

Constituency Projects and Community Participation for Sustainable Rural Development: Experience from Selected Local Government of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Over the years, most communities have been littered with failed and abandoned projects due to the community stakeholders' lack of participation during project initiation, implementation, and evaluation stages. Given these, the study seeks to assess community participation in constituency projects and its concomitant effect on rural development. A scholarly review of the literature was carried out to ascertain the state of knowledge of the communities regarding constituency projects and sustainable rural development. System theory was used as a theoretical framework. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in which respondents were randomly selected from the two federal constituencies for study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used with data analyzed through statistical tools such as simple percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings from the study revealed that benefiting communities were not part of the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of constituency projects. The study also reveals that the projects do not enhance sustainable development. Therefore, the study recommended that benefitting communities be involved in project initiation, implementation, and evaluation of constituency projects. Also, constituency projects should be effectively monitored and evaluated to enhance their sustainability.

Keywords: *Constituency projects, community participation, rural development, sustainable development, legislature.*

1. Introduction

Every rural community's desire, especially in developing countries, is to develop and improve their development level every day. The desire to improve the well being of the people is always the concern of every administration, especially in the developing countries as they strive to effectively achieve development (Atairet & Mboho, 2019). As the community considers different forms of development, it is also important to consider how sustainable these efforts are. The quest for development is one of the major preoccupations of a typical rural community, and Nigeria, as a developing country, has a more significant population living in rural communities with certain characteristics such as the near absence of the necessary infrastructural facilities required to meet the needs of the modern man; lack of public sector investment; a high rate of illiteracy and poverty

among the rural population; gross inadequacy of social amenities such as roads, pipe-borne water, electricity and healthcare facilities; and a predominantly farming population at subsistence level. With these in mind, every rural community tirelessly works towards improving their standard of living. Community-based efforts, non-governmental organizations, international donors, corporate bodies, governments, and private individuals could all contribute to raising the standard of living. With the coming of democracy in Nigeria, we operate a presidential system of government with a bicameral legislature where Senators and House of Representatives Members are elected from different Senatorial Districts and Federal Constituencies. The legislature has the responsibility to represent the people, make laws, and oversee executive government arms, all in the context of delivering services to Nigeria's citizens (Yusuf, Yusoff & Zengeni, 2018).

Statement of Problem

Rural areas desire to develop especially in developing nations. As the representative of the people, the legislature is a platform for expressing the constituents' opinions and aspirations in the policy-making process (Awofeso & Irabor, 2020). The extent to which this can be fully achieved as not been well explored in the Nigeria context. Representatives, sometimes uses rural development and attraction of government presence as a campaign tool to gain the support of the electorate. This is possible since a greater proportion of the population of the people in developing countries resides in the rural areas, most of which are deprived of certain infrastructure (Ataire & Mboho, 2019). Legislators in Nigeria and their constituents sees constituency projects as a way to attract federal, state and local government presence to their constituencies. Once elected into power, most of the legislators use their influence to attract constituency projects to their respective constituencies as a way of developing the rural areas.

However, there are controversies surrounding the initiation, implementation and evaluation of constituency projects in Nigeria, bothering on corruption, non-execution of projects, unspecified project location, lack of legal framework, low quality jobs, absence of consultation with benefiting communities before initiation of projects, lack of awareness of budgetary provision by communities, lack of proper monitoring and evaluation and lack of continuity of projects. What is witnessed in most places is the unsuccessful implementation of constituency projects. Implementation is generally regarded as a vital and often neglected phase of strategic planning (Ataire & Mboho, 2019)). Constituency projects seem to be initiated from the top and corruption has affected its proper implementation. According to Fagbadebo,(2019) the MDAs and the legislators in connivance with the contractors are the beneficiaries of constituency projects rather than the constituents. This may be the reason why some projects are not sustainable. Former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, once described constituency project as a cesspool of corruption for the National Assembly. This study remain germane by exploring the extent to which communities involvement in project initiation, implementation, and evaluation of constituency projects can enhance sustainable rural development in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: Communities in Akwa Ibom State do not participate in the initiation of their constituency projects

Ho2: Constituency projects do not enhance sustainable rural development in Akwa Ibom State

2. Literature Review / Conceptual Issues

2.1 Constituency Project

A constituency is a community or an area represented by an officeholder. The office holder representing the constituency is usually elected by its constituent to National or State Assembly. According to Benjamin (2014), a constituency is a government electoral district. It refers to an area /section that had been divided for elections purposes, and from which the legislative members are elected to serve in a parliament. As the Nigerian National Assembly, 109 senators represent each Senatorial District and 360 House of Representative members representing the Federal Constituencies. Different states in Nigeria have State Houses of Assembly, where members are elected from different state constituencies to represent them; this is also applicable to the local government, where the councilors are elected to represent the wards. As the representative of the people, the legislature impacts the lives of the people they represent through constituency projects. Thus, constituency projects are any project that is conceived, designed, or executed within a legislative constituency with the collaboration, input or influence of the legislator(s) representing that particular constituency in the legislature and such project is, however, funded from the national or state budget (Onmoguje, 2015). They are projects executed at the constituencies, mostly nominated by the legislators. As opined by Yusuf *et' al* (2018), constituency projects are those works or projects executed by either the federal government or state in exchange for the legislative members for house support on the crucial issues. Some see the constituency project as a scheme designed for lobbying the legislators for support from the executive some key issues that are of interest to the executive, which brings the issues of separation of powers to question. However, the former Nigerian Speaker, House of Representative, Dogara (2016), in his presentation maintained that constituency projects are developmental projects proposed and implemented in the constituency of members of the National Assembly or House of Assemblies, those projects are executed by various ministries, department, and agencies (MDAs). Constituency project as a practice is not only peculiar to Nigeria alone; other developed and developing democracies do practice it also though, with different nomenclature as models. With these in mind, some identifiable characteristics are found in them as pointed out by Kalu & Chikwe (2017) as follows:

1. The constituency project sought to be implemented as usually identified by the legislators representing the host constituency, acting in the parliament or a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee of his constituency.
2. The project is designed, funded, and executed with some participation or collaboration of the legislators in the process.
3. The project is funded directly from the budget of the central or state government.
4. The project is usually identified with the legislator as his/her constituency project.

2.1.2 Community Participation in Developmental Efforts

The concept of participatory development is intertwined with the concepts of community development, community-based organizations, and empowerment (Schrin, 2010). Every community, especially in developing countries, wishes to develop or improve upon the people's standard of living. For development to be achieved, individual, community, government, and non-governmental organizations as well as international organization are involved. There is always a needs to work together for the actualization of every effort. The community remains very vital in this regard since they are the direct beneficiaries of every developmental effort. According to the United Nations, community development refers to the process that unites the people's efforts with those of the governmental authorities (Curtis, 1995). Also, Ngiri (2012) sees community development as the participation of community members in a development programme, which brings about an improvement in their quality of life. It involves the engagement of material and human resources to better the living standard of the people. The welfare of the community is always paramount in carrying out community development. Therefore, community participation in development implies that success is assured where a local community's effort is supplemented by the direction of governmental authorities (Taiwo, 1998). The community's involvement makes them see themselves as co-owners of the projects, which will help sustain and maintain the sad developmental project. When the community is involved from the initiation stage, the community will inform the government what they need to benefit them when completed. The masses need to be fully involved; otherwise, there may be sabotage. In executing the constituency projects, the right people should be used for the effectiveness and trust of the people to gain the trust of the people and for effective and efficient delivery because the caliber of persons in a particular project to a greater extent determines of the projects can be completed or not.

2.1.3 The Legislature

Legislature is a deliberative assembly with authority to make laws for a political entity such as a country or a city. It is an assembly of elected members with equal relationship to one another. As an organ of government, the legislature is one of the three government organs with specialized function of law-making; however, they perform some other functions. They are the representatives of the people, and the leadership is elected among them. In a democratic setting, as it is practiced in most countries of the world, the legislative function is to represents the people's interests that elected them. Anifowose (1999), describe the functions and powers of the legislature to include:

- Statute – making
- Electoral powers/function
- Financial powers
- Executive powers
- Judicial functions
- Investigative functions
- Constitutional powers
- Representation
- Interest articulation and aggregation
- Supervision, scrutiny, and surveillance
- Control of administration and
- They are educating and informing the public.

The legislature can be the bicameral or unicameral legislature. The unicameral legislature is the legislature with one chamber like the State Houses of Assemblies in Nigeria. In contrast, the Bicameral legislature is the type of legislature with two houses or chambers. Scholars mostly agree that democratically viable national legislative bodies are bicameral like the national Assembly in Nigeria with the House of Representatives and the Senate.

2.1.4 Sustainable Rural Development

Like other developing countries and indeed the world over, Nigeria has been concerned about sustainable development. The world today is one global village; what affects a particular area will affect other parts. Consequently, these concerns by world leaders thought it wise to consider sustainable development. These efforts brought about the Stockholm Conference, World Commission on Environmental and Development (WCED) chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987 that released a report captioned "our common future," which clearly defined in the report the meaning of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." With the definition, it becomes necessary that the principle of sustainability should guide every developmental project in the world. Sustainable development is a strategy that provides a framework under which communities can use resources efficiently, create efficient infrastructure, protect and enhance the quality of life, and create new businesses to strengthen their economies. It helps in creating healthy communities that can sustain our generation as well as those that follow ours.

Every project so embarked upon must stand the test of time without putting the future generation to danger. It embodies the notion and idea of the development process that is equitable and socially responsive, that recognizes the extensive nature of poverty, deprivation, and equality between and within nations, classes, and communities (Onah, 1995). In carrying out sustainable rural development, these are steps to be considered as identified by Ekanem (2013) cited in Atairet & Mboho (2019) thus:

1. Getting stakeholders agreement on implementing a sustainable programme.
2. Conducting a community assessment.
3. Creating a community vision and developing a roadmap for reaching that vision.
4. Developing sustainable indicators to measure progress.
5. Identifying sources of help
6. Projects implementation, monitoring, evaluating, and making adjustments as needed.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts system theory as propounded by Easton (1973) cited in Enemuo (2005). The theory was chosen because it shows how the political power, resources and social system interact in the society. The theory conceptualized the political system as the most unit of analysis of political life. Easton sees the political system as a complex set of specific processes or interactions that transform particular inputs into the output of authoritative policies, decisions, and implementation. The basic unit of Easton's system analysis is "interaction." Interaction is generated from the behavior of members of the system when they play their roles as such. A system cannot exist in a vacuum; it receives information, materials, and energy from the environment as inputs.

These inputs undergo a transformation process within a system and leave the systems as output to other systems.

According to Eminue (2001), Easton's political system resembles a vast perpetual conversion process or a conversion machine that takes the inputs of demands and support from the environment in which it is embedded and produces outputs in the form of policies and decision. Inputs provide the political system with raw materials, energy, and information and energy with which to work. Inputs from the environment come in the form of demands for welfare services, better government, and the provisions of infrastructural facilities. The input from the constituents will help in projects initiation that would have direct impact on them. Lawmakers in delivering dividends of democracy to the people they represent through constituency projects' initiations fail to take cognizance of their immediate political environment. Thus, projects that might not meet the community's needs are often imposed and initiated against the people's wishes and demands due to the people's lack of involvement during the initiation process. This abstract analytic system interacts with its environment converting its inputs (demands and support of the people) into outputs through processes and sent to the people in policy implementations and executions. Easton political system, in a way, is continuous processes in which inputs from the society (the needs and demands of the people are transformed with the support which have to do with positive responses towards specific objects. The support comes from community participation, loyalty, obedience to laws, policy formulation, project initiation, community discussion, comment, and constructive suggestion.

2.3 Empirical Review

The Constituency project is one way to make the communities have a sense of belonging. It makes it possible for proper devolution of limited resources to the different constituencies. By so doing, it will bring about the presence of government in every constituency and the rural areas will be developed. There are cases of pervasive lack of transparency in handling constituency projects that were meant for the development of constituencies. According to Afolabi (2015), cited in Awofeso & Irabor (2020), the MDAs and the legislators, in connivance with the contractors, are the beneficiaries of constituency projects rather than the constituents. This may be the reason why some projects are not sustainable. The former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, once described constituency projects as a cesspool of corruption for the National Assembly. In a similar vein, Ajimotokan (2019), maintained that President Buhari during the first phase report of tracking of these projects by ICPC confirmed this administration's worst fear that the benefit of constituency projects was not trickling down to the common people at the grassroot despite the huge sum appropriated for constituency projects since inception.

On the other hand, Udefuna, Jumare and Adebayo (2013) in their study examined legislative projects in Nigeria and posited that the National Assembly merely identifies the needs of the constituents and recommends the same to the executive during budgeting. The question is, why are the leaders complaining about corruption and the lack of transparency associated with it? The extent to which this can be curbed forms the basis for this present study. Also, in a study conducted by Yusuf, Yusoff & Zengeni (2018), the study reveals that the funding of constituency projects is the responsibility of the executive; the legislature only designs and selects its location. However, Bugit Tracker (2019), in identifying common challenges of tracking constituency projects, that is, the

challenge of unspecified project locations. Also, cases of connivance with MDAs have been reported. In Awofeso & Irabor (2020), in their studies, they concluded that the modalities involved in the operation of constituency funds in Nigeria permit corruption and embezzlement of funds. There is a need for a proper institutional framework backed up by law that will allow for the proper initiation and implementation of constituency projects in Nigeria. Kalu & Chikwe (2017), in their study on the political economy of constituency projects in Imo State, reveal that there is excessive legislative interference in the accomplishment of constituency projects and this seriously hampers satisfactory implementation. The sustainability of projects has a relationship with the participation of the host communities in the initiation and implementation of developmental projects in rural areas. According to Akinbile, Oladoja, Awoniyi & Adisa (2006), their study on the effect of community participation on the perception of sustainability of rural water projects in Oyun L.G.A of Kwara State reveals that the people get involved in the projects as they address their felt needs. This is a clear indication that if rural dwellers are part of the constituency project, such projects will be sustainable because they will protect it. The perception of the benefiting community will change; they will see it as their project since they were part of the initiation and implementation stage.

3. Methodology

A mixed research design was employed. Two Federal Constituencies were selected from the ten (10) Federal Constituencies in Akwa Ibom State using purposive sampling techniques. This is done so that at least two senatorial districts will be captured. The two selected constituencies form 20% of the Federal Constituencies in Akwa Ibom State. The selected Federal Constituencies were Itu/Ibiono Ibom and Ikot Abasi, Mkpato Enin and Eastern Obolo Federal Constituencies. The total study population is known to be **686,330**. The sample size for the study is 400, and this was determined using Yamane's (1967) proportional sampling techniques. Four hundred and forty-five questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the two federal constituencies. Questionnaires served as a unique instrument for collecting primary data and were subjected to reliability and validity tests (face and content validity). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency, as well as inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The sampling formula is represented by the following equation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = Sample
 e^2 = Margin of error with value from 0.1 – 0.10 (0.05 is chosen for this study)
 1 = Constant

Table 1: Population of the selected sample Federal Constituency and Local Government in the State

Itu/Ibiono Ibom Federal Constituency	Population
Itu Local Government Area	127,856
Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area	188,605
Ikot Abasi/Mkpat Enin/Eastern Obolo Federal Constituency	
Ikot Abasi Local Government Area	132,603
Eastern Obolo Local Government Area	59,970
Mkpat Enin Local Government Area	177,296
Total Population	686,330

Sources: population census, 2006

4. Results and Discussions

Data Analysis and Presentation

In order to process the collected data the questionnaire returned by the respondents were numbered and sorted to reflect the banking institution covered in the study. Out of four hundred questionnaire (400) distributed, three hundred and twenty four (324) were returned and found useful for the purpose of the study. Representing 81% of the total questionnaire distributed as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Questionnaire Administered

Responses	Frequencies of Responses	Percentage %
Returned	324	81
Not returned	76	19
Total (Administered)	400	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2021

Analysis of Respondents Perceptions on communities participate in the initiation of constituency projects and influence on Sustainable Rural Development

In line with the objective of the study, "to ascertain if communities participate in the initiation of constituency projects in Akwa Ibom State," the table below seeks to analyze the results as obtained from the respondents in the selected communities in Akwa Ibom State. Table 3 shows that 31% agree that the government always seeks the input of community leaders prior to project initiation, 8% were neutral, and 61% disagree that lawmakers do not seek their input and instead projects are imposed on them. More so, from the responses obtained, 124 respondents, representing 38.2% strongly agree, and 100 respondents, representing 30.8%, agree that they have constituency projects initiated by their legislator; 20 respondents, representing 6.3%, were neutral. While 50 respondents, representing 15.4%, strongly disagree, and 30 respondents, representing 9.3%, disagree that project initiation in their constituencies is not visible but can only be seen on the pages of newspapers. Furthermore, 42 respondents, representing 13%, strongly agree, and 18 respondents, representing 5.6%, strongly agree that the government has fully implemented all the projects initiated in their constituency. Meanwhile, 15 respondents representing 4.6% were neutral, while 130 respondents representing 40.1% strongly disagreed, and 119 respondents representing 36.7%

disagreed with most constituency projects in their community being partially implemented. Lastly, aside from project initiation and implementation, immediate satisfaction and benefits derive from every project initiated by the government, helping to a greater extent to determine the level of project viability. On the respondents' views concerning the direct benefits of projects initiated by lawmakers, analysis shows that 33% agree that rural dwellers enjoy enormous benefits from every project in their constituency, while 9.3% are neutral. Meanwhile, 48% disagree that most projects sited by lawmakers are not the rural dwellers' needs; hence, they attract no benefits.

In a democratic setting, any project initiated by the government should be directed towards enhancing sustainable rural development. Consequently, results obtained from respondents show that 68% agree that projects initiated by lawmakers in their constituency enhance sustainable rural development; 4.3% were neutral; and 29% disagree that constituency projects in their community do not enhance sustainable rural development. A good maintenance culture plays a crucial role in the life span of every project. Hence, the respondents' results in question 7 in table 3 show that 42 respondents, representing 13%, strongly agree, and 18 respondents, representing 5.6%, agree that lawmakers' projects in their constituencies are always maintained. Meanwhile, 15 respondents, representing 4.6%, are neutral, while 130 respondents, representing 40.1%, strongly disagree, and 119 respondents, representing 36.7%, disagree that there is no maintenance culture on constituency projects sited in their community.

Table 3: Communities participation and projects initiation

	Research Questions	SA	%	A	%	N	%	SD	%	D	%	TOTAL
1	Lawmakers always seek the input of community stakeholders before project initiation	60	18.5	40	12.4	24	7.5	110	33.9	90	27.7	100
2	Lawmakers initiate constituency projects in our constituency	124	38.2	100	30.8	20	6.3	50	15.4	30	9.3	100
3	Constituency projects initiated by lawmakers have been fully implemented and completed	42	13	18	5.6	15	4.6	130	40.1	119	36.7	100
4	Constituency projects initiated by lawmakers have been beneficial to the rural dwellers	77	23.8	60	18.5	30	9.3	82	25.3	75	23.1	100
5	Projects sited by lawmakers in our constituency	130	40.1	90	27.8	14	4.3	50	15.5	40	12.3	100

	enhance sustainable rural development											
6	Projects initiated by lawmakers in our constituency can stand the test of time	51	15.7	47	14.5	22	6.7	106	32.7	98	30.2	100
7	There is good maintenance culture on every project embarked by lawmakers in our constituency	42	13	18	5.6	15	4.6	130	40.1	119	36.7	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2021

Test of Hypotheses

In testing the hypotheses, Pearson Product Moment Correlation will be employed to determine the magnitude and relationship between constituency projects and indigene participation for sustainable rural development. Thus, responses from Tables 3 were used in the testing of the hypotheses.

The formula is presented thus:

$$r = \frac{N(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N(x^2) - (\sum x)^2(N(y^2) - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

Df = (C-1) (R-1)

Where

C = column total

R = row total

The level of significance 0.05

Hypothesis One

Ho: Communities in Akwa Ibom State do not participate in the initiation of their constituency projects

Table 5

Variables	X Male	Y Female	X ²	Y ²	XY
SA	45	15	2025	225	675
A	22	18	484	324	396
N	10	14	576	196	140
SD	60	50	3600	2500	3000
D	50	40	2500	1600	2000
Total	187	137	9185	4845	6211

$$r = \frac{N(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N(x^2) - (\sum x)^2(N(y^2) - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5(6211) - (187)(137)}{\sqrt{5(9185) - (187)^2(5)(4845) - (137)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{31055 - 25619}{\sqrt{(45925 - 34969) \times (24225 - 18769)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5436}{\sqrt{(10956) \times (5456)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5436}{7731.48}$$

$$r = 0.70$$

Degree of freedom is given thus

$$df = (C-1) (R-1)$$

$$df = (2-1) (5-1)$$

$$df = 1 \times 4$$

$$df = 4$$

The Level of Significance 0.05

The Calculated r value 0.70

The Critical table value .8114

Decision rule

The calculated r-value of 0.70 is less than the critical table value of .8114 at 0.05 level of significance and 4 degrees of freedom. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is rejected, and the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that communities in Akwa Ibom State do not participate in the initiation of their constituency project.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: Constituency projects do not enhance sustainable rural development in Akwa Ibom State

Table 6

Variables	X Male	Y Female	X ²	Y ²	XY
SA	75	55	5625	3025	4125
A	55	25	3025	625	1375
N	9	5	81	25	45
SD	30	20	900	400	600
D	28	12	784	144	336
Total	197	117	10415	4219	6481

$$r = \frac{N(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N(x^2) - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{N(y^2) - (\sum y)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{5(6481) - (197)(117)}{\sqrt{5(10415) - (197)^2} \sqrt{5(4219) - (117)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{32405 - 23049}{\sqrt{(52075 - 38809) \times (21095 - 13689)}}$$

$$r = \frac{9356}{\sqrt{(13266) \times (7406)}}$$

$$r = \frac{9356}{9912.01}$$

$$r = 0.94$$

Degree of freedom is given thus

$$df = (C-1) (R-1)$$

$$df = (2-1) (5-1)$$

$$df = 1 \times 4$$

$$df = 4$$

The Level of Significance 0.05

The Calculated r value 0.94

The Critical table value .8114

Decision rule

The calculated r-value of 0.94 is greater than the critical table value of .8114 at 0.05 level of significance and 4 degrees of freedom. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that constituency projects enhances sustainable rural development in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of findings

From the analysis conducted, it is evident that community participation in constituency projects is a mere utopia and an illusion that is yet to be realized. Although some rural dwellers have constituency projects in their communities, the study revealed a low community participation level at the initiation and implementation stages. Consequently, some of these projects do not meet the people's yearning and outcry since their inputs were not sought at the initiation stage, thus making the projects prone to vandalism, which cannot stand the test of time. The analysis also shows that some of the constituency projects initiated by lawmakers have been abandoned even at the first stage of execution. This is due to widespread corruption and diversions of funds, inexperienced and incompetent contractors, or lack of project monitoring and evaluation. These findings are similar to Kalu & Chikwe (2017); they maintained that the failure of constituency projects in Nigeria is traced to the lack of monitoring from the executives. Consequently, most communities are littered with abandoned and failed projects, bringing sorrow and agony to the rural dwellers. The analysis also indicated that lawmakers' constituency projects are sometimes not beneficial to the rural dwellers because they were imposed on the communities. The issue of lack of continuity has also affected constituency projects, as most lawmakers do not stay in office to complete the projects they started; the incoming legislators most often initiate a new project that will carry their names, thus leading to the abandonment of projects already started by the former in the case where the latter is not re-elected. It can be seen in a bridge constructed across the Itu River, initiated by the former lawmaker representing Itu-Ibiono Ibom Federal Constituency, but has since been abandoned. The study also revealed a road construction project initiated by the same federal lawmaker at Ikot Antia Ididep, all in Ibiono Ibom L.G.A, where the contractors are not on-site and the road is becoming worse than before.\

Analysis further revealed that most constituency projects initiated by lawmakers do not stand the test of time. It might result from the use of substandard materials by the contractors during execution, which directly affects the project's life span. The result confirmed a study carried out by

the BudgiT Tracka (2019), which cited a case in Sokoto State where N37.4m was allocated for the tarring of a road stretch in Wurno L.G.A, Sokoto State. The study also revealed that the Environmental Impact Assessment was not carried out before some projects' initiation; thus, it poses an environmental problem to the people and the projects itself when completed. The fundamental aim of initiating constituency projects is to bring development to the rural communities—not just development but sustainable rural development. Hence, findings revealed that most of these projects have enhanced sustainable rural development and benefited rural dwellers. Lastly, the study revealed that the initiators poorly maintained some of these projects. Hence, most rural communities in Akwa Ibom State are littered with shattered, spoilt, and vandalized projects because of a lack of proper maintenance culture.

5. Conclusion

Community participation in the constituency project is a panacea for sustainable rural development. The sense of belonging to the federal and state in most communities is through constituency projects, and as such, the constituents should be involved in the constituency project to be executed. Lack of involvement of the communities in the initiation of constituency projects seems to have affected the proper implementation of constituency projects. Community participation in the initiation and implementation stages of the constituency project will enhance sustainable development. Most of the time, the lawmakers do not seek the input of the constituents before initiation and implementation; hence, some of the projects are not sustainable. More so, government presence in most communities is through constituency projects, giving the communities hope and a sense of belonging.

Implications of the Study

Based on the findings of this study it is suggested that concerted effort regarding community participation in *constituency projects* for sustainable rural development is required by all stakeholders involved in the development of nation. Most constituency projects emanate from the legislature; this study would open avenue for new ideas on how constituency projects can emanate from the constituents. It has open way for reconsideration of the approach.

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