

Democracy and Sustainable Development in Cross River State 1999 - 2020

Ekong Edet Boco^{1*}, Emeodu Elijah Nwabueze², Obuzo Mezewo Emerinewo³

^{1,2}Ph.D; Development Sociology, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

³Rivers State University

***Corresponding Author:** Ekong Edet Boco

Ph.D; Development Sociology, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Article History

Received: 23.05.2022

Accepted: 29.06.2022

Published: 16.07.2022

Abstract: This study examined democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State from 1999 – 2020. Given this, three research questions and objectives were raised to guide the study. The paper adopted Marxian Dialectical Materialism and Lipset's theory of economic development and democracy. The descriptive survey was used as the study research design. The sample size for the study was 400, derived through Taro Yameni formula. The purposive, simple random, chain-referral sampling technique, etc were adopted. Both questionnaire and in-depth interview were used as instruments for data collection. Again, mean and standard deviation as well as content analysis were used for data analysis. Findings of the study revealed that the failure of the democracy to ensure sustainable development in Cross River State was as a result of the nature of political culture, poor resource management, low participation of the people in policy formulations and implementations, and Leaders are only representing the interest of their political parties/themselves and not the need of the people. The study recommends that since development is human centered, and that the falling human capacity development indeed affects the level of literacy due to existence of poor educational facilities, absence of model schools to mitigate gaps in human capacity deficiency syndrome, and rising school enrolment could not match existing infrastructure in the state. There should be a deliberate policy by government to invest a reasonable portion (25%) of its annual budget on education, skills development of future generation that will contribute to development in the state.

Keywords: Democracy, Sustainable Development, Leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

The return to democratic rule in 1999 ushered in fresh hopes to all Nigerians that development will thrive due to the promises of a democratic system or governance. Obviously, democracy is targeted at ensuring progressive development. This is because, democracy has the tendency to improve man's capacity and potential to reduce the rate of poverty, inequality, unemployment, that would improve the general condition for human existence and self-reproduction (Okolie, 2009). Democracy and sustainable development has attracted many scholarly works with various contributions based on their ideological considerations. These scholars have contended that development is comprehensive and must be viewed in terms of how it has impacted on man, for instance focusing on development as a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society at large interact with their physical environment, manipulating and transforming them to the satisfaction of their needs and at the same time being transformed by it for sustainability (Onyishi, 2018, Ake, 1996 and Nnoli, 1981).

Democracy and sustainable development are imperative to the welfare of a people remains largely undermined in Nigeria since the post military era as there is a substantial impingement on socio-economic development. The large array of inordinate activities such as fraud, election rigging, ballot box snatching, bribery and corruption, misappropriation of public funds, embezzlement, white-collar crime, tax evasion, money laundering, among others have debilitating effects. This range of anti-social activities constitutes universal social problems that not only threatens sustainable development, but also compromises the stability, transparency, and efficiency of financial systems, thereby

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

CITATION: Ekong Edet Boco, Emeodu Elijah Nwabueze & Obuzo Mezewo Emerinewo (2022). Democracy and Sustainable Development in Cross River State 1999 - 2020. *South Asian Res J Human Soc Sci*, 4(4): 245-255.

undermining the spate of development in Nigeria in which scholars such as Desta (2006) and Dike (2008) described as slow and sluggish. This two scholars were of the opinion that the slow socio-economic development in the process of leadership transition which largely encourage the above listed inordinate activities have significantly not only contributed to the backwardness and failure of good governance in Nigeria but also hinders economic growth and endangers the stability of democratic institutions and sustainable development (Inokoba & Ibegu, 2011).

The above scenario, equally explains the situation in Cross Rivers State. Accordingly, Ayobolu (2006), states that electoral and economic debacles are among the many unsettled challenges that have decisively distorted sustainable development in Nigeria as well as in Cross River State. This prompted Sachs' (2007) position that they have become a clog in the wheel of Nigeria's progress and development. Cross River State in 1999, when Nigeria witnessed a return to democracy following long drawn military interregnum, there was sincere need for leadership, Donald Duke led the administration at inception, took steps to redress the major causes of economic stagnation, poverty, ignorance, unemployment and poor living conditions with the framework for economic management in the state (Essia, 2006). The inability of the successive government to ensure policy continuity and development sustainability, replacing them with their incoherent programs and policies was the genesis of democratic and development challenges in Cross River State. Sad to say, when extrapolating the current situation, democracy has not been able to produce its intended fruits in Cross River State. This manifest in the poor representation of the people in policy making as well as apparent evidence of poor infrastructures, electoral malpractices, high rate of insecurity and many more. Hence, as these exist, sustainable development is seen as a mirage. However, the effect of weak democratic practice on development necessitated this study on democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State, to find out the reasons for the failure of governments despite being democratized to ensure development of Cross River State.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Democracy and sustainable development are very important issues many academic researchers are exploring to investigate and recommend the way forward. The reason for this interest on democracy is because of the huge benefits it promises. Crucial indicators of sustainable development are: socio-economic empowerment (including: employment, and education), improved standard of living, availability of basic social amenities, etc., are often ignored in the grassroots which often leads to deterioration in the indicators of democratization such as: transparency in leadership, citizens' participation, free and fair elections etc. This deplorable situation often forces the electorates to compromise by selling their votes, being apathetical towards electoral processes and resorting to violence.

A study by Orakwe (2019) on *Grassroots development ad democratization in Ebonyi State: An analysis of grassroots governance in Ikwo local government area* outlined a number of factors that can improve democracy and development in Ebonyi State. He emphasized the factors of productive governance bothering on transparency, honest leadership with substantial provision of basic social and physical amenities which he believes can improve the lives of the people, active participation and involvement of the people in decision making and implementation of project. This assertion was supported by the statement made by Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike during a lecture titled: Governance, Security and Sustainable Development in Africa, Nexus, Challenges and Prospects. Declared that the exclusion of other regions in the country from key appointments by the Buhari administration which he tag as absence of social justice were some of the factors causing unrest and violence in the country. Wike lamented that because there is poor democratic practice, it has led to increase in insecurity and unsustainable development which are antithetical to democracy (Omolaoye, 2021). Extrapolating from the above assertion as regards to participation of the people in the governance, it means that proper consultation and informed need assessment before setting or starting and completing a project, will help avoid a situation of under developing the people or bringing in projects that do not address their needs. Through this, the people can have a strong sense of belonging in the project being executed. This in essence is what true democracy stipulates. These efforts or democratic tenets identified above are lacking in Cross River State, and it has affected development.

Consequently Okodudu and Irikana (2008) in Orakwe (2019) lamented that the lack of participation of the grassroots people in decision making brings about underdevelopment. This is because the grassroots people are alienated from decisions that affect their day-to-day lives; and are disempowered from the appropriation of the limited available resources. Generally, most notable studies have often linked sustainable development to democratization in Nigeria (Ikeji *et al*, 2013; Nwobashi and Itumo, 2017; Akujuru, 2015. Nwiteozum (2009) advanced a study on "People's perception about community development projects", and found that factors militating against effective community development and democratization include: non-involvement of the people in the design, implementation and assessment of projects, conflicts among leaders, poor leadership and embezzlement of project fund, inadequate finance and materials, government lip service, poor targeting of projects, natural disasters, unwillingness of the community members to participate in project implementation and use of inappropriate communication network. Okolie (2015) in his study "Global Political Economy and the Development of Underdevelopment" noted that 64% of Nigerians live on \$1.25 per day and 83.9% on \$2 per day; this situation does not excuse or exonerate the people of Cross River State, as they also

experienced similar situation. This argument may be euphemistic since some Nigerians hardly meet requirements for daily survival and thus, live on virtually nothing.

Eze (2017) opines that government agencies have failed to show transparency in carrying out projects and thus have inhibited development and growth in Nigeria. Consequently, Oruonye (2013) in a study "Grassroots Democracy and the Challenges of Rural Development in Nigeria, as well as Anyanwu (2000) in his study "Introduction to Community Development" agreed that the amount of paternalistic projects foisted on the people by the government is usually elitist in nature; and not aimed at developing the people or stimulating democratic consolidation. Hence, common objectives and needs of the beneficiaries are often ignored.

Also, it has been empirically proven that leaders in the Nigerian, democratic system are often handpicked without regard to democratic processes and this robs the people of their constitutional right to choose their leaders. Cross River State is no exception to this (Omoruyi, 2001; Anyanwu, 2002; Nwizu, 2002). Furthermore, Akujuru's (2015) study on Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State (2001-2012) discovered the key problems affecting democracy, sustainable development and the economic empowerment of the people to include: lack of funds to execute local government programmes, lack of employment opportunities, bribery and corruption, incompetence, lack of transparency and accountability, lack of planning for good governance / public objectives, non-government co-operation on socio- economic issues for the citizenry and poor capacity utilization. This situation explains how democracy has been raped in Nigeria and this attitude of the government towards the people affects democratic tenets and in turn hurts sustainable development.

Regrettably, Cross River State like most states in the South-South region or Nigeria at large remains largely underdeveloped and its possibility for advancement has become a conundrum. This is attributed to the problem of succession and leadership inadequacy. The researcher observed together with some reports that the democratic leadership in Cross River State failed to ensure policy formulations and implementation of predecessor's projects in the state. Thus, the absence of this, has affected sustainable development, and at the same time brought about poverty, unemployment and insecurity. This is in conjunction with the assertion of Ojobo (2005) that good leadership guarantees sustainable development, and that sustainable development involves continuous improvement in the living standard of citizens and the structural transformation in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the economy.

Comparatively, as observed by the researcher, the movement to democratic rule in 1999, started with Donald Duke as the Governor. His administration brought about various development projects, policies and programs. He started with rural electrification, agriculture, water supply (by sustaining water supply, he ensured total replacement of old pipelines), promotion of tourism such as Obudu Cattle Ranch, Calabar carnival among others. His effort made the state to be recognized as the cleanest state in Nigeria. At the same time, there was good road construction, and planting of trees. This helped in providing employment opportunity to the youth and the people slept with two eyes closed. In 2007-2015, Imoke Liyel emerged as the governor of Cross River State. He failed to sustain the development effort of Donald Duke. The governor concentrated on rural road construction, building and improving health care centers while avoiding what was put in place by his predecessor (Okongoh, 2014). The shift from his predecessor led to development challenges, as what was put in place by Donald Duke started fading out. This situation continued until Ben Ayade emerged as Governor in 2015. He also failed to sustain the efforts of his predecessors. According to Onoh (2016), Ayade's project was to ensure a super highway project that is meant for developmental purposes and wealth creation. Other signatory projects carried out were Deep Sea Port, Spagetti flyover, Calas-Vegas etc. Onoh (2016) in his report stated that other project includes garment factory, rice seedling factory, cocoa factory, Calabar fertilizer, iron corrugated factory and many more. However, of all that have been promised, nothing seems to be working. Insecurity and unemployment are on increase and electoral violence became a means to assume political power. This resulted to the point that the people of Cross River State could not boost or feel the impact of true democracy.

Given the situation in Cross River State, led Ikeji, Paul, Ojah, Akpan and Ibah (2013) in their study on Democratic Local Government in Cross River State, to argue that the issue of governance when compared with the realities on ground in Nigeria, as exemplified by Cross River State, is a farce and fallacy; as the development policies were not inclusive of the grassroots population. Evidently, development is slow and democratic principles are relegated to the backgrounds. Extrapolating on relegated democratic principles, it reflect the presence of electoral violence in the state, where about 56.5 unemployment rate in Cross River State exist (Onoh, 2020) as well as high crime rate. Having stated this, it is evident that what has been in practice in Cross River State is the selection of candidates by stakeholders; the people are not consulted in the development project decision making and this in turn affect development of the state. Problems emanating from the failure of practicing true democracy are high level of poverty, high unemployment rate, high social inequality, insecurity arising from cult clash for supremacy/economic reasons, kidnapping for ransom, abandoned projects, political violence and thuggery, amongst others.

Considering all these problems, the researcher observed that it constitutes a gap to fill. This is because if successive government discontinued with their predecessors projects, it will continue to affect development. Therefore, as most of the studies reviewed by Orakwe (2019), Omoruyi (2001); Anyanwu (2002) Nwizu (2002) Oruonye (2013) Ikeji, Paul, Ojah, Akpan and Ibah (2013), Nwobashi and Itumo (2017), Akujuru (2015) and Nwiteozum (2009), they only captured the role of democracy and sustainable development in various areas across Nigeria. Thus, as previous studies failed to compare the three democratic regimes in Cross River State, it therefore, constitutes the gap the study seeks to fill by contributing empirically to studies on democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State from 1999-2021, to assess the link that exists between democracy and sustainable development, as well as why successive government failed to ensure continuity of projects of their predecessors, and the neglect of the people towards policy formulation and implementations as pointed by Ober (2013) that democracy is a sham if meaningful decisions, leading to significant public outcomes, are not made by free citizens, secure in their dignity, with them acting as political equals. Based on the foregoing, the study raised the following research questions:

- i. What is the nexus between democracy and sustainable development process in Cross River State?
- ii. To what extent has leadership succession influenced sustainable development in Cross River State?
- iii. Have the people been consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development process in Cross River State?

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- i. To examine the nexus between democracy and sustainable development process in Cross Rivers State.
- ii. To investigate the extent to which leadership succession influences sustainable development in Cross Rivers State.
- iii. To investigate if the people have been consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development process in Cross River State?

4. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study area is Cross River State. Cross River State is a state in the South-South region in Nigeria, bordering Cameroon to the east. The area known as Cross River State derives its name from the river which passes the State. The state is a coastal state located in the Niger Delta region, and occupies 20,156 square kilometers. It shares boundaries with Benue State to the north, Ebonyi and Abia States to the west, to the east by Cameroon Republic. Again, the state is bounded in the South by Akwa Ibom and the Atalantic Ocean (Andem, Udofia, Okorafor, & George, 2013). According to Nwabueze (1982), Cross River State was created on May 27th 1967 by General Yakubu Gowon's regime. Demographically, the state is composed of several ethnic groups which include Efik, Ejagham, Yakurr, Bette, Yala, Igede, Ukelle, Bekwarra etc. The state boasts playing host to the largest carnival in Africa. Cross River State consists of 18 local government areas. The state is an agrarian state and due to its fertile soil produces rich food. As nature favours her with rivers, the major occupation of rural dwellers is fishing. The state is mainly dominated by the Christian religion, with a few traditional worshippers and Muslims making up the religious constitution.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for analysis is shrouded under Dialectical Materialism and Lipset's Theory of Economic Development and Democracy to explain issue of democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State.

Karl Marx's dialectical materialism gives vivid explanations on democratic challenges in Cross River State especially as it involves choice of candidate in electoral processes. Thus, Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism suits Nigeria's scenario. Dialectical Materialism is premised on man's inherent motivations of economic pursuits and needs. However, man's fierce inclinations and struggles to acquire, control and maintain political power at all cost justify the choice of this theory. Therefore, the relationship between the people in the production processes is symbiotically connected with the nature and direction of the political struggles to capture political power in order to determine economic factors. Furthermore, this assertion was supported by Dudley (1965) cited in Etannibi (2004). Dudley contended that:

The reality was that Nigerian politicians perceived politics and political offices as investment and as an avenue for the acquisition of extraordinary wealth (through corruption) which they think is not possible through other forms of legitimate vocation and enterprise. Thus, in Nigeria, the shortest cut to affluence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics...to be a member of the government party means open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the like (Dudley, 1965).

In a country where over 70 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty, politics is seen as an escape route from poverty. This is worsened by the high level of corruption among public office holders in Nigeria. Over the years, Nigerian politicians and other public office holders have promoted ostentatious lifestyles, not being mindful of the sufferings of the Nigerian masses. One of Nigeria's brightest political scientists, Claude Ake (1964) asserted that: "Those

who win state power can have all the wealth they want even without working, while those who lose the struggle for state power cannot have security in the wealth they have made even by hard work. The capture of state power inevitably becomes a matter of life and death. That is one reason why our politics is so intense, anarchic and violent”.

Comparatively, it has been discovered that elected representatives of the people at the local, state and federal levels of government earn higher wages and allowances than their counterparts in the developed countries. Hence, the struggle for political power through any means becomes inevitable in Nigeria’s political space. This easily explains why there exists electoral crisis which is anti-democracy in Cross River State.

Lipset’s Theory of Economic Development and Democracy was the second theory used in this study. This theory was propounded by Seymour Martin Lipset in 1959. Lipset’s theory on economic development and democracy pointed out how economic development impacts democracy. In his presentations on economic development and democracy, Lipset points out that democracy is related to the state of economic development. In a concrete term, the theory reveals that the more well-to-do a nation becomes; the greater its chances of achieving and even sustaining democracy. Therefore, economic development facilitates democracy and at the same time alters favourably four important intervening variables: political culture, class structure, state-society relations and civil society. Thus, Orakwe (2019) revealed them as follows:

1. Economic development will give rise to a more democratic political culture; this is due to the fact that more progress would be made in education, health and social-wellbeing, reducing political apathy and generating better democratic political participation.
2. Economic development will lead to changes in class structure (the growth of the middle class, the enlargement, unionization and improved incomes of the working class; and the migration of the rural poor to cities and consequent disruption of “clientelistic” and feudalistic relations in the grassroots) and this will lead to stimulation of democracy. An increase in the middle class owed to increase in physical and disposable income will reduce severe class distinctions and open up people who will be more willing and financially able to fight against extremist regimes, leading to general democracy.
3. Economic development will change the relationship between the state and civil societies as more people will be willing to engage in political processes leading to democracy.
4. Lipset, like Toqueville, maintained that economic development would also contribute to democracy by giving rise to large number of voluntary civil societies that would serve as check to the repressive power of the state.

The two theories adopted in the study are relevant to the study on democracy and sustainable development. First the theory of Karl Marx on Dialectical Materialism is useful to the study as it explained the reason for stunted democratic practice in Cross River State. Politicians in the state have used politics as means to amass wealth and hence utilize every opportunity to seize power from the people without ensuring popular consent. It is as a result of this that the Cross River state is still underdeveloped because what ought to be practiced have been abused on the altar of personal interest. As this occurs, the economy or the wealth of the state will be controlled or resident in the hands of few political stakeholders who decide what, when and how the resources or the economy should be distributed.

Also, since the economy is affected, democracy is also affected as people who are poor are not interested in the affairs of government and politics. Those who show interest in the political affairs may adopt violence which negates democratic tenets, either as violators of electoral practices or are handpicked to play to the dictate of their political godfathers. Lipset’s theory is relevant in this area as it explains that since the economy is affected, democracy cannot be attained. Therefore, he linked economic development to democracy. Thus, his theory pointed to the challenges facing Cross River State democratic practices and linked it to poor economy. Such poor economy is due to poor economic planning where the political class fails to extend development across. Hence, as the economy of Cross River State is low, democracy cannot surface or survive because democracy is abused; sustainable development becomes an unrealistic dream or effort. As Lipset suggested, what can help democracy to survive in the area is when large number of voluntary civil societies exist, and serve as check to the repressive power of the state. Their effort will reduce pressure and control of the economy by few individuals and give room to popular representatives. This effort will reduce corruption and ensure accountability as well as transparency in the system. It is on this basis that the economy of the people can grow and at the same time guarantee economic development and ideal democracy.

6. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Democracy

Although many definitions of the concept of democracy have been given, there is no agreement on an omnibus definition. Democracy means different things to different people: a platform for power contestation and not the least a class struggle (Adelaja, 2007). Differing views seem to exist when attempting to define the concept of democracy. This is because there has been no universally recognized definition for the term. Various characteristics rather than definition of the term have always evolved whenever the issue of defining democracy is discussed. Wikipedia (2017) defined

democracy as a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among them to form a governing body. It is sometimes referred to as rule of the majority. Okoli and Gusau (2013) describe democracy as people’s rule or rule by the people. The authors see democracy as one of the abiding legacies of the ancient Greek civilization in the contemporary world and observe that the practice of democracy in its original form originated in Greece.

Sustainable Development

Some of the working definitions are herein posited. Vinceta Singh (2014) argue that sustainable development means attaining a balance between environmental protection and human economic development and between the present and future needs. This, according to her, guarantees equity in development and sectoral actions across space and time, requiring the integration of economic, social and environmental approaches towards development. According to Elliot (2009), the term sustainable development is a well-used one and is probably familiar to many within and beyond the academia, certainly in the more developed parts of the world. It is a term that we come across in areas ranging from door-step recycling initiatives to media explanations of global security issues.

Democracy and Sustainable Development: The Nexus

Mazrui (2002) and Soderbaun (2012) state that democratization and sustainable development have some unique characteristics such as capacity expansion, popular participation as well as freedom. Democratization has the position of independent variable, and on that basis determine the degree and level of development in any nation or society. Osaghae (1995) on the other hand is of the opinion that, it is essential to highlight the point that while democratization may engender national development, much of it would depend to a certain extent on the context under which the analysis is based. Besides, the impact of democratization on sustainable development may be a reflection of its time-spell as well as the degree of the democratization process. Osaghae, by the above analysis, is not as specific as one would have expected, but has made his point. The idea of popular participation, as already highlighted, is important to both democratization and development. In its comprehensive application, popular participation is the process of empowering the people to get involved themselves in the regulating structure and designing policies and agendas that serve the interest of the entire population in that society and also contribute optimally to the development process.

7. METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted descriptive survey research design. According to NPC (2016), the population of Cross River State stands at 7,303,900 people Through Taro Yameni, the sample size of 400 was derived. To achieve the selection of the respondents, first, the study used simple random sampling technique to select four local government areas within the three senatorial districts in Cross River State. Again, the judgmental sampling techniques were used to select 2 communities in each local government area, making a total of 8 communities for the study. Quota sampling was used to allocate 100 samples to each LGA and 50 samples to each community. Therefore, the communities selected for the study are Ekajuk (Ogoja LGA), Nkum (Ogoja LGA), Ofutop (Etung LGA), Bendeghe-Ekim (Etung LGA), Ifondo (Akpabuyo LGA), Ikot Ekanem Nya (Akpabuyo LGA), Obutong (Calabar Municipal LGA) and Ekorinim (Calabar Municipal LGA). Using purposive sampling technique again, the study selected various categories of respondents such as politicians, opinion leaders, business men and women, civil/public servants, youths/Chiefs use quota to assign 80 samples to each group. Therefore, both accidental, snowball and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to reach the respondents. The primary sources such as questionnaire and in-depth interview instrument were used, while other secondary sources such as published and unpublished materials. Statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation were used for the analysis of research questions and content analysis for the analysis of in-depth interview.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: What is the nexus between democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State?

Table 1: Shows Mean and Standard Deviation score of the nexus between democracy and sustainable process in Cross River State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	No	Mean	St.dev	Remark
1	The emergence of democracy suppose to improve social development	400	3.17	0.50	Accept
2	True democracy suppose to ensure economic development	400	3.27	0.60	Accept
3.	True democracy supposes to ensure peaceful co-existence & security in Cross River State.	400	3.00	0.44	Accept
4	Do you think democracy suppose to guarantee free and fair election in Cross River state.	400	2.66	0.94	Accept
5	Democratic practices suppose to direct leaders towards accountability and transparency.	400	3.21	0.56	Accept
6	Have democratic practices improve and sustained development in Cross River State	400	2.41	0.99	Rejected
	Grand Mean		2.95		Accept

Source: Research Fieldwork (2022)
 Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table above considered the nexus between democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State. The item 1 that the emergence of democracy suppose to improve social development had the following scores (M=3.17 & SD=0.50). Also, item 2 that true democracy suppose to ensure economic, development had the following scores (M=3.27 & SD=0.60). Item 3 that true democracy supposes to ensure peace co-existence & security in Cross River State had the following scores (M=3.00 & SD=0.44). Again, item 4 that ask if democracy suppose to guarantee free and fair election in Cross River state had the following scores (M=2.66 & SD=0.94). Item 5 that democratic practices suppose to direct leaders towards accountability and transparency had the following scores (M=3.21 & SD=0.56). Item 6 that if democratic practices have improve and sustained development in Cross River State had the following scores (M=2.41 & SD=0.99). Therefore, item 1,2,3,4 and 5 indicates the nexus between democracy and sustainable development. It shows that the emergency of democracy suppose to improve social, economic development. Also, with true democratic practice, there suppose to be peaceful co-existence, security, quarantee free and fair election and also direct leaders towards transparency and transparency. Again, item 6 was rejected and revealed that democratic practices have not improve and sustain development in Cross Rivers State with a mean score of 2.41 which is below the standard reference mean.

Base on the results given, the findings revealed that democracy have not really ensured sustainable development in Cross River State. However, considering the Nexus between democracy and sustainable development, it assures that with the practice of democracy in Cross Rivers State since 1999, there supposed to be improvement in social development, economic development, also ensuring peace and security, ensuring free and fair elections, direct leaders to be accountable and transparence and through this, development can be sustained. Studies have revealed that though there is a relationship between democracy and sustainable development in Cross River State, there seem to be a divorce between the two concepts in practice. Democracy according to respondents has been of benefit to the ruling class and for their sustainability. The essence of sustainable development has not been achieved in Cross River State as high level of poverty, unemployment and general insecurity persists. Thus, of all these mentioned, it is true that Cross River State cannot boost of any improvement or development sustainability.

The IDI respondents who spoke on the democratic practices and sustainable development reveal that: Democracy is human centred, and development is an economic concept which has positive connotation. He added that democratic practices suppose to improve on human welfare and ensure economic and social transformation. It involves development that impact on the people (IDI/Dr. Ekpenyong Nsa/64 years/Stakeholder/2022).

Again, some respondents in various communities who are youths, opinion leaders, businessmen and women reacted that: Democracy suppose to usher sustainable development because if practically practiced can ensure security, good governance which it impact are ideal. They added that despite democratic practices which claims to be really established in their areas, development have not been felt and seen as the people are characterized with poverty, insecurity, unemployment and excluded in decision making process that affects it (IDI/ Ifondo, Ikot, Ekorinim, Nkum, Obutong, Ofutoland Ekorinim/2022).

Research Question 2: To what extent has leadership succession influenced sustainable development in Cross Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation score on how Leadership succession influenced sustainable development in Cross Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	No	Mean	Std.dev	Remark
7	Have changes in leadership from 1999-2019 led to sustained development	400	2.25	1.47	Reject
8	Have successive government ensures continuity of project or development effort of the past leaders	400	2.31	1.56	Reject
9	Because leadership succession is about party interest only, the need or desire of the people are always neglected	400	3.12	0.72	Accept
10	Each successive government desire to introduce their development policy and abandon the previous have influenced sustainable development	400	3.00	0.84	Accept
11	Most of the development policies/programs initiated by successive leadership have not sustained and improved development.	400	3.43	0.62	Accept
	Grand Mean		2.82	1.04	Accept

Source: Field Study 2022
Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table above reflects how leadership succession influences sustainable development in Cross Rivers State. Item 7 on changes in leadership from 1999-2021 led to sustained development had the following scores (M=2.25 & SD=1.47). Also, item 8 on if successive government ensures continuity of project or development effort of the past leaders had the following scores (M=2.31 & SD=1.56). Item 9 on because leadership succession is about party interest

only, the need or desire of the people are always neglected had the following scores (M=3.12 & SD=0.72). Item 18 examine if each successive government desire to introduce their development policy and abandon the previous one have influenced sustainable development had the following scores (M=3.00 & SD=0.84). Again, item 10 on Most of the development policies/programs initiated by successive leadership have not sustained and improved development had the following scores (M=3.43 & SD=0.62). Furthermore, item 7 and 8 were rejected with mean score of 2.25 and 2.31. By implication, they revealed that changes in leadership from 1999-2021 did not sustain the needed development. Secondly, it shows that successive government fails to ensure continuity of project or development effort of the past leaders. Moreover, item 9, 10, and 11 were accepted as they supports the statement that leadership succession has influenced sustainable developmental. This was as a result of each successive government desire to introduce its development policy as stated in item 10 with mean score of 3.00. Finally, the table shows that most of the programs of the successive government have not really improved or sustain development.

Serious concern is on problem of leadership succession and inconsistency of policies programmes. The first democratic government in Cross River State by name Donald Duke set a development template that made Cross River State what it is today. This was through his development plans that if sustained would have led to more development advancement in Cross River State. Those who succeeded him such as Imoke and Ben Ayade failed to sustain Donald Duch development plans effort. When Ben Ayade succeeded Governor Imoke, he came in as the Governor, he introduced various new development plans, which were not a reflection of what past Governors did, because of this inconsistency in policy and programmes, sustainable development was fervently defeated in the area, and therefore led to development deficiency. Until, every successive government tries to improve on what is on ground, before initiating theirs, development in Cross River State will not be achieved. Indeed, the process of leadership transitions has led to the slow socio-economic development in Cross River State. The emergence of these leaders could be likened to jumping the barrel of the gun and fraudulent, fraught in electoral abracadabra – that is, the more you look the less you see adding that the state is lacking in quality leadership, poor resource management, lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and formulation and implementation of parochial policies and to the detriment of the overall sustainable development goals.

Correlating with the interview data, some of the respondents revealed that;

There cannot be a comparison to Donald Duke administration and his successors. That what is experienced after his leadership can be seen as undemocratic. Some respondents were of the view that Donald Duke government were above board since the return of democracy in May 29 1999 (IDI/Nkum, Ekorinim, and Ofutop communities/2022).

Accordingly, the Honorable Speaker of House of Assembly in Cross River State Posited that: Succeeding regimes such as Imoke Lyel was concerned about rural development, road construction and establishment of health centres. While the emergence of Prof. Ben Ayade was geared towards industrialization of the state but was not achievable due to some factors which cannot be revealed. Hence, lamented on the poor road architecture in the state and unrealistic budget 2020 (IDI/Eteng Jonah/Hon Speaker House of Assemble/Public Servant/ Calabar Municipal LGA/2022).

Research Question 3: Have the people been consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development process in Cross River State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation score on if the people have been consulted in Policy Formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development process in Cross River State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	No	Mean	Std.dev	Remark
12	There have been low participation of the people in policy formulations and implementations in Cross River state	400	3.39	0.53	Accept
13	Because the people are not consulted, it leads to Corrupt practices by political office holders	400	3.54	0.61	Accept
14	Leaders are only representing the interest of their political parties/themselves and not the need of the people, hence may be the reason for not consulting the people	400	3.35	0.50	Accept
	Because the people are not consulted in policy formulation and implementations, most of the projects and programs formulated do not reflect the needs and aspirations of the people	400	3.47	0.51	Accept
15	Because development is for the people’s utilization, the failure to consult the need of the people has posed challenges to sustainable development.	400	3.33	0.60	Accept
	Grand Mean		3.42	0.55	Accept

Source: Field Study 2022
Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table above shows if the people have been consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development process in Cross River State. Item 25 that there have been low participation of the people in policy formulations and implementations in Cross River state had the following scores ($M=3.39$ & $SD=0.53$). Item 26 that because the people are not consulted, it leads to corrupt practices by political office holders, had the following scores ($M=3.54$ & $SD=0.61$). Item 27 that Leaders are only representing the interest of their political parties/themselves and not the need of the people, hence may be the reason for not consulting the people had the following scores ($M=3.35$ & $SD=0.50$). Item 28 that because the people are not consulted in policy formulation and implementations, most of the projects and programs formulated do not reflect the needs and aspirations of the people had the following scores ($M=3.47$ & $SD=0.51$). Item 29 that because development is for the people's utilization, the failure to consult the need of the people has posed challenges to sustainable development had the following scores ($M=3.33$ & $SD=0.60$). Therefore, there is an agreement or homogeneity as all the items were accepted from the respondents. Thus, it implies that the people of Cross River State have not been consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring sustainable development.

Further findings revealed that if the people of Cross Rivers were consulted in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development in Cross River State. Thus, the paper found that the people are not actively involved in policy formulation and implementations that would bring about sustainable development. Hence, it has led to increased corrupt practices among political office holders as most if not all, are there to protect or represent the interest of political party and not the need of the people. However, since the people are excluded in decision making or policy formation and implementations, the leaders uses various mechanisms that is anti-democratic to assume political office and share the wealth of the State as against the wills of the people. Corroborating on this, Inokoba & Ibegu (2011), Cross River State just like any other state in the federation, the system to a large extent encouraged election rigging, bribery and corruption, misappropriation or embezzlement of public funds, white-collar crime, ballot box snatching and economic malpractices. These to an extent have significantly not only contributed to the backwardness and failure of good governance in Cross River State but also hinder economic growth and endanger the stability of democratic institutions and sustainable development and the moral values of the State. Observably, most of Ben Ayade development policy on road creations was fraudulent as they didn't mean well to the people of Cross River State. This is true as the establishment of garment industry and many more industrial boosts have not been able to materialize or impact on the people.

Reacting on this, an interview with Dr, Ekpenyong Nsa pointed that:

Lack of policy implementation resulting from political leaders who deliberately permit leaders without capacity to deliver governance; others include balkanization of people in decision making, poor maintenance culture, loss of oil wells in bakassi to Cameroon, relocation of quarrying companies to other states, poor road network, policy summersault leading to project abandonment in the education, health and economic sectors.

This is because, most, if not all the policies made are not reflecting on the needs of the people. However, as the people are not consulted in any policy implementation or formulation, sustainable development is on jeopardy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Democracy and sustainable development are two good bed fellows and inseparable twins. Many events accounts to the failure of democracy to sustain development in Cross Rivers State. In this sense, economic development could have fueled development in Cross River State. Poor budgeting and implementation is traced to fall in federal allocation to the state as it adversely affects accruals to the state to meet sustainable development. It is this issue of inadequate funding that adversely affected poor road maintenance culture, rural electrification, portable water supply, difficult terrain, absence of peoples' participation in budgeting process led to none capturing of their needs. Nigeria generally as a country is vulnerable to weak governance and poor decisions making, where poverty, inequality, and economic instability are severe and unsolved. Therefore, the study recommends the following as the way forward:

- i. Considering the problems that affect democratic efforts in ensuring sustainable development includes excluding the people towards project formulation and implementations, it is important for successive government to consult the people before embarking on projects and such project should reflect the needs of the people, ensuring continuity of project and at the same time, government should engage the youths in empowerment programs, as this will help in tackling poverty and reducing inequality through inclusive policies and people-centred development programmes, as well as addressing critical factors of underdevelopment, joblessness and lack of economic diversification. As this is achieved, it will ensure sustainable development in Cross River State.
- ii. It is obvious that successive governments have failed to ensure consistency of policies or programmes of their predecessor, at which influencing sustainable development. The study appeal and recommend the need for legislative documentation that gurantees an emerging political leaders in Cross River State to adopt key policies

- and programmes of past government. As this approach is ensured, it will bring about sustainable development and continuity of purposeful projects.
- iii. The manifestations of election rigging, bribery and corruption, misappropriation of public funds, embezzlement, white-collar crime, and failure of leaders to prioritise the need of the people have led to the problems of poor policy formulations and implementations. At the same time, they have significantly contributed to the backwardness and failure of good governance in Cross River State which hinders economic growth and endangers the stability of democratic institutions and sustainable development. Therefore, it is recommended that emerging leadership in Cross River State should involve transparent selection system and restructuring of political parties' ideologies and the people. Therefore, as leadership selection approach is solved, political leaders will be transparent and meet ethical practices to ensure effective governance, formulation and implementation of policies of sustainable development goals.
 - iv. Since development is human centred, the falling human capacity development indeed affects the level of literacy due to existence of poor educational facilities, absence of model schools to mitigate gaps in human capacity deficiency syndrome, rising school enrolment could not match existing infrastructure in the state. There should be a deliberate policy by government to invest a reasonable portion (25%) of its annual budget on education, skills development of future generation that will contribute to development in the state.

REFERENCES

- Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and development in Africa*. African Books Collective Publisher.
- Akujuru, C. A. (2015). Local government, good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. A Case Study of Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State (2001-2012). *Global Journal of Political science and Administration*, 2(1), 35-51.
- Andem, A. B., Udofia, U. U., Okorafor, K., & George, U. U. (2013). Bioaccumulation of some heavy metals and total hydrocarbons (THC) in the tissues of periwinkle in the intertidal regions Quo Iboe river basin. *Greener Journal of Biological Sciences*, 3(7), 258-264.
- Anyanwu, C. N. (2000). *Introduction to community development*. Babethers Educational Publishers.
- Ake, C. (1964). 'The political question' in O. Oyediran (ed). Governance and development in Nigeria: Essays in honour of Professor Dudley, B. J. Oyediran Consult International.
- Desta, Y. (2006). 'Designing anti corruption strategies for developing countries': A country study of Eritrea. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 4(5), 421-449.
- Dike, V. (2008). Corruption in Nigeria: A new paradigm for effective control, African Economic Analysis. www.africaeconomicanalysis.org
- Dudley, B. (1965). The Nigerian elections of 1979: The voting decision. *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 12(3), 46-54.
- Essia. (2006). Cross River State economic empowerment development strategy. *Journal of Sustainable Society*, 1(2), 52-62.
- Etannibi, O. A. (2004). *Elections as organized crime: Nigerian experience*. Paper presented at the Centre for African Studies Seminar, at the University of Cape Town, on May 12.
- Eze, C. A. (2017). Local government administration and grassroots development in Nigeria: A theoretical appraisal. *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research*, 3(2), 78-86.
- Ikeji, C. C., Paul, B., Ojah, O., Akpan, E., & Ibah, J. (2013). Decentralization and democratic local government in Cross River State, Nigeria! A fact or fallacy: *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 16(3), 45-59.
- Inokoba, P. K., & Ibegu, W. T. (2011). Economic and financial crime commission (EFCC) and political corruption: Implication for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. *Anthropologist*, 13(4), 283-291.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy; economic development and political legitimacy: *American Political Science Review*, 5(3), 69-105.
- Mazrui, A. (2002). *Nigeria research for good governance and national development dilemmas of policy and leadership*. In I.Y. Lane and H. Dabin(eds.), *Democracy, good governance and national development in Nigeria: Actualizing the Public mandate*. Spectrum Books.
- Nnoli, O. (1981). *Path to Nigerian development*. Codestral, B. P.
- Nwabueze, B. O. (1982). *A constitutional history of Nigeria*. C Hurst and Co Ltd.
- Nwiteozum, E. N. (2009). Assessment of people's democratic perception of grassroots community development projects in Ezza South LGA of Ebonyi State: *A Paper Presented to the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Moral Studies University of Nigeria, Nsukka*.
- Nwizu, S. C. (2002). The problems of using distance education media in conscientizing rural adults for community development: *Journal of Adult Education and Development, University of Nigeria Nsukka*, 1(1), 54.
- Nwobashi, H. N., & Itumo, A. (2017). Democracy and contributions of town union to educational development in Ebonyi State. A focus on Some Selected Rural Communities: *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(4), 41-50.

- Ojobo, J. A. (2005). Tax evasion and avoidance in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable economic development. *Abuja Journal of Administration and Management*, 4(2), 26-47.
- Okodudu., & Irikana. (2008).
- Okolie, A. (2015). Global political economy and development of underdevelopment: different people, same market and glorification of poverty: *An Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria Delivered On 14th May, 2015*.
- Okongoh, E. C. (2014). Imoke Spends N20.325 Billion on Rural Roads. Crossriverswatch.com/2014/05/imoke-spends-n20-325-billion-on-roads/amp/
- Onoh, I. (2016). Ayade, at COP22, defends Cross River State's highway project. *Earth Journalism Network*.
- Onyishi, A. E. (2018). Democratic governance and sustainable development in the oil rich countries of the global South: A comparative assessment of Nigeria and Indonesia. *International of Multidiscipline Scientific Publication*, 1(1), 89-102.
- Orakwe, E. C. (2019). *Grassroots development ad democratization in Ebonyi State: An analysis of grassroots governance in Ikwo local government area*. An Unpublished Dissertation of Sociology Department, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.
- Oruonye, E. D. (2013). Grassroots Democracy and the challenges of rural development in Nigeria. A case study of Bali local government area of Taraba State: *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS)*, 1(1), 23-34.
- Osaghae, E. E. (1995). *Ethnicity in Africa or African ethnicity. The search for a contextual understanding*. In G. Himmelstraid (eds.). *African perspectives in development, controversies, dilemmas and Openings* (83-97). James Curracy Ltd.
- Sach, J. (2007). The end of poverty: Possibilities for our time. *An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*, 2(2), 206-209.
- Soderbaun, F. (2012). *Democracy and sustainable development: Implication for Science and Economics*. Real - World Economics Review, Issue no. 60.
- Wikipedia. (2017). *The free encyclopaedia: Democratization*. Wikipedia, the Free Press. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/free-press-_\(Organisation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/free-press-_(Organisation)).