

Factors influencing active community participation in local development projects: a case of JPLG Project in Garowe, Puntland state of Somalia

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Abstract

Even though participatory development process is given prominence in National development process but there is still low response and the concept has not yet been well institutionalized in the Puntland societies. The study title is the factors influencing active community participation in development projects in Garowe, Puntland state of Somalia. to identify factors influencing active community participation in development projects in Garowe and the study was guided by four specific objectives which are; to found out the extent to which Government institutions involved citizens in decision making process concerning development projects in Garowe, to found out the awareness and information levels of community about development projects in Garowe, to identify the effects of Culture on community participation in development process, to assess the education levels of citizens toward participating development projects in Garowe. This study was guided by four variable and were; levels of information sharing, Community awareness of their civic rights, Education levels and Culture. The research was conducted through descriptive and correlation design using quantitative approach. The researcher employed whole enumerations to select respondents who are highly knowledgeable and experienced in community involvement in development projects. Two methods of data collection were used which were questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion. The study found out that the gender distribution of village development committees was 17% male and 39% female, and that the age of the respondents' majority was old from 40-50 years old with 36% feedback where by 75% are voluntarily working with no actual paid job. 52 % of the respondents worked as village committee for 1-3 years. This showed that these respondents were experienced enough to work on community development and the needs of the citizens to be solved whenever raised. 64% of the respondents responded that they receive information and are well communicated but have no much influence in the outcome of the project, and 63% are aware of their civic rights and always fight for achieving it. 63% of the respondents responded that they never studied and that they have been involved in community work for long time and that they did not had a basic education, but they had an experience and skills to serve their communities. The researcher recommended that for the village development committee to be gender equal and the municipality to enforce incase male citizens do not contribute in community work. The municipality to mix the age of the elder and young citizens of the community when appointing the committee, whereby the elder will provide advice and experienced through the years as they have been involved in community work for long

time and the young can provide knowledge and education needed to solve legal, social and technical aspects of the community. The study recommended for any future cultural related challenges the government to make sensitization campaigns and advocacies to strength the contribution of male female alike in community work. And because the feedback of the respondents about the activities of the JPLG project was positive, the community to work on improving to strength their relationship with both the municipality and project implementers and make a tangible contribution toward the outcome of the project. The study concluded that because the respondents only contributed physically with JPLG project and did not involve in the outcome of the project and the whole cycle of the projects. Thus, the study concluded that community are not actively participating in local development projects of JPLG as in the focus group discussion they shared with the researcher that how some projects of the JPLG ended were not happy by the community and thus was not sustainable. The examples the respondents gave included the Kalawareega road which floods during the rainy seasons and whole waaberi village suffers whenever there is a rain in Garowe. This showed that if community were involved in every stage of the projects the end results were to be satisfied and sustained by the community in the village.

Keywords: Community participation, information sharing, community awareness of their civic rights, Education, Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Community participation in development activities is defined as the process by which individuals, families or communities assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their own and the community development it is inactive process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development(Oakley, 1989).(Marsland, 2006)Argues that community participation in international development discourse is commonly used to refer to the involvement of local people in decision making process and evaluation of development projects and is associated with empowerment and the respect for also the use of local knowledge.

For the last twenty years, the concept of participation has been widely used in the discourse of development. For much of this period, the concept has referred to participation in the social arena, in the community or in development projects. Increasingly, however the concept of participation is being related to rights of citizenship and to democratic governance. Nowhere is the intersection of concepts of community participation seen more clearly than in the multitude of programs for decentralized governance. Linking citizen participation to the state at this local or grassroots level raises fundamental and normative questions about the nature of democracy and about the skills and strategies for achieving it. Citizens in many countries have been on the receiving end of a wave of interest from governments, NGOs, donors and leaders in ways of

involving them more actively in shaping decisions that affect their lives. Levering open arenas once closed off to citizen's voice or public scrutiny, these moves have helped to widen political space for citizens to play more of a part in shaping some of the decisions that affect their lives. Efforts to involve citizens more directly in processes of development are inspired, and underpinned, by the view that to do so makes for better citizens, better-or more certainly more widely accepted decisions and better governments.

The history of participatory development of Somalia was traced long before the civil war of 1991. In 1969 Somalia was a socialist country led by Mohamed Siyad Barre, whereby there was a high level of citizen participation there was a development in all sectors of infrastructure, social services where everyone had an equal opportunity to benefit the social services.

The early years of Somalia before the civil war were a period of self-help projects, in which community members worked together to build schools, roads and village health posts using their own labor and materials and great public property were build such as Somali National University (Fearon, 2004). In 1972 the government introduced major changes in local governance, the changes stipulated included start writing the Somali language and use it in working offices, after a long challenge of using different languages in the institutions and written books. The Somali Socialist Party were formed, also in 1974 the national illiteracy campaign was formed and engaged by everyone in Somali community voluntarily and willingly which reached the whole country, and everyone benefited this participatory approach by the government

In 1977 of the Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia led to destruction of the country's infrastructures and social services which led to general decrease of country economic and social sectors. All this destruction led to the formation of antigovernment movements such as Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and Somali National Movement (SNM). (Valet, 1974).

The idea of participatory development is attractive because it allows the state to retain control over its citizens. It is necessary for citizens to cooperate and be concerned with their own ideas and needs. People will not be developed if they make new things without knowing their meaning, it is the people's development if they have a good living, but they cannot be forced to do so. Participation empowers the developers and citizens to achieve something for themselves and gives them the confidence to continue independently.

The changes stipulated in the government at that time government resumed full responsibility in implementation of all policies(Fundi, 2005). This situation hindered effective participation

because now people were turned to passive recipients of government orders instead of key players in social-economic development thus to enhance the role of Local Authorities and people's participation in development activities the government formed small institutions such as in Puntland, the Puntland Civil servant commission. This local institutions and authorities are foreseen to facilitate participation of the people in deciding on matters affecting their lives, planning and executing their development programs and fosters partnership with civic groups (Maryan, 1995). The government commitment to enhance community participation in development planning and budgeting has emanated aim at transferring authority to the people through establishment of local Civil Servant Commissions. These civil commissions are charged with rights and powers to involve the people in planning and implementation of development programs within their areas of control, strengthening democracy to speed up community development (Hilliard, 1997). To encourage community initiatives in accordance with these, It is the belief that local governments, community organizations and public agencies make better decisions and have greater positive impact on their communities when they increase the regularity, variety, and level of engagement of community residents. In many local communities most citizens do not participate in decisions that affect their daily lives, and there is often a lack of trust between citizens and local officials. A crucial bridge over this gap is the use of suitable strategies and tools to encourage citizens and local officials to work together regularly, increase their knowledge of each other, and develop trust (Bray, 1996). Despite numerous reform initiatives in this field by the local government institutions have not yet emerged as autonomous and self-governing units. This in turn, limits the scope of mass people participation in the local decision-making process as well as development process.

1.2. Problem Statement

In Puntland, community participation in development programming and policy-making is quite negligible. According to Puntland Ministry of Interior and Local Government, only 7 out of Portland's 56 districts have development frameworks that reflect community prospective and priorities. This entails that developmental intervention in most of Puntland districts are not necessarily a community-driven, rather a top-down approach and imposition from state and development partners.

Communities are also under-represented and less consulted in developing sector development plans for education, health, water and infrastructure – an attribution of longstanding centralized governance system which persistently prevailed in Somalia since the eve of independence in 1960. Equally problematic, local communities, and reportedly state governments, are disengaged from national planning process, an exercise that is unilaterally manipulated by the federal government according to Puntland State of Somalia.

Nonetheless, the implications of community exclusion from development planning and delivery are largely devastating and at times irreversible. To mention but a few, the exclusion of communities from development planning leads to overlap of development priorities, duplication of resources, incoherent prioritization of needs, inconclusive decision-making and short-living development initiatives due to the absence of sustainability plans and community ownership of the very development outcomes impacting their lives.

Despite the pervasive research gap in communities' participation in development, this study will, however, unpack the factors influencing community participation in development and will explore strategies for improving grassroots and community participation in development intervention in their constituencies.

1.3. Objectives of the study

General objective

The general objective of the research was to identify the factors influencing active community participation in local development projects in Garowe

Specific objective

The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To determine the extent to which project information is shared and influence active community participation in local development projects in Garowe.
2. To find out the influence of community awareness of their rights on active community participation in local development projects in Garowe.
3. To identify the influence of Culture on active community participation in development projects.
4. To assess the influence of education levels on community active participation in Local development projects in Garowe

1.4. Research Questions

1. How does information sharing influences active community participation in local development projects in Garowe?
2. How does the community's awareness of their civic rights influence active participation of community?
3. How does culture influence community active participation in local development projects in Garowe?
4. How do education levels influence active community participation in local development project in Garowe?

1.5. Scope

The study was conducted in Garowe Municipality, in this case making the researcher's target population the village development committees for each village.

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the independent variables which are informationsharing levels, community awareness of their civic rights, education levels and culture influence and the dependent variable which is Active Community Participation in Local Development Projects.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The research Design of the study was descriptive design. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative approach to investigate to articulate current conditions and to discover the factors influencing active community participation in local development projects using structured questionnaires and Interviews. The descriptive was used to gather data from the present condition. Further descriptive surveys were used to discover causal relationships (descriptive correlation), differences (descriptive comparative), to provide precise quantitative description and to observe behavior.

The researcher concentrated on the JPLG project in Garowe. The researcher chooses the JPLG project because it is the largest project if not the only one, that concentrates on Local development of the districts. The research population was the total beneficiaries of the JPLG project in Garowe.

The JPLG project is the largest project which develops with the cooperation of 5 UN agencies which came together to develop the legal framework and rule of law of Somalia, the project is implementing only in 7 districts in Puntland state of Somalia including Garowe district. The researcher chooses **village development committees** in Garowe to be the research population. There are 8 villages in Garowe, and every village has a village development committee consisting of 7 members. Thus, **the researcher carried out a full enumeration** and interviewed all the village development committees in the 8 village of Garowe, making the total number of research population **56 individuals** (Garowe Municipality, 2016).

The researcher here did not use any technique as the respondents are already identified and conducted a full enumeration of all village development committees in the 8 villages of Garowe. The list of these committees was available with the Garowe Municipality department of Social Affairs and director of Women and village affairs in the municipality.

The research instruments design was questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions.

The researcher used Microsoft Excel spread sheet for data analysis and to prevent lose or miscalculations of data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 together with excel for consolidating, calculating and analyzing the data that was collected. The researcher also undertook daily monitoring and administration of the Focus Group Discussions whereby descriptive analysis from the focus group discussion was captured and in cooperated into the study to enrich and validate the findings from the questionnaire.

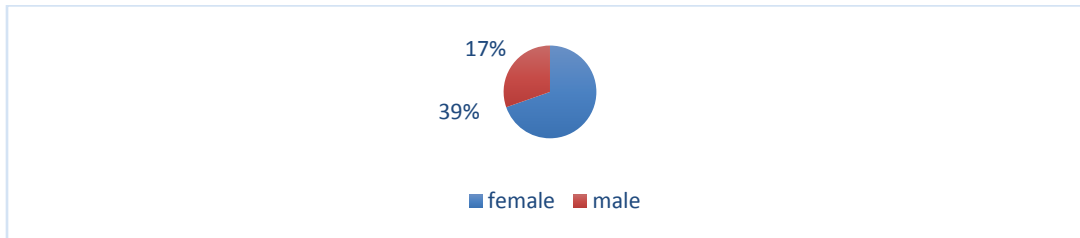
The findings have been presented in charts in relation to the topic of study. For analysis of the qualitative data it been administered by the researcher herself .data from the questionnaire has been also analysed and represented in figures and tables.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1.General Information

findings indicate that the number of **male** respondents whom the researcher managed to get information concerning the factors influencing active community participation in Local development projects in Garowe was 17% while the number of female respondents was 39%. This shows that the researcher intended to collect information without inclining to one source although it was easy to get information from female respondents because they were the majority

executives for the village development committees in their respective villages and as the executives they had a lot of information to share with and were willing to share it.



Findings indicate that 16% were aged between 18-30 years, 27% of respondents are aged 30-40 years while 36% aged 40-50 years and 21% aged 50-60 years. The data shows that majority of the respondents were relatively old and may have long experience in handling community affairs and hence provide more information about the factors influencing active community participation in Local development project in Garowe.

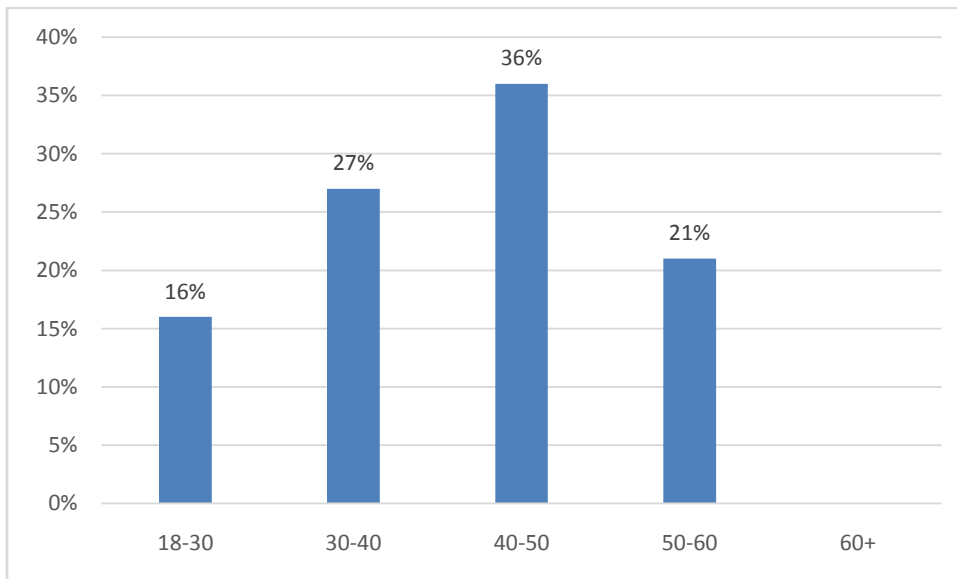


Figure 4.2 age of the respondents

The respondents were asked to point out the type of work they do. Findings show that most of respondents were voluntarily working and had no daily paid jobs and the majority of these respondents were relatively old women who took the responsibility of developing their communities without getting benefits and sees this as a part of their responsibilities, and they were very happy sharing with the researcher their great achievements as leaders of their villages whereby, **21%** are entrepreneurs doing small business in Garowe such as street shops, selling vegetables and meat in Garowe Market, **75%** are the majority and are voluntarily working with no paid jobs yet are the ones who mainly participate in the development of communities in their

respective village, while 4% are working with the Garowe Local Municipality. The respondents were also asked for how long they have been serving as a village development committee member and the findings were that 20% of the respondents are in the committee for less than one year, 52% are for 1-3 years long, while 29% are for 3-5 years long. The finding shows that most of the respondents are working for community and its development for some long time as indicated 52% are for 1-3 years long working as a village development committee member.

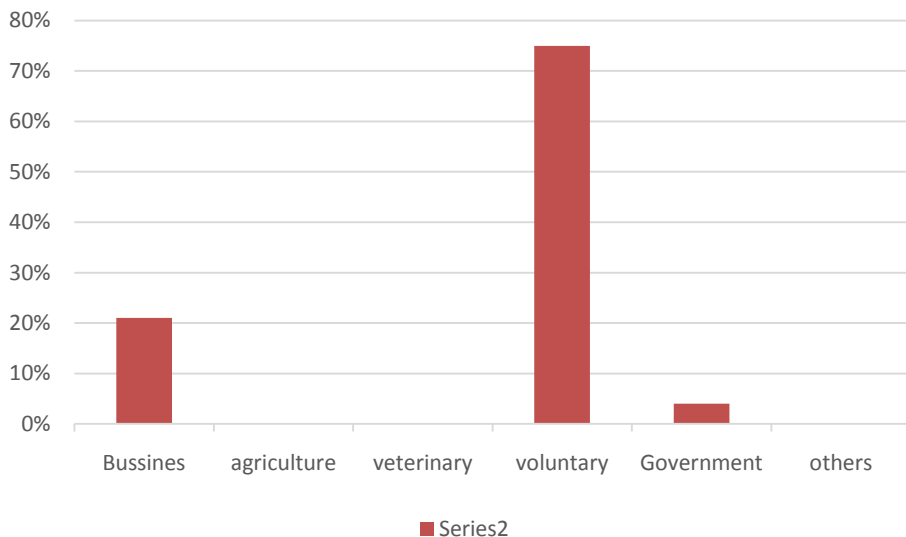


Figure 4.3 work and experience of the respondents

4.2. Information and communication levels of respondents about the JPLG project in Garowe.

The finding from the respondents about the information level they have about project and how often project implementers communicate with them states that. 64% of the respondents replied that they have the full information about the developmental projects in Garowe and that they fully participate in the development of their village, 20% stated that they have the information but they do not have much control over the implementation of these projects, 13% stated that they do not get information about these projects and that they also do not have influence in the outcomes of these projects, while 4% stated that they do not have the necessary information about the developmental projects but have influence on the outcome of the projects once they follow up them. The above finding shows that the level of information the community has about the local projects is very high and the implementers of these projects communicate with the village

development committee for update, but what the findings is also showing is that although there is high information communicated and shared with the community but the community do not have much control over how well the project will be finished, the community's participation is high yet their influence , decision making and control is very low thus making less citizen development as the development process should be human centered and if the community do not have control of the outcomes of the development projects, the development process will be slow and less functioning. Table 4.1. shows the analysis the researcher made.

Table 4.1. the information and communication levels of respondents about JPLG project

Options	frequency	Percentage
I actively participate, have full information about the JPLG project and contribute project outcomes	36	64
I have the information but do not have much control of the project outcome	11	20
I neither have information nor have influence in the outcome of the project	7	13
I do not have information but my relationship with government is good and my rights are always protected	2	4

4.3. Respondents level of awareness about their civic rights

The respondents statistics stated that 63% selected the first option which states that the respondents are aware of their civic rights and that they always fight for achieving theirs and the rights of the village they are member of, 32% selected the second option which states that they are aware of their basic rights as citizens but do not get much support from the government, and 5% of the respondents selected that they do not know much about their rights as citizens but their rights are always protected by the government. The below table shows the analysis.

Table 4.2. community awareness level of their civic rights

Options	frequency	percentage
I am aware of my civic rights and always fight for achieving it as citizen and as a member of village development committee	35	63
I am aware of my civic rights but do not get support from the government	18	32
I am not aware of my civil rights and do not have enough education to	0	0

fight for it.		
I am not aware of my civic rights but have a good relationship with the government	3	5

4.5 education levels of the respondents

The findings revealed that 4% of the respondents have completed up to primary school, 7% completed up to intermediate, another 7% up to university degree, 20% of the respondents have completed vocational training while 63% are illiterate and never studied. The above findings indicate that a very high number of the village development committees are illiterate yet they are the community who should be in the center of the development process and should be educated to handle different scenarios and solve community problems and challenges while a very low number of the respondents have completed primary and university level and thus their contribution in the development process will not be noticed.

Table 4.3. education level of the respondents

Options	frequency	Percentage
I have completed primary school	2	4
I have completed up to intermediate school	4	7
I have completed up to secondary school	0	0
I have completed up to university degree (diploma, bachelor, master and PHD)	4	7
I have completed vocational training	11	20
I have never studied	35	63

4.6 My goal as a village development committee is

According to the findings the researcher calculated, 46% of the respondents selected the first option which states that as a village development committee member my first goal is to make my village community the first priority in the development process, 41% of the respondents selected the second option which states that their first goal is to participate local development projects in their area and later share the necessary information to the rest community of the village and finally 13% of the respondents selected the third option which states that the

respondents first goal as a village development committee is to gain popularity and strength their relationship with the government. The above findings state that there is a high percentage of committee members who are willing to help their fellow villages and help them to develop by sharing with them the necessary information.

Table 4.4. my first priorities as a village development committee

options	Frequency	Percentage
Make citizens of my village priority of development process	26	46
Participate local development projects, and gather necessary information that will help our community to develop	23	41
Gain popularity and strength my relationship with the government	7	13
Get a percentage of every development project and deal with it as an income source.	0	0

4.7 The effects of culture on active community participation in local development projects

The respondents were asked on their cultural views of women as a decision maker in the development process and **18%** responded that women are a housewife who is intended to stay home and take care of the children, **63%** responded that women donate and voluntarily work toward the contribution of the development process, **9%** of the respondents selected the third option which states that women do not have a position in district development activities and finally **11%** of the respondents selected the fourth option which states that women do not represent a clan thus cannot be a decision maker. From the above findings, a relatively high number of respondents stated that women donate more and actively participate in the development process voluntary without seeking any benefits and although most of the respondents were female thus having a positive feedback, yet there are a 18% who are still having the traditional view of women as a housewife who are intended to stay home and take care of their children. The last traditional view of women as only housewives will have negative impact on the development process as women are the first to start self-created voluntary activity in any community.

The respondents were also asked their cultural view of youth as a decision maker in the development process. 46% of the respondents responded that youth are tomorrow's generation

who should have a quota in decision making, 54% of the respondents responded that youth are more educated than older representative and should be involved in decision making. The finding states that both women and youth should have an influence in decision making and development process of local communities so that they actively participate where needed and challenge where this a twist and vice versa within the community.

Table 4.5 cultural views of women as a decision maker in development process

options	frequency	Percentage
Women are housewives who are intended to stay home and take care of their children	10	18
Women donate and voluntarily contribute in development process	35	63
Women do not have decisions in district development activities	5	9
Women do not represent a clan, thus cannot be a decision maker	6	11

Table 4.6 cultural views of youth as a decision maker in development process

options	frequency	Percentage
1. Youth are tomorrow's generation who should have a quota in decision making	26	46
2. Youth are young generation who do not have an enough experience and should not have a role in decision making	0	0
3. Youth are more disadvantages than advantages and they should not have role in decision making process	0	0
4. Youth are more educated than older citizens in community and thus community need more of young educated representatives in decision making	30	54

4.8 JPLG activities in Garowe

The respondents were asked their knowledge about the activities that are implemented under JPLG project in Garowe district, and **71%** responded that JPLG is the only developmental project that is ever implemented in Garowe while **29%** responded that JPLG is a community centered project which concentrates on community needs. The findings state that there is a high

positive feedback by the respondents from the JPLG project which shows that they have seen positive results from the project activities in Garowe.

Table 4.7 the view of the respondents about the JPLG project in Garowe

Options	frequency	percentage
1. JPLG is the only Local development project that is ever implemented in Garowe	40	71
2. JPLG project is any other self-oriented project which is in the hands of the Government	0	0
3. JPLG project is community centered project which gives priority to citizens needs	16	29
4. JPLG project is a western driven idea which has no benefit to Garowe Citizens.	0	0

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Summary of the finding

4.1.1. Information sharing levels

The finding from the respondents about the information level they have about project and how often project implementers communicate with them states that 64% of the respondents have full information about the developmental projects in Garowe and that they fully participate in the development of their village. the level of information the community has about the local projects is very high and the implementers of these projects communicate with the village development committee for update, but what the findings is also showing is that although there is high information communicated and shared with the community but the community do not have much control over how well the project will be finished, the community's participation is high yet their influence , decision making and control is very low thus making less citizen development as the development process should be human centered and if the community do not have control of the outcomes of the development projects, the development process will be slow and less functioning.

4.1.2. Community awareness of their civic rights

The respondent's statistics stated that 63% of the respondents stated that they are aware of their civic rights and that they always fight for achieving theirs and the rights of the village they are member of that the citizens are aware of their civic rights as they have been in the field of community development for some long time but sometimes they do not get the support they need from the government and their involvement is limited to the first phases of development projects.

4.1.3. Culture Influence

63% of the respondents stated that women donate more and actively participate in the development process voluntary without seeking any benefits and although most of the respondents were female thus having a positive feedback, as of youth 54% of the respondents responded that youth are more educated than older representative and should be involved in decision making. The findings stated that culture has no much influence on active community participation, whereby majority of the respondents responded that the most culturally affected are youth and women. For youth they are tomorrow's generation and with the necessary education they can development our community. Whereby women are most volunteer workers in community development and their efforts are appreciated by all in the community in Garowe.

4.1.4 Education Levels

63% of the village development committee are illiterate and never studied. The above findings indicate that a very high number of the village development committees are illiterate yet they are the community who should be in the center of the development process and should be educated to handle different scenarios and solve community problems and challenges

The findings stated that majority of the respondents are illiterate whereby a small number attained only primary education, some did vocational training and the rest never studied at all. This will affect the local development of the city and limit the development projects that will be implemented by international communities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The overall conclusions of the study aimed at evaluating the factors influencing active community participation in local development projects in Garowe. Whereas the findings revealed that the active participation and involvement of the communities in local development project was low. The village development committees were physically involved in the project set up and

need assessment phases but very low in decision making and contributing toward the outcome of the project. The study examined the factors influencing community active participation in local development projects in Garowe where by concluded that village development committees represent the rest of communities in their respective village in the development process, although these committee's majority of them did not had basic education but had enough experiences through the years in community development. These committees were physically involved in the development projects but had no contribution towards the end of the project or the outcome. The study asserted that there is need for active community participation in local development projects. The challenges influencing poor community participation were revealed and the way to solve them such as educating local leaders on how to influence citizens to participate, improving communication between local leaders and local citizens were identified by respondents. Community active participation is very important because it creates awareness among beneficiaries and stakeholders on how funds are being utilized in development projects. When the communities participate there is an increase of transparency and accountability to leaders that is leaders become accountable for their actions, active participation helps to have projects of quality standard, foster development in wards. Community participation gives citizen a chance to decide on projects of their interest and generally make decisions concerning their social development.

On information sharing, The findings stated that there is a high level of information shared with the respondents about the JPLG project and that the communication channels are well understood between the community the project implementers, but their do not have contributions and actively participate in the outcome of the project thus affecting the citizen involvement in the development process.

On the Civic right awareness, The findings stated that the citizens are aware of their civic rights as they have been in the field of community development for some long time but sometimes they do not get the support they need from the government and their involvement is limited to the first phases of development projects.

On Cultural influence, the findings stated that culture has no much influence on active community participation, whereby majority of the respondents responded that the most culturally affected are youth and women. For youth they are tomorrows generation and with the necessary

education they can development our community. Whereby women are most volunteer workers in community development and their efforts are appreciated by all in the community in Garowe.

On the Education Levels, The findings stated that majority of the respondents are illiterate whereby a small number attained only primary education, some did vocational training and the rest never studied at all. This will affect the local development of the city and limit the development projects that will be implemented by international communities.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The main contention behind community participation in development should be community centered. Projects conceived and implemented by outside organizations have failed and were not sustained because adequate consideration was not given to the active participation of communities. Project beneficiaries or the community people should be included in all phases of development projects from the process of the needs assessment for the design and development of project, through project implementation to project monitoring and evaluation.

The need to involve the community to greater extent, much more sensitization and awareness to other stakeholder is needed so that in their collaboration they set objectives could be attained on time Partnership in the mobilization of both international and national resources and energies for the betterment of the communities.

The study recommends local leaders and the municipality to ensure that agenda of the meeting must originate from the grass-roots level and get discussed collectively to reduce resistance during implementation and consulted the village development committees in every step of the project.

To increase degree of trust to communities, to local representatives, the government officials must carry out all actions fair to all beneficiaries and avoid mistrust and political party's difference. The elected representatives at local level are mostly uninformed about the benefits of participatory development approach. Lack of knowledge in this regard on their part may have contributed to their confusion and misconception. Launching training programs or workshops organized by the local municipality department of social affairs and village committees may help change the mind-set of the elected representatives regarding participatory practices in development interventions.

Establishment of active local civil society watchdog committees, this will help to remove misuse of public funds directed to local projects since societies as the main beneficiaries has a strong role of helping to ensure accountability and transparency to leaders.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

With the given research questions and the scope of this research, some relevant issues have not been covered by this study. To explore the level of community participation in development projects, the current study focus was on the limiting factors and the importance of participation in development projects. Whereas in the projected cycle there are different stages while the current study focuses on planning and implementation stage, there is a need to assess the level and importance of community participation in monitoring and evaluation which can be relevant and interesting.

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