

Self-Help Initiatives and Sustainable Development in Resettlement Schemes: The Case of Bakassi Resettlement Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examine settlers' self-help initiatives and sustainable development in Bakassi resettlement scheme in Cross River State, Nigeria. To elicit information, a questionnaire was designed and administered to three hundred and fifty (350) household heads and further confirmed with Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The research adopted a descriptive survey design utilizing both cross sectional and correlation analysis while the stratified and systematic random sampling techniques were used to select the sample. In testing the research hypothesis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (F) statistical analysis was adopted. The result indicated that settlers' self-help initiatives have significant impact on sustainable development in Bakassi resettlement scheme in Cross River State, Nigeria. In other words, settlers' self help initiatives led to the attainment of qualitative and quantitative changes in the lives of settlers as well as promote sustainable development in the resettlement. In the light of this finding, the study stresses the need for government to pursue consistent policy targets that would create sustainable resettlement scheme through self help development. That is, government should support the settlers' self-help development efforts as a strategy for the socio-economic development of the program.

Keywords: Self-help, development, sustainability, resettlement, settlers

1. Introduction

The complete government presence and control in resettlement programs which some scholars tagged "high capitalization strategy" has gained wide acceptance by scholars and government agencies alike.

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For instance, the United Nations has since adopted it as its model for population resettlement programs (Cernea, 1997). Scholars such as Chambers (1996) and Marbogunje (1971) also lent their weight behind it, suggesting that only government interventionist measures can effectively provide for the needs of settlers. By this measure, government is expected to inject sufficient capital from the start of the scheme to the finish as this would ensure a certain scale of operation that would provide adequate care and also afford the settlers a much higher standard of living. Jabbelin and Hans (2011) argued that it is only the government that can invest huge capital needed to provide accommodation, machinery, hired labor, irrigation projects and infrastructural facilities for resettlements.

According to Adepetu (2006) all the resettlement operations in which the United Nations participated either directly or indirectly throughout the world were capital intensive. He however argued that although government control was favored by the United Nations (UN), and other development agencies, it has never been very successful in the African continent. He attributed the failure to philosophical, administrative, social, financial, economic, and technical inadequacies. This approach had been criticized because its welfare scheme often bred apathy, inactivity, dependency, and a continual demand for more by the settlers (Adepetu, 2006; Oni, 2009). Bathomine (2012) posited that in most resettlement schemes undertaken by government, especially in Africa, the settlers were excluded from functional participation in the system which made them feel a deep sense of neglect, abandonment or alienation. Haruna (2011) stated that whenever people were forced to abandon their homes and it becomes the responsibility of government to resettle them, more often than not they would first be treated as refugees and deprived of normal livelihood; and then pushed to the limits of poverty and starvation. Asuja and Benda (2009) pointed out that the challenges confronting resettlement programmes under government control have the "multiplier effect of unquantifiable consequences on the political, social, cultural, morale and psyche of the people".

However, in his study of the Langtan/Shendam resettlement scheme, Adepetu (2006) reported that the scheme was very successful because the settlers did not rely on government or external aid but on their self-help efforts.

That is why Obasse (2010) stressed that it is better for government to assist the settlers to stand on their feet instead of making them to depend wholly on government.

This measure according to Obasse (2010) would promote a higher degree of commitment and a growing sense of achievement that would guarantee the success of the scheme. Dan and Fredga (2013) on their part assert that while the government is doing its best to provide for the needs of settlers, there is need for the settlers themselves to provide for themselves the minimum of basic needs. That is, they should depend essentially on their own initiatives and effort rather than on government. They further argued that this measure has greater chances of success than when settlers depend wholly on the government.

Onojowwo (2008) stated that although the Bakassi resettlement programme was under the Federal and Cross River State government control, a cross section of Nigerian populace is skeptical of its success in bringing meaningful development to the resettled people. According to him about US \$25 million, meant to take care of accommodation, feeding and the provision of necessary infrastructures for the new settlers had already been sunk into the project, yet only about two hundred low cost housing ear-marked in the first phase had been built with one or two other infrastructural facility provided. Johnson (2008) also asserted that no serious attempt was made by the government to settle the people properly since some of the settlers still live in make-shift camps and in old dilapidated thatch houses and were treated more or less like refugees.

It is also notable that past emphasis had been placed on the understanding that the success or failure of a resettlement scheme is hinged on government actions or inactions than to the role played by settlers themselves. In other words, there is the high concentration of studies on the role of government on resettlement processes with very little studies carried out on the part played by the settlers towards the success or failure of resettlement programs. For instance Chukuma (2009), Olarewaju (2013) and Cernea (1997) assert that because of their complexity and the huge capital involved in their operations, almost all resettlement programs all over the world were undertaken by government. The implication being that all government policies and programmes on resettlement programmes were often influenced by these studies. It is in view of the foregoing that it became necessary to fill some of the gaps in the existing literature by examining the self-help initiatives and sustainable development of resettlement schemes:

The case of Bakassi Resettlement Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive survey design carried out on a randomly selected sample. The descriptive survey design was preferred for this study because it made it possible for the researcher to draw inferences from a sampled population and then make a generalization of the findings. The study population comprises the entire Bakassi indigenes who resettled at Akwa-obutong in the new Bakassi Local Government Area. The respondents of the study were drawn from household heads totaling three thousand and seventeen (3,017 in number (Bakassi Resettlement Commission, 2009). It was from this number of household heads that a total sample of three hundred and fifty (350) respondents was selected for the study.

The sample was selected through stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. First, the resettlement camp was divided into three strata according to the existing resettlement units. Thereafter, the researcher went through a register of each resettlement unit containing the names of household heads. From each of the registers, every tenth (10th) name was picked and the individual household head was then located and interviewed. University students were used as research assistants to facilitate the interpretation and smooth interaction and were properly instructed. Two types of research instruments were used to collect data for this study. These were the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The questionnaire also consisted of items measured on a 4-point Likert scale type that measured the variables under study. The hypothesis that was formulated to guide the study was appropriately tested using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure as shown in Table 1

3. Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their opinion about settlers' self help initiatives and sustainable development of Bakassi resettlement

S/n	Items	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Settlers do embark on self help projects.	321 (53.5%)	181 (30.2%)	33 (5.5%)	65 (10.8%)
2.	We volunteer the supply of labour and help as the need arises.	481 (80.2%)	74 (12.3%)	39 (6.5%)	6 (1%)
3.	Settlers provide security through vigilante groups to the settlement.	197 (32.8%)	142 (23.7%)	75 (12.5%)	186 (31%)
4.	We have development associations/ cooperative societies to carry out community development.	502 (83.7%)	89 (14.8%)	-	9 (1.5%)
5.	Settlers are marginalized in the decision making process and development of the area.	289 (48.2%)	230 (38.3%)	55 (9.2%)	26 (4.3%)
6.	Settlers are more prosperous for owning luxury goods.	307 (51.2%)	193 (32.2%)	11 (1.8%)	89 (14.8%)
7.	Most settlers now attend adult education and literacy classes to better their lot	441 (73.5%)	159 (26.5%)	-	-
8.	Settlers do not embark on enlightenment campaigns as a way of fighting illiteracy.	19 (3.2%)	29 (4.8%)	162 (27%)	390 (65%)
9.	Settlers do not render voluntary services to one another in time of need.	6 (1%)	17 (2.8%)	493 (82.2%)	84 (14%)
10.	Settlers continue to demand more from government thus, making them ingrates.	-	-	584 (91.3%)	52 (8.7%)

Table 1 shows the analysis of respondents' responses in regards to settlers' self help initiatives and socio-economic development of Bakassi resettlement.

The pattern of responses as to whether settlers embark on self help projects, shows that 321 (53.5 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 181 (30.17 per cent) agreed, 33 (5.5 per cent) strongly disagreed and 65 (10.83 per cent) disagreed. From the responses, it can be deduced that the feeling of self help development among the settlers is relatively high, probably borne out of the circumstances in which they found themselves – a case of relative neglect and abandonment by a government that failed to live up to her expectation. Analysis of responses to whether the personal efforts put in by settlers to ensure a successful resettlement program is reflected in their supply of labor and help where the need arises, shows that 481 (80.17 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 74 (12.33 per cent) agreed, 39 (6.5 per cent) strongly disagreed, and 6 (1 per cent) disagreed.

From the responses it is deduced that development in the resettlement is stimulated by the settlers themselves through the mobilization of labour and resources. In other words, it is a social demand upon the settlers to contribute their labour and resources to any developmental project embarked upon by the community of settlers. As to whether the settlers provide security to the layout of the resettlement, houses and provision of social amenities by the government, data shows that 197 (32.83 per cent) respondents strongly agreed; 142 (23.67 per cent) strongly disagreed and 75 (12.5 per cent) respondents disagreed, 186 (31 per cent) agreed. The response pattern shows that the settlement is faced by security challenges which the settlers were ready to address.

As to whether settlers have different development associations and cooperative societies with which they carry out community development activities, analysis of data shows that 502 (83.67 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 89 (14.83 per cent) agreed, no respondent strongly disagreed, while 9 (1.5 per cent) disagreed. The response pattern reflects the existence and important role these development associations play in the socio economic development of the settlement.

With regards to whether the settlers are marginalized in the decision making process, data shows that 289 (348.17 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 230 (38.33 per cent) agreed, 55 (9.17 per cent) strongly disagreed while 26 (4.33 per cent) disagreed. The response pattern reflects the feeling of alienation and abandonment the settlers experienced.

The pattern of responses as to whether settlers are more prosperous for the luxury goods they owned such as cabinet beds, radio, television, bicycle, motor cycle, modern fishing tools, modern farming tools and motors, etc, shows that 307 (51.17 per cent) respondents strongly agreed and 193 (32.17 per cent) agreed, 11 (1.83 per cent) respondents strongly disagreed and 89 (14.83 per cent) disagreed; It is deduced from these responses that for what they count as luxury goods the settlers can be said to be more prosperous.

With regards to item 7 which states that "settlers attend adult education and literacy classes to better their lot" analysis of data shows that 441(73.5 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 159 (26.5 per cent) agreed, none of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. The explanation for this is that majority of settlers are conscious of their plight and therefore needed to be educated in order to cope with modern day challenges. Responses to item 8 which states that "The settlers are not involved in enlightenment campaigns to wipe away ignorance from their mist", shows that 19 (3.17 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 29 (4.83 per cent) agreed, 162 (27 per cent) strongly disagreed and 390 (65 per cent) disagreed. From the responses, it can be deduced that enlightenment campaigns were one of the very measures adopted to improve their lot.

As to item 9 which states that "The settlers do not render voluntary services to one another in time of need", data analysis reveal that 6 (1 per cent) respondents strongly agreed, 17 (2.83 per cent) agreed, 493 (82.17 per cent) strongly disagreed and 84 (14 per cent) disagreed. The response pattern shows that nearly all the respondents reject the premise of that statement. It further implies that the need to be their "brother's keeper" is so strongly felt that it has become a significant factor in their life. Analysis of responses to item 10 which states that "The settlers continue to demand more of displacement benefits, making them ingrates" shows that none of the respondents strongly agreed or even agreed, rather 548 (91.34 per cent) strongly disagreed while 52 (8.68 per cent) disagreed. From the pattern of responses, it is clear that the settlers do not see their pressures on government to meet with their needs as misplaced. Rather they see government's insensitivity to their demands as unfortunate.

4. Test of Hypothesis

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Thus, the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the impact of settlers' self help initiatives on the sustainable development of Bakassi resettlement (N=350)

Settlers' self help initiatives	N	\bar{X}	SD	
1. Carry out development projects	107	28.7	10.3	
2. Literacy education programmes	78	20.7	9.6	
3. Voluntary labour for service	80	21.4	6.5	
4. Formation of development associations.	85	16.3	5.6	
Total	350			
Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Between groups	415,402.68	3	138,468	4.69*
Within groups	10,215,304	346	29,524	
Total	10,630,706.68	349		

* $P > 0.05$, $df = 3:346$, Critical $F = 2.62$

The result of the analysis indicated that the calculated F-ratio of 4.69 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 2.62 at 0.05 level of significance at 3:346 degree of freedom. With the result of this analysis the alternate hypothesis is accepted, while the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore shows that settlers' self help initiatives have a significant impact on the sustainable development in Bakassi resettlement in Cross River State, Nigeria.

5. Discussion

Results derived from test of hypothesis indicated that settlers' self-help initiatives have significant impact on sustainable development in Bakassi resettlement in Cross River State.

The study supports the work of Adepetu (2006) who reported that the Langtang/Shendam resettlement scheme was very successful because the settlers relied on their self-help initiative and not on any external aid or patronage and this promoted a higher degree of commitment and a growing sense of achievement that guaranteed the success of the scheme. Evidence from the study indicated that the Bakassi settlers organized self help projects. This is shown in Table 4.2 (Item 6) where the ratio of respondents who agreed that settlers embark on self help projects was 83.7 per cent as against 16.3 per cent that disagreed. Some of these self help projects include construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, culverts, and building of schools. Through the self help efforts of the settlers, the resettlement camp has a market site which is centrally located. Because the variety and level of existing amenities and services were generally low, the settlers tried to provide what they could afford within their reach.

Apart from the motor-able road constructed by the government to link the resettlement with the outside world, all track roads linking the settlement with the neighbouring villages and the sea at Ikang were constructed and maintained by the settlers. Of significant note is that these roads intensified economic interactions between the settlers and their neighbours. The roads were used for the conveyance of food and other produce to and from the markets at Ikang, Akpabuyo and Calabar.

Through self help efforts, the settlers can boast of a primary school block, a health post, although some of these projects are yet to be completed at the time of this study. Beside, a number of local industries among which include a rice mill and corn mills were also provided by the settlers. The personal efforts put in by settlers to ensure a successful resettlement programme is equally manifested in their supply of labour and help where the need arises. This is reflected in Table 4.2 (item 7) where the ratio of respondents that accepted this premise was 92.5 per cent as against 7.5 per cent who disagreed. It implies that one area of development in the resettlement which was stimulated by the settlers themselves was the mobilization of labour and resources for self help development. In other words, it is a social demand upon the settlers to contribute their labour and resources to any developmental project embarked upon by the community of settlers.

Another self help initiative of the settlers was the formation of vigilante groups to protect and secure the lives and property of the resettlement. This is indicated in Table 4.2 (Item 8) in which the ratio of respondents who agreed to this was 66.5 as against 33.5 percent that disagreed. It suggests that the settlers provide security to the resettlement, houses, infrastructural facilities provided by the government. Apart from the formation of various development associations and cooperative societies which enabled the settlers to have access to credit facilities provided by government and financial institutions, they also utilized these development associations to finance most of the projects in the settlement. This was indicated in table 4.2 (Item 9) where the ratio of respondents who agreed to this was 98.5 per cent as against 1.5 per cent that disagreed. The response pattern further reflects the important role these development associations and cooperative societies played in the lives of the settlers. For instance, labour in either fishing or farm work was often rendered in rotation among members of a particular association. Through these development associations, they also enter into "Osusu" contribution. This is a practice where each member of a group contributes a certain amount of money which is handed over to an individual member at a particular period. The trend continues until all the members have their turn.

It was also deduced from the study that what they count as luxury goods was acquired by the settlers through their personal efforts. This is expressed visibly in the number of settlers owning luxury goods such as cabinet beds, radio, televisions, bicycles, motorcycles, fishing tools, farming tools and motors. Table 4.2 (Item 11) reflects the ratio of respondents who agreed to be more prosperous for the luxury goods they owned to be 83.3 per cent as against 6.7 per cent that disagreed. A further check of data revealed that settlers attend adult education and literacy classes to better their lot. This was reflected in Table 4.2 (Item 12) where all the respondents agreed to it. From the study it is gathered that the settlers were involved in enlightenment campaigns against ignorance and diseases, boost adult education classes and provide funds for educational programmes. The study also found out that the settlers tried to supplement government efforts by constructing classroom blocks for their children. Again, the ratio of respondents who agreed to this was 95 per cent as against 5 per cent that disagreed. On the other hand, the need to boost and finance education as another of their major self help initiatives was a heavy responsibility borne by the settlers themselves with some assistance from government.

6. Conclusion

Even though the Bakassi resettlement programme is a government controlled project where the government provided houses, social amenities and funded some developmental projects in the resettlement, the settlers never depended wholly on government to provide everything for them. That is, the settlers decided to confront the challenges they faced in the resettlement by embarking on self help developments initiatives rather than continue to depend on government. Thus, they believed that through self help development, they would be able to utilize their potentials and adapt faster to the changes they were facing. Consequently, they began to explore both the material and human resources around them, and also refused to be tied to excessive government controls. Indeed, evidence presented in this study shows that the Bakassi settlers had put in concerted efforts through self help initiatives to better their lot and ensure that the resettlement succeed. For now, self help initiatives were used to foster interpersonal development, facilitate not only the spread of education and adoption of innovations, but also adaptation to change, all of which were essential to the success of the Bakassi resettlement programme.

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that the government should further encourage self-help or community development efforts as a strategy for the sustainable development of the resettlement. Self help efforts will create a network that fosters rapid development. Beside, the settlers should continue to provide support to each other rather than compete for what the government provides. This is vital for them if they really want to gain prestige and integrity in their new home.

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