

Challenges of Mobilization And Participation For Community Development: A Study Of The Internally Displaced Person Of Bakassi Peninsular, Nigeria

Usang, Eteng Eloma Ph.D
Faculty of Education
Cross River University of technology, Calabar
E-mail: eloma01@yahoo.com.

Ikpeme, Nya John,
CENTRE FOR GENERAL STUDIES,
Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar,
E-mail; mfonsan@yahoo.com, Phone; 07064645100

Amimi Paul Bassey
CENTRE FOR GENERAL STUDIES,
Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar,

Abstract

Mobilization and participation have extraordinary implication on the socio-cultural lives of the people of Bakassi, especially for the kind of forceful resettlement on the citizenry. This study was conducted through a participatory rural appraisal technique (survey research) in order to ascertain and evaluate the basic needs of a typical rural setting like Bakassi in Nigeria, with a view of understanding the strategies for rural mobilization and participation in a resettled environment. The study intended to explore on the social-economic, political and cultural factors affecting the internally displaced persons of Bakassi. The study was premised on invalidating contemporary resettled issues affecting a resettled area like Bakassi. The people are not appreciative of government efforts because of the frustration encountered as displaced persons. Data for this study were obtained from two hundred (200) respondents in the study area through a combined set of research instrument and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The respondents were randomly selected from the various areas under the study. Two null hypotheses were tested using the χ^2 test of significance. The findings of the study have among other things shown that the people of Bakassi are not properly resettled inspite of government huge resources committed to the area; majority of the people are poor and under fed, the settlers are without good drinking water, no access to good education and poor health delivery services. The study therefore, recommends that government should have the political will to design and implement policies targeted at ameliorating the plight of the resettled Bakassi people especially in the provision of affordable social services and empowering the poor to design and implement policies having the potential of meeting the basic needs of the people. Government should also embark on proper and most effective resettlement that could make the people closer to the sea, in other to continue with their normal marine occupation.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Bakassi is the peninsular extension of the Africa territory of Calabar into the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria and Cameroon have disputed the possession of Bakassi for some years; leading to considerable tension between the two countries. Cameroon took the matter to the international court of justice on the 29th of March, 1994. The court delivered its judgment on 10th October, 2002, finding (based principally on the Anglo-Cameroon Agreements) that sovereignty over Bakassi did indeed rest with Cameroon. It instructed Nigeria to transfer possession of the peninsular but did not require the inhabitants to move or to change their nationality. Cameroon was thus given a substantial Nigeria population and was required to protect their rights, infrastructure and welfare. The outcome was a de facto Nigeria government did not, however, openly reject the judgment but instead called for an agreement that would provide “peace with honors, with the interest and welfare of Bakassi people”.

The international court of justice judgment was backed up by the United Nations, whose charter potentially allowed sanction or even the use of force to enforce the court ruling. The then Secretary –General Kofi Annan mediated and chaired a tripartite summit with the two countries presidents on 15 November, 2002, which established a commission to facilitate the peaceful implementation of the ICJs judgment on 13 June, 2005. The dispute resolution was headed by the then secretary General of United Nations Kofi Annan, the

Cameroonian President and the Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo in New York city. At the point the Nigeria troops within the next two years.

At a matter of fact, Nigeria actually began to withdraw its military, comprising of some 3,000 troops, beginning from 1st August, 2006 and in a ceremony on 14th August, 2006 marked the formal handover of the Northern part of the peninsula.

The peace accord brokered by the UN secretary General Kofi Annan is what is popularly referred to as “the Green Tree Accord” the Agreement titled “Agreement between the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria, concerning the modalities of withdrawal and transfer of authority in the Bakassi peninsula. The Agreement was done at Green Tree, New York on 12 June, 2006, signed by Olusegun Obasanjo for Nigeria and Paul Biya for Cameroon, witnessed by representatives of United Nations, Federal Republic of Germany, United States of America, the French Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Within sixty days of the date of signing of the agreement.

By article 2 of the accord Nigeria agreed to withdraw all its armed forces from Bakassi peninsula within sixty days of the date of signing of the agreement. By article 3, Cameroon, after the transfer of authority to it by Nigeria, guaranteed to Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi peninsula the exercise of the fundamental right and freedom enshrined in the international law. The agreement further provided in its Annexure that Nigeria shall not conduct or continue the exploitation of natural resources in the sub oil of the zone, or to engage in any activities harmful to the environment while Cameroon should apply to Bakassi a special transitional requirement for not-renewable period of five years in which Cameroon shall allow officers and uniformed personnel of the Nigeria police access to the zone in cooperation with the Cameroonian police, with the minimum of formalities when dealing with inquiries into crimes and offences or other incidents exclusively concerning Nigerian nationals.

In reaction to the signing of the Green Tree Accord, Kofi Annan said “with today’s agreement on the Bakassi peninsula, a comprehensive resolution of the disputes within our grasps. The momentum achieved must be sustained”. It must be stated that such an imminent conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon, has to be resolved.

A senate delegation went to Bakassi to have a first hand experience of the plight of Nigerians. At a mini public hearing held in Calabar, the paramount Ruler of Bakassi, Etinyin Etim Okon Edet raised the refugee problem when he asked “was it right for Bakassi to be ceded without adequate relocation plans and due compensation paid to the people who were supposed to leave their ancestral homes”? This question and other disturbing issues concerning Bakassi resettlement has propelled this research with an aim of providing a good literature for the Bakassi question.

Theoretical framework

The most appropriate theoretical framework that best explains the working of this research is the participatory development theory, which is closely akin to the basic needs theory in whose assumption explains that the people are left out of the developmental processes that affects them, by not being involved in a participatory level.

The participatory development theory

The participatory development theory originated in the late 1970 by Mai and Koin Kean University of Thailand. It emerged as an alternative to the conventional top-down approach to development. The increased popularity of the theory grew out since 1970s because of its focus on meeting basic needs and reaching the poor (Mechener 1998. 205). In a similar development, Grady (1991) observe that participatory action research emerged as a result of the failure of the old development approaches built on the trickle down principles. With the unrealistic nature of transfer of technology, researcher and development experts begin to appropriate the complex relationship between the environment and economy, culture and politics in rural societies.

The participatory development approach is intensive and semi-structural hearing experience carried out in a community by multi-disciplinary team, which includes community members. In its simplest form, participatory rural development is one, which carried rural people along at every stage of the development process. Qualifying this gesture, Nyoni (1981) maintained that the very notion of participation implies that nothing should be hidden from the people. They should be involved in the identification and prioritization of activities to be undertaken, decision making and planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory development approach takes off with a process known as problem posing (Modo 1994, 199). He explains that the approach enable professionals, consultants and government officials to learn from the rural people, directly and face to face; and also enhance their understanding of the perception priorities and needs of the people. The theory is important because of its potentials for the concretization and empowerment of whom development is planned. Usually, it is used for problem solving at the local level. It has been found very

useful in exploring an area to learn about key problems or when planning for research of development projects especially in areas like Bakassi, and its new resettled area.

This approach is very relevant within the context of this study because through collective warning and mobilization, it will help and empower the rural Bakassi people to identify their own problems, needs and opportunities; provide practical research based on information that will help to solve this problems, and assist them take advantages of the opportunities to improve their lot.

The selection of this theory is based on: (i) enhancing the chances of making development objectives and outputs relevant to the perceived needs of the people, and (ii) enhancing negotiations of rural societies and associations with institutions and agencies concerned with development etc.

Statement of the problem

Judging from the formal handover of Bakassi peninsular to the Republic of Cameroon, it is most obvious that the internally displaced persons of Bakassi extraction like refugees all over Africa land are exposed to challenges. The situation in Bakassi, Nigeria became most pathetic in the face of unexpected and sudden ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at Hague.

It is worthy to note that Bakassi have been so displaced from their ancestral homes that relocating the people outside their historical and cultural environment would make life very unbearable for immediate adjustment, as they are exposed to untold hardship.

Pioneer Newspaper of Monday, 26th May, 2008 drew the attention of the Federal Government of Nigeria to the right of Bakassi returnees as well as those of other states in the country. The paper quoted the deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State Engr. Patrick Ekpotu as indicting the Federal Government during the interactive session with some Bakassi returnees for not providing relief materials to returnees of Akwa Ibom State extraction of Bakassi, to enable them settled properly.

Studies have revealed that 90% of the settlers in the Bakassi peninsula were fishermen who depended solely on the sales of marine food for their livelihood. They used boats; nets, iron hooks and others fish traps to carry out their maritime business. Much of what they got from their trades were both for export and local consumption.

Most disturbing is the challenges faced by security implications of the Bakassi internally displaced persons (IDP) because of their leaguered history of privacy and smuggling activities at the high sea. Inspire of their condition, some of these persons still persist in their nefarious activities thereby posing threat to internal security. These crop of people have strong alliance with their Cameroonian counterpart at sea piracy. In February 2008, a Nigerian Government led maritime team were mercilessly shot and drowned at the River Nyankasa estuary and about 30 armed uniform men drowned, this incidence diverted Government attention to serious security problem entailing the IDPs. It is often rumoured that many committed Cameroonians espionages are presently posing security risk to this part of the country, and in affirmation of this, in his remarks, at an official commissioning of the Immigration Base at Ekpri Ikang on October, 2007, the Cross River State Governor, senator Liyel Imoke stressed that “the secretary of the state and by extension the country solely depended on the incorruptibility of the security forces at our borders”. This in essence means that Government has specifically instructed the security outfits on security measures among the armed forces and security operative to the areas. One of the contentious issues of this work is the traditional challenges faced by the internally displaced persons. It is however a known fact that Bakassi resettles are facing the problem of adjusting to the customs and traditions of the original homes akin to those of Cameroon neighbors. The French culture finds it difficult to blend with the British cultures in the Nigerian states. Attitudes towards issues and personalities have to be re-adjusted in line with Nigeria and Cross River State traditions. At the new settlement in Ikang, these victims of ICJ ruling shave greater task of re-adjusting their psychic, mode of eating dressing and living homes to suit the new environment.

As fish farmers and traders, the displaced people of Bakassi have lost their business positions in view of the new political development. Those of them that had established trade relationship with some Cameroonian business tycoons may not have the opportunity to transverse the ocean for trading transactions – any longer hence, their desperations to return to their ancestral homes.

A cursory look at the study area indicates that in view of the emergency of evacuation programme, some people decided to remain with the Cameroonian government while their kith and kin decided otherwise. Coupled with the unsettled cum odious situation in the refugee camps, social vices such as children labor, sexual abuse and other gender discriminations.

The absence of inadequate information on Bakassi resettlement setting in terms of needs has made their true character unknown before planning the type off assistance to be extended to the people. Projects which started without planning would not satisfy the demands of the people, and so their expectant results are unusually

unfulfilled (Igbozuruike 1977: 171). In fact, studies have indicated that there are no sustainable government policies with a serious reconstruction programmes to replace vandalized structures due to violent conflicts.

The research is therefore, an attempt to find out the impact of community mobilization/participation in community development with a study on the internally displaced persons of Bakassi resettlers with the aim of addressing some of their teething problems.

Purpose of the studies

The major purpose of this study is to:-

- i. determine the extent at which community mobilization and participation can be of immense assistance in coping with the needs of Bakassi resettlement setting.
- ii. to assess how mobilization/participation of the affected settlers of Bakassi could be measure with community development.
- iii. ascertain the role played by NGOs in community development through participation in projects located in their area of abode.
- iv. assess government efforts in community development through mobilization and participation of citizenry.
- v. suggest effective machineries of community development in Bakassi resettlement centre.

Research hypothesis

The entire concentration of this paper is to ascertain the understated hypothesis, which holds that: -

There is no significant relationship between project initiated by government and citizens mobilization/participation in community development.

Significant of the study

Although very little efforts has been made in the past to ascertain the impact of mobilization/participation in community development. This study in addition to the scanty literature on the subject matter, will advance the following social significance such as; -

- i. Shade more light on impact of peoples mobilization/ participation in community development.
- ii. Provide enough literature on impact of mobilization/ participation in community development.
- iii. Provide socio-economic indicators on community development and how these measures could play a critical role in the process of Bakassi resettlement.
- iv. Sensitize NGOs on proper needs assessment of rural communities and how this can be done using community mobilization/participation.
- v. Provide a data base on community initiated project and how these can stimulate community mobilization and participation.
- vi. Further test the validity of basic needs theory in meeting rural communities and the appropriateness of the approach as a strategy for community development.
- vii. Also provide feasibility study that will assist government/NGOs in their planning, implementation and evaluation of intended projects in Bakassi resettled area.
- viii. Create awareness among development planners on how to apply the participatory development theory to meet the developmental needs of the local communities.
- ix. Provide facts from the community development background to available literature on the subject matter of community mobilization/participation and
- x. Provide data that will be useful to students of peace and conflict studies on a new approach to peace building.

Limitation of the study

The researcher was restricted to the area of study because of the following;

- i) Inadequate literature on the subject matter compounded the researcher focus and wide range of coverage.
- ii) Scarcity of funds to execute such in-depth study of marginal displaced persons of Bakassi resettlement.
- iii) The attitude of respondents in handling and responding to questionnaires as respondents collected the instrument without responding to it, thereby impeding into the expected data analysis.
- iv) Some of the instruments suffer from regression; all these further limited the study to its present form.

Scope of the study

This study is basically limited Internally Displaced Persons of Cross River State, on the impact of mobilization/ participation in community development with a focus on Bakassi. It has its restrictions to only issues emerging from the purpose and hypotheses which have been specified here. The researcher focus has been on investigating into the scope, nature and incidence of community mobilization/participation in an attempt to uncover new strategies for community development, especially as it concerns an internally displaced community

of Bakassi. But on account of time, cost and the need to create delimitation for the study, in respect to the role of mobilization participation for community development, this study has its limitation in Cross River State, particularly Bakassi.

Operational definitions of terms

The following terms and concepts are operationally defined to suit the context of the study and the needs of the people as it reflect the standard of living and quality of life, such as food, shelter, security and clothing etc.

Community development – a process of social action by which the voluntary efforts of the people are combined with those of government towards an oval improvement of the conditions of community living within an accepted pattern of social and economy progress (Bharadway, 1972: 23).

Trickle down – the suggested spread effects of development benefits from the top to the bottom.

IDP – internally displaced persons, a domestic word for refugees

NGOs - Non Government Organizations assisting the development of the communities.

Mobilization - a process whereby a group of people have transcended their differences to meet on equal terms in order to facilitate a participatory decision-making process. In other words it can be viewed as a process which begins in a dialogue among members of the community to determine who, what, and how issues are decided, and also to provide an avenue for everyone to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Participation - the act of taking part or sharing in something.

Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, motivating and controlling resources to achieve specific goals.

Community – is a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common interest.

Implementation is the realization of an application, or execution of plan, idea, model, design, specification, standard, algorithm or policy.

Conflict resolution - is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of ... theories and models.

Data Analysis and Testing of Hypothesis

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained in the course of this study where analyzed, and interpreted using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Two statistical tools were used namely; simple percentages and chi-square (χ^2) test of significance. The simple percentage (%) was used in describing and interpreting the responses relating to socio-demographic data and other quantitative information; while the chi-square (χ^2) test was used in testing the hypothesis. The qualitative data obtained from the respondents were also presented to complement the already analyzed (quantitative) data.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for the study stated that there is no significant relationship between governments initiated projects and citizens mobilization/ participation in the projects implementation.

Respondent's responses on government initiated projects and citizens mobilization and participation in the project.

Perceived initiator	Achievement of Needs		
	Achieved	Not achieved	Total
Initiation by community approach	10 (12.66%)	69 (87.34%)	79
Initiation by government	81 (75.70%)	26 (24.30%)	107
Initiation by elites in the community	3 (21.43%)	11 (78.57%)	14
Total	94 (47%)	106 (53%)	200

Table χ^2 value at 2 d/f under 0.05 (95% critical level of significance) = 5.99

Confirming further the strength of this relationship. The phi-coefficient value (θ) is applied.

Phi-coefficient table (θ)

Variables	N	χ^2	θ
There is a significant relationship between projects initiated by government approach and mobilization/participation by the people	200	76.46	0.62

$$\theta = \frac{\chi^2}{n} = \frac{76.46}{200}$$

The phi-coefficient value of 0.62 shows a high level of significant and a very strong relationship between the top variables measured (initiation by government approach and the people's

mobilization/participation. The chi-square (χ^2) analysis therefore shows a strong association between the two variables measured.

Conclusion

Since the calculated χ^2 value of (76.46) is greater than the table χ^2 value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. The result shows that the relationship between government initiated projects and the peoples mobilization/participation for community development is highly significant.

The result confirms findings of scholars like Sands (1996) who believe that there will be no sustainability in development programmes without government providing the means. In a similar circumstance Olawole (1994) recognized the need and importance of mass participation in government initiated projects by the beneficiaries of such projects; he went further to affirm that successful government development projects rest on the premise that the local people are willing to work with the initiation.

It is equally important to note, that people participate in determining projects of their needs could be which they may perceived as crucial in alleviating and sustaining their participation and commitment to community development programmes.

Summary

The major focus of this study is to x-ray and examine the peculiar needs, expectations and aspirations of the internally Displaced Persons of Bakassi peninsular. The study used the participatory appraisal techniques as to determine basic needs of the people, access their degree of awareness to and satisfaction with the available basic need projects, as well as assessing the various aspects of the peoples' quality of living emanating from their perceived basic needs.

From the analysis, and interpretations of the study, the following results were unrivalled.

- i. Due to their peculiar circumstances of ceding out their ancestral homes without formal notifications, the degree of their accessibility to and the satisfaction with existing social infrastructures, in the new settlement tend to raise some basic questions which answers tend to suggest, that their priorities in terms of needs may focus on portal drinking water, education, transportation and affordable houses.
- ii. With the absence of social amenities in the area, and lack of proper relocation plan, the peoples' state of well-being and quality of living tends to be too low.
- iii. The people under study have high perception and ability to asses their basic needs, without imposition.
- iv. The findings of this study has also shown that the non-existence or poor implementation of various government programmes in the study area, has minimally contributed to the improvement of the living standards of the people. The reason being, that government have done little in terms of meeting the immediate needs of the people which may include; - food, shelter and security.
- v. The people's perception of their real needs have significantly influence their mobilization/participation in basic community development projects initiated by government.
- vi. The findings of this study have also shown that the non-existence or poor implementation of various projects in the study area, has minimally contributed to the improvement of the living standards of the people. This is because the government has done little or nothing helping in terms of the displaced persons to settle properly.
- vii. The study also reveals that the people's level of income has significantly influence their ability to meet their basic food and educational needs. This is because meeting food and literacy needs is a function of income and size of the people.
- viii. The findings further imply that the people under study not only leave the provision of their basic needs to the government or its agents, but adopt a number of strategies-g geared toward community development.
- ix. The poor quality of living of the Displaced persons under study is also attributed to wrong, faulty and ill-conceived development projects which in most access do not meet with their basic needs, taking the peculiarities of their communities into focus.

Suggestions/Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested to ensure the sustainable achievements of basic needs of the displaced people of Bakassi.

1. The displaced persons should be incorporated in the planning and execution of development projects which should meet their basic needs. This will give the people the opportunity to make their contributions toward their personal welfare and sustained quality of life.
2. Government projects should be relatively large, and well targeted and should be implemented by either joint efforts of government and community or targeted to community implementation solely.

3. Government sponsored community projects should be tailored to meet the development initiations and peculiar potentials, constraints, socio-cultural conditions of the localities in which the displaced persons are resettled. Where the people seems not to appreciate a particular project located to them, governments, or its agency or even the NGOs should make up time to educate the people and sometimes use incentives or possible discontinue with the project instead of using force to carry them along.
4. In order to improve the income of the displaced persons government or its agencies as well as non-government organizations should establish local based organizations that will provide Microsoft loans to meet the needs of the displaced persons for credit.
Accessibility to such facility will help the people participate in meaningful income generating activities, which will further bring about increased to supplement other basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and education.
5. Rather than depend on the efforts of government for the provision of more sophisticated basic needs, individual resettled camp could embark on self help projects, self help income and supply projects.
6. Non-governmental organization (NGOs) should emphasize on the provision of medical/health sensitization services to these displaced persons in the resettled areas to enable the agencies address some of the prevailing heart related disease.
7. Government should intensify efforts on the development of other new sectors like Agriculture, so as to encourage enough food production besides equipment for their marine occupation. The food distributive mechanism should be streamline such that there is all year round provision of food to all.
8. Education to these people should be considered as a major priority of government.
9. Social welfare institutions should be established in the resettled areas so as to meet the needs of specific people – the aged, children, widows and other funeral groups.

Conclusion

The sustained long term growth with poverty reduction of the displaced Bakassi resettlers depends critically upon increasing access of the Internally Displaced Persons to quality social services.

Findings according to Peariman (1999) has shown that fundamental desire of basic needs must be fulfilled to enable the people function reasonably in the project for their well-being and continuous development.

Suggestion for further research

Sequel to the findings on the challenges of community mobilization and participation it is large that subsequent researchers could research on internally displaced persons generally across the country.

- i. The application of mobilization/participation in the attainment of sustainable community development should have a target of all rural areas in the country.
- ii. Problems of using self help projects in opting for community participations in project implementations, should be review.
- iii. The problems of non-governmental organizations in mobilization of Internally Displaced Persons across the state should be properly acknowledged by all interest groups.
- iv. The role of contemporary rural development efforts towards development imitative should be enhanced.

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