

Community Participation in the Provision of Educational Facilities in Public Schools and Community Development in Cross River State

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Abstract

Public secondary schools play a vital role in imparting knowledge and skills to students, which are essential for their personal and societal development. However effective learning cannot take place without educational facilities. Public schools are established and managed by the government, but at other times the community plays a support role in contributing to the security of the school, decision-making, and infrastructural development among other things. This study aims to examine the relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development, using the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State as a case study. The ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. A sample size of 600 respondents was randomly selected from the six local government areas that make up the Senatorial district. 575 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used for analysis. The result from the analysis shows that there exists a significant relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities and community development in Cross River State. The study therefore recommends the need for the community, non-government organizations and individuals to support the development of education and other sectors in the State.

Keywords: *Community participation, Educational facilities, Public secondary schools*

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Background to the Study

The dilapidating condition of public schools in Cross River State is not different from other States in Nigeria. according to Universal Basic Education (UBEC) (2023), “an estimated 50 percent of public schools in the country lack basic furniture, forcing pupils to sit on the floor to take lessons. To revamp basic education in the country, the federal government introduced an intervention fund for states in the country and the FCT” (TheCable, 2023). While the UBEC policy has emphasized the central place of educational infrastructure in determining the quality of learning and graduates being churned out, it admitted that, currently, most public schools lack basic infrastructure, such as a laboratory, library, electricity, and quality learning environment. The Editor of The Guardian (2021) reported that “while existing infrastructures in some public schools are in deplorable condition, others are below acceptable standards and, in few cases, nonexistent. In some of these schools, there is a lack of functional public sanitary facilities; hence, the 'bush' serves that purpose in such schools”. He added, “For instance, learning and boarding facilities at the Government Science College, Kagara, where some school children were kidnapped recently are dilapidated and in dire need of renovation”. This is the worst and even worst in most Nigerian public schools, with no exception to Cross River State.

Public secondary schools in Cross River State are educational institutions that are owned and funded by the government. The state government is responsible for establishing and maintaining these schools, ensuring that they meet the required standards for educational facilities. Public secondary schools in Cross River State aim to provide students with a quality education and prepare them for higher education or the workforce. These schools offer a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, social studies, and vocational courses. They also provide extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and societies to enhance students' overall development. Furthermore, public secondary schools in Cross River State are important contributors to the state's educational system and play a crucial role in shaping the future of the community. According to Mbon, Ukpong and Ekpenyong (2019), the school system is sustained when quality and adequate school facilities are provided in schools according to education programmes. Some indices of secondary school system sustainability include meeting the expectations of the parents and society, curriculum relevance, and teacher development. According to Mbon, Ukpong and Ekpenyong (2019), a school system is sustained when quality and adequate school facilities are provided in schools according to education programmes. Some indices of secondary school system sustainability include meeting the expectations of the parents and society, curriculum relevance, and teacher development.

Community participation plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education provided in public secondary schools. By actively involving community members in the decision-making process, educational facilities can be tailored to meet the specific needs and desires of the local community. This involvement can range from participating in the planning and construction of physical facilities to contributing funds for the improvement of educational resources. Moreover, community participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, encouraging community members to actively engage in the education of their children.

Ultimately, the significance of community participation lies in its ability to strengthen the connection between the school and the community, resulting in a more effective and inclusive educational system.

One of the key factors influencing community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is the level of awareness and understanding among community members. Without a clear understanding of the importance of education and the benefits that can arise from community involvement in school facilities provision, community participation is likely to be limited. Additionally, the level of community empowerment and the availability of resources can also impact the extent to which communities can contribute to the provision of educational facilities. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development, using the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State as a case study. The study hypothesized that there is no significant between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development.

Literature Review

Government's Provision of Educational Facilities and Community Development

Education is found to be a powerful means of social progress (UBE, 2011). A method by which knowledge, skills, and ideas are acquired to shape an individual's attitude, actions, and achievements. Also, means of increasing an individual's moral, physical, emotional, and intellectual power for social reforms in the society. Education is a method of mastering the laws of nature to utilize efficiently for the well-being of individuals and rebuilding knowledge for complete living (Ekong, 2003). Education officially refers to systematic training by specialists in a formal organization. It is not socialization as the case may be;

1. It is official, direct, and less generalized than socialization or cultural learning which begins informally in the family, church, mosque, and community and then formally in schools,
2. It is a single and very vital tool for social mobility while socialization simply puts the individual in a social position (Ekong, 2003).

Education was usually considered a vital requirement for national development. Essential to socio-economic well-being and self-generating process transformation in contemporary society. It is in this light that government policy content accommodates collaboration with both organizations and individuals on the funding of the educational sector, particularly in the provision of facilities for poor communities. Bollag (2002) thinks that education is partially a method of transferring knowledge and skills, basically on conservation and expansion of knowledge both at individual and group levels. Bollag stressed that the importance of education to societal development was on the roles played by individual society to facilitate, nurture and build requisite institutions. He opines that it was inadequate for states to make a commitment to educational provision and development, or annually allocate budget and spend money for education. Jhingahn (2003) reported the findings of a survey carried out by a management information system (MIS) enterprise group. New Delhi it was revealed that oil

and gas India extended financial assistance to about 1500 educational institutions around oil and gas operational areas. Oil and gas the report added, has contributed to building schools, procurement of laboratory equipment, furniture, books, and other teaching aids, and awarded scholarships to commendable students. Introduced in 1998, the corporation provided scholarships to about 1,000 students.

Ogai and Benson (2003) in their study on an appraisal of multinational oil and gas companies were involved in formal and informal, or non-formal educational ventures. Many people had been sponsored to study overseas to boost the manpower requirement in strategic sectors of Nigeria's economy. The study showed that multinational oil and gas companies provide educational infrastructure such as science equipment classroom blocks, teachers' quarters, and scholarship programmes. It supported youth development through a scheme that aimed at equipping youth with the requisite skills to earn a living. An independent study conducted by Dike (2004) on the relationship between governments' programmes on the provision of educational facilities and community development discovered that the government of Akwa Ibom in collaboration with Exxon Mobil has done a great deal on educational initiatives in Eket and Ibeno local government areas. The analysis showed a correlation coefficient of 0.615 for educational services. This coefficient indicated the existence of a relationship between the joint educational initiatives of the state government and Exxon Mobil in community development. The findings revealed that Exxon Mobil in collaboration with the state government has offered scholarships to host community students studying in tertiary institutions such as the university, the polytechnic, and colleges of education. The findings also showed that Exxon Mobil in collaboration with the government of Akwa Ibom State has constructed and rehabilitated many classroom blocks in secondary and primary schools in this local government area.

According to Ekpo (2004), Exxon Mobil company's director made a huge donation to the graduate school, the University of Calabar as part of its support services in the domain of education. The donation was to assist in the development of its human resource development programmes. Its aid-to-education scheme was launched as far back as 1962. Ekpo found out that this scheme originated from the policies of the government and was replaced by the current scholarship programme. Similarly, Otu (2005) reported from another study that investigated the relationship between multinational oil and gas companies' social infrastructure of manpower development initiatives and sustainable community development that a correlation existed between these two variables. His findings revealed that the multinational oil and gas companies embarked on scholarship awards to boost education in the host communities. His work revealed that while community scholarship then catered exclusively to candidates in its operational companies was based on merit for candidates drawn from all parts of the country. This catered for over 1.500 beneficiaries annually. They also built and donated buildings such as science laboratories and libraries to schools.

Ashton-Jones (1998) stated that government policies and programmes through the involvement of multinational oil and gas companies especially in their efforts to improve education to foster sustainable community development are commendable. For example,

Ashton-Jones reported that the Lekki Conservation Centre, a center for excellence in environmental research and education including a seventy-eight-hectare wildlife reserve donated by Exxon Mobil to the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) stands out as one of the joint ventures between Nigeria's national petroleum corporation (NNPC) and Exxon Mobil, the biggest community relations projects. The contributions of Elf (NNPC/Elf joint venture) have not gone unnoticed. Ekpo (2004) still discovered from his investigation that evidence of NNPC/Elf joint venture involvement in sustainable community development could be found in Obegi, River state, where it started its commercial oil and gas production in 1964. The provision of educational facilities such as laboratory equipment was boosted etc. in 1973 through the recommendations of the Obagi Oil and Gas Field Consultative Committee (OOFCC). The OOFCC was set up to enhance consultation design and develop projects with local communities. These amenities which stimulated socio-economic activities in the area were extended to other areas such as Upamani, Obodo, Jatumi, Okpoko, and Aghigbo in the Niger Delta region. Available literature from Idemudia and Ite (2006) and Okaba (2005) and Ite (2006) unanimously confirmed that the multinational and gas companies with the help of the government have contributed to social infrastructural development in the educational sector. The NNPC builds, rehabilitates, and furnishes classroom blocks in some educational institutions. It provides schools for the youths from its host community and other parts of Nigeria, encouraging education because of its conviction that when communities are educationally empowered, this will arm them with the necessary tools to establish and manage productive ventures capable of stimulating socio-economic development in the host communities and other parts of Nigeria.

Okaba (2005) stated that the social responsibility inherent in its philosophy of community relations for community development has been moderated and guided by government policies and programmes. He stressed that most Niger Delta states in collaboration with multinational oil and gas companies have been able to construct classroom blocks and rehabilitated existing ones that are in their dilapidating state to give the host communities a new facelift. Okaba observed that an organic bond has developed between the multinational oil and gas companies and the Niger Delta region host communities. Therefore, he concluded that the contribution of the multinational oil and gas companies through their community relations strategy has tremendously helped to reposition communities in the Niger Delta region on the path of community development. Eweje (2006) found out that the joint venture between Mobil and Shell and the government of Rivers state has contributed towards the social infrastructural transformation of the host communities thereby gingering the development of these communities. Eweje stated that they rehabilitate and furnish classroom blocks in some situations. The joint venture awards contracts to indigenes because of its conviction that they will be committed to executing efficiently for the host communities and beneficiaries of the projects.

According to Anya (2001), educational institutions are in dire need, he adds that the most troubled is the primary education sector. He stressed that about 120,151 primary schools in Nigeria are without buildings of any type. Classes are held under trees. He wonders what the quality of education under such conditions would be. The Federal Ministry of Education

report (2001) did not concur with the opinion that the government has not been able to provide infrastructural facilities for schools. The report maintains that this democratic government has tackled the nation's long-fettering education difficulties. It has embarked on building primary and secondary schools and licensing private universities to avail the teeming population of the opportunity to be educated. The report insists that the government in recent times has increased educational funding by 180%. According to the Cross-river State Annual Development Report of 2014, the increase in access to educational facilities and rehabilitation of others was the starting point. Today educational facilities in cross river states are well provided and are as good as those in any modern part of the world. This has moved the state from its predominantly poor performance in the West African school certificate examinations (WASCE) and moved the state from the distant position of 29th among states in Nigeria to 9th.

Challenges in the Provision of Educational Facilities in Cross River State

One major challenge in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is the lack of adequate funding. Many schools are not able to provide sufficient resources such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and computers due to limited financial resources from the government. This hampers the quality of education as students do not have access to the necessary materials for learning. Additionally, the lack of proper infrastructure is another challenge faced by these schools. Many schools do not have well-equipped classrooms, libraries, or sports facilities, hindering students' ability to engage in a well-rounded education. These challenges highlight the need for increased funding and support from the government and community to ensure quality educational facilities in public secondary schools.

1. Lack of infrastructure

One of the major issues limiting community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is the lack of infrastructure. The inadequate infrastructure includes insufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and recreational facilities. According to Abbass (2012), the teacher-student ratio in public secondary schools in Nigeria is as high as 1:50, far above the recommended 1:35 ratio. This lack of infrastructure not only affects the quality of education but also reduces the attractiveness of these schools to students. Additionally, the absence of functional libraries and laboratories limits the ability of students to access resources and conduct practical experiments, hindering their overall learning experience.

2. Insufficient Funding

Inadequate funding remains a significant obstacle to effective community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The state government's allocation for education is insufficient to meet the growing needs of these schools. This lack of funding hinders the communities' ability to contribute financially, leading to a decline in their participation. Insufficient funds result in dilapidated school buildings, outdated equipment, and a shortage of teaching materials. Moreover, without proper funding, it becomes challenging to hire and retain qualified teachers, undermining the quality of education provided. Therefore, unless adequate funding is prioritized, the extent of

community participation will continue to be limited, hindering the development of public secondary schools in the state.

3. Inadequate learning materials

Another factor contributing to the extent of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is the issue of inadequate learning materials. It has been observed that many schools lack the necessary textbooks, laboratory equipment, and other resources needed to support effective teaching and learning. Without these materials, students' educational may be compromised, limiting their ability to fully engage with the curriculum. Additionally, inadequate learning materials can also hinder the ability of teachers to effectively deliver lessons and engage students in meaningful ways. This creates a need for community members to step in and support the schools in acquiring the necessary learning materials to enhance the educational experience of students.

4. Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms pose a significant challenge to the provision of quality education in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Excessively overcrowded classrooms, with a high student-to-teacher ratio, can impede effective teaching and learning. Students may find it difficult to concentrate or actively engage in classroom activities due to the lack of personal space and individual attention. This can result in a decrease in academic performance and hinder the overall educational experience. Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms may also limit the ability of teachers to provide personalized instruction or to address the diverse needs of each student. Therefore, addressing the issue of overcrowding in classrooms is crucial to improving educational outcomes in public secondary schools.

On the significant of educational facilities, the study conducted by John (2018) reveals that there is a significant correlation between the level of community involvement and the availability and maintenance of educational facilities. It is observed that communities that actively engage in the provision of these facilities result in better infrastructure, such as well-equipped libraries, science laboratories, and modern classrooms. Furthermore, community participation ensures the sustainability of these facilities, as the residents take ownership and responsibility for their maintenance and improvement. Overall, this study highlights the importance of community participation in ensuring the adequate provision and enhancement of educational facilities in public secondary schools.

Community participation and the provision of educational facilities in Cross River State

According to the United Nations (2005) community participation “involves the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence development processes and to share equitably in the fruits of development”. Izuehie and Ofojebe (2019) stated that “community participation is seen as the involvement of parents, community members, voluntary organizations (alumni associations, financial organizations) in schools' activities to enhance development and promote quality learning environment within the community and society at large”. They added that, “community participation in school development can be achieved through adequate provision of school facilities”.

Educational facilities as defined by Asiabaka (2008) are “equipment and supplies which are essential for the attainment of educational goals and objectives”. Alimi, Ehinola, and Alabi (2012) pointed out that “facilities are everything used directly or indirectly for the benefit of education. These are seen as the entire school plant such as blocks of classrooms, staff offices, laboratories, workshops, libraries, laboratory equipment, consumables, audiovisual aids, electricity, water, chairs, tables, stationeries, playground, storage spaces and others which the school has”. (Uko, 2015) explained that these educational facilities “comprise the physical expression of the school curriculum in the construction, internal and external arrangements of the buildings, equipment, grounds, surroundings, general appearance which include the flower beds, paths, orchards, shrubs, playgrounds, classrooms, assembly hall, dining hall, desks and school farms”. He added that educational facilities “provide a comfortable atmosphere for the achievement of educational goals”. Asiabaka (2008) also described educational facilities as “all types of buildings for academic and nonacademic activities, equipment for academic and nonacademic activities, areas/spaces for sports and games, landscape, farms, and gardens including trees, roads, and paths”. This study supports the position of Izuehie and Ofojebe (2019) and admit educational facilities as “as those useful amenities found in the school environment that motivates both the teachers and the students to have a positive attitude towards teaching and learning”.

According to Arugu and Anam (2014), “Community participation is the secret of the success of self-help projects. Participation is both in kind and cash”. They added that “Participation and community development have been identified as key concepts in development with the emphasis on the direct involvement of ordinary people in local affairs” (Midgley et al 1986, Arugu & Anam, 2014). Otu and Anam (2018) reiterated that “The more rural people were involved in addressing their development, the more confidence and success level associated with such programmes”. Their position supports the conclusion of Reid (2002) that “local participation in community and/or project implementation is significant to rural development.

A cross-section interview among respondents in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State shows that at different points, the community gets involved in community projects. One of the local governments has records of the active engagement of the community in the construction and maintenance of school buildings. This involvement not only ensured the timely completion of the project but also contributed to the improvement of the overall infrastructure. Another case study, however, revealed a lack of community participation, leading to delayed construction and inadequate facilities. This discrepancy highlights the need to understand the factors influencing community participation and the potential impact it can have on the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools. Further analysis of such case studies can provide valuable insights and recommendations to enhance community involvement in the educational sector.

Community participation in educational development is a dual function. The school as a social institution has its contribution to the community, and the community in return contributes to the development of the educational system. According to Ejie (2005), the obligation of the

school to the community includes, “the intellectual development of the individual child to his greatest potential. This requires in addition to the mastery of the three Rs – (reading, writing, and arithmetic) the acquisition of information and understanding of the concepts and meanings in several subject areas including the languages, the arts, history, geography, science and technology.” The community fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the educational facilities among community members by actively participating in the decision-making process. By so doing, community members can ensure that the needs and concerns of the school are adequately addressed. This collaboration between the school and the community not only enhances the quality of educational facilities but also promotes a sense of community cohesion. Moreover, community participation can alleviate the burden on government resources, as community members can contribute financially and through volunteering their time and skills. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and promote the importance of community participation in education to improve the quality of educational facilities in public secondary schools.

1. Shared responsibility

The findings of this study demonstrate the significant role of shared responsibility in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The results indicate that a lack of community participation and involvement can hinder the effective delivery of educational facilities, leading to inadequate infrastructure and limited resources. This highlights the need for increased awareness and engagement of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, government officials, and community leaders, in the decision-making processes related to educational infrastructure development. By recognizing and embracing their shared responsibility, these actors can contribute to the improvement of educational facilities, ensuring a conducive learning environment for students and ultimately enhancing the quality of education in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

2. Utilization of local resources

The utilization of local resources is crucial in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Local resources refer to the materials and expertise readily available within the local community. By harnessing these resources, schools can effectively address the infrastructure and resource challenges they face. The community can contribute by offering their expertise in construction, engineering, or other relevant fields. Additionally, locally available materials such as stones, sand, and timber can be used in the construction of school buildings. This approach not only saves costs but also promotes community ownership and pride in the development and maintenance of educational facilities. Furthermore, the involvement of the local community fosters a sense of responsibility and commitment towards education, ultimately enhancing the quality of education provided in public secondary schools.

3. Ownership and pride in the facilities

Regarding ownership and pride in the facilities, the findings of this study revealed that there is a significant level of community participation and involvement in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. It was observed that the community

members took a sense of ownership and pride in the facilities by actively contributing to their construction and maintenance. The study further established that this level of participation was due to the recognition of the importance of quality educational facilities in enhancing learning outcomes and the overall development of students. Additionally, the community's involvement in the provision of these facilities fostered a sense of belonging and commitment toward the school, thereby creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

4. Cultural relevance and sensitivity

Lastly, cultural relevance and sensitivity play a crucial role in promoting community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. As an ethnically diverse state with numerous cultural groups, it is essential to consider and respect the cultural practices and beliefs of the community members when seeking their involvement. Recognizing and valuing their cultural heritage can create a sense of belonging and ownership, leading to increased participation and investment in educational initiatives. Moreover, by incorporating culturally specific approaches and content into educational programs, schools can better engage students and promote inclusive learning environments. Thus, cultural relevance and sensitivity must be integrated into community participation efforts to ensure their success and sustainability in the long term.

In Cross River State, some instances of community support in the development of educational facilities can be cited.

1. A successful example of community-built classrooms

A good example of community effort in developing education in the state is the successful example of community-built classrooms is the Idomi Community Secondary School in Cross River State. This school lacks proper educational facilities due to limited government support. In response, the community united and mobilized resources to construct classrooms for the school. The community members volunteered their time, labor, and donated construction materials such as bricks and cement. This collaborative effort resulted in the construction of new classrooms, providing a conducive learning environment for the students. The community's active involvement demonstrates their commitment to education and their willingness to take responsibility for the development of their children's educational facilities.

2. Cross River State government initiatives to involve communities

In addition to the above-mentioned community initiatives, the Cross River State government has taken several steps to involve communities in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools. Firstly, the government has established the Cross River State Education Endowment Fund (CREEF) to solicit donations from individuals, organizations, and communities interested in contributing to the improvement of educational facilities. This fund allows communities to actively participate in the development and maintenance of schools within their locality. Secondly, the government has introduced a policy mandating parents and community members to contribute a certain amount towards the provision of educational facilities. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, encouraging them to actively engage in the development of their local schools. Lastly, the government facilitates regular town hall meetings and community forums

to solicit input from community members regarding the prioritization of educational projects and the allocation of resources. Such initiatives provide a platform for communities to have a voice in decision-making processes, aligning the provision of educational facilities with the needs and aspirations of the local population.

3. Collaborative projects with NGOs and other stakeholders

Collaborative projects with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders have been identified as crucial strategies to enhance community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. These projects present an opportunity for different entities to come together and pool their resources, expertise, and networks towards a common goal of improving the quality of education. NGOs can provide financial support, and technical expertise, and help build community linkages that can strengthen the overall impact of educational initiatives. Engaging other stakeholders such as local businesses, community leaders, and parents also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability in the development and sustainability of educational facilities.

Impact of Community Participation on Community Development

Community development (2014) is the process of enhancing the social and economic status of the community. The United Nations defines **community development** as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It is a broad concept, applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens, and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. One of the indicators of community development is access to quality education by community dwellers. Access to education reduces illiteracy level among community members. This can be achieved through community participation in providing quality education. Community participation has been found to have a significant impact on educational outcomes in public secondary schools in Cross River State and this has reduced the level of illiteracy among community members. This is evident in the improved infrastructure provided through community involvement. By actively participating in the provision of educational facilities, the community shows a vested interest in the success of the schools and the education of their children. This increased level of commitment translates into better learning environments, which can enhance students' academic performance and overall educational outcomes. Furthermore, community involvement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, creating a supportive and collaborative. Some impacts are further examined below,

1. Improved Academic Performance

The provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River. The state can also potentially lead to improved academic performance among students. Adequate facilities such as libraries, science laboratories, computer rooms, and well-equipped classrooms provide students with the necessary resources and tools to enhance their learning experiences. Studies have shown that students who have access to such facilities tend to perform better academically compared to those who do not. Additionally, the availability of modern teaching aids and technology in classrooms can facilitate better understanding and

engagement among students, further contributing to their academic success. Therefore, promoting community participation in the provision of educational facilities can have a positive impact on students' academic performance.

2. Increased Retention Rates

Furthermore, increased retention rates have also been identified as a significant outcome of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. When communities actively engage in the process of building and maintaining school facilities, students are more likely to remain in school and complete their education. This is primarily due to the sense of ownership and pride that communities feel towards the schools they contribute to. Additionally, community involvement ensures that school facilities are properly maintained and upgraded, creating a conducive learning environment for students. As a result, students are motivated to stay in school, leading to higher retention rates and ultimately improving the overall educational outcomes in Cross River State.

3. Enhanced community cohesion and sense of social responsibility

Enhanced community cohesion and a sense of social responsibility can foster a more inclusive and engaged educational environment in public secondary schools. When community members actively participate in the provision of educational facilities, such as through donations or volunteering, they become more invested in the success of the school and its students. This increased involvement can lead to improved relationships between community members and school staff, as well as among community members themselves, creating a cohesive and supportive network. Furthermore, a sense of social responsibility is cultivated among community members when they witness firsthand the positive impact of their contributions. This can lead to a greater understanding of the importance of education and a commitment to supporting educational initiatives in the future.

The extent of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is moderate at best. While some communities have actively engaged in supporting the development of educational infrastructure, such as building classrooms or donating materials, the overall level of involvement is not sufficient. Factors such as lack of awareness, limited financial resources, and inadequate government support hinder community participation. To improve the situation, it is necessary to create a conducive environment for community engagement by raising awareness about the importance of education, providing financial incentives for communities to contribute, and enhancing government support through policies and programs. Only through sustained community participation can the educational facilities in public secondary schools be adequately improved.

There are certain factors that affects community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Inadequate awareness and understanding of the importance of community participation pose a significant barrier. Many community members may not fully grasp the benefits of their involvement or the potential

impact they can have on the educational system. Additionally, limited resources, such as financial constraints, lack of time, and competing priorities, can also hinder community participation. These barriers can limit the extent to which the community is actively involved in decision-making processes and contribute to the provision of educational facilities.

1. Lack of Awareness and Understanding

A lack of awareness and understanding plays a significant role in hindering community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Many community members are unaware of the benefits and importance of their involvement in improving the quality of education. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding about the specific ways in which they can contribute to the enhancement of school facilities. This lack of knowledge leads to a lack of motivation and investment in the education system. It is imperative to increase awareness and understanding among community members regarding the pivotal role they play in shaping the educational landscape and highlight the various ways they can actively support and contribute to the improvement of school facilities.

2. Socio-economic Disparities

One significant factor contributing to the disparities in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic status of individuals or communities can greatly impact their access to quality educational resources. Lower-income communities are often unable to provide adequate infrastructure, such as classrooms or libraries, due to financial constraints. Additionally, families with lower socioeconomic status may struggle to afford school supplies or extracurricular activities, further limiting their educational opportunities. These disparities perpetuate a cycle of inequality, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to face academic challenges and have limited access to higher education or employment opportunities.

3. Limited Organizational Capacity

School administrators and staff are faced with numerous challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of skilled personnel, and poor coordination. The shortage of financial resources restricts the ability of schools to maintain existing infrastructure or expand their facilities. Additionally, the absence of professionals skilled in project management and community engagement hampers the effective implementation of community-driven initiatives. Furthermore, poor coordination between schools and community members leads to a lack of synergy and collaboration, resulting in missed opportunities for effective partnerships and resource mobilization. These constraints undermine the potential for community participation in addressing the infrastructure needs of public secondary schools in Cross River State.

4. Political Interference

Political interference in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is a significant factor that hampers the extent of community participation. The involvement of politicians in the decision-making process undermines the autonomy of

school administrators and community members, leading to biased resource allocation and mismanagement. Politicians often prioritize their personal and political interests over the collective needs of the community, thus hindering the equitable distribution of educational resources. This interference not only compromises the quality of education but also perpetuates social inequalities by favoring certain schools or communities based on political affiliations or influence. To enhance community participation, it is crucial to address and mitigate political interference in the provision of educational facilities.

The findings of this study suggest that there is a significant extent of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Most respondents reported being actively involved in various aspects of school development. This includes providing financial resources, construction of infrastructure, and offering labour for maintenance and renovation. Additionally, community members expressed a strong sense of ownership and responsibility towards the schools, viewing them as integral to the overall well-being of their communities. However, challenges such as inadequate funding and limited government support were also identified, which hindered the effectiveness of community participation. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders must address these issues and create an enabling environment for sustained community involvement in educational facility provision.

The extent of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is a crucial aspect to consider for the improvement of education in the region. Communities play an essential role in the development of these schools, as they contribute resources, manpower, and expertise towards upgrading the facilities. However, the level of community involvement varies across schools, and this can lead to disparities in the quality of education offered. The government and stakeholders must encourage and support community engagement to ensure equal access to quality education for all students in Cross River State.

Theoretical Framework

The study leverages the community participatory theory. The theory was propounded by Midgley (1986). Community participatory theory seeks to explain the direct involvement of ordinary people in local affairs. It is concerned with the control of local services and facilities by inhabitants. Community participatory theory is an active process that reflects the participant's act of mental labour as thinking deliberating inspiring or planning becomes a motive force for the actions. The theory seeks to arouse interest and commitment towards development programmes on the part of those who are expected to gain the most. Also, it explains adequately the nature of changes and benefits to the unhappily designated target groups and the activation of institutions of community involvement that could facilitate genuinely creative participation in the planning and execution of programmes/projects. Its further emphasis on the choice of what should be done for the rural communities when where and how should be determined by the community dwellers. The theory de-emphasizes a top-bottom approach in the process of community development. In other words, the overriding

principle is mass participation by all anchored on cooperative efforts of the people with or without external stimulus. The external assistance, such as matching grants from the government for community-led programmes does not redefine the substance of the approach provided that the major element of community initiative and inputs in the implementation of their community development programmes is not undermined.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. Ex-post facto design is a systematic inquiry that does not have direct control over independent variables since they cannot be manipulated. The study involves a huge population, it helps the researcher to carry out, explain existing phenomena, and draw conclusions based on the data collected.

Population and Sample of the Study

Cross River Central Senatorial District in Cross River State covers six local governments which include Abi, Yakurr, Obubra, Ikom, Etung, and Boki. The population of Cross River State is estimated at 2.89 million persons. The Central Senatorial District has about 942,416 persons living in the area (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Africa Region, 2023). From this estimated population, 600 respondents were randomly selected and used for the study. The respondents were adult members of the community between 25 years and above. It is believed that this population will provide the needed response to examine the variables of the study.

Data Presentation

Hypothesis:

There is no significant between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development.

The data was obtained through a research questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using the 4-item Likert Scale Technique of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was randomly administered to 100 respondents in each local government area. A total of 600 questionnaires were administered. In the end 575 were properly filled and submitted. This number was analyzed, and the result was used in testing the research hypothesis. The data is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Provision of educational facilities in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State

Statement	SA	Percent	A	Percent	D	Percent	SD	Percent
Dilapidated school blocks have been renovated in my community school.	278	48.35	167	29.04	84	14.61	46	8.00
There are adequate writing desks in my community school.	209	36.35	183	31.83	78	13.57	105	18.26
New classroom blocks have been constructed in my community school	163	28.35	163	28.35	74	12.87	175	30.43
Science laboratories in my community school are well equipped	78	13.57	94	16.35	211	36.70	192	33.39
Provision of science equipment's has increased the number of science students in my community school	57	9.91	73	12.70	209	36.35	236	41.04
My community schools library is well equipped with textbooks	46	8.00	54	9.39	289	50.26	186	32.35
The school in my community lacks good teachers	67	11.65	78	13.57	167	29.04	263	45.74
There is a functional information communication technology (ICT) centre in my community	78	13.57	118	20.52	156	27.13	223	38.78

Source: Field work 2023

Table 2: Analysis of the relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities and community development

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Community participation in the provision of educational facilities (x)	8649	130653	141955	
Community development (y)	9420	155108		0.39*

*P, 0.05, df = 573, critical r = 0.195

Source: Field work 2023

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this hypothesis show there exists a significant relationship between government provision of educational facilities and community development. This agrees with the assertion of the United Nations (2005) that community participation creates opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence development processes and to share equitably in the fruits of development. Uko (2015) earlier highlighted school facilities provided by the community to include “physical expression of the school

curriculum in the construction, internal and external arrangements of the buildings, equipment, grounds, surroundings, general appearance which include the flower beds, paths, orchards, shrubs, playgrounds, classrooms, assembly hall, dining hall, desks, and school farms” (Uko, 2015). Asiabaka (2008) adds that the community also contributes to educational development in the form of buildings for academic and nonacademic activities, equipment for academic and nonacademic activities, areas/spaces for sports and games, landscapes, farms, and gardens including trees, roads, and paths. These contributions enhance school facilities, while also providing teaching and learning motivation (Anya, 2021). These contributions show a strong relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities and community development in Cross River State, and Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development, using the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State as a case study. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public schools and community development in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. However, the study further underscores the need for increased participation by the community, multinational corporations, and non-government organizations as most public schools lack educational facilities. This affects learning about the socio-economic status of the people. In achieving these certain recommendations are highlighted below.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the study and conclusion, the following recommendations are highlighted,

- 1. Establishment of a community-based organization:** One strategy to enhance community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State is the establishment of community-based organizations. These organizations can serve as intermediaries between the community and the school, fostering collaboration and involvement. Through regular meetings and forums, community members can voice their concerns and opinions regarding the school's facilities and contribute to decision-making processes. Additionally, organizing community workdays can further promote participation, as community members can actively engage in the improvement and maintenance of school facilities. By involving the community in these initiatives, a sense of ownership and responsibility can be cultivated, leading to increased support and investment in the provision of educational facilities.

- 2. Public awareness campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns play a crucial role in informing the public about the importance of the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools. These campaigns serve as a tool to raise awareness and engage the community in actively participating in the process. By disseminating information through various mediums such as print, radio, and social media, public awareness campaigns can reach a wide audience and ensure that the message reaches the target population. Additionally, these campaigns provide a platform for community members to voice their concerns, suggestions,

and opinions, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. Ultimately, public awareness campaigns contribute to the overall success of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools.

3. Capacity building programmes: Capacity building programmes are essential for the improvement and sustainability of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. These programs aim to enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of school stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, and community members. By providing training and professional development opportunities, capacity-building programmes enable these individuals to effectively contribute to the planning, management, and maintenance of educational facilities. Furthermore, these programs also foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the community members, encouraging their active involvement in the provision of resources and support for the schools. Ultimately, capacity-building programs play a crucial role in promoting community participation and ensuring the effective functioning of educational facilities in Cross River State.

4. Strengthening community-based organizations: Strengthening community-based organizations is a crucial step in enhancing the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. These organizations have the potential to mobilize resources, foster collaboration between schools and communities, and advocate for necessary infrastructural improvements. By empowering community-based organizations, policymakers can harness local knowledge and expertise to address specific educational needs and challenges effectively. Furthermore, these organizations can contribute to the sustainability and accountability of educational initiatives by actively engaging with stakeholders, monitoring implementation processes, and ensuring that funds are utilized efficiently. Therefore, by investing in community-based organizations, Cross River State can foster a culture of collective responsibility and shared decision-making, thereby improving the overall quality of educational facilities in public secondary schools.

5. Policy reforms and political support: Policy reforms and political support play a crucial role in the extent of community participation in the provision of educational facilities in public secondary schools in Cross River State. In recent years, there have been significant policy reforms aimed at increasing community involvement in the education sector. These policy changes have focused on empowering communities to take ownership of their schools and play an active role in decision-making processes. Additionally, political support has been instrumental in driving these reforms forward. The government has shown a commitment to promoting community participation in education and has provided the necessary resources and support to facilitate this. This has created a conducive environment for community members to contribute effectively towards the improvement of educational facilities in public secondary schools. The government needs to sustain its political support for educational development in Nigeria.

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