

Local Leadership Styles and Community Development: A Study of the Irasa Community of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *The assertion that the leadership style exhibited by the community leaders influenced the participations of community members in development activities was examined in this study using Irasa community in Ado-Ekiti as a case study. An instrument tagged 'Questionnaire for Community Members' was used for this study. The instrument was administered on thirty randomly selected respondents in the community. Information obtained revealed that respondents believed that community development involved setting up of goals which are done jointly through the involvement of all stake holders. Participation in Community Development Projects was not regarded as mandatory hence offenders were not liable to punishment. Also, the in-flow and out-flow of information were not restricted by the leaders and their directives were not strictly complied with. The leaders respected and protected the self esteems of the subjects. The leaders recognized the subjects' worth and esteems, based their actions on trust, integrity, honesty, equality, openness and mutual respects. All these were features of democratic or participative leadership style. In conclusion, this study revealed that democratic leadership practised in the study area lends credence to the assertion that when good leadership is provided the people participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated objectives.*

Keywords: *Community Development; Leadership style; participations and democratic leadership practised*

I. Introduction

The United Nations defines community development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Thus, Maser (1997) opined that it is ability of people to work together to achieve their common interests. The community members come together and take collective action that generates solutions to common problems. According to Maimunah (1999), community members planned and organized activities to increase their standard of living in a social, cultural, spiritual setting through creativities and active participation of the individuals in the community with minimum help from outside. Hence CPA (2001) viewed community development as a process for the marginalized and excluded to gain self-confidence in joining others and to contribute in activities to change their situation and tackle the issues that face their community.

Recent initiatives revealed that participations of community members in development activities are influenced by the leadership style exhibited by the community leaders. Schein (1992) described leaders are agents of change who affects other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leaders, according to House (2004), influence and motivate others to contribute towards the success of the organisations of which they are members. Thus leadership is generally defined simply as the art of influencing people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals (Kootz 1978, Nwanchuckwu 1988, Deliaati 2019). Research has revealed that an array of leadership styles abounds but the most appropriate leadership style depends on the function of the leader, the followers and the situation. Thus when a good leadership is provided, the people participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated objectives.

The Irasa community, situated about 10 kilometres along Ado-Ekiti - Iworoko-Ekiti Road in Ekiti State, Nigeria, is an agrarian local community where series of community development projects were recently executed. Thus this study set out to examine the leadership style exhibited in this community that has led to the successful implementation of the projects.

II. Theoretical Framework

The community development theory, which is the most practical framework for enhancing lasting change for individuals and the communities and societies in which they live (Tan, 2009), is used in this study. The theory emphasised the importance of collective action. It is believed that joining together in solidarity facilitates community members' understanding that their individual problems have social causes and collective solutions (Ireland and Thomalla 2011).

The theories recognised that the act of maintaining roles, structures and processes which are performing well is vital for a working community system. Thus the theories are advocating that people must meet as a social unit to develop their society by eliminating their differences which is the main factors affecting community under - development in community development.

Community development theory advocates that the community system should allow an equality of standing for citizen roles; suggests a balanced respect for the potency of both tradition and social inventions and advocates that community system should allow an equality of standing for citizen roles in the community.

III. Methods

An instrument tagged 'Questionnaire for Community Members (QFM)' was used for this study. The QFM was administered on thirty randomly selected respondents in the community. The data obtained from these set of respondents were analysed by using Likert rating scale as follow:

- SA - Strongly agreed - 4 Points
- A - Agreed - 3 Points
- D - Disagreed - 2 Points
- SD - Strongly disagreed - 1 Point

The scores above were weighted to get their means and the means interpreted as follows:

- 1.0 - 1.49 = SD
- 1.50 - 2.49 = D
- 2.50 - 3.49 = A
- 3.50 - 4.00 = SA

IV. Results

Table 1 shows that respondents believed that community development involved setting up of goals and the goals were jointly set through the involvements of all stake holders that include leaders, subjects (community's dwellers) and governments. Field observation revealed that recent development projects in the community included the constructions of motorized boreholes, maternity centre, drainage and curvet. Respondents believed that participation in CDPs was not regarded as mandatory hence offenders were not liable to punishment. The

participatory methods used at all stages of CDPs motivated the dwellers to contribute in cash and kind to development projects.

Table 1. Mean ratings of responses of respondents on community development projects (CDP)

S/n	Statement	Frequency of Responses				N	Total	Mean	Interpretation
		SA	A	D	SD				
1	Community development requires goals to be set	120	0	0	0	30	120	4.00	SA
2	Goals are set jointly by leaders, subjects and government	108	9	0	0	30	117	3.90	SA
3	CDPs execution involve mutual respect among leaders and subjects	108	9	0	0	30	117	3.90	SA
4	Dwellers are motivated for self development during CDPs	104	9	2	0	30	115	3.83	SA
5	Participation in CDPs is mandatory hence offenders are liable to punishment	16	9	10	18	30	53	1.77	D

Table 2. Mean ratings of responses of respondents on leadership style in Irasa community

S/n	Statement	Frequency of Responses				N	Total	Mean	Interpretation
		SA	A	D	SD				
1	Community goals are set by the leaders only	0	0	4	28	30	32	1.07	SD
2	Subjects' self esteems are protected by the leaders	80	27	2	0	30	109	3.63	SA
3	In-flow and out-flow of information are restricted by the leaders	0	0	6	27	30	33	1.10	SD

4	Strict compliance to the directives of leaders abounds	0	3	16	21	30	40	1.33	SD
5	Trust and integrity abound among leaders and subjects	64	36	4	0	30	104	3.47	SA

Table 2 reviewed the activities of the community leaders in this study. Results obtained revealed that goals setting were not restricted to the leaders only rather they were jointly achieved. In-flow and out-flow of information were not restricted by the leaders and their directives were not strictly complied with. Respondents also revealed that the leaders respected and protected their self esteems. Also trust and integrity abound among the leaders and subjects.

V. Discussion

This study revealed the existence of community leadership in the study area. Study by Onosode (1988) stated that there are many dimensions to leadership and many possible ways of describing leadership style such as dictatorial, unitary, bureaucratic, charismatic, consultative, participative and abdicatorial. However, Igbaekemen (2014) classified the leadership styles within a three-fold heading, namely: autocratic or authoritarian, democratic or participative and Laissez-faire or free rain styles.

The leadership in Irasa community, as described by the respondents, exhibited the features of democratic or participative leadership style. The leaders in Irasa community recognize the subjects' worth and esteems, based their actions on trust, integrity, honesty, equality, openness and mutual respects. All these, according to Okoji (2014), Musdiani (2019) and Muhsin (2019) are virtues of democratic leadership. In conclusion, this study revealed that democratic leadership practised in the study area offer good leadership thus supporting the assertion that when good leadership is provided, the people participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated objectives.

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