

**Citizen Participation and Service Delivery at the Local Government Level: A Case of Ise/Orun Local Government in Ekiti State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:**

*The whole essence of citizens' participation in the decision-making process is about the search for new and more direct ways of influencing governmental outcomes, particularly as it relates to service delivery. The existence of the local government is essentially predicated on the need to facilitate effective delivery of services to the people at the grassroots. Utilizing both primary and secondary data, the study examined the extent of citizen participation in the delivery of services in Ise/Orun Local Government Areas of Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was discovered that citizens' involvement in the process of service delivery was minimal, particularly in the provision of portable water, rural roads and health services. The study further revealed that inadequate participation, the absence of transparency and accountability, as well as the prevalent and endemic nature of corruption contributed significantly to the sub-optimal performance of the local government in the area of service delivery. The study therefore suggested the need for effective participation, transparency and accountability in government business and the control of corruption as strategies for improving the quality of service delivery in Ise/Orun Local Government.*

**Keywords:** Participation, Service Delivery, Transparency, Accountability, Nigeria.

**Introduction**

The whole essence of citizens' participation in the decision-making process is about the search for new and more direct ways of influencing governmental outcomes. An essential component of these outcomes is service delivery. According to Eigema (2007), Service delivery is the government's key task.. The best yardstick of measuring government performance in governance is through the quality of service delivered to the people. A government is expected to deliver better services to its people, and the indices of measuring service delivery to the people include low inflation, better education, provision of improved health care at affordable rates, provision of clean water, provision of good roads and good road networks to the rural areas for the transport of agricultural products and raw materials etc (Akanji et al, 2011). The realization of these important indicators of service delivery will no doubt be predicated on the extent of government's receptivity to the views, observations, complaints and suggestions of the people as the net users of these services.

In Nigeria, despite the country's earning of over \$800 billion in oil revenue since the discovery of the resource in 1956 (Izuora, 2013), the state of service delivery still remain parlous, particularly in the rural areas, where the incidence of poverty remains prevalent and widespread. According to the African Development Bank, "the proportion of people living below the national poverty line has worsened from 65.5 per cent in 1996 to 69.0 per cent in 2010. Poverty is higher in rural areas at 73.2 per cent than in urban area at 61.8 per cent." (theeagleonline.com.ng/news/nigerias-poverty-level-has-worsened-afdb/).

The creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots. The creation and recognition of the local government as the third tier of government in Nigeria was with the sole objective of ensuring effective, measurable and efficient service delivery to the people at the grassroots (Arowolo, 2008; Amujiri, 2012). The decentralization of governmental responsibility is expected to enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar and more easily-influenced level of government. Following this fundamental purpose of local government, the Guidelines on the 1976 Local Government reforms makes community participation imperative on Local Government. The principal objectives of the Reform as provided by the Guidelines were to:

- (a). make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiative by devolving and delegating them to local representative bodies;
- (b). facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society, and to encourage initiative and leadership potential;
- (c). mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development;

- (d). provide a two-way, channel of communication between local communities and government (both state and federal).

Well-meaning and good intentioned as the establishment of the local government system appears, it's operation in Nigeria has however, been plagued by lack of transparency in the working of public institutions, poor implementation, non-participatory methods of designing policies, programmes and service delivery by the government institutions and the absence of effective institutions for checking corruption.(Adesopo,2011:113;Mapuva,2011;Okojie, 2009).. Reasoning along this description, Agba et al.(2013) succinctly argued that the provision of basic social services such as education, health, maintenance of roads, and other public utilities within the jurisdiction of most local governments in the country is both a myth and mirage; as the tenure of local government chairmen is primitively conceived as a period of wealth accumulation and not about service to the people.

For a resource poor state like Ekiti, whose share of federally allocated revenue remains one of the least in the country, coupled with a weak internally generated revenue base, the imperativeness of effective citizens' participation in the process of service delivery becomes even more apparent, if the people must enjoy the "dividend of democracy". It is against this backdrop that this paper examines and analyses the need for grassroots participation for effective service delivery and community development in Ise/Orun Local Government. The study would be guided by the following research questions which constitute the basic research problems:

- i. What social service has Ise/Orun Local Government undertaken between 2003 – 2012, whether completed or uncompleted?
- ii. How were social services like the provision of potable water, rural roads, health centres, selected and how are they relevant to the people?
- iii. Which factor(s) affected the effective and efficient delivery of social services mentioned in item ii above?
- iv. What are the best approaches to effective and efficient social service delivery by Ise/Orun Local Government?

#### **The Study Area**

Ise/Orun is a Local Government Area in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It has an area of 432 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 113,754 at the 2006 census. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise/Orun). Ise - Ekiti is the headquarter of the Local Government Area. Its geographic coordinates are 7°27'36"N 5°25'12"E. As of 2007 Ise Ekiti had an estimated population of 204,022(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise-Ekiti)..Some farmsteads which include: Aba Onisu, Ajebamidele, Oladoyinbo, Obada, Ogbese, Kajola, Afolu, EgbiraEse and AbaOsogbo(ekitistate.gov.ng/2013/01/iseorun-caretaker-chairman-charges-committee-on-maintenance-of-boreholes/).

#### **Gap- in- Literature and Contribution of the Study to Existing Knowledge**

The contribution of the present study to existing knowledge is that most works reviewed were too general and theoretical in approach. The works tend to discuss issues affecting local governments especially service delivery as if all the local governments are same in Nigeria without due reference to some of their peculiarities such as environment; rural and urban nature; financial capacity; leadership quality; level of governance awareness of the population; etc.

The present study is empirical in that it adopted survey method like questionnaire, interview, and personal observation, in studying the performance of Ise/Orun Local Government of Ekiti State from 2003 to 2012.

#### **Research Methodology**

##### *Research Design*

A survey design on the performance of Ise/Orun Local Government of Ekiti State, in service delivery from 2003 to 2012 was taken. Data were obtained primarily through, personal observation, interview and questionnaire administered on respondents selected from residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun Local Government Area. The data obtained were used descriptively on the variables studied.

##### *Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

The population of the study consists of residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun Local Government. A total of 100 questionnaires was administered.

A sample size of 100 respondents consisting of 50 respondents from the local government headquarter and 50 from the villages under the local governments. This sample size was purposively or judgmentally selected to assess the overall development in the local government. However data gathered through questionnaire were complimented with personal observation and interview.

##### *Methods of Data Collection*

Data for the study were sourced through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consisted of questionnaire, personal observation, and interview. The study used the following secondary sources: textbooks, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers, government publications and internet-based materials.

*Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument*

To ensure the content validity of the research instrument (questionnaire), the researcher compared the items raised in the questionnaire with the research questions. Through this, it was ensured that the research instrument covered the variables investigated in the study. The research instrument was also subjected to professional scrutiny of other experts for the purpose of boosting its content validity. Reliability was ensured through comparing the findings from the research instrument with similar study like Agba et al (2013). The result shows that the research instrument is reliable, as there are consistencies in the data supplied by the respondents with the findings of the previous similar study. There is therefore an acceptable and satisfactory validity and reliability.

*Methods of Data Analysis*

Data from questionnaires administered are presented in tabular and pictorial forms followed by brief discussion. The research questions of the study were analyzed using simple percentage statistical method. The results of personal observation, and interview conducted were also incorporated into the discussion.

**Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

Data presented and analyzed in this section were generated from personal observation; interview and questionnaire administered to 100 residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun local government who were purposively selected.

**Figure 1: Sex Composition of Respondents**

Male-49

Female-51

The female respondents from figure 1 above are slightly bigger than male composition. As female residents and indigenes, they are likely encumbered with family activities which can put them in a better position to assess the efficiency of social services.

**Table 1: Awareness of Service Delivery of Ise/Orun Local Government**

Options No of Respondents Percentage

Yes 66 66%

No 6 6%

Undecided 28 28%

Total 100

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents 66% are aware of the social service provision like potable water ,healthcare , good roads and electricity at Ise/Orun Local Government. While6% of the respondents said they are not aware, 28% were undecided in their position. It can be inferred that this high level of awareness among respondents is a strong potential that can be harvested for quality, effective and satisfactory service delivery in the local government.

**Table 2: Access to regular electricity in Ise/Orun local government**

Options No of Respondents Percentage

Yes 26 26%

No 69 69%

Undecided 5 5%

Total 100

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 2 shows the rating of regular electricity supply in Ise/Orun Local government. The rating reveals that there is no regular electricity supply in Ise/Orun Local government. This is evidently seen in the 69% who supported the above rating. 26% respondents said there is regular electricity while 5% were undecided. The high percentage in support of no regular electricity supply shows the true state of electricity supply in the local government.

**Table 3: What problems do you have with respect to electricity supply in your community?**

	Problems identified	No of Respondents	Percentage
i.	Irregular electricity	70	70%
ii.	Low voltage	01	01%
iii.	Stealing cables	01	01%
iv.	Faulty transformer	17	17%
v.	Others	11	11%
	Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 3 shows that the problem of irregular supply is the major problem associated with electricity in Ise/Orun local government. 70% of respondents identified irregular supply as the problem, only 1% identified low voltage as the problem facing electricity supply while 1% also said stealing of cables is the problem, 17% said the problem is faulty transformer and 11% have other reasons. The high percentage identification of irregular supply of electricity reveals the actual situation of electricity supply in the local government.

**Table 4:** Accessibility of Health Centres to the people

Options	No of Respondents	Percentages
Close	70	70%
Far	27	27%
Not Available	3	03%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 4 reveals the accessibility of health centres to the people at Ise/Orun local government. The closeness of the health centres to the people is seen in the response of 70% of residents and indigenes living in the community. 27% of respondents said health centres is far from them while only 03% said health centre is not available.

**Table 5:** Quality of services-Availability of Drugs and other services

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	28	28%
Poor	31	31%
Average	40	40%
Others	01	01%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 5 shows the rating of the quality of services at local government health centres in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that the local government has not performed to expectation in the quality of services offered to the people and in the availability of drugs to the people. This is evidently seen in the response of 31% who said the services is poor and the 41% who said the services is average. 28% of respondents said the services is good while 01% is of different opinion.

**Table 6:** Can you say the health centres is well equipped?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	34	34%
No	51	51%
Undecided	15	15%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 6 reveals that the health centres at the local government are not well equipped. This is seen in the 51% of response of indigenes and residents of the community. 31% said the health centres are well equipped while 15% are undecided. Despite the closeness of the health centres to the people, the availability of equipment and the quality of services is yet to meet the expectation of the people.

**Table 7:** Reliability of Public Roads in Ise/Orun local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	20	20%
Average	24	24%
Poor	55	55%
Others	01	01%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 7 shows the reliability of public roads in Ise/Orun local government. The rating of public roads in Ise/Orun local government is poor based on the response of 55% opinion of residents and indigenes. 24% rated the roads to be averaged while 24% said the roads are good. 01% is of different opinion. Obviously, results of interview and observation shows

that the quality of public roads in Ise/Orun local government is not good enough, the tarred roads in the local government headquarters are sworn out and full of potholes while the interlinked roads to the surrounding villages are inaccessible. Some of the graded roads are usually impassable during raining season.

**Table 8:** Is there any incidence of waterlogging or deterioration of the local roads during heavy rain?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	76	76%
No	19	19%
Undecided	05	05%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 8 shows the rating of deterioration of roads at the local government level during heaving rain. 76% said there is deterioration of roads and incidences of waterlogging during heavy rain. This reveals the quality of roads which were not tarred and the quality of roads tarred with sub-standard materials. 19% said there is waterlogging and deterioration of roads during heavy rain while 05% were undecided.

**Table 9:** Has there been any repair of roads in your community?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	42%
No	52	52%
Undecided	06	06%

Total 100

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 9 reveals that repairing of roads in the local government is not effective enough. This is seen in the response of 52% who said there is no repair of roads while 42% said there is repair of roads while 06% were undecided.

**Table 10:** Involvement of community in repairing of roads

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	51	51%
No	40	40%
Undecided	09	09%

Total 100

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 10 shows average involvement of the community in repairing of roads in Ise/Orun local government. 51% of respondents said community were involved in repairing of roads 40% said community were not involved, while 09% were undecided. The community from the above response play moderate role in repairing of roads in their community.

**Table 11:** Regularity of Potable Water Supply in Ise/Orun local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	10	10%
Average	17	17%
Poor	72	72%
Others	01	01%

Total 100

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 11 reveals the rating of potable water supply in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that Ise/Orun local government has performed poorly in the provision of potable water in effective, satisfactory manner. This is evidently seen in the response of 72% of residents and indigenes of Ise/Orun local government. 17% of respondents said potable water supply is average while 10% said it is good and 01% is different opinion. The report of SLGP Consultant No 202(2004:24) agreed with this, stated that ‘water supply is from Egbe Dam. Supply has remain nil over years. Most settlements are not connected’.

**Table 12:** How responsive is government at the grassroots in your area to the needs of the society?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Good	09	09%

Average	21	21%
Poor	59	59%
Others	01	01%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 12 shows the rating of the responsiveness of local government to needs of the society. 09% said the response of local government to society needs is good, 21% said it is average while 59% reveals that the response of local government to the needs of society is poor. Attendance evidence of the poor performance can be further supported in the inefficient provision of relevant social services in table 4, 6, 7 and 10 above.

Since Ise/Orun local government has not perform excellently in the provision of potable water, good roads and healthcare delivery in terms of quality and satisfaction, there is need to find out the factors hindering effective service delivery at Ise/Orun local government.

**Table 13:** Are people being involved in decision making on local needs?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Often	16	16%
Rarely	34	34%
Not at all	46	46%
Others	04	04%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 13 reveals the involvement of people in decision making on local needs. The response of 46% who said they are not involved at all and 34% who said the involvement of people in decision making is rare reveals that the lack of participation of the people.16% said they are involved while 04% are of different opinion.

Lack of participation may account for the failure of the local government to effectively meet the needs of the people. This is in line with Gaventa and Valderrama(1999) who believed that an increased participation of civil society in activities that traditionally formed part of the public sphere it will improve the efficiency of public services, that it will make local government more accountable, and that it will deepen democracy - complementing representative forms with more participatory forms.

**Table 14:** Do you often reach consensus with government at your local level on what is the best interest of the society?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	26%
No	44	44%
Undecided	27	27%
Others	03	03%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 14 shows the rating on reaching consensus with government at the local level on what is the best interest of the society. 26% said they often reach consensus while 44% said they do not and 30% are undecided. The rating shows it is not a common practice for the government to reach consensus with the people before taking decision on what is best for them.

This is contrary to The Guardian News(2013) which noted thatworking with citizens allows councils to fine tune services based on actual needs. It is one thing to provide services, it is another thing to provide the services needed by the people.

**Table 15:** Awareness of policies of government for local government

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	40%
No	49	49%
Undecided	11	11%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 15 shows the awareness of people about the policies of government for local government. The response reveals average in the awareness of people, 40% shows the people are not totally ignorant of activities in the local government

level. 49% said they are not aware while 11% are undecided. This, perhaps may be because of non-involvement of the people at the stages of policy making and implementation.

**Table 16:** How often do your leaders give account of their stewardship?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Often	18	18%
Rarely	29	29%
Not at all	47	47%
Others	04	04%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 16 shows the rating of accountability of leaders of their stewardship. 18% of respondents said the leaders often give account. 29% said they rarely give account while 47% of the respondents said the leaders don't give account at all and 03% have different opinion. The above rating of leadership accountability reveals the failure of leaders to regularly give account to the people on programmes, implementation of policies and funding. Lack of accountability and transparency can create an avenue for corruption.

**Table 17:** Can you say corruption is one of the major causes of poor service delivery in your local government?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	65	65%
No	19	19%
Undecided	16	16%
Total	100	

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Table 17 reveals the rating of corruption as one of the major causes of poor service delivery in Ise/Orun local government. The rating reveals that corruption is one of the major causes of poor service delivery in Ise/Orun local government. The response of 65% residents and indigenes of the community attests to this. 19% said corruption is not one of the major causes while 165 are undecided. This is in line with Amujiri(2012) who posited that officials sometimes mis-appropriate funds meant for financing community welfare programmes. This act aggravates the problem of shortage of fund which has already been discussed. The findings of Agba et al(op cit.) also supported that corruption contributes to the state of service delivery in Nigeria.

**Table 18:** What do you think is the foremost reason for inadequate provision of social services in your local government?

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
i. Poor funding	09	09%
ii. Inefficient use of available fund	27	27%
iii. Lack of participation of people in policy making and implementation	13	13%
iv. Lack of accountability and transparency	47	47%
v. Others	02	02%

**Source:** Field work, 2013

Obviously, table 18 shows there are factors responsible for inadequate provision of social services in Ise/Orun local government. From interview and the response to questionnaire, poor funding is identified as one of the factors. Insufficient use of available fund was also identified, pointing to the failure to judiciously use the available fund to meet the needs of the society. In line with the insufficient use of fund is the problem of lack of accountability and transparency which a larger percentage pointed to. Lack of participation of people in policy making and implementation is another noted factor for inadequate provision of social services in the local government. Others pointed to the insincerity of political leaders who only show up when their votes are needed but usually fail to re-surface or fulfill their promises.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The lack of effective participation of the people in the political process hinders effective service delivery in Ise/Orun Local Government in particular and Ekiti State in general. Transparency and accountability that are necessary for efficient use of available funds for the benefits of the people in the society were therefore undermined. The absence of transparency and accountability thus, create opportunities for corruption to thrive. The incentives of local authority to

genuinely serve the people could not be guaranteed in an atmosphere of corruption. The people of the local government decried the poor state of the services delivered to them. For example, dwellers in the various communities within the local government reported that they had difficulty marketing their farm products because of the poor conditions of the roads. The available health centres are not well equipped to provide adequate health care services to the people. As such most people had to patronize private clinics and traditional care givers as succor. Similarly, majority of the community dwellers usually go through a lot of difficulty in getting potable water.

Transforming the face of service delivery under these conditions in Ise/Orun Local Government above anything else, requires a pragmatic strategy of citizens engagement in the decision making process of the local government. Political participation is necessary for ensuring that the process of policy formulation is fair, equitable and fulfilling for the local populace. Also, effective participation, particularly at the implementation stage of service delivery gives the people a sense of pride and the desire to own and sustain the continued existence of these services. In this regard, participation and genuine partnership builds trust between the people and government, and equally enhances the peoples' sense of identity and empowerment (Abe, 2011).

Similarly, importance of transparency and accountability towards achieving people centered service delivery cannot be overemphasized. Transparency makes government's business open and accessible. A local authority that is genuinely accountable to the electorates will have more incentive to improve the services for which it is responsible. The believed is that accountability is essential for improved performance and equally stronger when authorities and those they govern are proximate (Kjaer, 2011).

Lastly, efforts at combating corruption at the local government level must be vigorously and genuinely pursued. The war against corruption if successfully waged, will attract people of proven integrity and sincerity to the service of the government at the grassroots.

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