

Grassroots' Participation and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Osun State in Focus

Journal of Management and
Social Sciences
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Abstract

This article provided insights into the grassroots' participation and democratic governance of Nigeria, with a focus on Osun State. The study adopted survey research design and utilized primary data obtained through the administration of questionnaires and conduct of in-depth interview. A proportional fraction of 382 respondents comprising executive members of political parties, traditional chiefs, community development associations, civil society organizations and semi-formal organizations were selected for the study. The data were analysed using descriptive analysis with the aid of SPSS. The study revealed that limited government accommodation and responsiveness, lack of access to information about government programmes, lack of trust in political office holders, and low awareness level of the people concerning their roles in governance are major factors responsible for low grassroot participation in the governance of the State. These factors, as revealed, have led to the reduction of the legitimacy and peoples' trust in the government of the State. Thus, more fora such as town hall meetings must be provided by the government and there should be a law for mandatory public hearing and consultation in the State.

Keywords

Community, democracy, governance, participation, public value

Introduction

It is generally believed that governance paradigm is about process, politics and partnerships (Bakare, 2016). The new governance structures require that government agencies expand public consultations, implement participatory governance practices at the local level, encourage popular participation and develop new partnerships with civil society organizations. Government actors need to open up for more transparent and responsive decision making. Without transparency, citizen participation is poorly informed and less effective, and without accountability, those in positions of power can safely ignore the will of the people (Bakare, 2016). By demanding responsiveness to social and

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economic needs, an organized civic activity can have a real and tangible impact on local government performance and the quality and responsiveness of public services.

A functional democracy needs an informed citizenry and empowered media, popular participation in policy making, a responsive state, and governing processes that are open, transparent and inclusive to all legitimate interests (Bakare & Raji, 2019). Improving relationships between citizens and their government means working simultaneously on state responsiveness and effectiveness, citizen empowerment, and the accountability of elected officials and council members (Helao, 2015, Bakare, 2016). The state alone cannot solve society's many problems or provide the remedies for democracy's deficits—this also requires citizen action.

The principles of participation and inclusion are cornerstones in the United Nation's common understanding of a Human Rights-Based Approach. The United Nation's submitted that "Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized" (United Nation, 2017). This can be paraphrased as "People who participate take responsibility and thereby become free individuals that engage in the societal development for the benefit of the family, community and society as a whole" (Bakare & Raji, 2019: 6).

In recognition of the declaration at the 49th National Conference of the African National Congress held in 1994, successive governments in Osun State, since 1999, have made attempts at incorporating the views of the people into governance through the promulgation of programmes. For instance, Chief Adebisi Akande, the executive governor of Osun State between 1999 and 2003, introduced a programme tagged "*Labe Odan*" (Under the Shade of Tree). This programme was designed to encourage the participation of the people in governance by identifying and incorporating their needs into government activities. In the same vein, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the governor of Osun State from 2003 to 2010 also introduced a public engagement programme tagged "*Open Forum*". It was a monthly programme hosted by the governor and his cabinet for discussing government activities. Mr. Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola assumed the office in October 2010 as the third governor of the State since 1999. Like the previous governors, Aregbesola introduced two public enlightenment programmes tagged "*Ogbeni Till Day Break*" and "*Gbangbadekun*" (Face-Off). Thus, from the foregoing, it is very clear that the successive governments since 1999 have made attempts at encouraging grassroots' participation in the governance of Osun State through various outlets as mentioned above. However, these outlets are defective and politically motivated, thus, could not ensure proper participation of the people (Bakare, 2016), while such a public engagement programme has yet to be instituted by the current democratic regime.

There is a general argument that most African governance systems are illegitimate; not responsive to the needs of their citizens, not committed to providing public welfare; and not competent to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities and for ensuring the participation of the people (Olu-Adeyemi, 2012). Hence, the present study interrogates the factors affecting the participation of people at the grassroots in democratic governance of Nigeria using a survey approach.

Conceptual Review

Political Participation

The term political participation is broad and has attracted different definitions. It is seen as an action or act by citizens to influence political outcomes (Dunse, Mato, Makinde & Chidozie, 2018). It could imply several formal and informal processes and structures through which the citizens get involved in public policy-making as well as electing those that will represent them in government (Paki & Inokoba, 2008; Preye & Samuel, 2018). Falada (2014) sees political participation as the process through which the individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding what common goals of the society are and the best way of achieving these goals. Thus, political participation could imply a voluntary activity in government formation and activities, and this participation may be direct or indirect. Political participation, in essence, is every action of ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes: distribution of social goods and norms' (Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003). It is principally about citizens and their attempts to influence the politics and policies of the government (Segesten & Bossetta, 2017). Political participation is all about influencing government formation, actions and inactions, directly or indirectly by citizens or individuals. Political participation covers a broad spectrum of issues from conventional participation, i.e., electoral processes to the unconventional involvement which include demonstrations, protest and movements. It encompasses an array of forms, including traditional forms, such as voting, petitioning governments, contacting elected representatives, and taking part in demonstrations, as well as non-conventional acts performed using digital technologies, which appear geared more toward expressing a view, supportive or otherwise, than influencing decision-makers (de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012; Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013).

Grassroot participation

Grassroot participation is simply a site of political participation that principally relates to participation which takes place at the local or grassroots level with its characteristics of passive citizens, limited access to information and lack of capacity by local natives to compel accountability from elected local

representatives. It entails the involvement of people at the grassroots in the business of the government. The United Nations (1981) sees grassroots participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the consequences of development. Grassroot participation in governance is a complex mechanism, and in effect, there is no single blueprint for its design. Hence, each area is characterized by different dynamics and demographics.

The methods of participation at the grassroots play a crucial role in terms of meaningful participation (Nekwaya, 2007). Grassroot participation is rooted in democratic approaches to public policy, community planning and development, which assume that people have a right to make decisions that affect their lives (Bakare, 2016). Oakley and Marsden (1984), state that there are two main vehicles for implementing this notion of participation; (1) community development programmes which were aimed at preparing the rural population to collaborate with government development plans and (2) the establishment of formal organizations (cooperatives, farmers association, etc.) which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes. Thus, participation is an indispensable element of democratic governance, such that meaningful and functional democracy depends solely on the participation of the people at the rural community (Bakare & Raji, 2019).

Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn to the effect that meaningful participation of the rural poor in development is concerned with direct access to the resources necessary for development, and some active involvement and influence in the decisions affecting those resources (Burkey, 2000).

The Concept of Governance

Like most concepts of its kind, the concept of governance due to its complex weaving of “economic, political and social aspects of a Nation” (Shehu, 1999), has not been amenable to an easy or simplistic definition. In other words, the concept has not been an exception to the volatility and eclecticism for which the disciplines in the Social Sciences have been globally noted whenever it comes to the conceptualization of core issues.

This explains Esman’s (1997) claim that “no two political scientists would agree on what the concept of governance is, or what it means”. In fact, as Hyden (1999) once noted, “only a few authors (have) define(d) it (the concept of governance) to serve an analytical purpose” hence, “governance as a concept has not been extensively used (or defined) in the political literature until very recently when it gained currency” (Nkom & Sorkaa, 1996).

World Bank (1989) defines governance as “how power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”.

According to the World Bank (1993), governance has three dimensions which include “the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the management of social and economic resources and, the capacity of government to design and implement policy and to discharge its functions”. These dimensions were specifically identified and concretely elucidated by Olowu and Erero (1997) who conceptualize governance in terms of “rule-ruler-ruled relationship”.

Although governance has a wide range of meanings and applications, there are some key elements of governance that most scholars who use the concept tend to agree upon (Turnhout & van der Zouwen, 2010). These key elements are the increased involvement of non-state actors, the decentralisation of decision making, and the emergence of new modes of steering by central authorities. These elements are used both prescriptively – as ways to achieve good governance – and descriptively – as empirical manifestations of a changing political landscape and of the new methods by which societies are governed. Therefore, they can be invoked both as policy instruments to achieve democratic norms and as analytical concepts to describe governance.

Kura (2006) defines democratic governance as the science of organizing government at all levels and the process of coordinating direct mass and popular people's participation in affairs that relate to the totality of their wellbeing. Hence, the democratic way of governance, of course, involves competitions for various government positions, people's participation in choosing political leaders as well as the guaranteeing of human rights.

A democracy that is meaningful to people is that which positively affects at least their social and economic wellbeing. Thus, these economic and social impacts suggest the supremacy of the political objectives of the whole democratization process. However, to ensure broad participation of the people and attach legitimacy, democratic principles and procedures, as well as protection of human rights, are essential ingredients for genuine and transparent democratic governance. Several models of governance based on people's participation have been propounded in literature. Waheduzzaman (2010) explains that the Authoritarian Model evolves when people's participation remains at stage 1, otherwise known as the information level. In this situation, decisions and resources come from the top and projects are implemented mostly by the bureaucrats of the local agency, following rigidly prescribed processes, where people are treated as passive recipients. Bureaucratic Model evolves when people's participation level remains at Stage 2 or the consultation stage. Governing agencies, in this model, consult with the people and use the resources of the people, but do not share power with them, to make decisions and/or policy. The participation is not enough to allow the people to know all about the resources, and that leaves scope for corruption in this model. Political Model evolves when the participation level reaches the stage of involvement. In this model, the governing agency shares the knowledge, resources and authority with the local people to make decisions to

implement the project. Moreover, in this model, people and agencies jointly form a kind of coalition where both sides share histories, rituals, values and other common interests, and establish a more cooperative network to develop any programme. Democratic Model emerges gradually as peoples' participation attains the stage of empowerment. This model allows developing a partnership with people, delegating authority to make decisions and implementing programmes with the sharing of local knowledge, resources and values. This model allows participatory planning and strategic decision making, which facilitates the development of common vision, articulation of needs, effective, efficient and transparent management that facilitate a joint working environment. This is the most rational model when people are considered as stewards or navigators. But authorities need to be flexible and open to encourage the development of this model.

Empirical Review

Studies have documented different factors influencing grassroots participation as well as the nature of participation. Preye and Samuel (2018) examined the extent, in which the citizens are involved in political activities at the local government level and how this has impacted on the state of grassroots democracy with particular reference to Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The study adopted a survey design and utilized primary data analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that there is low citizens' participation at the local level and this has had a debilitating effect on the state of democracy at the grassroots.

Gaventa and Barrett (2012) contend that understanding what difference participation and engagement make to development and to more accountable and responsive governance has become a key preoccupation in the development field. Speer (2012) reviews experiences of participatory governance mechanisms as a strategy for increasing government responsiveness and improving public services and contends that involving citizens in decision-making over the distribution of public funds between communities and the design of public policies, as well as in monitoring and evaluating government spending are fundamental requirements of democratic governance.

Mansuri and Rao (2012) examine over 500 examples of interventions (government- and donor-supported) which have sought to induce participation, including the World Bank's substantial effort to support participatory development. From their review of the evidence, they are generally modestly positive about the results of participatory approaches but emphasise that the main beneficiaries tend to be the most literate, the least geographically isolated, and the most politically well-connected. They found little evidence that participation induced long-lasting cohesion, even at the community level" and

that “group formation tends to be both parochial and unequal.” They also note that participation often tends to be driven by project-related incentives: people get together to derive benefits from project funds. In short, it can be inferred from the available literature that democratic governance can only thrive in a political climate that favours the full participation of all the people in the society and where the government is willing to treat the people as the ultimate custodian of power and sovereignty.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on public value theory. The theory was first introduced in Moore’s 1995 book titled, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. The fundamental assumption of public value theory is the provision of services according to the public interest (Chambers, 2003). Public interest is defined as what people would ‘choose if they saw, thought rationally, and acted disinterestedly and benevolently’ (Chambers, 2003). Thus, this theory entails desired outcomes of public programmes and participation of expected beneficiaries (to see the outcome clearly) for the services when delivered by the government bodies. Bozeman (1999) argued that ‘Public value theory tends to operate at the highest levels, such as philosophical treatises about the public interest, or the operational level, focusing on specific desired programme outcomes. This theory induces public institutions to recognise the public value of resources, goods, and services and to think of the arrangement under what ‘is the public best served’ (Chambers, 2003). The public value theory articulates that public officials and representatives should include people in making decisions for service delivery, and thus the theory pursues the implementation of good governance with people as the central element. Hence, this study adopts this theory to conceptualize grassroot participation and governance.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey design and utilized primary collected through the administration of questionnaire and conduct of in-depth interviews. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. As revealed by the pilot study conducted in the three LGAs, the study population (2,357) comprised executive members of the two dominant political parties in the State: APC and PDP (120), traditional chiefs (56), executive members of community development associations (428), executive members of civil society organizations (219), and members of semi-formal organizations (1,534) of the three selected LGAs in Osun State. A proportional fraction of 472 respondents, was selected for questionnaire administration. Besides, six selected stakeholders on community participation and governance were interviewed. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean value and chi-square.

Findings

Grassroot Participation in the Governance of the State

This section analyses the factors affecting grassroots participation in the democratic governance of the State. A total of 382 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and subjected to analysis. Using Likert-scale ratings, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with 10 assertions made by the researcher on the factors affecting participation in the governance of the State of Osun. Use differently, the mean value ($\bar{\chi}$) here rates the strength of the respondents for each of the assertions set out to achieve this objective, using a decision rule as thus: ($\bar{\chi} > 2.5$) means agreement with the assertion; and ($\bar{\chi} < 2.5$) means disagreement to such assertion.

As shown in Table 1 below, 288 (75.39%) respondents strongly agreed to the fact that the participation of the people seems to be much facilitated at the national level making it difficult for those located at the outlying rural areas to participate and influence public policy while only a few respondents 94 (24.61%) disagreed to this view. The mean response is 3.13 which remarkably is above the average tending towards the agreement. It can therefore be admitted that participation is much more facilitated at the national level than community level. This may be attributed to the fact that the federalism being practised in Nigeria allocates greater power to the central rather than the local which is closer to the community, thereby limiting the financial capacity of the local government to embark on sensitization programme which would have engendered greater participation at the community level.

It was also revealed in the Table that the extent of government accommodation and responsiveness to civil society participation appears to be limited. This fact is supported by the majority of the surveyed respondents 288 (75.39%) with a mean response of 3.11. This shows that the existence and participation of civil society organization in the democratic governance of the state are limited and this is one of the strong factors affecting the participation of the community members in local governance.

Lack of trust in political office holders, future developments and a growing sense of alienation of individuals from their immediate community was equally identified as a major factor affecting the inclusive participation in the governance of Osun State. This was supported by the majority of the respondents 261 (68.32%) with a mean response of 2.71. The respondents 121 (31.68 %) who disagreed to this fact may be justified on the ground of their membership of political parties in the State and as such, by attending meetings and rallies, they may be inclined to their political parties and taking such as participation in governance. However, considering the mean response of 3.71, it can be averred that the people of the state do not trust their elected representatives and are grossly alienated from their immediate community

which could therefore be responsible for their low participation in the governance of the State.

Lack of access to information about government programmes and services was also mentioned as one of the factors affecting the participation of the people in the governance of the State of Osun. This view was supported by the majority of the respondents 238 (62.30%) with a mean of 2.86. This shows that there is a lack of access to information about government activities in the state and this is responsible for the low level of participation of the community members in the governance of the state.

Another factor affecting the community participation in the governance of the state is that there is a general lack of political commitment on the side of the Federal government of Nigeria towards effective devolution of powers, which is evident in the continued influence and interference in the functioning of local communities. This view is evidenced by the majority of the respondents 241 (63.09%) who agreed to the assertion with a mean response of 2.88. This further corroborates the earlier fact established above regarding the financial incapacity of the local government to implement programmes targeted towards enhancing community participation in the governance.

Another important factor affecting the community participation in the governance of the state as attested by the majority of the respondents 207 (54.19%) is the fact that the people at the community are usually indifferent to the decisions of the government. This apathy to government activities may be attributed to the factor earlier established in this study regarding the lack of trust in elected representatives. However, considering the strength of the disagreement to this fact 175 (45.81%), it could be submitted that the apathy to government activities and decisions is personal which may vary from one individual to another and which cannot be generalized like other factors established above.

Also, Table 1 below showed that the majority of the respondents believed that there is a low level of awareness of the people concerning their roles in governance. This is evidenced by the majority of the respondents 311 (81.41%) who agreed to this fact. This showed that the awareness of the majority of the people at the local level concerning their roles in governance is low and this is affecting their participation in governance. This position further corroborates the fact established above regarding the low awareness creation of by the government on the role of the people in governance. In the same vein, the table reveals that the majority of the respondents 278 (72.77%) agreed that community participation in governance is not majorly entrenched in our laws. This could be interpreted to mean that most of the available provisions in the Nigeria 1999 constitution focus on political participation, especially, concerning election and not focusing on other areas of inclusion such as participatory governance or participatory budgeting and this hinders the participation of the people in the governance of the country with no exception to Osun State.

Table 1: Factors Affecting Grassroot Participation in the Governance of the State

	<i>Strongly Agreed</i>	<i>Agreed</i>	<i>Strongly Disagreed</i>	<i>Disagreed</i>	$\bar{\chi}$	Remark
1	118 (30.9)	170 (44.5)	70 (18.3)	24 (6.3)	3.13	Agree
2	113 (29.6)	175 (45.8)	68 (17.8)	26 (6.8)	3.11	Agree
3	11 (2.9)	250 (65.5)	71 (18.6)	50 (13.1)	2.71	Agree
4	21 (5.5)	260 (68.1)	71 (18.6)	30 (7.9)	2.84	Agree
5	48 (12.6)	190 (49.7)	109 (28.5)	35 (9.2)	2.86	Agree
6	48 (12.6)	193 (50.5)	111 (29.1)	30 (7.9)	2.88	Agree
7	104 (27.3)	103 (26.9)	112 (29.3)	63 (16.5)	2.86	Agree
8	17 (4.5)	260 (68.1)	90 (23.6)	15 (3.9)	2.90	Agree
9	11 (2.9)	300 (78.5)	70 (18.3)	1 (0.3)	2.97	Agree
10	78 (20.4)	200 (52.4)	101 (26.2)	4 (1.0)	3.11	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2019

NB: f = Frequency, % = Percentage, $\bar{\chi}$ = Mean value, and N = Total Number of Respondents

To complement the data gathered through questionnaire administration, some key personalities were interviewed. Most remarkably, the interviewees noted that our constitution only focuses on the political inclusion of the people but does not focus on other areas of inclusion. For instance, it was noted by the interviewees that the constitution ought to make it compulsory upon political office holders to discuss with their people before preparing the budget to identify the key areas that the budget must focus on. In the same vein, it was noted that the National Orientation Agency which is saddled with the responsibility of sensitizing the public on their roles in governance is not working to the expectations of the natives.

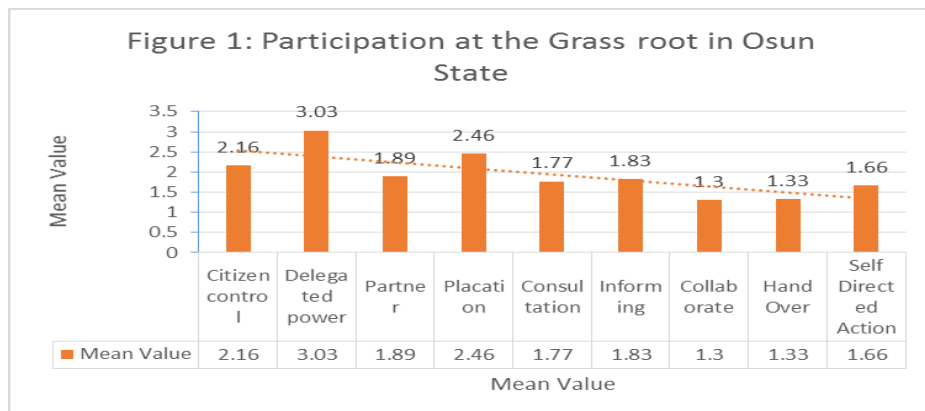
Participation at the Grass root in Osun State

The various assertions put forth to assess the level of participation in the governance of the state are the citizen control, delegated control, partner, consultation, placation, informing, collaborating, handover and self-directed action. All these assertions were assessed by various statements which the respondents were asked to respond to.

Governance is about a partnership between the ruler and the ruled as empirically established in the literature review of this study. To assess this position concerning the State of Osun, it was found that the government and community (stakeholders) do not share responsibility in the decision making process with a mean response of 1.89 tending towards disagreement. It can therefore be established that there is no partnership between the government and the people at the community concerning the decision-making process in the state.

To draw the people nearer to the government so that harmonious relation could be established between the ruled and the ruler which is the cardinal goal of democratic governance, the government usually puts in place a necessary arrangement to facilitate discussion and share of views. Concerning the State of Osun, it was found that the government has not put in place necessary arrangements such as town hall meetings to apprise the community against any problems.

In the same vein, informing is also examined as an element of governance, it is demonstrated in Figure 1 that the majority of the respondents believe that the government has not provided adequate information that facilitates informed choices by the community. It can therefore be inferred from the responses of the respondents that the people are not usually carried along through proper information about the activities of the government. The extent of collaboration between the government and the community was also examined in the table. According to the respondents, there was no cooperation between the government and the people at the grassroots concerning the involvement of the people through cooperation.



Source: Field Survey, 2019

To complement the data gathered through questionnaire administration, some key personalities were interviewed. The interviewees provided their views on the state of political mobilization in Osun State since the beginning of the fourth republic. One of the interviewees, a member of CSOs, noted as follows:

The government cannot exist without the participation of the people at the community, who are to be governed. That is, democratic governance presupposes the existence of the participation of the community members in the decision making of how they will be governed. The adequacy or otherwise of this participation is however contestable. In the case of the State of Osun, there is community participation in governance. However, this participation of the people is not adequate to guarantee the total inclusion of the will and desires of the people into the major decisions of the government. For instance, when the council area and new LGAs were to be created, there was a voting process where people of the State were allowed to express their views regarding that decision... *(Male/CSOs/12-5-2019)*

A traditional chief in one of the sample areas expressed his view on the subject matter as follow:

...a desirable situation is where a government carries people along in its decisions and policies, but, oftentimes, this does not happen. A very recent case was the merger of secondary schools and the single uniform policy for all the secondary school students in the state

by the immediate government. This decision was not communicated to the people before the implementation... among the factors that responsible for this is the low level of awareness of many people which hinders them to ask government questions about its actions and inactions... (*A Male traditional chief, 21/3/2019*)

In the same vein, a member of NGOs based in Ile-Ife expressed his view on the factors militating in the governance of the state as follow:

... among the factors responsible for low participation of people in governance are the electoral fraud, violence and monetization of the electoral process which act as strong disincentives to grassroots participation in politics and in the programmes of the government that eventually won through that process... (*A Male Member of NGOs, Osun State 19/7/2019*)

It was also widely mentioned that the community members participate in the governance of the State but that their participation is low. It was also gathered from the interview session that the people are not usually informed about the activities of the government and even when they are carried along, their views are not usually incorporated into the decision of the government. Thus, it can be inferred from the responses of both the respondents to the questionnaires administered and the interviewees that there is community participation in the governance of Osun State but that their participation is low.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have revealed the perceived grassroot participation in the governance of the state due to factors such as low level of awareness, deliberate exclusion of peoples' opinion by the government, lack of trust in government and limited access to government information. It appears this scenario of low grassroot participation is common to many states in Nigeria and other developing countries. The findings are in agreement with previous findings of Preye and Samuel (2018) with regard to Bayelsa State; and in tandem with the submissions of Mattes (2003) that popular trust in political institutions and government remains at relatively low level in South Africa. And in Nigeria, this study establishes that distrust of political leaders, unaccountable and unresponsive governance process, and lack of faith and confidence in the political process and leaders by the citizenry has resulted in people's apathy, indifference and low voters' turnout in elections, which is well corroborated by Dungse, Mato, Makinde and Chidozie (2018). It is equally established that low political consciousness and education has made

the grassroots populace to be indifferent to the affairs of the state as supported by Amechi, Innocent and Ikechukwu (2018) who contends that the more knowledge citizens have, the more likely they are to change their views on policy matters based on new development.

The findings of this study also show that grassroots participation in governance is not majorly entrenched in our laws. That is, the current laws generally do not establish mechanisms for true citizen involvement in decision-making. Except for negotiated rule-making, government agencies are not obliged to incorporate citizen input into decisions—only, in some instances, to respond to comments.

All the above findings fall in consonance with the findings of the previous studies, though concerning a different state. Falade (2014) finds that the public has always been disillusioned by the lack of genuine opportunities to participate, the failure of many multi-stakeholder processes, the frequent disregard of their concerns as “emotional”, the failure of the government to incorporate their concerns in decisions, and the power that economic interests exert in agency decision-making. In support of this fact, Dare and Olukemi (2012) note that inclusion of citizens in the policy-making arrangement is to create a sense of belonging and awareness necessary for the sustenance of policy even if it is a short-term painful policy that will provide a long-term reward. This public participation model is potent enough to consolidate democracy and engender good governance.

It is, therefore, less surprising that responsibility and accountability in grassroots governance have become vague words only in theory but not in practice in Nigeria. This lends credence to the argument of Afolabi and Agunyai (2017) that the whole idea of grassroots representative democracy is more of a sham and myth than reality. The wishes and interests of the grassroots are never considered in the process of electing political leaders as well as decision making at the local level of governance. The democratic principle of representation is compromised at the altar of political expediency and interests of the political class.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that there was low political mobilization in grassroots and in democratic governance of Osun State. The bond between the people at grassroots and political institutions is weak due to inadequate participation of people at the community level in the governance of the State. This low connection between the people and the government has reduced the legitimacy and trust in the government of the State since its return to the fourth republic.

In respect to the findings from the study, the following recommendations are proposed to help resuscitate community-wide participation in the governance of Osun State: The government should provide more fora or

platforms that will encourage increased participation of the people at the community level in the governance of the State, devoid of political gain/motive. Government should also create more enlightenment opportunities for people to know their rights and responsibility in respect to direct participation in government, most especially in the areas affecting their livelihood.

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