TOPIC: Participatory Implementation: The Gender Dimension in the Implementation of Community-Level Projects in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Participatory Implementation has become popular jargon in development circles without in-depth cognisance of its ramifications. Implementation of community-level projects with a gender dimension provides a new perspective which is grounded in a constructive rather than symbolic participation of beneficiaries (women groups) in the project cycle. This calls for institutional changes in respect of the paternalistic or exclusionary relationship between beneficiaries and development agents.

The author departs from mainstream thinking where participation supposedly ends with beneficiaries and highlights the indispensable role of the traditional political institution of chieftaincy among the Akans. Hence the call for the integration or participation of the institution in the implementation of community-level projects. This is necessary as the institution has legitimate control over the local cultural environment and must not be neglected any further if cultural backlash or resistance is to be minimized; and local development enhanced. The institution has been denied this role for some time either due to a lack of adequate knowledge by experts and development workers or blinded patriarchal considerations.

Hence the need to address the negative aspects of patriarchy. The author therefore calls for the ‘traditional civil society groups’ to advocate for the democratization of the traditional institution to ensure a gender balanced and consensual household decision-making process. The study calls for realistic project proposals which make provision for incentives; guarantees procedural transparency; and, the meticulous balancing of the use of both local and expert knowledge to permit local adaptation of projects. This is considered a recipe for sustaining participation and interest of beneficiaries with the view to achieving the anticipated project outcome.