



EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGET PRACTICE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF EBONYI STATE: FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT CENTERS OF EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of Participatory Budget Practices on Economic Development in the rural communities of Ebonyi State: Focus on the Development Centers of Ebonyi State. Four research questions guided the study. The design was a descriptive survey while the population of the study is made up of 167 Development Centers key Players (DCKPs) and 300 Rural Communities Stakeholders (RCS) as explained in the methodology of this study. Instrument for data collection was self structured questionnaire which was distributed through the help of three staff of the Development Centers, one from each Senatorial Zone. The instrument was validated by two experts from Faculty of Management Science of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Cronbach's alpha was used to correlate the 50 copies of the instruments distributed on two weeks interval to staffers of Local Government service Commission and Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters of Ebonyi State. It yielded alpha of 0.83 correlation co-efficient. The data collected from the four questionnaires were analyzed using mean and Standard Deviation, while t-test of difference was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed among other things that arranging for public hearing and meetings for citizens to make input, creating avenues for rural dwellers platform for feedback during budget implementation; community outreach/mobilization and appointing community representatives in budget committee could lead to improve in the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State. The study recommended that Local Government should always engage the citizens in the budgetary process to allow them present their most pressing needs such as provision of portable water to the rural dwellers; Local Government should enforce transparency approaches in the process of budgeting to enable the citizens to effectively participate on the process. This could help the stakeholders of the communities. The findings of this study has shown that participatory budget could improved economic development at the rural communities of Ebonyi State to high extent visa-viz provision of portable water to the rural dwellers, quality education, improved electricity supply and employment opportunities to the rural communities of Ebonyi state. These have definite implications on the local government, the rural dwellers and the policy makers. It then means that if the stakeholders of the rural communities are given opportunities to participate in planning the development of their areas they could present the major challenges facing them to be included in the budget.

Keywords: *Effects – Participatory – Budget – Economic Development – Rural – Communities*

INTRODUCTION

Development Center is one of the units of government, created as a means of reaching out the rural communities easily for development by some state governments in Nigeria. In Ebonyi State, the creation of development centers dates back to 2001, under the administration of Governor Sam O. Egwu, with the establishment of 21 development centers. Later, in 2007, Governor Martin Elechi created additional development centers, bringing the total to 64 development centers in the state. The first 30 new additional development centers created were established under Law No. 003 of 2006 followed by other 13 more, under Law No. 001 of 2007, bringing the total to 64 development centers.



The essence of these development centers were to bring governance closer to the people at the rural areas and ensure sustainable economic development in form of provision of basic infrastructure and social services, increase citizen participation, encouraging community involvement in policy-making and development processes.

In Ebonyi State, the relationship between local governments and development centers is that of both administrative and financial management. The state has 13 local government areas (LGAs) with the 64 development centers and currently housing 150 autonomous communities (Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters report, 2025). The financial relationship between the two is governed by a revenue-sharing arrangement. According to the state's policy, after deducting mandatory deductions from the local government areas, the balance is distributed between the local governments and development centers in the following ratio, Local Government Areas 38% of the balance, Development Centers: 60% of the balance, Stabilization Fund: 1% of the balance and Administrative Fund: 1% of the balance (Nwigboji & Onwe 2022). This revenue-sharing arrangement is based on the monthly allocation from the Federation Account, which is the primary source of revenue for both local governments and development centers in Ebonyi State. The state's and Local Government low internally generated revenue has led to a heavy reliance on federal allocations, which can be unpredictable and subject to fluctuations. This calls for proper budgeting at the Local Government Areas for adequate fund allocation for the sustainable development at the rural communities of the state.

In the words of Ezeani (2006), an organized local government administration exists to showcase a sound public financial management through proper budgeting in order to render quality services that impact on the citizens. It also exists to create wealth for the masses on the process of managing fiscal resources prudently to alleviate poverty, give sound education to the citizen, quality healthcare delivery services and create employment for the people.

Budgeting is essential part of human life. Budget in human life takes place every moment whether knowingly or unknowingly. Budget has been defined however by many scholars in different dimensions. A budget can be defined as a “financial and or quantitative statement prepared and approved prior to a define period of time usually in relation to anticipated revenue and expenditure to be incurred in a given accounting period so as to achieve a basic goal or objective of the organization” (Ajibola, 2012:187). Budget according to Abah and Nwokwu (2016) is the detailed description of the estimated receipts and proposed expenditures and disbursement under various heads. Okpata (2004) opined that budgeting can be defined as the process of formulating into a plan all the estimates of income and expenditure of an organization with the ultimate intention of directing, controlling and co-ordinating the monetary commitments of the organization towards the attainment of its goals or objectives. This has to put into consideration the need of the beneficiaries in planning for their economic needs, hence their participation creates avenue of getting their best desires included in the budget.

Suffice to say that, budget is concerned with the relating financial resources into human purposes. In other words, budget as a practice is made in such a way that goals are tagged with the prices of achieving it. Local government budget therefore, is a quantitative and qualitative plan of estimates of the inflows of fund that are expected to be realized and expended respectively on a desired project in a particular year.

In achieving sustainable development, Participatory Budgetary (PB) practice could be the best to be employed by the Local government in meeting up with the developmental activities at the development centers.

Participatory Budgeting (PB) has been viewed by Cabannes and Lipietz (2018) as a democratic process where citizens participate directly in deciding how a portion of public budget is spent. In this practice, the citizens identify priorities and make decision on budget allocation. While Schugurensky and Lerner (2024) noted that participatory budget is a democratic process in which a community members decide together how to spend a portion of the budget. In the words of Dias and Julio (2018) participatory budget is a creative financial practice that enhances democratic participation in local planning and improves accountability and transparency in local administration while opening new avenue for community engagement and co-governance. In participatory budgeting, all stakeholders including



marginalized groups lay their voice as the process allows openness and decisions made openly all public officers are held accountable by the citizen. In the views of Marujo (2021), by involving the citizens in budgeting decision, transparency is eminent and accountability in government spending is assured while corruption is minimized. He maintained that PB ensures that budget allocations reflects community needs and priorities, leading to more effective use of resources and better economic outcome. Gilman and Lucero (2023) identified the key aspects of participatory budgeting to include; Citizen engagement which implies encouraging citizens to participate in budgeting; Transparency, that is making budget information accessible and understandable; Inclusivity, ensuring that all voices are heard, especially the marginalized rural dwellers and; Accountability, holding officials responsible for budget implementation.

The application of participatory budgeting practices by the financial stakeholders of the local governments and development centers of Ebonyi State cannot be overemphasized. Nwigboji and Onwe (2022) argued that some of the economic programme such as quality education, employment generation, quality health care services and provision of portable water should be areas of primary concern to the stakeholders but doubt the level of involvement of the development centers and stakeholders of the communities in the budgetary process to ensure that these economic development programmes are well captured in the budget. Milosavljevic, Spasenic and Krivokapic (2023) noted that participatory budget gives room for democratic innovation that promotes citizen empowerment, increase transparency and enables civic education to the municipalities. In the words of Dias and Julio (2018) the essence of participatory budget is to enable everybody have opportunities to participate in decision that affects them. Ganuza and Baiocchi (2019) why lamenting the lack of transparency that existed in the traditional budgeting process admitted that participatory budgeting is an alternative budgetary process that allows citizens to negotiate with government officials over the municipalities budgetary allocation and its investment priorities.

The need for participation of Rural Communities stakeholders (Local Chiefs and Town Union Presidents) on the budgetary process seem to have become paramount as they directly benefit from the economic development programmes. Their cooperation with the Local Government (LG) and Development Centers (DC) key players in the budgetary process becomes imperative.

The above and more will enable Rural Communities make major inputs on the economic development priorities in their areas. Hence the need to investigate the extent to which the participatory budgeting could enhance sustainable economic development at the rural communities of Ebonyi state.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges of economic development have been a serious battle to many stakeholders of rural communities in Nigeria. The ceaseless outcry of the rural dwellers in the Development Centers of Ebonyi State over none accessibility to live basic amenities has continued to be a serious issue puzzling not only the local government chairmen and Development Centers Coordinators but has created worries to the state government over time. Many economic development programs have been rolled out from one administration to the other to tackle the issue such as portable water to the rural dwellers, all to no avail. Nwigboji and Onwe (2022) observed that in Ebonyi State, the state government introduced what they called “joint state/local government projects” to ameliorate the problem but the challenges still persist. The Local Government on yearly basis makes an Estimate (Budget) to arrest economic developmental challenges but the level of accountability to the citizens seems not to exist as nothing practical or visible is seen at the rural communities to show the implementation of the Estimate, yet yearly, programmes are rolled out without proper explanation to why the previous plan was not visible at the rural areas. Again, the level of poor electricity supply to the rural dwellers has created doubt over the citizen’s engagement on the process of budgeting. It therefore becomes worrisome that year to year the budget estimates would be made, accommodating some basic amenities, only for the status quo to continue existence. Again, the dilapidated structures seen in the primary schools in different Development Centers call for proper attention as many school children are seen learning under trees as there seem to be inadequate classrooms for teaching and learning. It calls to query the level of transparency in allocation of funds coming from UBEC to the state UBEB in the process of budgeting at local government for the benefits of the rural dwellers. More so, the level of mass exodus

of the youths from the rural areas to the town and suburb in search of menial jobs is a serious worry and leads one to question the level of inclusivity of the people during local government budgeting to accommodate creation of employment opportunities to the rural dwellers. Therefore, one doubts the extent rural communities stakeholders participate on the budgetary process to ensure that economic development programme priorities of the rural communities under their coverage are accommodated in the yearly budget at the Local Government, hence the need for this investigation.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent could citizen engagement in budgeting process improve the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?
2. To what extent could transparency in budgeting enhance quality education to the rural communities in Ebonyi State?
3. To what extent could inclusivity in budgeting promote provision of electricity to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?
4. To what extent could accountability in budgeting increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effect of participatory budgetary practice on the economic development of the rural areas in Ebonyi State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent citizen engagement in budgeting could improve the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers of Ebonyi State.
2. Find out the extent transparency in budgeting could enhance quality education to the rural communities in Ebonyi State.
3. Examine the extent inclusivity in budgeting could promote provision of electricity to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.
4. Verify the extent accountability in budgeting could increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Citizen engagement in budgeting has not significantly improves provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.
2. Transparency in budgeting has not significantly enhanced quality education for the rural communities in Ebonyi State.
3. Inclusivity in budgeting has not significantly promoted provision of electricity to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.
4. Accountability in budgeting has not significantly increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is 467 comprising Local Government (LG) and Development Centers key players (13 Local Government Chairmen, 64 Development Centers Coordinators, 77 Treasurers and 77 Planning Officers) and the Rural Community Stakeholders (150 Local Chiefs and 150 Town Union Presidents) in Ebonyi State. There was no sampling as the entire population of the Local government and development Centers key players and Rural Communities leaders are small to be sampled. Therefore, the 167 LG&DC key players and 300 Rural Communities stakeholders were taken as sample for the study making total sample size 467. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument contained 16 items in respect to the four research questions raised. It was validated by two experts from Management Sciences from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Test –retest was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instruments were distributed to staffers of Local

Government Service Commission and Staffers from Ebonyi State Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, 50 copies each at interval of two weeks. The two were correlated using Cronbach’s Alpha and it yielded 0.83 co-relation co-efficient. This implies that the instruments were reliable for the study. The 467 copies of the instrument were distributed through the help of three staff of the Development Centers (one from each senatorial zone) who were briefed by the researchers of the modalities and stakeholders involved, and the rate of return was 100 percent. Data collection in respect to the four research questions were analyzed using mean scores (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD), weighed in four rating scales of 4, 3, 2 and 1 as follows: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). Any mean score of 2.5 and above is regarded as High Extent and below is seen as Low Extent.

RESULT

1. Research Question 1: Extent citizen engagement in budgeting process could improve the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean Statistics of the extent citizens’ engagement in budgetary process could improve the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	DCKPs N=167			RCS N=300		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
1	Arranging for public hearing in communities and meetings for citizens to make input.	3.80 2	0.551	VHE	3.146	0.692	HE
2	Creating avenue for rural dwellers platform for feedback during budget implementation.	3.45 5	0.499	HE	3.073	0.715	HE
3	Community outreach and mobilization	3.65 8	0.557	VHE	3.070	0.906	HE
4	Appointing community representative in budget committee	3.40 1	0.728	HE	3.103	0.821	HE

Note: 0.01-2.00= Very Low Extent (VLE); 2.01-2.49=Low Extent (LE); 2.50-3.49= High Extent (HE); 3.50- 4.00 Very High Extent (VHE).

Note also that: “Development Centers Key Players” is abbreviated “DCKPs” while “Rural Communities Stakeholders is abbreviated “RCS”.

2. To what extent could transparency in budgeting enhance quality education to the rural communities in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: Mean Statistics of the extent transparency in budgeting could enhance quality education to the Rural Communities in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	DCKPs N=167			RCS N=300		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
5	Preparing budget estimate in clear and simple language for better understanding of the community members.	3.44 9	0.733	HE	2.916	0.912	HE
6	Make budget documents and data accessible to community members.	3.46 7	0.674	HE	2.786	1.070	HE
7	Presenting regular financial reporting and updates to	3.68 8	0.569	VHE	3.093	0.879	HE

	community members.							
8	Making use of Open-book approach to budget information	3.61	6	0.523	VHE	3.176	0.748	HE
	Grand Mean	3.55	0.625	HE	2.992	0.902		
		5						

Note: 0.01-2.00= Very Low Extent (VLE); 2.01-2.49=Low Extent (LE); 2.50-3.49= High Extent (HE); 3.50- 4.00 Very High Extent (VHE).

Note also that: “Development Centers Key Players” is abbreviated “DCKPs” while “Rural Communities Stakeholders is abbreviated “RCS”.

3. To what extent could inclusivity in budgeting promote provision of electricity to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?

Table 3: Mean Statistics of the extent inclusivity in budgeting promote provision of electricity to the Rural Communities in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	DCKPs N=167			RCS N=300		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
9	Targeting to reach out marginalized groups such as women and youths.	3.407	0.622	HE	3.230	0.799	HE
10	Making meeting locations accessible to the rural dwellers.	3.461	0.674	HE	3.113	0.850	HE
11	Allowing representation of various stakeholders in budget process	3.413	0.851	HE	2.950	0.947	HE
12	Consideration of equity and social justice in allocation of items to the budget.	3.640	0.603	VHE	2.903	0.995	HE
	Grand Mean	3.480	0.688	HE	3.049	0.898	HE

Note: 0.01-2.00= Very Low Extent (VLE); 2.01-2.49=Low Extent (LE); 2.50-3.49= High Extent (HE); 3.50- 4.00 Very High Extent (VHE).

Note also that: “Development Centers Key Players” is abbreviated “DCKPs” while “Rural Communities Stakeholders is abbreviated “RCS”.

4. To what extent could accountability in budgeting increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State?

Table 4: Mean Statistics of the extent accountability in budgeting increases employment opportunity to the Rural Dwellers in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	DCKPs N=167			RCS N=300		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
13	Clear roles and responsibilities for budget implementation	3.407	0.622	HE	3.230	0.799	HE
14	Regular monitoring and evaluation of projects	3.461	0.674	HE	3.113	0.850	HE
15	Proper auditing and oversight mechanism	3.413	0.851	HE	2.950	0.947	HE
16	Spelt out consequences for mismanagement or corruption	3.640	0.603	VHE	2.903	0.995	HE
	Grand Mean	3.480	0.687	HE	3.049	0.897	HE

Note: 0.01-2.00= Very Low Extent (VLE); 2.01-2.49=Low Extent (LE); 2.50-3.49= High Extent (HE); 3.50- 4.00 Very High Extent (VHE).

Note also that: “Development Centers Key Players” is abbreviated “DCKPs” while “Rural Communities Stakeholders is abbreviated “RCS”.

Table 5: T-test Result of Respondents’ on the extent citizens engagement in budgetary process has improved the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State

S/N	Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	P-value	Decision	Remarks
1	DCKPs	167	3.802	0.551	465	0.002	Accept	Not
	RCS	300	3.146	0.692			H0	Significant (NS)
2	DCKPs	167	3.455	0.499	465	0.00	Accept	Not
	RCS	300	3.073	0.718			H0	Significant (NS)
3	DCKPs	167	3.658	0.557	465	0.001	Accept	Not
	RCS	300	3.070	0.906			H0	Significant (NS)
4	DCKPs	167	3.401	0.728	465	0.00	Accept	Not
	RCS	300	3.103	0.821			H0	Significant (NS)
t-test value						0.003	Accept H0₁	Not Significant (NS)

Nwigboji & Nwali field work, 2025

Note: DCKPs means – Development Centers Key Players and RCS means – Rural Communities Stakeholders.

Table 6: T-test Result of Respondents’ on the extent transparency in budgeting has enhanced quality education to the Rural Communities in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	P-value	Decision	Remarks
1	DCKPs	167	3.449	0.733	465	0.00	Accept	Not Significant
	RCS	300	2.916	0.912			H0	(NS)
2	DCKPs	167	3.467	0.674	465	0.00	Accept	Not Significant
	RCS	300	2.786	1.070			H0	(NS)
3	DCKPs	167	3.688	0.569	465	0.001	Accept	Not Significant
	RCS	300	3.093	0.879			H0	(NS)
4	DCKPs	167	3.616	0.523	465	0.003	Accept	Not Significant
	RCS	300	3.176	0.748			H0	(NS)
t-test value						0.001	Accept H0₁	Not Significant (NS)

Nwigboji & Nwali field work, 2025

Note: DCKPs means – Development Centers Key Players and RCS means – Rural Communities Stakeholders.

Table 7: T-test Result of Respondents’ on the extent inclusivity in budgeting has promoted provision of electricity to the Rural Communities in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	P-value	Decision	Remarks	
9	DCKPs	167	3.407	0.622	465	0.008	Accept H0	Not (NS)	Significant
	RCS	300	3.230	0.799					
10	DCKPs	167	3.461	0.674	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not (NS)	Significant
	RCS	300	3.113	0.850					
11	DCKPs	167	3.413	0.651	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not (NS)	Significant
	RCS	300	2.950	0.947					
12	DCKPs	167	3.640	0.603	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not (NS)	Significant
	RCS	300	2.903	0.995					
t-test value						0.002	Accept H0₁	Not Significant (NS)	

Nwigboji & Nwali field work, 2025

Note: DCKPs means – Development Centers Key Players and RCS means – Rural Communities Stakeholders.

Table 8: T-test Result of Respondents’ on the extent accountability in budgeting has increased employment opportunity to the Rural Dwellers in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	P-value	Decision	Remarks	
13	DCKPs	167	3.832	0.405	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not Significant (NS)	
	RCS	300	2.923	1.000					
14	DCKPs	167	3.521	0.609	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not Significant (NS)	
	RCS	300	2.900	0.795					
15	DCKPs	167	3.580	0.652	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not Significant (NS)	
	RCS	300	3.030	0.847					
16	DCKPs	167	3.550	0.673	465	0.00	Accept H0	Not Significant (NS)	
	RCS	300	3.126	0.799					
t-test value						0.00	Accept H0₁	Not Significant (NS)	

Nwigboji & Nwali field work, 2025

Note: DCKPs means – Development Centers Key Players and RCS means – Rural Communities Stakeholders.

Discussion and Findings

Result of as show on the different tables above is discussed below.

On the table 1 and 5 were presented the results of the extent citizen engagement in budgeting process could improve the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State. Items 1 and 3 indicated VHE on the responses of Development Centers Key Players (DCKPs) while items 2 and 4 showed High Extent (HE) for the items. Also on the opinions of Rural Communities Stakeholders,

their responses indicated High Extent (HE) on the 4 items. The grand mean stood at 3.579 and 3.093 while the standard deviation (SD) showed 0.583 and 0.783 respectively. The *p-value* indicated 0.001 which means that the null hypothesis which stated that citizens' engagement in budgeting at the rural communities of Ebonyi state has not significantly improved provision of portable water in their areas. The findings from the analysis of the table 1 and 5 showed that arranging for public hearing and meetings for citizens to make input, creating avenues for rural dwellers platform for feedback during budget implementation; community outreach/mobilization and appointing community representatives in budget committee could lead to improve in the provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

Result on table 2 and 6 showed grand mean of 3.555 and 2.992 respectively on the responses of both DCKPs and RCS on the 4 items raised. The SD for both showed 0.625 and 0.902 respectively. The *p-value* showed 0.001 which is a high level of significant difference leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis that transparency in budgeting at the rural communities of Ebonyi State has not significantly enhanced quality education. The findings from the above analysis showed that preparing budget estimate in clear and simple language for better understanding of the community members; making budget documents and data accessible to the community members; presenting regular financial reporting and updates to community members and making use of open-book approach to budget information could avail the community members the opportunities of contributing to the process and thereby enhancing quality education to the rural communities of Ebonyi State.

On the tables 3 and 7, the grand mean for Development Centers Key players (DCKPs) showed 3.480 and SD of 0.688 while that of the Rural Communities Stakeholders (RCS) showed grand mean of 3.049 and SD of 0.898 showing "High Extent" (HE) respectively on the items raised. The *p-value* stood at 0.002 which is high level of significant difference, indicating that inclusivity in budgeting has not promoted provision of electricity to the rural communities in Ebonyi State. The findings on the above analysis indicate that if inclusivity in budgeting could be employed in areas like targeting to reached out marginalized group such women and the youths; making meeting locations accessible to the rural dwellers; allowing representation of various stakeholders in budget process and consideration of equity and justice in allocating budget items could promote provision of electricity to the rural communities of Ebonyi State.

Results of tables 4 and 8 discussed the extent accountability in budgeting could increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State. The grand mean for both respondents indicated 3.480 and 3.049 while the SD showed 0.687 and 0.897. The *p-value* of 0.00 which is far below the 0.05 level of significance showing high level of significant difference that in Ebonyi State, the extent of participatory budget as it relates to how accountability has increased employment opportunities. The findings on the analysis of the results above showed that clear roles and responsibilities for budget implementation; regular monitoring and evaluation of projects; proper auditing and oversight mechanism and spelt out consequences for mismanagement or corruption if employed could lead to increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of participatory budget practice on economic development in the rural communities of Ebonyi State: Focus on Development Centers of Ebonyi State. Some of the areas examined were extent citizens' engagement in budgetary process could improve provision of portable water to the rural dwellers, transparency in budgeting; inclusivity in budgeting and accountability in budgetary processes as means of allowing the citizens/rural dwellers to contribute their ideas to accessing those essential human needs in the rural communities. The findings of the study could facilitate provision of the needed programmes at the rural communities of Ebonyi State such as provision of portable water to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State; enhanced quality education for the rural communities in Ebonyi State; provision of electricity to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State and increase employment opportunities to the rural dwellers in Ebonyi State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:



1. Local Government should always engage the citizens in the budgetary process. This could allow them to present their most pressing needs such as provision of portable water to the rural communities.
2. Local Government should enforce transparency approaches in the process of budgeting to enable the citizens to effectively participate on the process. This could help the stakeholders of the communities to present the challenges that have hindered quality education in the rural communities.
3. The Development Centers who closer to the people and understand their plight should always emphasize on carrying along the stakeholders of the communities during budgeting so that they could voice out their major challenges like electricity supply to their rural communities.
4. The local Government and responsible and responsive organ of government to the rural communities and should improve in their accountability practices to the public. This will not only make projects executed prominent but increase opportunities for employment to the rural dwellers.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study has shown that participatory budget could improved economic development at the rural communities of Ebonyi State to high extent visa-viz provision of portable water to the rural dwellers, quality education, improved electricity supply and employment opportunities to the rural communities of Ebonyi state. These have definite implications on the local government, the rural dwellers and the policy makers.

It then means that if the stakeholders of the rural communities are given opportunities to participate in planning the development of their areas they could present the major challenges facing them to be included in the budget. This could avail the opportunity of provision of portable water to the rural dwellers and nip in the bud guinea worm and other deceases that have been threatening the rural dwellers. Having revealed the importance of participatory budget practices, this study could open the eyes of community leaders to demand for their participation in budgetary practices in future to arrest most of the issues challenging them. The Development Centers Coordinators and other key players through this investigation may utilize this opportunity to bring closer the community leaders. The community leaders could redirect their minds on projects and programmes that could make their performances prominent pointing to them the programmes they could have omitted to be included in the budget.

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