

An Assessment of Factors Affecting Grassroot Political Participation in Democratic Governance in Nigeria: A Perspective on Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the factors affecting grass root participation in democratic governance in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Osun State. The study adopted survey design and utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaire and conduct of in-depth interviews. As revealed by the pilot study conducted in the three selected LGAs, the study population of 2,357 comprised executive members of the two dominant political parties in the State: APC and PDP (120), traditional chiefs (56), executive members of community development associations (428), executive members of civil society organizations (219), and members of semi-formal organizations (1,534) of the three selected LGAs in State. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample fraction of 20%, making 472 respondents, for questionnaire administration. In addition, six selected stakeholders were interviewed. Secondary data were obtained from books, academic journals, official documents, newspapers, magazines and the Internet. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and chi-square. The study revealed that there was low community participation in the governance of the State, due to limited government accommodation and responsiveness to civil society participation, lack of access to information about government programmes and services, peoples' low concerns to decisions of the government (54.19%), lack of trust in political office holders, and lack of awareness of the people concerning their roles in governance. The study hereby concluded that there was low political mobilization at the grass root, and as well as the participation in democratic governance in Osun State within the study period. It was argued that the bond between the people at the community level and political institutions has weakened in the State due to the inadequate participation of the people at the community level in the governance of the State, which has reduced the legitimacy and trust in the government of the State. It was recommended that government should provide more fora or platforms such as town hall meetings that will encourage increased participation of the people at the community level in the governance of the State and there should be an empowerment bill that has provisions in the code for mandatory public hearing and consultation, sanctioning local officials who potently violate the participatory provisions of the code, and increasing substantive representation of civil society in local government units.

Keywords: Community-wide, Democracy, Governance, Participation, Public Value

Introduction

It is generally believed that governance paradigm is about process, politics and partnerships. While in the past, many countries (including Nigeria) were run by government officials that took decisions primarily based on technical knowledge, today new governance structures and demands require that government agencies expand public consultations, implement participatory governance practices at the local level, encourage popular participation and develop new partnerships with civil society organizations. Government actors need to open up for more transparent and responsive decision making. Without transparency, citizen participation is poorly informed and less effective. Without accountability, those in positions of power can safely ignore the will of the people. By demanding responsiveness to social and economic needs, organized civic activity can have a real and tangible impact on local government performance and the quality and responsiveness of public services.

A functional democracy needs an informed citizenry and empowered media, popular participation in policy making, a responsive state, and governing processes that are open, transparent and inclusive to all legitimate interests. Improving relationships between citizens and their government means working simultaneously on state responsiveness and effectiveness, citizen empowerment, and the accountability of elected officials and council members. The state alone cannot solve society's many problems or provide the remedies for democracy's deficits—this also requires citizen action.

The principles of participation and inclusion are cornerstones in the UN common understanding of a Human Rights-Based Approach. According to the UN common understanding “Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized”. This can be paraphrased as: People who participate take responsibility, and thereby become free individuals that engage in the societal development for the benefit of the family, community and society as a whole.

In recognition of the declaration of ANC (1994), successive governments in Osun State, since 1999, have made attempts at incorporating the views of the people into governance through the promulgation of programmes. For instance, Chief Adebisi Akande, the executive governor of Osun State between 1999 and 2003, introduced a programme tagged “*Labe Odan*” (Under the Shade of Tree). This programme was designed to encourage the participation of the people in the governance by identifying and incorporating their needs into government activities. It was a monthly programme and it used to be taken to every town in the state in an open environment where people would gather with the governor himself and his cabinet in attendance. The governor would listen to the views of the people and provide clarifications where necessary. Even though, this programme was featured in every town in the state, the major participants or audience during the programme used to be politically inclined and there used to

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be discriminations with regard to the views of the people based on political affiliation.

In the same vein, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the governor of Osun State from 2003 to 2010 also introduced a public enlightenment programme tagged “*Open Forum*”. It was a monthly programme and it used to be hosted by the governor and his cabinet at the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), wherein it would be coordinated by an officer of the OSBC. Unlike “*Labe Odan*” (Under the Shade of Tree) of the previous administration, the open forum was designed such that people would be expected at the OSBC Osogbo which happened to be the venue of the programme. During the programme, people, perhaps, representative from different communities would make their demands known to the governor and sought clarifications to issues bordering their minds. However, because this programme was not taken to the door step of the people, many people who could not afford to travel to the venue of the programme due to financial, distance or time challenges were denied the opportunities of expressing their view. Additionally, the programme was politically inclined.

Mr. Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola, assumed the office in October 2010 as the third governor of the State since 1999. Like the previous governors, Aregbesola introduced two public enlightenment programmes tagged “*Aregbesola Till Day Break*” and “*Gbangbadekun*” (Face Off). The first one is a phoning programme shown on the television where people will call the governor and express their views. The programme is held at the end of every month and it runs through the night to the day break. However, many people were not able to participate in the programme, first because of the timing of the programme, the network problem, and the financial challenges of many people at the local community. The second is usually held on quarterly basis and on zonal basis. It is usually taken to a particular local government of each zone. The people from different communities will gather at the designated venue and express their views to the governor who is equally present at the programme. However, this programme is totally political in nature and it is usually held for campaign purpose and not mainly for identifying and incorporating the view of the people. Thus, from the forgoing, it is worthy to say that the successive governments since 1999 have made attempt at encouraging peoples' participation in the governance of Osun State through various platforms as mentioned above. However, these platforms are defective and politically motivated, thus, could not ensure proper participation of the people

There is general argument that most African governance systems are illegitimate; not responsive to the need of their citizens, not committed to providing public welfare; and not competent to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities and for ensuring the participation of the people (Olu-Adeyemi, 2012). Additionally, previous researchers have studied Governance of Nigeria's villages and cities through indigenous institutions (Olowu & Erero, 1997); and Participation of Citizens in Rural and Urban Governance: A Situational Analysis of Nigeria 2011-2014 (Ikegwuoha &

Ifeanyi, 2015). There is lacuna with respect to the establishment of the status and factors influencing political mobilization and grass root participation in the governance of Osun State; hence this study

Literature Review

Community-wide participation

The United Nations (1981) sees community-wide participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development. Community participation is a complex mechanism, and in effect there is no single blue print. Hence, each area is characterized by different dynamics and demographics. This view is held whilst taking cognizance of the fact that development does not occur successfully if beneficiaries are not part and parcel of the process of planning and implementation of the process.

The methods of community participation play a crucial role in terms of meaningful participation (Nekwaya, 2007). Community participation is rooted in democratic approaches to public policy, community planning and development, which assume that people have a right to make decisions that affect their lives. In short, a community that gives up the ability to make its own decisions loses some essential humanity.

Oakley and Marsden (1984), state that there are two main vehicles for implementing this notion of participation; (1) community development programmes which were aimed at preparing the rural population collaborate with government development plans and (2) the establishment of formal organizations (cooperatives, farmers association, etc.) which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes. Burkey (1993) provides the evidence which suggests that only a few achieved any meaningful participation and benefit by means. Oakley and Marsden (1984) assert that this strategy has not resulted in meaningful participation of the community in rural development. In fact it is the strategy which has resulted in the current situation failing to confront the issue of the lack of meaningful community participation in rural development. Thus, community-wide participation is an indispensable element of democratic governance, such that, meaningful and functional democracy depends solely on the participation of the people at the rural community.

Public participation is an end in itself, and is the unavoidable sequence of the process of empowering and liberating the community to understand the process of development (Oakley and Marsden, 1984). Kumar (2002) agrees that community participation as an end is self- mobilizing where the local people themselves are in total command. There is no doubt that meaningful participation is about achieving power: which is the power to influence the decisions that affect one's livelihood. Community participation is viewed as an

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end if it becomes a long-term process, the purpose of which is to develop and strengthen the capabilities of people in order to participate directly in development initiatives (Kumar, 2002).

This comparative analysis will be presented briefly below:

Table 1: Comparative Analysis: Participation as a means or an end

	Participation as a means	Participation as an end
1	Implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective	Attempts to empower people to take part in their own development
2	Attempts to utilize existing resources in order to achieve the objective of the project/programmes	Ensures increased role of people in Development initiatives
3	Common in government programmes, specifically for mobilising community to improve efficiency of delivery system	More favoured by Non - Governmental Organizations than by government
4	Stresses the achievement of the objective rather than the act of participation itself	Focuses on improving the ability of the people to participate rather than just achieve prede termined projects objectives
5	Participation take a more passive form	It is relatively more active and dynamic

Source: Kumar (2002)

Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn on the fact that meaningful participation of the rural poor in development is concerned with direct access to the resources necessary for development, and some active involvement and influence in the decisions affecting those resources (Burkey, 2000).

The Concept of Governance

Like most concepts of its kind, the concept of governance due to its complex weaving of “economic, political and social aspects of a Nation” (Shehu, 1999), has not been amenable to easy or simplistic definition. In other words, the concept has not been an exception to the volatility and eclecticism for which the disciplines in the Social Sciences have been globally noted whenever it comes to the conceptualization of core issues.

This explains Esman's (1997) claim that “no two political scientists would agree on what the concept of governance is, or what it means”. Infact, as Hyden (1999) once noted, “only few authors (have) define(d) it (the concept of governance) with a view to serving analytical purpose” hence, “governance as a concept has not been extensively used (or defined) in the political literature until very recently when it gained currency” (Nkom and Sorkaa, 1996).

World Bank (1989) defines governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development”. According to the World Bank (1993), governance has three dimensions. These dimensions which, Eyinla (1998), equally noted are: “the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the management of social

and economic resources and, the capacity of government to design and implement policy and to discharge its functions". These dimensions were specifically identified and concretely elucidated by Olowu and Erero (1997) who, both conceptualized governance as relating to the "rule-ruler-ruled relationship".

Trevor Gordon-Somers' (1997) attempt appears like a summary:

the legitimate exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, at all levels. It comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations and mediate their differences. Management of development, in terms of policy formulation, resource allocation and balancing of economic interests, is crucial".

... *Sound governance* is therefore participatory, transparent, accountable, effective, equitable and promotes the rule of law (Trevor Gordon-Somers 1997:133).

Although governance has a wide range of meanings and applications, there are some key elements of governance that most scholars who use the concept tend to agree upon (Turnhout and van der Zouwen 2010). These key elements are: the increased involvement of non-state actors, the decentralisation of decision making, and the emergence of new modes of steering by central authorities. These elements are used both prescriptively – as ways to achieve good governance – and descriptively – as empirical manifestations of a changed political landscape and of the new methods by which societies are governed. Therefore, they can be invoked both as policy instruments to achieve democratic norms and as analytical concepts to describe governance.

Speer (2012) reviews experiences of participatory governance mechanisms as a strategy for increasing government responsiveness and improving public services. She characterises these mechanisms (p. 2379) as follows:

They involve citizens in decision-making over the distribution of public funds between communities and the design of public policies, as well as in monitoring and evaluating government spending. Thus they differ from community-based development schemes in which community members participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of a particular development project within their community (Speer 2012 p. 2379)

It can be inferred from the entirety of the literature that opinions are diverse on the subject of community-wide participation and democratic governance. There appears to be consensus on the exigency of community participation in the governance system, and scholars also agreed that there is need for effective

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participation of the people in the democratic system of their community or state, which, of course, should be result oriented and not counter-productive as in the case with Nigeria, especially, Osun State. From the review of literatures, it was revealed that majority of the studies examined focused only on governance, democracy and development with little emphasis on community participation. Other than that, little attention has been given to the study of the level of political mobilization and grass root participation in democratic governance in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is public value theory. The concept of public value theory was first introduced in Moore's book *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (1995). The fundamental assumption of public value theory is to provide services according to the public interest (Chambers, 2003). Public interest is defined as what people would 'choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, and acted disinterestedly and benevolently' (Chambers, 2003). Thus this theory entails desired outcomes of public programmes and participation of expected beneficiaries (to see the outcome clearly) for the services when delivered by the government bodies. Bozeman argued that 'Public value theory tends to operate at the highest levels, such as philosophical treatises about the public interest, or at the operational level, focusing on specific desired programme outcomes'. This theory induces public institutions to recognise public value of resources, goods, and services and to think the arrangement under what 'is the public best served' (Chambers, 2003).

The public value theory articulated that public officials and representatives should include people in making decisions for service delivery, and thus the theory pursues the implementation of good governance with people as the central element of both the approaches. Hence, this study adopts this theory to conceptualize community-wide participation and democratic governance; and to address the earlier research questions raised in this study.

Methodology

Primary and secondary data were utilized for this study. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaire and conduct of in-depth interviews. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. At the first stage, one Local Government Area (LGA) was randomly selected from each senatorial district of Osun State, making a total of three LGAs in the State. At the second stage, political parties, traditional chiefs, executive members of civil society organizations (CSOs) and executive members of community development associations were purposively selected in each of the three selected LGAs. The choice of these targeted groups was based on their vantage positions to provide unbiased information on the level of community-wide participation in the governance process of the State. As revealed by the pilot study conducted in the three LGAs, the study population (2,357) comprised executive members of

the two dominant political parties in the State: APC and PDP (120), traditional chiefs (56), executive members of community development associations (428), executive members of civil society organizations (219), and members of semi-formal organizations (1,534) of the three selected LGAs in Osun State. A sample fraction of 20%, making 472 respondents, was selected for questionnaire administration. In addition, six selected stakeholders on community participation and governance were interviewed. Secondary data were obtained from books, academic journals, official documents, newspapers, magazines and the Internet. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean value and chi square.

Findings

Factors Affecting Political Mobilization and Grass root Participation in the Governance of the State

This section analysed the factors affecting political mobilization and grass root participation in the democratic governance within the period under study in the study area. Using likert-scale ratings, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with 10 assertions made by the researcher on the factors affecting community-wide participation in the governance of the State of Osun. Use differently, the mean value ($\bar{\chi}$) here rates the strength of the respondents for each of the assertions set out to achieve this objective, using a decision rule as thus: ($\bar{\chi} > 2.5$) means agreement with the assertion; and ($\bar{\chi} < 2.5$) means disagreement that such assertion is not a factor affecting community-wide participation.

As shown in Table 3 below, 288 (75.39%) respondents strongly agreed to the fact that the participation of the people seems to be much facilitated at the national level making it difficult for those located at the outlying rural areas to participate and influence public policy while only few respondents 94 (24.61%) disagreed to this view. The mean response is 3.13 which remarkably above the average tending towards agreement. It can therefore be admitted that participation is much more facilitated at the national level than community level. This may be attributed to the fact that the federalism being practiced in Nigeria allotted more financial power to the central rather than the local which is closer to the community, thereby restricting the financial capacity of the local government to embark on sensitization programme which will have engender more participation at the community level.

It was also revealed in the table that the extent of government accommodation and responsiveness to civil society participation appears to be limited. This fact is supported by the majority of the respondent 288 (75.39%) with mean response of 3.11. This showed that the existence and participation of civil society organization in the democratic governance of the state is limited and this is one of the strong factors affecting the participation of the community members in the governance.

Lack of trust in political office holders, future developments and a growing

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sense of alienation of individuals from their immediate community is was equally admitted as a major factor affecting the community-wide participation in the governance of Osun State. This was supported by the majority of the respondents 261 (68.32%) with mean response of 2.71. The respondents 121 (31.68) who disagreed to this fact may be justified on the ground of their membership of political parties in the State and as such, by attending meeting and rallies, they may be inclined to the confidence in their leaders. However, considering the mean response of 3.71, it can be submitted that the people of the state do not trust their political office holders and are grossly alienated from their immediate community which therefore responsible for their low participation in governance of the State.

Lack of access to information about government programmes and services was also considered as one of the factors affecting the participation of the people in the governance of the State of Osun. This view was supported by the majority of the respondents 238 (62.30%) with sample mean of 2.86. This shows that there is lack of access to information about government activities in the state and this responsible for the low level of participation of the community members in the governance of the state.

Another factor affecting the community participation in the governance of the state is that there is general lack of political commitment on the side of the Federal government of Nigeria towards effective devolution of powers, which is evident in the continued influence and interference in the functioning of local communities. This view is evidenced by the majority of the respondents 241 (63.09%) who agreed to the assertion with a mean response of 2.88. This further corroborate the earlier fact established above regarding the financial incapacity of the local government to implement programme targeted towards enhancing community participation in the governance.

Another important factors affecting the community participation in the governance of the state as evidenced by the majority of the respondents 207 (54.19%) is the fact that the people at the community are usually indifferent to the decisions of the government. This apathy to government activities may be attributed to the factor earlier established in this study regarding the lack of trust in the political office holders in the State. However, considering the strength of the disagreement to this fact 175 (45.81%), it could be submitted that the apathy to government activities and decisions is personal in nature which may vary from one individual to another and which can not be generalized like other factors established above.

Also, Table 4.4 below showed that the majority of the respondents believed that there is lack of awareness of the people concerning their roles in governance. This is evidenced by the majority of the respondents 311 (81.41%) who agreed to this fact. This showed that the awareness of the majority of the people at the local level concerning their roles in governance is low and this is affecting their participation in the governance. This position further corroborate the fact established above regarding the low awareness creation of the government on the

role of the people in the governance. In the same vein, the table revealed that the majority of the respondents 278 (72.77%) agreed that community participation in governance is not majorly entrenched in our laws. This could be interpreted to mean that most of the available provisions in the Nigeria 1999 constitution focus on political participation, especially, in relation to election and not focusing on other areas of inclusion such as participatory governance of participatory budgeting and this hinder the participation of the people in the governance of the country with no exception to Osun State.

Table 1: Factors Affecting Grass root Participation in the Governance of the State

Assertions	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	\bar{x}	Remark
1 Participation seems to be much more facilitated at the national level, making it difficult for those located in outlying rural areas to participate and influence public policy	118 (30.9)	170 (44.5)	70 (18.3)	24 (6.3)	3.13	Agree
2 The extent of government accommodation and responsiveness to civil society participation appears to be limited	113 (29.6)	175 (45.8)	68 (17.8)	26 (6.8)	3.11	Agree
3 Lack of trust in future developments and a growing sense of alienation of individuals from their immediate community	11 (2.9)	250 (65.5)	71 (18.6)	50 (13.1)	2.71	Agree
4 Participation framework has not mainstreamed gender, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable groups.	21 (5.5)	260 (68.1)	71 (18.6)	30 (7.9)	2.84	Agree
5 Lack of access to information about government programmes and services	48 (12.6)	190 (49.7)	109 (28.5)	35 (9.2)	2.86	Agree
6 There is general lack of political commitment on the side of the Federal government of Nigeria towards effective devolution of powers, which is evident in the continued influence and interference in the functioning of local communities	48 (12.6)	193 (50.5)	111 (29.1)	30 (7.9)	2.88	Agree
7 People at the community are usually indifferent to decisions of the government	104 (27.3)	103 (26.9)	112 (29.3)	63 (16.5)	2.86	Agree
8 Lack of trust in political office holders has made people at the community to refuse to participate in government decisions	17 (4.5)	260 (68.1)	90 (23.6)	15 (3.9)	2.90	Agree
9 There is lack of awareness of the people concerning their roles in governance	11 (2.9)	300 (78.5)	70 (18.3)	1 (0.3)	2.97	Agree
10 Community participation in governance is not majorly entrenched in our laws	78 (20.4)	200 (52.4)	101 (26.2)	4 (1.0)	3.11	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2019

NB: f = Frequency; % = Percentage; \bar{x} = Mean value; and N = Total Number of Respondents

To complement the data gathered through questionnaire administration, some key personalities were interviewed. Most remarkably, the interviewees noted that our constitution only focus on the political inclusion of the people but does not focus on other areas of inclusion. For instance, it was noted by the interviewees that, the constitution ought to make it compulsory upon political office holders to discuss with their people before preparing the budget so as to identify the key areas that the budget must focus. In the same vein, it was noted that the National Orientation Agency which is saddled with the responsibility of sensitizing the public on their roles in governance is not working to the expectation.

Participation at the Grass root in Osun State

The various assertions put forth to assess the level of participation in the governance of the state are; the citizen control, delegated control, partner, consultation, placation, informing, collaborating, handover and self directed action. All these assertions were assessed by various statements which the respondents were asked to respond to.

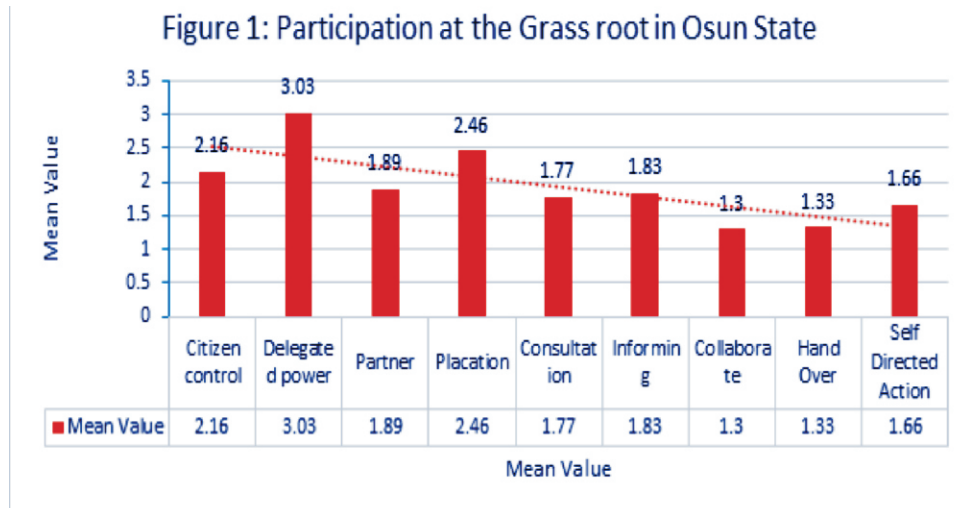
Concerning the citizen control of decisions affecting their life, the respondents were asked whether the community majorly involve in the control of decisions affecting them, it was revealed that, the community members are not usually involved in the control of decisions affecting them. This is supported by the mean of the responses 2.16 which tends towards disagreement to this assertion.

Governance is about partnership between the ruler and the rule as empirically established in the chapter two of this study. In order to assess this position in relation to the State of Osun, it was found that the government and community (stakeholders) do not share responsibility in the decision making process with mean response of 1.89 tending towards disagreement. It can therefore be established that there is no partnership between the government and the people at the community with regard to the decision making process in the state.

To draw the people nearer to the government so that harmonious relation could be established between the ruled and the ruler which is the cardinal goal of democratic governance, government usually put in place necessary arrangement to facilitate discussion and share of views. In relation to the State of Osun, the majority of the respondents 243 (63.61%) opine that the government has not put in place necessary arrangement such as town hall meeting to appease the community against any problems The mean response to this assertion is 2.46 which affirms this fact. It can therefore be established that proper arrangements which could appease the community against any problem are not adequate.

In the same vein, informing is also examined as an element of governance, it was revealed in the Figure 1 that the majority of the respondents believe that the

government has not provided adequate information that facilitates informed choices by the community. It can therefore be inferred from the responses of the respondents that the people are not usually carried along through proper information about the activities of the government. The extent of collaboration between the government and the community was also examined in the table. According to the respondents, 330 respondents representing 86.39% of the total respondents disagreed that the government and community work cooperatively in the decision making process ($\chi = 1.30$). This shows that there was no cooperation between the government and the people at the community with regard to the involvement of the people through cooperation.



Source: Field Survey, 2019

To complement the data gathered through questionnaire administration, some key personalities were interviewed. The interviewees provided their views on the state of community-wide participation in Osun State since the beginning of the fourth republic. One of the interview noted as follow:

Government cannot exist without the participation of the people at the community, who are to be governed. That is, democratic governance presupposes the existence of the participation of the community members in the decision making of how they will be governed. The adequacy or otherwise of this participation is however contestable. In the case of the State of Osun, there is community participation in the governance. However, this participation of the people is not adequate enough to guarantee the total inclusion of the will and desires of the people into the major decisions of the government. For instance, when the council area and new LGAs were to be created, there was voting process where people of the State were allowed to express their views regarding

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that decision, however, the extent at which these views expressed by the people through voting, manifest in the final arrangement and creation of the LGAs was contestable because, the result of the voting was neither released for the people to see nor read out through any medium.

It was also unanimously mentioned that the community members participate in the governance of the State but that their participation is low. It was also gathered from the interview session that, the people are not usually informed about the activities of the government and even when they are carried along, their views are not usually incorporated into the decision of the government. Thus, it can be inferred from the responses of both the respondents to the questionnaires administers and the interviewees that there is community participation in the governance of Osun State but that their participation is low.

Discussion of Findings

This section provided further discussion on the study findings above. It synchronized the findings with related empirical findings of other research works on the subject matter of this study. It equally attested to the point of divergence between the findings of this study and other empirical outcomes.

As noted in the findings on objective one, concerning the citizen control of decisions affecting their life, majority of the respondents 312 (81.68%) disagreed to this statement. This implies that, the community members are not usually involved in the control of decisions affecting them. Also, governance is about partnership between the ruler and the rule as empirically established in the chapter two of this study. The findings shows that the majority of the respondents 273 (71.46%) asserted that there is no partnership between the government and the people at the community with regard to the decision making process in the State of Osun.

These findings fell in consonance with the submission of Abba (2015) in his study on Citizen Participation in Local Governance and Sustainability of Programmes. According to him;

Any system of government is primarily constituted to serve the citizens at all levels of the society. The objective of the governance is to develop the citizen by providing necessary infrastructures to improve the life of the citizenry. The rationale behind such policies is to bring government closer to the people (Abba, 2015: p 2).

This is the reason why Adelekan (2010) emphasized that ideally, democracy means individual participation in the decisions that involves one's life. In a democratic system, there is the necessity for the citizenry to be fully involved in the democratic procedures of the choice of rulers and effective communication of the public policies and attitudes. Any claim to democratic regime or state must

essentially embrace a high degree of competitive choice, openness, and enjoyment of civic and political liberties and political participation that involves all groups of the society (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010).

The findings of this study regarding the factors affecting community-wide participation in the governance showed that the extent of government accommodation and responsiveness to civil society participation appears to be limited (75.39%), lack of trust in future developments and a growing sense of alienation of individuals from their immediate community (68.32%), lack of access to information about government programmes and services (62.30%), lack of political commitment on the side of the Federal government of Nigeria towards effective devolution of powers, which is evident in the continued influence and interference in the functioning of local communities (63.09%), people at the community are usually indifferent to decisions of the government (54.19%), lack of trust in political office holders has made people at the community to refuse to participate in government decisions (72.51%) and there is lack of awareness of the people concerning their roles in governance (81.41%). Falade (2014) submitted that the public lacks confidence in government, and government does not trust lay citizens and their representatives to make informed decisions on issues generally considered the realm of experts. Part of this distrust relates to the role of government agencies—government environmental agencies often see themselves as mediators and service providers (both industry and the public being clients) rather than as trustees of the public interest.

The findings of this study also showed that community participation in governance is not majorly entrenched in our laws (72.77%). This view is supported by Joel (2012) who asserted that current laws generally do not establish mechanisms for true citizen discourse in decision-making. With the exception of negotiated rule-making, government agencies are not obliged to incorporate citizen input into decisions—only, in some instances, to respond to comments.

All the above findings fell in consonance with the findings of the previous studies, though in relation to different state. Joel (2001) found that the public has always been disillusioned by the lack of genuine opportunities to participate, the failure of many multi-stakeholder processes, the frequent disregard of their concerns as “emotional,” the failure of government to incorporate their concerns in decisions, and the power that economic interests exert in agency decision-making. In their own remark, Dare and Olukemi noted (2012) that inclusion of citizens in the policy making arrangement is to create sense of belonging and awareness necessary for the sustainable of policy even if it is a short-term painful policy that will provide long-term reward. This public participation model is potent enough to consolidate democracy and engender good governance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study hereby concluded that there was low political mobilization the grass

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root, and as well as the participation in democratic governance in Osun State within the study period. The bond between the people at the community level and political institutions has weakened in the State due to the inadequate participation of the people at the community level in the governance of the State. This low connection between the people and the government has reduced the legitimacy and trust in the government of the State since its return to the fourth republic.

In respect of the findings from the study, the following recommendations were offered to help resuscitate community-wide participation in the governance of Osun State: The government should provide more fora or platforms that will encourage increased participation of the people at the community level in the governance of the State and devoid of political gain/motive. The government should also create more enlightenment opportunities to inform and create awareness for the people regarding their rights and responsibility about direct participation in government especially, on the areas affecting their livelihood.

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