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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BOTTOM-UP PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS IN NIGERIA'S CROSS-ETHNIC STATES OF IMO AND AKWA-IBOM

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Abstract

In the midst of claims to democracy and participatory governance in most countries of the world, this paper examines the link between participatory governance and sustainable development to determine the type of participatory governance that is perceived to be the appropriate form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development, and at what level (s) of government, in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria. In pursuit of these objectives, the study assumes that if participatory governance is a viable strategy for achievement of sustainable development, it cannot be imposed on the people. Thus, using a descriptive-survey design, the paper is based on a study of a randomly selected sample of 904 indigenes/residents of the two cross-ethnic states. Blending descriptive and correlational analyses, the study found that in Imo and Akwa Ibom States, which are southern (south-east and south-south) states of Nigeria characterized by their decentralized (relatively more democratic) traditional political structure: 1. The people prefer the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance more than the Top-Down Participatory Governance. 2. The Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance is perceived by the people as a form of True Participatory Democracy at the Local Government Level only. 3. The Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance is perceived by the people as a preferred type of Participatory (True) Democracy for achievement of Sustainable Development. Accordingly, the paper recommends: 1. Given that Nigeria is a heterogeneous multi-ethnic nation, the scope of this study should be expanded nationwide to cover the northern and south-western states of Nigeria that are characterized by the centralized traditional political structure. Expanding the scope of the study nationwide will enable the formulation of a democratically viable sustainable development policy in Nigeria. 2. The Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance (COMPAG) system should be test-driven in some local government areas of Imo and Akwa Ibom states, to replace the current representative democracy at the local government level only, to support and facilitate the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2016-2030) in Nigeria.

Participatory Governance, Sustainable Development, Democracy, Participatory Democracy, Good Governance.

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Introduction:-

All through the beginning of the twenty first century, a paradigm shift is occurring in the way in which government, business and community sectors relate to each other, suggesting a possible participatory framework for progressive collaborative arrangements (Edwards, 2001). When Almond and Verba (1963) probed the future of democracy and asserted that the New World political culture must be a political culture of participation, they had set the pace earlier by presenting emerging nations with two different but equally appealing models of the modern participatory state: the totalitarian and democratic. But realizing that the totalitarian state offers the ordinary man the role of the “participant-subject” while the democratic state offers him the opportunity to take part in the political decision process as an influential “participant-citizen” (Almond and Verba, 1963; Unanka, 2001), scholarly interests are stimulated by the paradigm shift to probe the nature and direction of the modern participatory democracies in developing countries, amidst increasing claims of good and participatory governance at national and state levels. Claims of participatory governance are prompted because the right of citizens to participate in governance as evidenced in Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights asserts that “Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity ... to take part in the conduct of public affairs” (UN, 2008). Very importantly, since democracy and good governance are believed to be the foundation for the achievement of sustainable development, scholarly interests are increasingly generated on how to truly democratize governance for effective and sustainable development (Osmani, 2008), and specifically for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries by 2030.

The Problem:

The growing backlash against top-down approaches to participatory democracy throughout the whole world due to its tendency to prioritize and solely appreciate professional and scientific “expert” knowledge, which exposes its exclusively paternalistic nature and alienation of the local people, has led to the growing acceptance of the bottom-up approaches and its characteristic appreciation and incorporation of local knowledge and skills in the development process (Smith, 2008). For the fact that the top-down (public sector intervention) approach is observed to be unsuccessful in ensuring sustainable development for over sixty years of its practice since pre-independence in Nigeria, the bottom-up participatory approach, which takes its root from the communities, is best positioned to ensure sustainability in housing provision for low-income earners in Nigeria (Olotuah and Aiyetan, 2006).

Expectedly, in heterogeneous developing nations, like Nigeria, where the wind of democratization is blowing harshly amidst claims of democracy and good governance, questions about citizens’ participation for good governance and sustainable development have become paramount in political and academic circles. This is so because, in spite of the claims of national and state governments at adopting or claiming inclusiveness or other conceptual variants of participatory governance policy, sustainable development continues to elude them as Nigeria slides on the global development index. Since the 1970s and the beginning of the 21st century, Nigeria has moved from the enviable position of the fastest growing economy in Sub-Saharan Africa to one of the least developed countries in the World, dropping from a per capita income of around \$1100 (thanks to the oil windfall) to the accolade of one of the most corrupt countries in the world, sliding down to a per capita income of about \$340 (Salisu, 2000). Today, Nigeria has become a developmental paradox, ranking amongst the least developed countries in the United Nations’ and World Bank league tables, with a crisis-torn educational system, rising unemployment and crime rate, and with increasing wealth and rising inequality, Nigeria has earned the accolade of “the poverty capital of the world” (Unanka et al, 2019). From the lens of the aforesaid developmental paradigm shift, this sordid situation suggests either that the Nigerian governments have not yet applied the appropriate participatory governance system or the people do not want to participate in governance.

Thus, in the midst of claims to democracy (government of the people) by most countries of the world (notably Nigeria), the questions that yearn for answers include: (1) Are the people truly participating in governance and in what form? (2) Are the people interested in participating in governance? (3) What is the most appropriate form of people participation in governance for sustainable national development? (4) Could the people’s true participation in governance have any potentials (albeit, perceived) of impacting or enhancing the achievement of sustainable national development?

In his study on participatory governance in the South East (Ibo) of Nigeria, Unanka (2016) found the eagerness of the people to participate in governance but failed to find evidence of any functional participatory governance system

that is truly rooted in the tenets of participatory democracy for the realization of sustainable development goals. In a relatively more recent study on participative governance in cross-ethnic states of Imo (Ibo) and Akwa-Ibom (Efik, Ibibio, Annag, etc), Unanka et al. (2019) also found the eagerness of the people to participate in governance in the two cross ethnic states: (1) the people (citizens) are not involved in governance; rather, the government is perceived to be doing all in the initiation, planning and implementation of policies and projects, (2) the people indicated preferences for Participatory Governance at local and state government levels, but preference for Representative Democracy at the national government level; and (3) participatory governance is preferred, against representative democracy, for sustainable economic, social/human and environmental/ecological development. Yet the unanswered questions remain: What type of participatory governance is an appropriate form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development and at what levels of government?

Accordingly, the objectives of this paper are to determine the type of participatory governance that is perceived to be the appropriate form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development, and at what level (s) of government, in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria. In pursuing these objectives, this paper assumes that participatory governance is more likely to be a viable system of governance for attainment of sustainable development at the local/community level of government, if it is not a top-down imposition on the people.

Given that the politically developed countries of the world must have attained Almond and Verba's (1963) participant political culture and the people (citizens) assumedly participate in politics, discussion of the democratization process in the developing nations require turning the lens not only to citizens' involvement in elections for the development of representative democracies, but more importantly to their participation in governance for the development of participatory democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

In the following section of this paper, we shall discuss our choice of relevant theories that support and also explain the relationship between participatory democracy, good governance and sustainable development. These theories are, the classical theory of democracy, self-reliance and participative theories.

Theory:

According to the classical theory, democracy is "people power," -- a system in which leaders are accountable to the people for what they do and in which "a citizen must be an active participant in the affairs of the state." (Pericles, 495-431 BC; Horodutus, 484-424 BC in Johari, 2014). Abraham Lincoln reaffirmed this in his 1863 Gettysburg oration; calling it "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Edwards et al. 1996). The classical theory of democracy posits two choices, viz., power is vested in the people and its exercise is given to them (participatory democracy) or to their chosen representatives (representative democracy) (Johari, 2014). Democracy, as practiced (or assumed to be practiced) in the developing countries such as Nigeria is pivoted more on the representative choice of democracy. The failure of representative democracy to achieve social and human development in Third World countries (including Nigeria) led to the rethinking towards participatory democracy and the search for supportive alternative governance theories for the achievement of sustainable development, viz., self-reliance and participative theories/models.

The Self-Reliance model promises development through dependence on the energy and skills of the indigenous people (Unanka, 2008). Abdalla (1980), as well as believing in Julius Nyerere's 1967 famous policy advocacy of Education for Self Reliance, which places high priority on rural development, linking formal schools with the communities they served, and ensuring that schools use local resources and in turn teach adults in the community, as they become "production units" based on the principle of self-reliance (Sheffield, 1978; Unanka, 2001).

Several models of governance and public decision-making abound, viz: Rational-Comprehensive Model, Bargaining Model, Incremental Model, Participative Model, and Public Choice Model (Lemay 2002). How best a developing country develops depends on how correctly it chooses from the alternative models of public decision-making. Accordingly, the choice of the Participative Model is supported by Nyerere (1967), Sheffield (1978), Abdalla (1980), and Unanka (2001), holding that the most rational decision is the one that involves the participation of those who will be affected by the decision (Lemay 2002).

In the next section of this paper, we shall discuss the methodology used to address the objectives of this study -- to determine the form of participatory governance that is perceived appropriate for achievement of sustainable development and at what levels of government in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria.

Methodology:-

This study was sponsored by the Nigerian Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) –Institution-Based Research Fund (IBRF). The study uses the descriptive-survey and correlational designs. Data were collected through survey and observational methods. The survey targeted the 2011 estimated populations of the two cross-ethnic states of Nigeria – Imo (3.9million) and Akwa Ibom (3.9 million) (NPC, 2006). A sample size of 500 each was chosen – i.e., $500 \times 2 = 1000$ for the two states, which are respectively above the maximum attainable sample size (400) for a large target population, using the Yaro Yamane’s formula for computation of sample size (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006).

A combination of cluster and simple random sampling methods were used to draw the sample of 1000 (500 X 2), which comprised of individuals of voting age and who are constitutionally qualified to be involved in governance in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo (Ibo ethnic group) and Akwa Ibom (predominantly Ibibio, Efik, Annang, Oron, etc ethnic groups). Out of the one thousand (1000) administered questionnaires, nine hundred and four (904) were retrieved. Table 1 below presents a summary of the ethnic composition of the survey respondents across the two states.

Table1:- Ethnic Composition of Survey Respondents.

TRIBE/ ETHNIC ORIGIN	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENT			
	Akwa Ibom	Imo	Missing	Total
Ibo	70 (18%)	443 (99%)	4	517 (57%)
Annang	51 (13%)	0	*	51 (6%)
Ibibio	204 (52%)	0	*	204 (23%)
Oron	23 (6%)	0	1	24 (3%)
Others*	45 (11%)	6 (1%)	*	50 (6%)
Missing			58	58 (6%)
Total	393 (100)	449 (100)	62	904 (100)

*Adun (1), Bakor (1), Bette (1), Efik (3), Ejeghara (1), Eket (2), Ekid (1), Esan (1), Hausa (1), Ibani (2), Ibeno (1), Ibibio (1), Ijaw (4), Ikotun (1), Ikotnta (1), Ikwere (2), Ini (1), Isoo (1), Itam (1), Nsit (1), Ogoni (4), Oro (1), Tiv (1), Ugep (2), Ughobo (2), Urueoffo (1), Uyo (3), Yoruba (4). **(ALL DATA SOURCE: SURVEY)**

In the next section of this paper, we shall conceptualize participatory governance/ democracy, good governance and sustainable development, and thereafter present and analyze the empirical survey data that address the objectives of this study.

Participatory governance/democracy, good governance and sustainable development:

Over the course of the post-World War II development epoch, as donor agencies and developing countries in many parts of the world launched many programs and projects embracing a participatory component of one sort or another (e.g., in India, South Africa, Brazil, Senegal, etc.), studies following Almond and Verba (1963), to probe the future of democracy, have reported the positive relationship between participatory governance (direct community participation) and efficiency in agricultural/irrigation systems of production, water, sanitation and public work projects (e.g., Chambers, 1988; Ascher and Healy, 1990; Ostrom et al, 1994; Manikutty, 1997, 1998; Adato et al., 1999; UN, 2008; Blair, 2008; Unanka, 2019). Probing further on the future/prospects of democracy, it is imperative that we chart the empirical path of this study, first by explicating the conceptual links between governance, its democratic/participatory and good variants, and sustainable development.

Governance is the manner/process in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic, political and social resources for development purposes (UNDP, 1997). Whereas governance means the whole range of state sector activity fitted together at all levels of government – national, state/regional and local, participatory governance refers to the process where citizens, whether as individuals or in groups, are deliberately and systematically mobilized to play significant roles in the governance process -- taking part in the making of the basic decisions as to what are the common goals of one’s society and as to the best ways to move towards these goals based on majority rule (Davies, 1963; Chaturvedi, 2006; Blair, 2008). Governance is not restricted to governmental machineries as it is significantly a democratic process involving citizen participation in the selection and election of political leaders as well as their contribution in formulation and implementation of development policies (Oyeneke et. al, 1995).

Citizen participation implies the right to rule, freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, influence decision making process and right to social justice (Okolie, 2004). Thus, governance is good governance when the process leads to development, as satisfaction of human needs, including the need for citizens’ participation in making and implementing decisions affecting their lives. Development is the widely participatory process of social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other values) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control of their environment (Rogers, 1976; Rodney, 1974). Development means ensuring the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs of expression, creativity, and conviviality and for deciding his own destiny (Wignaraja, 1976).

By extension, good governance is bottom-up participatory governance, where governance is seen as cooperation between state institutions and civil society groups (Friedman, 2006). In this light, good governance, as bottom-up participatory governance is similar to cooperative government/democratic participation, which has to do with the interlocking of the state and societal groups in a mix of public-private policy networks in the formulation and implementation of public policy. Though broad participation of experts and civil servants could lead to greater efficiency, such technocratic participation without democratic participation makes sustainable development unachievable (Ulla Rosenstrom and Somo Kyllonen, 2007).

Sustainable development is a type of development that is characterized by freedom and equity in the development process and therefore that is socially responsive to the problems of poverty and inequality between classes, -- i.e., development that accounts for ecological and environmental balance to avoid development today at the expense of tomorrow; ensuring that technological, economic and social development does not compromise human needs today against the needs of the future. When people are involved in the determination of their needs of today and the future, they are bound to be relatively satisfied and sustained in the outcome of their thoughts and actions (Unanka, 2001).

In August 2015, the United Nations member states, following and expanding on the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2001, established the following 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide in framing their agenda and development policies over the next 15 years, ending 2030. The 17 SDGs, officially adopted at a UN summit in New York in September, 2017, and which became applicable from January 2016 (The Guardian, 2015), are as follows:

The 17 SDGs:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2) End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture 3) Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages 4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all 8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all 9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10) Reduce inequality within and among countries 11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns 13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum) 14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development 15) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss 16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
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For the purpose of this study, sustainable development is measured as the achievement or perception of tendency to achievement of the 17 SDGS collapsed into the following three developmental categories (Economic, Social/Human and Environment) and their associated indicators as follows:

Developmental Categories	Indicators		
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Economic Development	Ensuring: Power Supply, Industrialization and Productive Work and Employment		
Social/Human Development	Achieving: Elimination of poverty, hunger; Increasing Agricultural/food production, Quality Education, Good Health, Water, Sanitation, Justice, Inclusive Society and Peace		
Environmental/Ecological Dev.	Combating Ecological/Environmental Pollution and stopping the destruction of land resources, forests and rivers/oceans		

In the following sub-section, empirical data are correlated in providing answers to the yet unanswered questions, viz., What type of participatory governance is an appropriate (albeit, perceived) form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development and at what levels of government, in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria?

Data presentation and analysis: participatory governance, democracy and sustainable development:

To determine the type of participatory governance that is perceived an appropriate form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development, and at what levels of government, in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria, Tables 2, 3 and 4 present correlated data on the following variables: Preferred Type of Participatory Governance, Preferred Democracy at Local, State and Federal Government Levels, and Preferred Governance Type for Sustainable Economic, Social/Human and Ecological/Environmental Development to provide answers to the research questions and objectives of this study, as follows:

Objective1 – Preferred Participatory Governance:

(What type of Participatory Governance is preferred by the people in Imo and Akwa Ibom states of Nigeria?)

Table 2:- Preferred Type of Participatory Governance by State of Origin/Residence.

PREFERRED PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENCE					
	Akwa Ibom		Imo		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Top-Down Appointment of Citizens in Governance	191	46	185	41	376	43
Bottom-Up Community-Grown Citizen Involvement in Governance	226	54	264	59	490	57
Totals:	417	100	449	100	866	100

$\chi^2 = 1.86 (0.2)$; Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.05 (0.2)

Source: Survey

The data in Table 2 above show greater preferences for Bottom-Up Participatory Governance in both Akwa Ibom (54%) and Imo (59%) than the preferences for Top-Down Participatory Governance in Akwa Ibom (46%) and Imo (41%). The reported $\chi^2 = 1.86 (0.2)$; Phi = 0.05 (0.2) show that there is no significant relationship between State of Origin/Residence and Preferred Participatory Governance. In other words, the greater preferences for Bottom-Up Participatory Governance (54%; 59%) over Top-Down Participatory Governance (46%, 41%) does not vary statistically across the two states of Akwa Ibom and Imo.

Objective 2. Level of Government for Participatory Governance for True Democracy:

(At what Level(s) of Government is Preferred Participatory Governance perceived an appropriate form of Participatory (True) Democracy?)

Table 3:- Preferred Type of Participatory Governance for True Democracy at Various Levels of Government.

PREFERRED DEMOCRACY	PREFERRED PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE					
	Top-Down		Bottom-Up		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participatory Democracy: Local Govt. + State Govt. ++ Fed. Govt. +++	224	60	335	69	559	65
	207	56	260	53	467	55
	172	47	222	45	394	46
Representative Democracy: Local Govt. + State Govt++ Fed. Govt +++	146	40	151	31	297	35
	160	44	226	47	386	45
	196	53	268	55	464	54
Totals:	370	100	486	100	856	100
.....	367	100	486	100	853	100
.....	368	100	490	100	858	100

+ $\chi^2 = 6.52 (0.1)^*$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.08 (0.01)*
 ++ $\chi^2 = 0.71 (0.3)$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.03 (0.39)
 +++ $\chi^2 = 0.17 (0.6)$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.01 (0.67)

The data in Table 3 above show the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance (69%), more than the Top-Down Participatory Governance (60%), as a preferred form of True Participatory Democracy, against Representative Democracy (31%; 40% respectively). Though weak (Phi = 0.08), this relationship is significant ($\chi^2 = 6.52 (0.1)$; Phi = 0.08 (0.01) at the Local Government Level only, and not at the state and federal government levels.

Objective 3: Participatory (True) Democracy for Sustainable Development:

(What type of participatory governance is an appropriate (albeit, perceived) form of true democracy for achievement of sustainable development?)

Table 4:- Preferred Type of Participatory Governance for Sustainable Development.

PREFERRED DEMOCRACY	PREFERRED PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE					
	Top Down		Bottom-Up		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FOR SUSTAINABLE: +Economic Development: Rep. Demo Partic. Demo	153	49	133	33	286	40
	159	51	272	67	431	60
++Soc/Human Development: Rep. Demo Partic. Demo	127	41	93	23	220	31
	182	59	313	77	495	69
+++Env/Eco Development: Rep. Demo Partic. Demo	125	41	125	31	250	36
	182	59	273	69	455	64
Totals.....	312	100	405	100	717	100
.....	309	100	406	100	715	100
.....	307	100	398	100	705	100

+ $\chi^2 = 19.3 (0.00)$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.2 (0.00)*
 ++ $\chi^2 = 27.3 (0.00)$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.2 (0.00)*
 +++ $\chi^2 = 6.5 (0.01)$; Phi/Cramer's V = 0.09 (0.01) *
 Source: Survey

The data in Table 4 above shows that the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance is perceived by the people as a preferred type of Participatory (True) Democracy for the achievement of Sustainable Economic, Social/Human and Ecological/Environmental Development than the Top-Down Participatory Governance (67%, 51%), (77%, 59%) and (69%, 59%), as against the relatively lower preferences for Representative Democracy (33%, 49%), (23%, 41%) and (31%, 41%) respectively. The reported $\chi^2 (19.3, 27.3, 6.5)$ and weak Phi (0.2, 0.2, 0.09) are significant respectively, suggesting that in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, the Bottom-Up

Community-Grown Participatory Governance is a preferred (true) type of democracy for achievement of Sustainable Economic, Social/Human and Ecological/Environmental Development.

Conclusion:-

In commencing this study, it was evident that the failure of representative democracy to achieve social and human development in Third World countries (including Nigeria) led to the rethinking towards searching for the prospects of achieving sustainable development through participatory democracy. Guided by the Self-Reliance and Participative theories/models, we logically and conceptually established that the most rational decision is the one that involves the participation of those who will be affected by the decision, and that good governance is a bottom-up participatory process that makes sustainable development achievable.

In the following sub-sections, we present the summary of our findings, discussion and recommendations derived from empirical data analysis on the prospects and implications of acceptance and institution of the bottom-up community-grown participatory governance for the achievement of sustainable development in Imo and Akwa-Ibom states, Nigeria.

Summary of Empirical Findings:

Assuming that participatory governance is more likely to be a viable system of governance for the achievement of sustainable development at the local/community level of government, the following findings are established from our empirical data and analysis:

1. The people in Imo and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria prefer the Bottom-Up Participatory Governance more than the Top-Down Participatory Governance.
2. The Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance is perceived by the people in Imo and Akwa Ibom states as a form of True Participatory Democracy, against the current practice of Representative Democracy, at the Local Government Level only, and not at the state and federal government levels.
3. The Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance is perceived by the people as a preferred type of Participatory (True) Democracy for achievement of Sustainable Economic, Social/Human and Ecological/Environmental Development in the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria.

Discussion and Recommendations:-

Truly, the prospects of a developing country towards the achievement of sustainable development depends on how correctly it chooses from the alternative models of public decision-making. Accordingly, the findings in this study vindicates our choice of the Self-Reliance and Participative theories/models, which promise development through dependence on the energy and skills of the indigenous people in the communities as production units (Nyerere, 1967; Sheffield, 1978; Abdalla, 1980, and Unanka, 2001), holding that the most rational decision is the one that involves the participation of those who will be affected by the decision (Lemay 2002).

The preference for the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participative Governance raises the prospects for the achievement of sustainable development because participation in governance (especially at the local level) could be instrumental to the achievement of more efficient and equitable outcomes in many different contexts of decision making, such as allocation of budgetary resources, management of common property and delivery of community services (Osmani,, 2008). Through the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participative Governance, the intrinsic value of participation is equally derivable because since the act of participation is valuable in itself, it adds to any instrumental or functional value to facilitate the achievement of other good things (Osmani, 2008), which include the following indicators of sustainable development:

Developmental Categories	Indicators
Economic Development	Ensuring: Productive Work and Employment
Social/Human Development	Achieving: Increasing Agricultural/food production, Quality Education, Good Health, Water and Sanitation
Environmental/Ecological Dev.	Combating Ecological/Environmental Pollution and stopping the destruction of land resources, forests and rivers

According to Sen (1999), development has rightly been conceptualized as consisting of the expansion of a range of freedoms to do and to be the things that human beings have reasons to value, and the freedom to participate meaningfully in public affairs (democratic participation) is seen as one of those valuable freedoms inextricably associated with sustainable development (UN. 2008). The grassroots population in the bottom-up approach comprises (but not limited to) the local leaders, village elders, traditional chiefs, representatives of community groups, women and youth organizations, community-based organizations (local housing cooperatives, peer groups, social clubs, community associations, neighborhood associations and consultative assemblies (Olotuah and Aiyetan, 2006). Besides, the community-grown bottom-up participatory governance is perceived more applicable at the local government level because much of the implementation of policies aimed at sifting economies to a sustainable development path, take place at the local levels, as stressed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (Olotuah and Aiyetan, 2006).

Development is a participatory process of social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other values) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control of their environment (Rogers, 1976; Rodney, 1974). Development means ensuring the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs of expression, creativity, and conviviality and for deciding his own destiny (Wignaraja, 1976). Obviously, as the Bottom-Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance enables the people to gain greater control of their environment and destiny, it enhances the sustainability of development in general.

Accordingly, this paper recommends as follows:

In view of the fact that Nigeria is a politically heterogeneous multi-ethnic nation with various traditional centralized and decentralized sub-political systems, in which Imo and Akwa-Ibom states, though cross-ethnic (Ibo, Efik, Annang, Ibibio, etc), are southern states known and characterized by their decentralized (relatively more democratic) traditional political structure, the scope of this study is recommended to be expanded nationwide to cover the northern and south-western states of Nigeria that are characterized by the centralized traditional political structure. Expanding the scope of the study nationwide will enable the formulation of a democratically viable sustainable development policy in Nigeria.

To pilot the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2016-2030) in Nigeria, the Bottom—Up Community-Grown Participatory Governance (COMPAG) system should be test-driven in some local government areas (LGAs) of Imo and Akwa Ibom states, to replace the current representative democracy at the local government levels. This policy trial test will help to support and facilitate possible constitutional national policy changes towards the true democratization of the Nigeria's local government/governance system for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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