

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL POLITICS AND PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN RURAL AREAS OF JIGAWA STATE**

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**Abstract**

*This is a study on the Relationship between Local Politics and Peoples' Participation in Community Development Activities in Rural Areas of Jigawa State. The objectives of the study were to determine the extent of local politics taking place in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State, determine the extent of peoples participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State and determine the relationship between extent of local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State. The study is a correlational research whose population consisted of 2, 970 officials of Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and some leaders of major community based organizations and self help groups operating in the rural areas of the State. 341 subjects were selected and used as sample on the basis of deliberate or purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using two scales measuring the extent of local politics and peoples' participation while analysis of data was made using frequency, mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Results indicated that the extent of local politics in community development activities in rural areas of the State has reached the level in which locals are aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations, leading community based organizations and self help associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities and have realizing community development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities, the extent of peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of the State is around establishing organizations with external initiative, participatory decision making and establishing the majority peoples' control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring, the relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa state is perfectly positive. The study recommended that the extent of local politics and local political activities should be utilised by all stakeholders so that it can be full of fun, humour and can transform the socio-political phenomenon of the community, community development planners and other stakeholders in the rural areas of Jigawa State level should create opportunities for people to take part actively in the design, implementation and management of community development interventions so as to increase the level or extent of participation among local government and non local government employees in the State and since there is a positive relationship between local politics and peoples' participation it should be effectively utilised as a factor for improving the spectrum and efficacy of participation in community development activities.*

**Introduction and Background of the Study**

Community Development is a democratic field of practice which encourages the use of civic tenets in persuading community members to harness their assets and resources in instigating progressive social changes in a voluntary manner aimed at improving the living conditions of their people. Therefore as a democratic field, its sustainability and efficacy are often determined by the extent of local politics and

peoples' participation. Local politics here involves a series of actions and inactions of local political actors consisting of local community development agents and officers, leaders of community based organizations, the people, community development sponsors and many other interest and pressure groups in the communities. Local politics can be described as the competitions, local ideologies and their influence, participation, debates, agitations and local rallies and many other issues affecting common decisions in community development. Peoples' participation is one of the critical principles germane to community development. Participation has been defined as the massive involvement of all the people in activities designed to promote and enhance the socio-economic and political development of their community. Participation implies the enlightenment and empowerment of the people to be effectively involved in creating structures and designing policies and programmes for their development and involvement in decision-making processes (Omoruyi, 2000). Participation in community development is collaborative because it involves putting heads together between both the community development agents, the people and other stakeholders in order to effectively tackle the problems of underdevelopment facing the communities. Popular participation is a generic concept in community development, which recognises the centrality of the human person in development, aggregating the various culture, knowledge, experience and aspirations of a people for the collective utilization of the limited resources for their own development. Studies have indicated that political activities particularly championed by democratic institutions are germane to the mobilization and enlightenment of the people for community development activities especially at grassroots levels. For example, political science researches in western democracies suggests that education, socio-economic status and other personal experiences that expand an individual's horizons lead to increased political participation (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1996). The logic for this relationship is partly that these experiences increase information and awareness of the larger society of which one is a part, and that this in turn fosters both a sense of citizen duty and the motivation to help shape the way that society is governed. The logic for this relationship may also reflect interest calculations, as well as considerations of information and awareness. Those who are better educated and more affluent tend to have more opportunities and a greater stake in the prevailing political order, and thus to have an interest in activities like community development which supports the political system.

Participatory community development depends not only on individuals who have a combination of a particular need and resources, but also individuals who have specific skills and sufficient educational attainment to engage people in discourses that motivate people carry out the organization's activities. Examples of duties which require skills and education include participating in activity - specific training, organizing participants, understanding government regulations, and managing a project budget. Accordingly, individuals with considerable formal education, at the high school level or above, are likely to belong to the social and economic elite. Furthermore, government interest is a key factor in invoking and sustaining local politics. It is another important determinant of participation of people in development processes. In Nigeria for example, governmental organisations are considered as the major sponsors of community development programmes and projects, hence, the interest, enthusiasm and disposition of governmental organisations to evolve, encourage, utilise and sustain people's interest and involvement will determine how much and where the people participates. Democratic governments will always work towards the promotion and sustenance of peoples' participation as against autocratic military regime, which does not always consider the people and their ideas in governance. Ndiaye, (1990) opines that the degree of peoples' participation is in direct proportion to the degree of freedom that their country allows.

Moreover, the question of leadership is also of paramount importance in local politics as well as in participation. Oduaran, (1993) quoted in Omoruyi (2000) asserted that an environment which is barren in dedicated, upright and humane leadership cannot have enviable peoples participation in development. This suggests that where leaders at all the levels and tiers of governments are dedicated, committed and loyal to the realisation of objectives of the people, they will submit to the need for peoples' participation as a means of mobilising the resources lying idle among the people for development and decision-making purposes.

Verba et al. pointed to the importance of a democratic political culture in determining political behaviour (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1996; Dalton 2000). The literature on political culture argues that countries with more tolerant values and with positive orientations towards government and democracy are more likely to have higher levels of participation (Inglehart 1991; Putnam and Pharr 2000). Current trends of scepticism in politics have been identified as the causes of declining levels of electoral participation (Dalton 2000).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Jigawa is one of the states with relatively large number of areas classified as rural on the basis of their spatial nature, volume of non agricultural produce and disaggregation of essential social amenities between them and others. As a result of this, such areas seem to be facing serious disadvantages and neglect which induces enormous difficulties or distress among local people. Such distress conditions include low level of educational attainment, prevalence of diseases, low per capita income, dearth of essential social amenities among others. Community development is a field of theory and practice which is pre-occupied with concerns of instigating community action as a means of changing things over and making the communities healthy and safer for all. In these communities, the pioneers of community development processes such as local leaders, community development sponsors, community development officers and agents and other community members interested in facilitating progressive social changes engages in a lot of decisions aimed at designing and implementation of the programmes and projects. These decisions they make are often affected or surrounded by agitations, competitions, heated debates, publicity, civic actions and inactions. These are called local politics, and they seem to affect community development practices particularly in these rural areas.

Since community development is about initiating progressive social, economic and political changes aimed at improving the living conditions of people at grassroots communities, the extent and efficacy of community development activities in these local communities can be determined by the level and scope of local politics among local political actors. Local politics and local political activity is shaped by a number of key issues. These might include competition for community assets and resources, governmental institutions, group power, local leaderships and so on. Local political activities can take place in several areas of community development and there is the tendency that some local political issues attracting public interest may affect some of the principles and issues surrounding community development. Issues such as peoples' participation, assets identification and mobilization, assessment of needs and the question of leadership in these rural communities are crucial to the efficacy of community development activities and their impact on changing the lives of the people. This study is therefore instituted to determine the relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i) To determine the extent of local politics taking place in the field of community development practice in rural areas of Jigawa State
- ii) To determine the extent of peoples participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State.
- iii) To determine the relationship between extent of local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in the study:

- i) What is the extent of politics taking place in the field of Community Development in the rural areas of Jigawa State

- ii). What is the extent of popular participation in Community Development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was tested in the study:

- i) There is no significant relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The study adopted a correlational research design. A correlational design is that design of research in which the relationship between two or more variables is determined. Correlational research helps us to measure the association between or among variables particularly relating to a phenomenon. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), in most social science researches, particularly those concerned with developmental phenomena, establishing the relationships between variables and drawing implications on the relationships remain a contemporary issue which needed adequate attention among researchers. Correlational researches are intended to provide three answers on the relationship between two variables; whether a relationship or association exists between them, if yes, the direction of the association and the magnitude of the association. This study is therefore a correlational research because it determined the relationship or association between the two variables, local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State.

The population for the study comprises of 270 officials of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development in all the 27 Local Government Areas of Jigawa State and some 2, 700 leaders of selected community based organizations and self help associations in the rural areas of the 27 Local Government Area of the State. A sum total of 2, 970 subjects who are involved in the planning, mobilization of resources and implementation of Community development activities in the rural areas of the State served as population for this study. Out of the 2, 970 subjects who made up the population for the study, 341 were selected and used as sample for the study. This selection was made according to the prescription of Krejcie and Morgan, (1970). In order to select the sample, purposive or deliberate sampling procedure was employed. With this method of sampling, the researcher knows that specific traits or characteristics exist in a certain segment of the population and these traits are extremely critical to the results of the investigation. Therefore in using purposive sampling, the researcher selected those subjects that exhibit such characteristics. Thus, the 341 sample size was selected deliberately in view of the critical characteristics that existed in them which comprises of their attainment of leadership positions in their CBOs and self help associations and their involvement in the planning, mobilization of resources and implementation of community development activities in the rural areas of the State. Thus, the judgment of the researcher as to what he thinks constitutes a representative sample with respect to the research objectives formed the basis of sampling. This is supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000) who said that in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be include in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality.

Data for this study were collected using two scales; one for measuring the degree of popular participation adapted from Pimbert and Pretty (1994) in which respondents were asked to indicate their extent of participation from either nominal, partial and full participation regarding ten areas or spheres of participation identified in the scale and the other, a self developed scale also measuring the degree or extent of local politics taking place in the rural areas of the State. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their participation in community development activities and also in local politics. The mean score were calculated and used in answering the research questions as well as in testing the research hypothesis of the study. The items of the self developed instrument were validated by the some experts in Community Development and Measurement & Evaluation in Bayero University, Kano who tested the appropriateness of the language and contents in relation to the objectives of the study. After thorough perusal of the instruments, they confirmed that the instruments are valid for use in the study. The reliability of the

instruments was ascertained using test – re – test procedure. In this, the instruments were administered on at select sample and after four weeks, the same instrument was re – administered on the same subjects. The scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and a coefficient of 0.60 was obtained. This suggested the instrument is reliable for use in the study. Data generated for the study was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. Frequency, percentages and means and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were calculated to answer the research questions of the study as well as test the hypothesis of the study.

**Data Presentation, Results and Discussions**

**RQ 1:** What is the extent of local politics taking place in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State?

This research question is answered and data presented on the following table:

**Table 1:** Extent of Local Politics taking place in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Nature of Local Politics</b>	<b>Mean (Sd)</b>
a.	Initial awareness of local political activities through participation in community development activities	1.94 (.837)
b.	Engagement of locals by local political actors in to discussions centred around the life of their communities	2.10 (.556)
c.	Participating in local politics through contributing to debates, criticisms and local mobilization campaigns	2.17 (.658)
d.	Joining in local political activities through engagement into civic activities and local development tasks	2.24 (.681)
e.	Aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations	2.80 (1.54)
f.	Leading community Based organizations and Self Help Associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities	2.81 (1.55)
g.	Realizing Community Development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities	2.70 (.458)
h.	Active and competitive local political activities taking place through well established partnerships among community members representing various local institutions and local resource persons	2.62 (.586)
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.42 (.858)</b>

Table 1 above indicates the extent of local politics in the field of community development by the mean and standard deviation. The table shows that an initial awareness of local political activities through participation in community development activities has a mean of 1.94 (.837), engagement of locals by local political actors in to discussions centred around the life of their communities obtained 2.10 (.556), participating in local politics through contributing to debates, criticisms and local mobilization campaigns with 2.17 (.658), joining in local political activities through engagement into civic activities and local development tasks, 2.24 (.681), aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations 2.80 (1.54), leading community Based organizations and self help associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities 2.81

(1.55), realizing community development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities 2.70 (.458) and active and competitive local political activities taking place through well established partnerships among community members representing various local institutions and local resource persons 2.62 (.586) The sum of the means scores is 2.42 (.858) indicating that the extent of local politics in community development activities in rural areas of the State has reached the level in which locals are aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations, leading community Based organizations and Self Help Associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities and have realizing Community Development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities.

**RQ 2:** What is the extent of peoples’ participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State?

This research question is answered and data presented on the following table:

**Table 2:** Extent of Peoples’ participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State

S/No	Nature of participation	Mean (Sd)
1.	Getting information	1.94 (.837)
2.	Giving opinion	2.70 (.458)
3.	Advising	2.24 (.681)
4.	Participating in providing information	2.64 (.522)
5.	Periodical functional relations	2.62 (.586)
6.	Long term functional relations	2.27 (.644)
7.	Establishing organizations with external initiative	2.80 (1.54)
8.	Participatory decision making	2.80 (1.54)
9.	Being organized at own initiative	2.81 (1.55)
10.	Establishing the majority peoples’ control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring	2.80 (1.54)
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.56 (6.11)</b>

Table 2 above indicates the extent or level of participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State in the context of the ten areas of participation. According to the table, the mean and standard deviation for on getting information are 1.94 (.837), giving opinion, 2.70 (.458), advising, 2.24 (.681) participation in providing information, 2.64 (.522), periodical functions relations, 2.62 (.586), long term functional relations, 2.27 (.644), establishing organisations with external initiatives, 2.80 (.1.54), participatory decision making, 2.80 (1.54), being organised at own initiative, 2.81 (1.55) and establishing the majority peoples and leadership in project planning, implementation and monitoring, 2.80 (1.54). The total average mean is 2.56. From the table, the aggregated mean is 2.00, hence the total mean which is above 2.00 (2.47) indicates that the extent of peoples’ participation in community development activities in the rural areas of the State is around establishing organizations with external initiative, participatory decision making and establishing the majority peoples’ control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring.

**Ho 1:** There is no significant relationship between the extent of local politics taking place in community development activities and peoples participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State?

This research hypothesis is tested by the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and data presented on the following table:

**Table 3:** Relationship between the extent of Local Politics taking place in community development activities and peoples participation in community development in rural areas of Jigawa State

<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>sd</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Probability</b>
Extent of Local Politics in rural areas of Jigawa State	341	2.42	.858	339		
Extent of Peoples’ Participation in Community Development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State	341	2.56	.611	339	.17	.001

The table above shows that the mean for extent of local politics stands at 2.42 and the standard deviation is .634 while the mean for the extent of peoples’ participation index is 2.56 with standard deviation of .611. Correlation using Pearson product moment correlation method between the extent of local politics and extent of peoples’ participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa State indicates that  $r = .17$ ,  $df = 374$  and  $p < .001$ . According to the table, correlation is significant at .17 levels (2-tailed). Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected on this ground.

**Summary of Findings and Discussions**

Findings from the study revealed the following:

- i) The extent of local politics in community development activities in rural areas of the State has reached the level in which locals are aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations, leading community Based organizations and Self Help Associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities and have realizing Community Development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities.
- ii) The extent of peoples’ participation in community development activities in the rural areas of the State is around establishing organizations with external initiative, participatory decision making and establishing the majority peoples’ control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring.
- iii) The relationship between local politics and peoples’ participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa state is perfectly positive rejecting the null hypothesis proposed.

According to the findings of the study, the extent of local politics in community development activities in rural areas of the State has reached the level in which locals are aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations, leading community based organizations and self help associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities and have realizing Community Development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities. This finding is consistent with the opinion of political science researchers in western democracies who suggests that education, socio-economic status and other personal experiences that expand an individual’s horizons lead to increased political participation (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1996).

The second finding of this study is that the extent of peoples’ participation in community development activities in the rural areas of the State is around establishing organizations with external initiative, participatory decision making and establishing the majority peoples’ control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring. This finding of the study is a very significant one on whose basis correlation is made with other variable of the study. The study established that there is high level of

peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa state in the contexts highlighted.

The third research finding of the study is that the relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa state is perfectly positive. According to this finding of the study, the null hypothesis proposed is hereby rejected. This is supported by Oduaran, (1993) quoted in Omoruyi (2000) asserted that an environment which is barren in dedicated, upright and humane leadership cannot have enviable peoples' participation in development. This suggests that where leaders at all the levels and tiers of governments are dedicated, committed and loyal to the realisation of objectives of the people, they will submit to the need for peoples' participation as a means of mobilising the resources lying idle among the people for development and decision-making purposes. Rural areas of Jigawa State are not barren in dedicated, upright and humane leaders and that is why there are a lot of local politics and local political activities going on which are affecting the efficacy of participation and community development activities. Again, the literature on political culture argues that countries with more tolerant values and with positive orientations towards government and democracy are more likely to have higher levels of participation (Inglehart 1991; Putnam and Pharr 2000).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The paper examines the extent of local politics in the spheres of community development and peoples' participation in rural areas of Jigawa State and established the relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in rural areas of Jigawa State. The extent of local politics in community development in the rural areas of Jigawa State is that the extent of local politics in community development activities in rural areas of the State has reached the level in which locals are aspiring for local political and leadership posts through community based organisations and self help associations, leading community Based organizations and self help associations into practical political activities designed to impact on community development activities and have realizing Community Development dividends through active civic engagement of residents and through local political activities. The extent of peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of the State is around establishing organizations with external initiative, participatory decision making and establishing the majority peoples' control and leadership in project planning and implementation and monitoring. The relationship between local politics and peoples' participation in community development activities in the rural areas of Jigawa state is perfectly positive rejecting the null hypothesis proposed.

Accordingly, the study recommended as follows:

- i) The extent of local politics and local political activities should be enhanced, sustained and utilised by governmental authorities, community development officers and agents and other stakeholders so that it can be full of fun, humour and can be transform the socio-political phenomenon of the community.
- ii) Community development planners and other stakeholders in the rural areas of Jigawa State level should create `opportunities for people to take part actively in the design, implementation and management of community development interventions especially in the context of planning and resource mobilisation so as to increase the level or extent of participation among local government and non local government employees in the State
- iii) Since there is a positive relationship between local politics and peoples' participation local politics should be effectively utilised as a factor for improving the spectrum and efficacy of participation in community development activities and should be effectively utilised in uplifting mobilization and local leadership structures for the sustainability of community development interventions in the rural areas of the State.

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