

## Framework of Promoting Socio-Economic Development In Local Government Areas of Nigeria: Approach of Participatory Rural Appraisal Model

**S.I. Ikotun, A.E. Isinkaye & O'peters, J.T.**

Caleb Business School  
Caleb University  
Lagos -State , Nigeria

**A.A. Oyende PhD**

Department of Economics  
Crawford University  
Igbesa, Faith- City, Ogun -State

\*Corresponding Author

E-Mail: [Ikotunsi@Yahoo.Com](mailto:Ikotunsi@Yahoo.Com),/ [Ikotunsi@Gmail.Com](mailto:Ikotunsi@Gmail.Com)

Mobile-Phone:234[08052029468,/08034709624]

### ABSTRACT

This paper critically examined socio-economic development in the local government areas of Nigeria, with focus on challenges of its development. Therefore, attempts to solve these challenges make a suggestion of adopting approach of participatory rural appraisal model. More so that importance of the model was prominently established as an alternative approach to the top-bottom management or administration in the government circle, particularly in the developing nations like Nigeria. Also paper suggests that participatory rural appraisal model can be used to achieve people oriented projects development, as well as promoting general welfare of all sundry in a particular locality in as much as their desires are met and reflected in socio-economic development on principle and practice of the model .

**Keywords:** Framework, Socio-Economic Development, Government, Nigeria, Rural Appraisal Model.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The need to provide infrastructures, services and social amenities for the people in both the urban and rural areas of a nation is a constitutional responsibility of the governments, be it federal, state and local or council. Although, individuals and private organization can also support as well complement these functional gestures. One major feature of the national efforts in this regard was and still is that of planning from top to down. Therefore, planning and implementation are very crucial to the process of socio-economic development of any local government areas [LGAs], states and the nation in general. In this regard, it may not too difficult to see how importance is planning and implementation, no doubt, they constitute essential components of development strategy.

Planning for real development cannot be an easy task, particularly in a developing nation like Nigeria, where diverse cultures, traditions, ethnicities, linguistics, and variant and numerous religious believes are residents. In addition, it is evident that rapid population growth has also not been accompanied by corresponding increasing in socio-economic development. This situation no doubt calls for serious intervention in the country, particularly at the LGAs, where local government system is the closest to the grassroots among three tiers of government in Nigeria. Problems of development in most developing countries have been attributed to poor and uncoordinated planning, poor management, lack of judicious utilization of limited resources and lack of political will to execute programmes that are beneficial to the populace [Ikotun, 2006]. However, given the positive impacts of interaction of people in the society, it has also in a greater proportion created friction hostility and crisis through interaction and relationship to the very society which it has exerted such an overwhelming sociological positive influence upon. Therefore, organizing human activities are quite desirable in an environment or a society according to its dictates is necessary. In this paper attempts to draw attention to salient issues in the promotion of local government areas' socio-economic development using participatory rural appraisal technique is discussed.

Participatory rural appraisal model has become increasingly relevant because it is not too surprising to see a host of uncompleted or abandoned projects in most LGAs, and all these projects are proposed with good intention of stimulating socio-economic development in the areas. The paper argues for the need and importance of participatory rural appraisal approach in the socio-economic development of LGAs. Therefore, the need to examine socio-economic projects and its development in the framework of rural people needs and demand is quite desired. Particularly, as means to abate and curtail the ugly incidence of abject poverty ravaging the rural areas, and it will be an ample opportunity to move the country forward.

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This paper is set to present effective and efficient way of promoting socio-economic activities in the local government areas of the nation, using participation rural appraisal approach model.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

Our approach here was based on the mental analysis presentation that enrooted through secondary data from textbooks, journals, internets and some informed observations. Also, paper adopted generalization in its discussion hence no emphasis was placed on specific local government area as a study case. Review was done on conceptual issues, theoretical framework and processes of application PRA model being the variable considered as the independent, while sustainable socio-economic activities are considered as dependent variable. Conclusion drawn and recommendations were made from the discussion findings.

## **4. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AND CLARIFICATIONS**

### **4.1. Government**

Government is machinery for deciding and implementing the will of the state that comprises three parts, legislative executive and judicial bodies in all political system regardless of whether the system is centralized or decentralized and regardless of ideological, philosophical or political persuasion [Okumade, 2001]. Furthermore, government is viewed as a body of people who have power to make us behave in certain ways. This is possible because they are the government they have authority as well as power to act accordingly as their power is legitimate.

Okunade [2001] stated that the primary goal of such authority and the end of the exercise of their power is to ensure an orderly way of running a community's affair.... as defined by the constitution [Derbyshire, 1991]. Also, government is used to describe both the body that has power in a given unit... whether national, regional or local as mentioned in whole constitutional system [Robertson. 1985]. Nigerian government operates federating unit that comprises of three levels of government that is federal, state and local governments. Our concerns in this paper therefore focus on Local governments as a third tier federating unit in the national government.

#### **4.2 Governance**

According to Olowu and Akintola [1995], governance can be defined as embracing a set of rules, which is based on the values of the people, approved by the people and allowed to operate freely in the society. In respect of this definition governance has two faces, each with a specific function. The first face mentioned leaderships such as legitimate elective and appointed posts in various tiers of governments, whose responsibilities are derived from the principles of effective governmental organizations. The second face mentioned the governed such as people or the citizens whose responsibilities are to participate in the socio-economic and political affairs of the society by making relevant inputs.

Hyden and Braiton [1992] described governance as the conscious management of regime structure with a view to enlarge the legitimacy of the public realm. More so that governance concept incorporated to include public expectation and public decision making [Schaffer, 1988], thereby suggesting that governance refers to some notion of participatory and open public decision - making processes [Egunjobi, 1995].

#### **4.3 Development**

It is important to note that development as a concept has many dimensions on a general note; however, it can be periscope from the perspective of economic growth and development. Attempts to differentiate the economic growth and development will beam lights of clearer picture. Growth is an increase in output, and this implies an increase in quantity of output per unit of input whereas development is an increase in output together with a change in technical and institutional arrangement by which production takes place. According to Kindleberge [1977] development implies changes in the composition of output and in the allocation of inputs by sectors.

This means that economic development relates to qualitative changes in economic wants, goods, incentives and institutions [Olajide, 2004]. Furthermore, growth can take place without development, but the reverse is not possible as there cannot be development without growth taking place. Economic development can be considered as an all-embracing set within which we have some other sets. Among the major elements of the set is economic growth, so economic growth is a subset of economic development.

Lemo [2013] defined development to be connected to the human capacity improvement which focused on quality of life by transforming the way production and other human activities are done towards achieving high standard of living, reduced unemployment and social inequality. No doubt that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth but also to include its equitable distribution of social amenities, infrastructural facilities and other essential services all with view to improve the quality of lives of all people in a particular economy setting or nation.

#### **4.4 Socio-economic activities' development**

Generally speaking, these are project's operated on the premise of direct methods of raising welfare of the people at the grassroots to optimum level through provision of essential social services and infrastructural facilities [Obikoya&Abosedede, 1993]. In essence, it is activities which promotes and as well improves human philosophical existence. These can be provision of education, health & medical services, housing scheme units, pipe borne water, fire and safety services, electricity, transportation facilities and road networks.

#### **4.5 Participatory rural appraisal**

This approach originated in the late 1970s in Chang Mai and John Kean Universities Thailand, as an alternative to the conventional "top-down" approach to rural development [National Environment Secretariat, 1978], according to Oyeneye [1993]. The concept of participatory rural appraisal [PRA] is a tool for promoting community participation in need assessments as well as project planning and implementation. PRA is a veritable means of having adequate information about problems in a particular area or locality, thereby creating appropriate ways of solving the problems.

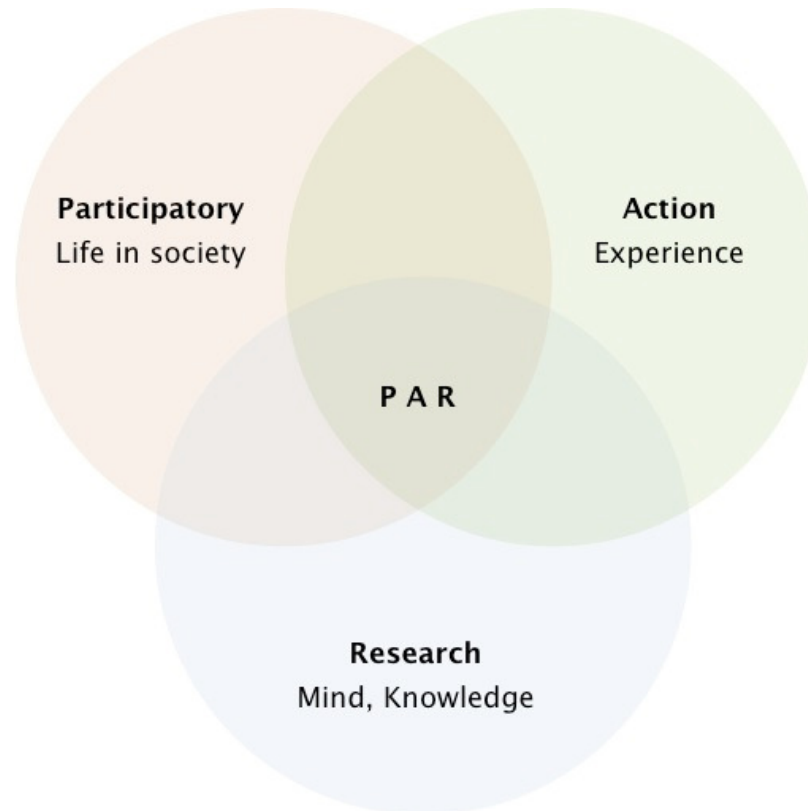
#### **4.6 Model**

Ayeni [1994] defined a model as a representation and simplification of reality. While according to Dixon-Ogbechi [2001] stated that Akingbade [1995] viewed models as descriptive representations of real-life situations which are more economical, easier and more feasible to manipulate experimentally than real life situations and systems themselves. These definitions connotes that a model is not exactly reality because reality is very complex and dynamics. However, the definition also presumes that we can simplify reality and represent this simplification in form that is meaningful [Ayeni, 1994]. Therefore, we construct model because we want to have greater insights into the processes or patterns that operate in the situation or system of interest.

Models may be used for a variety of purposes ranging from descriptive, explanatory, pedagogical, evaluative, predictive and optimising. More so, we can classify models according to the medium in which the model is expressed, namely: iconic, analogue and symbolic or mathematical models. It is now evident that model of participatory rural appraisal can be used as well as applied to the development of socio-economic activities in the LGAs of Nigeria.

## 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study anchors on participatory theory of development, since theory is a statement of invariant, relationship among measurable situation with the aim of explaining, understanding predicting and controlling such situation [Ikotun, Ogbechi & Oyende, 2016].



(Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory\\_action\\_research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_action_research))

### 5.1 Participatory Theory of Development

The theory posits that key to sustainable development is participation and involvement of beneficiaries according to Paul Freire and Boalo Augusto, since they are among those who proposed this idea for development to take place, they equally argued that people must be involved in the process. More so, the theory is seen as another alternative theory of development for developing countries, according to Anaeto & Magaret [2010], the participatory idea of development is premised on the fact that the common people are intelligent and can be active agent of change. Development is the people's capacity to contribute and participate actively in the task of transforming their society. Furthermore, they are of opinion that participation is necessary in order to share information knowledge, trust, commitment, and the right attitude in planning and implementing development programmes.

## **6. JUSTIFICATION OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' FUNCTIONS**

Generally speaking, Nigerian Local government are purposely created and driven, as Adamolekun [1983] identifies three broad objectives of local government based on their establishments to be [i] a desire to involve local citizens in the management of local affairs, [ii] speedy and efficient satisfaction of the basic needs of local citizens, and [iii] provision of a framework within which local resources both human and material are effectively mobilized. More so that Nigeria constitution as amended and the various local government amendments decrees have placed on the door steps of local governments the required autonomy to perform their role in the socio-economic development of the country.

Particularly, as government exists is based on need to provide certain goods and services which are quite necessary and essential and from society's point of view, these goods and services cannot be allowed to be produced by profit seeking private sector, and as such they are regarded as public goods or services. This includes power and electricity, provision of water, medical and health services, education, road networks and transportation system, fire and security services, and other social welfare activities. It is in this respect that we can discuss types of socio-economic development activities based on public services rendered in the local governments.

## **7. TYPES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The roles of local government's administration and management system can be profiled from four types of capital projects usually open to them [Orewa and Adewunmi, 1983]. These are administrative, social, economic and productive [Commercial] projects or activities.

### **Administrative Activities**

These are specific projects purposely designed to enhance physical structure of the existence of a local government. This entails construction and maintenance of local government secretariat, staff offices and accommodation, office equipment, chairs and tables, computer and electronic facilities, operational vehicles, stationeries, cabinets etc. all these facilitate smooth operations of local government performance.

### **Social activities**

These are projects of capital investment with sole aim of improving people life style like medical & health services, education, provision of water, installation of street lights, planning and organization of towns and streets, registration of association or clubs, promotion of socio-cultural festivals, and sports.

### **Economic activities**

These are also projects of capital investment with aim of improving people's life style as well as generating substantial returns or income from the project activities. Economic products in the context of Nigerian local governments are service and provisions which facilitate the production of other economic goods and services such as postal services, livestock or veterinary services, agricultural extension services, information, and communication liaison services, local registration of businesses and occupations and accreditation of reputable agencies for proper representation in the community.

### **Productive activities**

The productive activities cover the investment specifically designed to earn revenue in the local governments like taxes, rentage of shops and stores in markets, motor parks, permits fees, licenses, profit generation in the local government owned small scale enterprises and commercial ventures such as cassava

processing palm oil and kernel processing industries, mass transport services, sales from poultry and agro allied services.

Recently, there are lists of inexhaustible productive activities in the Nigerian local government areas. However, certain factors affect types of projects or activities a local government can embark on no doubt, these include:

- [i] Size of LGAs in terms of population, physical area and finance
- [ii] The fiscal and monetary policy of state and federal in general.
- [iii] Staffing and workforce policy
- [iv] The nature and extent of controls exercised over local government by the state and federal government ministries agencies, parastatals and departments.

## **8. NIGERIA'S RURAL AREA SITUATIONS**

The rural masses in the economically less developed countries remain steeped in crushing poverty, enmeshed in debilitating frustration enveloped by profound austerity, and buried in utter despair [Igbozurike 1990]. However, he mentioned that the statement serves to underline the fact that the majority of ruralites are citizens struggling on the margin of human existence. Nevertheless, Nigeria's rural sector can be described in term of population size and primary production activities

It has been established that over sixty percent [60%] of the country's total production live in the rural areas. Also, over seventy five [75%] of primary production activities are located in the rural areas. Despite this account, it is often surprised to hear that those rural dwellers are loser in many ways whether in terms of deprivations, dominations, neglect, exploitation, oppressions, impoverishment, marginalization or subordination in Nigerian Society [Gana,1991; Ikotun, 2007]. Meanwhile, rural areas are capable of solving problems of production activities through active stimulation of potential resources in the areas, particularly in response to developmental needs of economy and the society at large.

## **9. THE APPROACH OF PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL [PRA] MODEL**

The idea of PRA is not a new concept but its relevance needs to be re-emphasized in the socio-economic development of the rural areas in the country, particularly as the nation is promoting change of attitudes in its government in order to achieve good governance. Also, it is alternative approach to the top bottom projects' planning and execution which bedevil with uncompleted or abandoned projects, the disillusion of development experts regarding the long delays of projects planning and execution, and huge expenses incurred in conducting formal surveys to generate data for projects' planning and execution.

Therefore, as an approach, it facilitates platform of learning as well as having adequate understanding with rural people by the government officials, professionals and consultants, because of the direct dealings and face to face dialogue and negotiation of need assessment in particular area. More so this enhances their understanding of the perception, priorities and needs of the rural people [Chambers, 1990]. Furthermore, PRA encourages participation and empowerment of the people in the analysis of problems and the formulation of possible solutions [Oyeneye, 1993]. PRA have wide scope of application in the rural setting when exploring an area to learn about the key problems or carrying out research development projects. In this sense, PRA model uses several techniques to establish functional projects planning and execution in the rural areas.

### **9.1 Techniques of participatory rural appraisal**

Effective operations of PRA use several techniques which include the following:

- (i) Using conventional research design processes.
- (ii) Participatory mapping and modelling
- (iii) Projects' planning and execution

#### **(i) Using conventional researches design processes**

PRA technique resembles the architect's blueprint for a house in many ways. However, it is possible to build a house without a architects blueprint, which if possible may not reflect the desire of the house's owner, and also the house may not be habitable and the structure constitutes a serious danger, thereby rendering the purpose of its building unfruitful. The purpose of using conventional research design processes are intertwined with the need for a clear and precise statement of the recognized problems in the particular environment or area for three interrelated purposes of: [i] to diagnose a situation, [ii] to screen alternatives, and [iii] to discover new ideas in solve problems in the area.

In this case, situation analysis is necessary to clarify a problems nature according to its identification. The technique helps diagnose the dimensions of problems so that successive solutions will be on target. More so as several opportunities arise, such as numerous new ideas which allow trying all possible options. Furthermore, it accommodates all types of research and a research design is the plan or outlay that guides the researcher in the execution of projects. Therefore PRA in the context of research design can be described as the framework or plan of study that is used as a guide in collecting and analyzing information or data for adequate and appropriate decision making, particularly in a mutually inclusive manner.

In addition, research instrument is used to generate required data or elicit information on any issue of concern. The importance of the quality of information requirement has necessitated need to take serious cognizance of the research tool to be employed. In this respect, the accuracy, timeliness and relevance of the information to be gathered is usually germane to the eventual outcome of the research tools. These can be personal or direct observation, personal interviews and group interviews, focus group discussion [FGD], questionnaire, stories and case histories, informal interviews, workshop and brainstorming. There is no doubt that PRA have come to realise that the reliability of the outcome of these research efforts which give useful insights into the community needs, as in most instances a combination of these research tools are employed as way of having comprehensive information for real and precise decision-making.

#### **(ii) Participatory mapping and modeling**

This refers to process of capturing all information gathered in the community or area into representation facts. It is aspect of recording and accounting as well as showing members and locations of people, natural resources social orientations, infrastructures and facilities. This is stage of PRA technique that generate comprehensive information gathering and utilization of the information for the integration of the needs' assessment in order to make decisions aiding effective projects' planning and execution. More importantly it is where Geographical Information System [GIS] and Information Management System [IMS] are quite given relevance. Models generation are stimulated in this process for necessary projects' planning and execution. Participatory mapping and modeling is useful in several ways by providing accessible information of the community thus establishing enable environment of collection of demographic data and required information, it also promotes identification of physical features, and creates awareness of natural state of the community.



**[iii] Projects planning and execution**

PRA is used to determine needs assessment of a community, and for PRA to achieve the desired results, there must be consideration and careful identification of the types of information needed from the villages or communities under consideration. It is information gathering that reveals types of projects to be planned and executed in a particular area or community, more so that ranking method elicits information on the most important project to be planned and executed.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

It is revealing that PRA approach takes quite some and processes in its application, therefore due process must be followed. The first PRA be the direct observation of the entire area/community via preliminary survey or spot assessment in order to have first hand information about the people socio-cultural orientation, the economy and environmental aspects of the community. In view of these, types of information required, a combination of highlighted techniques is considered adequate. These are: preliminary survey or spot assessment as direct observation, informal interviews, formal interviews such as FGDs, mapping of the area, ranking of projects, stakeholders' meetings, workshop and brainstorming, and report writing. Also PRA practitioners must be friendly with people of the community under consideration; as well as share their powers with rural people to encourage them in the processes of PRA. Oyeneeye [1993] states that within the context of PRA, practitioners of PRA must be humble and show basic respect for the rural people, if the conventional "top-down" approach to development is to be reversed.

It must be admitted that the PRA approach is quite adequate for projects' planning and execution in the rural areas. PRA is not only time and cost saving but also promote efficient information gatherings which involve participation of the local people in the process of development. In this case, PRA empowers the rural people to have adequate inputs in the design and implementation of projects; thereby increasing their commitment to community development programmes and projects. No doubt, this makes rural dwellers to have desired contributions to matters affecting their well-being, general welfare and environment in which they live.

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