented by outside organizations have failed because adequate consideration was not given to the importance of local participation.

The study also revealed that lack of community empowerment was a factor that hindered them from their participation in the projects. The study recommended that the local community should be empowered through education so that they fully participated in development projects. The community people should be included in all phases of development projects from the process of needs assessment for the design and development of a project, through project implementation to project monitoring and evaluation.

The study has revealed that without meaningful participation of the local people in the development process, sustainable improvement in the standard of living of the people cannot be achieved. In view of the findings of the study, it was recommended that the poor and the disadvantaged, characterized by social, economic and political backwardness, are traditionally and culturally neglected in planning and implementation of development projects. Some structural changes can bring awareness and power among the marginalized groups breaking the traditional patterns. However, desired outcomes may not come overnight. In this context, local NGOs working with the marginalized section in the rural areas need to be included in the local development process through public opinion mobilization, design and planning process. This may gradually help to institutionalize the participatory practices in the development process.

The study has revealed that the community has not been involved in the management of the projects. The elected community representatives at management level are mostly unaware about the benefits of participatory development approach. Lack of knowledge in this regard on their part may have contributed to their misunderstanding and misconception. Launching training programs or workshops may help change the mindset of the elected representatives regarding participatory practices in development interventions.

The study also recommends that the management should be empowered so that they are able to participate in development projects. Participatory budgeting needs to be introduced in the projects with a view to integrating community people in the development project cycle. In this context, representatives from different social groups should be trained so that they can articulate their demands properly and make meaningful contributions to local development planning.

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