

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ECO-2024-12027209

Volume: 12

Issue: 2

Month: March

Year: 2024

P-ISSN: 2319-961X

E-ISSN: 2582-0192

Received: 29.01.2024

Accepted: 29.02.2024

Published: 01.03.2024

Citation:

Kassa, Degu, et al. "Assessment of Community Participation in Sustainable Local Economic Development: The Case of Wolaita Sodo Town, Ethiopia." *Shanlax International Journal of Economics*, vol. 12, no. S2, 2024, pp. 75–93.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/economics.v12i2.7209>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Assessment of Community Participation in Sustainable Local Economic Development: The Case of Wolaita Sodo Town, Ethiopia

Degu Kassa

*Social Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist,
Economic Social and Infrastructure Affairs Directorate,
Wolaita Zone Chief Administrator Advisory Office, Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia*

Deneke Dana

*Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
College of Social Science and Humanities, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia*

Mariesennayya Senapathy

*Associate Professor, Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension
College of Agriculture, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia, East Africa*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8371-3035>

Abstract

Economic development is turning into a more regional phenomena. Through active community participation, it brings about a change in the locus of responsibility for development planning from the national to the sub-national or local levels. Nevertheless, Wolaita Sodo town hasn't done enough research on community involvement with sustainable LEDs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the present level of community involvement in LED, examine the function of community participation in sustainable LED, and pinpoint the key variables influencing community participation in Sustainable LED in Wolaita Sodo town. Economic development is turning into a more regional phenomena. Through active community participation, it brings about a change in the locus of responsibility for development planning from the national to the sub-national or local levels. Nevertheless, Wolaita Sodo town hasn't done enough research on community involvement with sustainable LEDs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the present level of community involvement in LED, examine the function of community participation in sustainable LED, and pinpoint the key variables influencing community participation in Sustainable LED in Wolaita Sodo town. Data from primary and secondary sources were gathered in both qualitative and quantitative formats. Questionnaires and checklists were used to gather data from sample respondents and relevant government offices. Techniques for multi-stage sampling were used to reach the sample size of 203 households. In addition to employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, a binary logistic regression model was utilized to examine the information gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Results revealed that 72.5% of the residents took part in LED efforts by making monetary or in-kind contributions. Furthermore, even if it is not a continual contribution, communities supply 33 percent of the total funding required for the development project to be carried out in their areas, with the government providing the remaining 27 percent. This is a clear sign of how the community is participating in the research area. Regarding the community's role in LED, the results demonstrated that participation fosters a sense of ownership and organized performance, aids in social and personal empowerment, and creates locally based and owned development through resource mobilization—all of which contribute to sustainable development. The results also demonstrated that a number of factors, including income, attitude, level of awareness, interest in participating, leadership structure, monitoring and evaluation, partnership structure, and directives, were positively and significantly correlated with community participation in sustainable LED. Therefore, the government and other relevant authorities should actively work on awareness creation forums, knowledge and skill development training, community empowerment, and technical support in order to enhance community engagement. These are the main recommendations offered to improve community participation.

Keywords: Binary Logit Model, Community, Participation, Local Economic Development

Introduction

Background of the Study

The locus of responsibility for development planning is shifting from the national to the sub-national or municipal levels as economic growth becomes a more localized phenomena. The ‘local level’ is very attractive for development and policy making for a number of reasons.

First, the shift in planning strategies for local and regional development is mostly due to globalization. This is due to the fact that changes in global production systems, market liberalization, and trade conditions all have an impact on local economies (Cunningham and Meyer-Stamer). Second, decentralization has made it possible to provide local governments more authority, influence, and resources. However, decentralization has made it more difficult for local governments to come up with creative solutions to combat poverty, promote development, supply infrastructure, and aid in economic expansion (Nel and Rogerson). Due to these obstacles, local governments must create locally relevant policies for issues pertaining to economic development. Third, local actors participate in economic development initiatives regardless of decentralization policies since local communities are most acutely affected by issues of poverty and unemployment (Meyer-Stamer). Therefore, sectoral policies are not meant to be replaced by LED; rather, it is meant to enhance them while fostering endogenous capability. In order to solve these issues, the LED method thus functions in addition to macroeconomic tools.

The process by which people take charge of their own well-being and learn how to contribute to their own and the community’s development is known as community participation in development activities. It is an active process through which beneficiaries have a say in how development is carried out and directed (Oakley). In international development discourse, the term “community participation” refers to the inclusion of local residents in the decision-making and project evaluation processes. It is linked to respect for the application of local knowledge and empowerment (Marsland). Local residents from all walks of life collaborate to promote local development, which creates a robust and sustainable economy. This process is known as local economic

development, or LED (Rogerson). At different phases of the local economic development process, there are several ways the community can participate in sustainable local economic development. Planning, carrying out, managing, and maintaining all or most local economic development projects and activities can involve the community.

Following the second phase of decentralization in Ethiopia in 2001–2002, local governments—especially woredas and municipalities—have become hubs for grassroots engagement, socioeconomic development, and service delivery. Even though the nation has seen hopeful growth and progress in reducing poverty, a local development strategy is still required due to the high rates of inequality and unemployment, as well as the inadequate capacity of local communities to provide social and economic services. According to legislation, cities must take the lead and oversee LED initiatives. These include establishing the right framework for industrial development, managing land well, attracting more residents and investors to the city, working with other government agencies to provide infrastructure (like water and electricity), and promoting the creation of jobs through MSE development (MUDH).

Therefore, robust community involvement is necessary to address all facets of local communities, including political, social welfare, economic, and environmental challenges, in an integrated and comprehensive manner in order to achieve dynamic local development.

Statement of the Problem

The primary element that can influence local community economic development processes is community engagement. Without the involvement of the local community, local economic development is impossible (Cupples). In Ethiopia, community involvement in sustainable LED approaches falls short of government directives. Major issues mentioned in various studies conducted on the subject included the community’s lack of awareness of the LED strategy, attitudes toward community development issues participation, the absence of LED structure at various levels, and the government coordinating body’s weakness (MUDH).

As previously mentioned, a variety of empirical data seem to have escaped the researcher's attention thus far, demonstrating the volume of global research on the subject, especially in industrialized nations. However, evaluating community engagement in sustainable local economic development and issues that impede it receives little attention in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ethiopia still has a dearth of written and unpublished documents about community involvement in sustainable LED, much like Sub-Saharan Africa, and the study area's scenario is similar to Ethiopia as a whole.

Therefore, the main empirical gaps in this study that have yet to be thoroughly examined are as follows: First, determining the role that local communities play in sustainable local economic development for particular localities based on the resources and assets that are available; Second, ways and strategies for effective community participation in sustainable local economic development; and Third, the state of local governance, the framework in place for community mobilization; institutional and regulatory frameworks for participation; and partnership arrangements that support communities in actively and continuously participating in the local economy, etc. The researcher was inspired to conduct a more thorough investigation in order to close these empirical gaps.

Objective of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to assess the community participation in sustainable local economic development in the study area.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were

- To evaluate the degree to which the study area's community is involved in sustainable local economic development;
- To examine how community involvement affects the study area's sustainable local economic development
- To determine the primary determinants of community involvement in locally sustainable economic growth within the research region

Review of Related Literature

The Nature and Concept of Local Economic Development Even if the idea of local economic development is becoming more and more well-known, it is not yet widely accepted as a tool for economic restructuring and regeneration. Due to the lack of a well-defined theoretical model and the fact that experiences and imitation are the primary sources of inspiration, the idea has been described in numerous ways. As a result, definitions of the notion have a tendency to center on its essential ideas, producing definitions that are generally acknowledged. According to this perspective, several meanings of the term were thought to highlight some of its fundamental problems and traits.

Local economic development is the process by which partners in the public, private, and non-governmental sectors collaborate to improve the environment for economic growth and the creation of jobs, according to the World Bank. In order to create jobs and boost the local economy, it is also understood as a process by which regional administrations, private businesses, and community-based organizations manage their resources and form alliances or networking arrangements. In 2005, Andrés and Sylvia In addition, LED believes that in order to create a robust and sustainable economy, locals from all walks of life collaborate to promote local business activity.

Local Economic Development in Ethiopia

Since the 1990s, Ethiopia has implemented federal and decentralized systems of governance. The Ethiopian governance structure places a strong emphasis on woreda and municipal governments. The several regional constitutions emphasize that these local governments have the power and independence to carry out social and economic development. Ethiopia's decentralization has given local governments the freedom and chance to shape their own destiny and drive their own progress. Stated differently, Ethiopia's decentralized structure has made it possible to undertake local economic growth within the country. Furthermore, the ability of cities to set their own budgets and to collect and allocate their own income gives them the freedom to carry out local economic development

initiatives. (MUDH) states that, despite having little resources, Ethiopian city governments all contribute significantly to the local economy. According to legislation, cities must take the lead and oversee LED initiatives. These include establishing favorable conditions for the growth of industry, managing land well, attracting more residents and investors to the city, working with other government agencies to provide infrastructure (like water and electricity), and promoting the creation of jobs through MSE development. In actuality, every city we visited, no matter how big or little, played a significant part in three key areas: (a) supporting MSEs; (b) investing in infrastructure and easing access to land.

The ministry states that four major obstacles have been found thus far in the process of putting local economic development initiatives into action. These are: (a) low survival and graduation rates among supported MSEs; (b) low levels of capacity among city administration staff and offices; (c) low levels of capacity among public-private dialogue that informs capital investment plans; and (d) lack of access to land and electricity, which are also major binding constraints that delay new investments but fall more under the purview of the federal government. Infrastructure challenges impede firm success.

Community Participation and LED in Wolaita Sodo Town

Following the federal MUDC principles, Wolaita Sodo Town created eighteen agendas for community engagement pertaining to issues of good governance and local development. In light of the importance of communities in local development, this has been attempted to be adopted from GTP 1 and is currently being implemented on GTP 2. The town established the framework and designated the appropriate experts at various administrative tiers to manage the town's operations. The primary objective is to establish a community as a whole that takes an active role in matters that impact it either directly or indirectly. Secondly, to completely implement the plans, initiatives, and programs for community development by utilizing the local community's knowledge, skill, asset, power, experience, etc. The community economic development amendment was divided into four overarching categories by the town,

and each of the eighteen individual agenda items allowed for the participation of all residents. They are: economic; building infrastructure; promoting social justice and the economy; and upholding sound governance. The municipal administration has so been developing LED programs and projects through community participation, despite all of its difficulties and disadvantages.

Conceptual Framework

This study considered demographic, socio economic, personal, technological, institutional, and regulatory framework as determinants affecting community engagement in sustainable local economic development in the study region, based on the theoretical and empirical literature review mentioned below (Figure 1). Age, religion, family size, and sex are examples of demographic variables. Education and income are socio-economic factors; awareness, interest in participating, and attitude are personal factors; leadership, monitoring, and evaluation systems are technical factors; and institutional and regulatory framework, such as guidelines and partnership agreements, are technical factors.

These elements, whose diagrammatic outline is provided below, were predicted to have an impact on successful community engagement in sustainable local economic development in the research area. They were determined based on theoretical and empirical evidence from earlier studies.

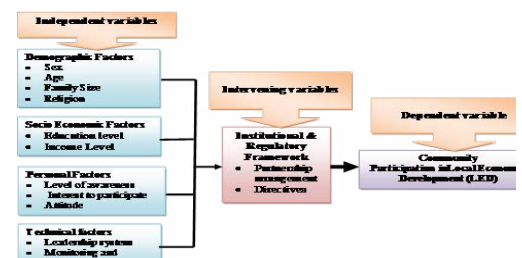


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Referred across the volume of literature

Research Methodology

Description of the Study Area

One of Ethiopia's oldest cities, Wolaita Sodo is situated 320 kilometers from Addis Ababa, the country's capital, and 165 kilometers from Hawassa,

the region's seat. In terms of astronomy, Wolaita Sodo is located between latitude 6049' N and longitude 39045' E. Six rings of easily accessible transportation connect Wolaita Sodo, an economic hub and vital business town, to various portions of the surrounding zones and Woredas. The capital of the Wolaita Zone administration, Wolaita Sodo is the second referral town in the SNNPR state, after Hawaii.

Wolaita Sodo has 255,994 residents in total. Seven kebele administrations make up Wolaita Sodo town's current administrative division. Its total land area is 16.65 hectares. The town's agro-ecological zone has ideal weather for people to live in and is excellent for urban areas; similarly, the average annual rainfall is roughly 1000 mm, and the average temperature ranges from 11.90C to 260C.



Figure 2 Location Map of Wolaita Sodo Town

Study Population

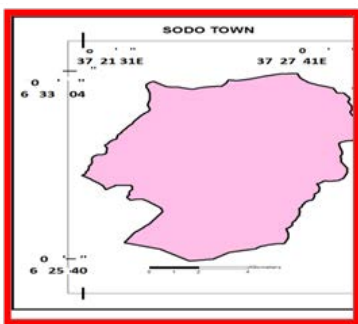
In keeping with this analysis, four of the seven administrative kebeles were methodically chosen after taking the following factors into account. Due to the town's growth, many of the seven kebele administrations now contain all or more than half of the rural population. The researcher methodically chose four kebeles that have all or most of their inhabitants in the current areas of the formerly urbanized sector according to the target related to the research issue. Because household heads were more likely than other community members to reside in the town and take part in various community development projects, it was decided to include them in the study in order to identify a manageable sample size and better reflect the population.

Research Design

Due to the survey nature of the study, a mixed-method research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques was utilized. A standardized household survey questionnaire was utilized to gather quantitative data from a representative subset of the town's household heads. The checklists, key informants, and focus group discussions were used to gather the qualitative data.

Data Sources

Primary and secondary sources were employed in this study to collect data that was both quantitative and qualitative. Sample household heads from town residents, key informants such higher-ranking town administration officials, municipality officials, and members of the community development participation committee served as the main sources



of information. As a result, four kinds of FGD participants were involved: members of development committees at various levels, town, kebele, ketene, and Sefer level government officials that oversee the region, and community participation officers. Using a straightforward random sampling technique, community members were chosen at random to complete the survey questions; key informants, who included people from various levels, served as data sources. Furthermore, focus groups have been held to confirm the information gathered through questionnaires. Secondary data on community involvement and local economic growth were gathered from a variety of sources that contained pertinent secondary data.

Method of Data Collection

Document Analysis

The study's implementation guidelines, reports on community participation and economic development, books, articles, project reports, and other pertinent websites were consulted in order to gather additional data that was required for the effective conduct of the research.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus groups are a type of focus group discussion used in qualitative research to get detailed qualitative information about a certain topic from a group of participants in an organized discussion format. Ten people per group participated in each of the four focus groups; efforts were made to include people of both sexes, a range of ages, and different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. The goal of the conversation has been to use the group's social dynamics to elicit information about participants' opinions, experiences, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and complaints about local economic development and community participation. It has also given the researcher an opportunity to reveal and gather important information about these perspectives.

Key Informants Interviews

The information gathered from the questionnaire was insufficient to complete the study because in-person interactions with significant others are required to gain additional information that would

not be available otherwise. Fifteen important informants participated in both organized and unstructured interviews to provide the essential data. Four town authorities, four Kebele officials, four Ketena development committee coordinators, four Sefer development committee coordinators, and one Ketema community involvement committee head were among the key informants who took part in this study. The investigator feels that 15 key informant interviews were sufficient to combine the quantitative data from representative respondents.

Sampling Technique and Method of Data Analysis

Sampling Technique

The size of the sample is a crucial choice that must be made when using a sampling strategy. The right sample size is determined by a number of factors related to the topic being studied, such as the required level of accuracy, the cost and time implications, etc. (Gujarati). The analysis's goals may be challenging to meet if the sample is too small. When handling the sample, it could lead to resource waste if it is excessively large. When the entire population is not studied, sample error occurs. It is common for sampling to exclude some important population information. The larger (and more expensive) the sample, the higher the desired precision or level of confidence. In any given context, sampling theory is not very helpful in estimating the sample size (Gujarati).

The urban kebeles and sample homes were chosen using a multi-stage sampling process. In the first phase, four of Sodo Town's seven administrative kebeles were purposefully chosen. In order to determine the kebeles, a new administrative structure arrangement was taken into consideration, which comprised the kebeles that were previously rural and stretched from Sodo Zuria Woreda to Sodo town. Owing to the peculiarities of the recently incorporated rural kebeles in the study, four kebeles now house all or most of the population of the town portion that is now there. Arada, Mehal, Merkato Yushuwa, and Dil Begerera Amba are these.

Simple random sampling was used in the second stage to choose sample households. The formula from (Yamaneh) was used to determine the sample

size from the entire population. Because they provided the finest representation of the community, household heads were chosen to be the responders. Using the Yemaneh formula, the data of household heads from four chosen kebeles was calculated. The Yamaneh formula is computed in this way:

$$n = N/(1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where

‘N’ is the total population for the study is 31,221

‘e’ is Margin of error i. e 7% = 0.07

‘n’ is the sample size of the study

There are 7477, 7189, 7150, and 9405 homes in the chosen kebeles for Arada, Mehal, Merkato Yushuwa, and Dil be Gerera Amba, in that order. There are 31,221 households overall.

Therefore,

$$n = 31221/\{1+31221(0.07)^2\} = 203$$

Method of Data Analysis

The design of the data gathering process, which combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies, has influenced the data analysis method. Thus, as described in the study’s results and discussion section, the data gathered using qualitative approaches were examined through interpretation, conceptualization, and tabulation of data.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data that were collected. Mean, range, percentage, minimum, and maximum values were among the descriptive statistics that were employed. Furthermore, to determine the correlation between x and y, inferential statistics such as t-tests and x2 were employed. An application of the binary logit model was used for regression.

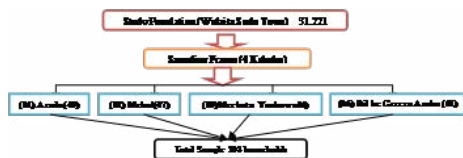


Figure 3 Sampling Procedure

Source: Survey Data, 2020

Econometric Analysis

This study’s general focus was on how the local community participates in economic growth. Numerous research connected personal, institutional, technical, demographic, socioeconomic, and

regulatory elements to the topic or issue. As a result, a suitable model that could include all data aspects needed to produce pertinent results or conclusions was necessary. When choosing a model specification among the three model types (linear, logit, and probit), it is important to take into account both the independent variables and the dichotomous dependent variable, community participation. When the dependent variable is dichotomous, logit and probit models are most commonly utilized. Because the logit model is simpler to compute, it was chosen for data analysis in this study.

The logit model’s functional form, which was employed in this investigation, is shown as follows:

$$P_i = E\left(\frac{Y_i}{x_i}\right) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i}} \tag{1}$$

$$P_i = E\left(\frac{Y_i}{x_i}\right) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z_i}}$$

where P_i , which varies from zero to one, is the probability of community engagement that is unaffected by an independent variable; Z_i is an explanatory variable (x_i) with a functional form of m that may be stated as;

$$Z_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^m \beta_i x_i, (i=1,2,3,\dots,m) \tag{2}$$

where the model’s slope parameters are denoted by β_i and the intercept by β_0 . The slope indicates how changes in independent factors affect the log-odds favoring community engagement in local economic development initiatives. If P_i represents the likelihood that the explanatory variable will affect community involvement, then $1 - P_i$ denotes the likelihood that community participation will remain constant when the independent variable changes. This can provide us with the following information:

$$1 - p_i = 1/(1 + e^{z_i}) \tag{3}$$

Dividing equation (1) by equation (3) and simplifying gives

$$e^{z_i} = \frac{p_i}{1 - p_i} = \frac{1 + e^{z_i}}{1 + e^{-z_i}} \tag{4}$$

Equation (4) shows that when the explanatory variable changed, so did the odds ratio, indicating a change in community participation. It is the ratio of the likelihood that a community will be impacted to the likelihood that it won’t be. In this case, 1 denotes those who are impacted and 0 does not. Finally, by

taking the natural logarithm of equation (4), the logit model can be derived.

$$L_i = \ln = \{p_i / (1-p_i)\} \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i$$

Where,

P_i = the probability that $Y = 1$ (the event occurred or probability of growth);

$1-P_i$ = the probability that $Y = 0$ (the event does not occur or is not affected);

L_i = the natural log of the odds ratio or logit

β_1 = the slope, measures the change in L (Logit) for a unit change in explanatory variables (X);

β_0 = the intercept. It is the value of the log odd ratio, $p_i/(1+p_i)$, when x or the explanatory Variable is zero. Thus, if the stochastic disturbance term (u_i) is taken into consideration, the logit model becomes

$$L_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + U_i \quad (5)$$

The involvement of the community in regional economic development initiatives served as the study's dependent variable. The outcome and discussion show that independent variables have an impact on community participation.

Multicollinearity and Degree of Association

The presence of multicollinearity the presence of flawless or exact linear correlations among some or all explanatory variables was examined for the hypothesized variables. Multicollinearity could be found using a variety of statistical techniques. In order to reduce computing effort and better address

the collinearity issue, the variance inflator factor (VIF) and tolerance level (TOL) were selected (Gujarati). Every other chosen independent variable is regressed on every chosen continuous variable.

Definition of Variables and Hypothesis of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine community involvement in locally driven, sustainable economic development. As stated in the analysis section, the subject of community engagement that has been brought up in a variety of literary works was examined to determine its relationship to the factors.

Dependent Variable (Y): Community involvement is considered a dependent variable in this study. Community engagement is the dependent variable, and it is dummy. It determines whether or not communities take part in sustainable LED activities (i.e., give in kind or cash) and assigns a rating of 1 to those that do, and 0 to those who do not.

Independent Variables: Community participation in sustainable LED initiatives is thought to be influenced by a number of factors, including institutional, technological, human, socioeconomic, demographic, and regulatory framework effects combined. Several variables are proposed to explain the study's dependent variable based on the study's brief literature evaluation.

Table 1 Summary of Definitions and Measurement of Explanatory Variables

S. No	Explanatory Variable	Description	Variable Type	Hypothesis	Unit of Measure	Result
1	SEX	Sex	Dummy	-/+ve	Male or Female	-
2	AGE	Age	Continuous	+ve	Ages in number	-
3	FAMSIZ	Family Size	Continuous	-/+ve	Number of Members	-ve
4	RLIGION	Religion	Dummy	-/+ve	Assigned score value	-
5	EDULVL	Education level	Categorical	+ve	Assign scale	+ve
6	INCOML	Income Level	Continuous	+/-ve	Number in Ethiopian Birr	+ve
7	LAWRNS	Level of awareness	Dummy	+ve	Assigned score value	+ve
8	INTRST	Interest to participate	Dummy	+ve	Assigned score value	+ve
9	ATITUD	Attitude	Dummy	+ve	Assigned score value	+ve
10	LDRSHP	Leadership	Dummy	+ve	Assigned score value	+ve
11	MAE	Monitoring & Evaluation	Dummy	+ve	Assigned score value	+ve
12	DIRCTV	Directives	Dummy	+/-ve	Assign score value	+ve
13	PRTART	Partnership Arrangement	Dummy	+ve	Assign score value	+ve

Results and Discussion

Table 2 Level of Awareness of the Respondents

Level of awareness	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED activities	Not Participated in LED activities	
Low	13 (8.8%)	41 (73.2%)	54 (26.6%)
Medium	50 (34%)	11 (19.6%)	61 (30%)
High	84 (51.1%)	4 (7.1 %)	88 (43.3%)
Total	147 (100%)	56 (100%)	203 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 7.676$; P-value 0.0006***

***Significant at 1% probability level

Source: Own Survey, 2020

Positive hypotheses are made regarding community involvement and individual knowledge of LED works. The sample respondents answered the seven questions by selecting Yes or No, and the values above average were classified as high awareness, the average as medium awareness, and the values below average as low awareness regarding their rights and duties, their role and responsibilities, their locality-specific activities, their method of participation, the body that organizes community participation, guidelines for community participation, the advantages of community participation for local economic development and sustainability, etc. Consequently, Table 2 shows that the percentages with low, medium, and high awareness are, respectively, 26.6%, 30%, and 43.3%. There are 8.8%, 34%, and 51.1% of participants in the participant category who have low, medium, and high awareness, respectively. Regarding the non-participant group, the percentages are as follows: 73.2%, 19.6%, and 7.1%, respectively, have little, medium, and high interest in taking part in local economic development initiatives. At less than a 1% probability level, the p-value (0.0006) indicated that awareness has a substantial impact on participation in LED activities.

Table 3 Sources of Awareness about Community Participation in LED

Which of the following bodies created more awareness about community participation and LED?	Proportion of the respondents
Government officials at different levels	51(49.5%)

Community participation committee	20 (19.4%)
Community participation agents of the municipality	13(12.6%)
Volunteers from the community	4 (19.2%)
NGO's working on LED in the town	10 (3.88%)

Source: Own Survey, 2020

Table 3 shows that the primary sources/ means by which the sampled respondents learned about community participation in local economic development were local government officials at various levels (49.5%), the community participation committee (19.4%), the municipality's community participation agents (12.6%), community volunteers (19.2%), and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) working on LED in the town (3.88%). This suggests that political commitment and will are mostly responsible for the coordination of LED adoption. Members' integration, cooperation, and dedication will be guaranteed by the political will that political champions may offer. Nevertheless, when it came to raising awareness of their rights and obligations, their role and responsibilities, the specific activities they could participate in locally, how to participate, the body that organizes community participation, guidelines for community participation, the advantages of community participation for local economic development and sustainability, etc., the community participation agents in municipalities and the corresponding structures fell short.

Table 4 Attitude of Sample Respondents towards Participation in LED

Response regarding attitude	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED works	Not participated in LED works	
Low	37 (25%)	36 (63.4%)	72 (35%)
Medium	0 (0%)	4 (7.1%)	4 (2%)
High	110 (75%)	17 (29.5%)	127 (63%)
Total	147 (100%)	56 (100%)	203 (100%)

$\chi^2 = -7.144$; P-value = 0.028**

** Significant at < 5% probability level

Source: Own Survey, 2020

According to Luthans, attitude is the consistent propensity to feel and act a certain way toward an item. Evaluative statements about objects, whether positive or negative, are called attitudes. Three aspects of attitude are listed by Luthans: behavioral, informational, and emotional. The person's "feelings of affect - positive, neutral, or negative about an object" comprise the emotional component. Beliefs and facts a person has about the object make up the informative component. Whether or if this information is true or accurate based on empirical evidence is irrelevant. He continues by stating that among the three components of attitude, only the behavioral component can be directly observed. Behavioral component of attitude is made up of an individual's inclinations to behave in a specific way toward an object. It's commonly believed that measuring someone's attitude will reveal their beliefs, emotions, and behavioral patterns toward an object. Therefore, the third component of this study focused on the attitude of the individual toward community participation.

Six positive and six negative questions were posed to the study population in a sequential manner. Once more, the sample respondents gave the following responses to those questions: strongly disagree, agree, neutral disagree, and agree. In this study, responses to positive questions that ended in strongly disagree or disagree were interpreted as positive attitudes, and the opposite was true for responses to negative questions that ended in strongly agree or disagree. In this survey, those who selected "neutral" also selected "neutral." Overall, the results indicate that sample respondents with a strong attitude toward community engagement are above average, averages are medium, and below average are those with a low attitude toward the same.

According to Table 4, the sample respondents' opinions for taking part in local community economic development activities are low (35%), medium (2%), and high (63%). Conversely, of the respondents in the participant sample, 75% have positive attitudes on taking part in community economic development activities, while the remaining 25% have negative sentiments. Once more, 63.4%, 7.1%, and 29.5% of those who were not participants expressed low, medium, or high opinions about community

participation. This suggests that there is a favorable correlation between having a positive attitude and engaging in community economic development initiatives. Furthermore, at less than a 5% probability level, the P value 0.028 shows that attitude has a substantial impact on community participation in LED activities.

Table 5 Level of Interest of Sample Respondents

Response about interest in participating	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED activities	Not Participated in LED activities	
Low	18(12.5%)	38(67.5%)	56(63.3%)
Medium	55(37.5%)	4(8%)	60(10%)
High	74(50 %)	14(25%)	88(26.7%)
Total	147(100%)	56(100%)	203(100%)

$X^2 = 11.729$ P value = 0.003***

***significant at < 1% probability level

Source: Own survey, 2020

It is positively hypothesized that participation in LED works will pique personal attention. The sample respondents marked as disagree, undecided, and agree on the six interest valuing questions, respectively. All values were then calculated, with above average representing strong interest, average representing medium interest, and below average representing low interest in participation. Consequently, Table 5 shows that the percentages with low, medium, and high interest are 63.3%, 10%, and 26.7%, respectively. Of the participants, 12.5% are not very interested, 37.5% are somewhat interested, and the remaining 50% are very interested. Regarding the non-participant group, the percentages are as follows: 67.5%, 8%, and 25% have little, medium, and high interest, respectively, in taking part in local economic development initiatives. At less than 1% probability, the p-value (0.003) indicated that participation in LED activities is significantly influenced by personal interest. This might be because there isn't a conducive atmosphere for involvement or because relevant bodies aren't organizing things well enough to need time, expertise, and resources from interested parties.

Table 6 Response of Leadership System to Community Participation

Response about leadership	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED activities	Not Participated in LED activities	
Poor	63(42.8%)	44(78.5%)	107(52.7%)
Medium	50(34%)	8(14.2%)	58(28.7%)
Good	34(23.1%)	4(7.1%)	38(18.7%)
Total	147(100%)	56(100%)	203(100%)

$X^2 = 15.669$; P-value = 0.000***; Df = 1

***Significant at 1% probability level

Source: Own Survey, 2020

The sample respondents answered “Yes” or “No” to the six questions on the leadership system and how it influences community engagement, as shown in Table 6. As a result, the outcome was computed, and all values over average are interpreted as signs of excellent leadership, while values below average are associated with subpar leadership. Consequently, the above table shows that, in terms of leadership quality, 52.7%, 28.7%, and 18.7%, respectively, have poor, medium, and good leadership. There are 42.8%, 34%, and 23.1% of participants in the participant category who have poor, medium, and good leadership, respectively. Regarding the non-participant group, the percentages with poor, medium, and good leadership were 78.5%, 14.2%, and 7.1%, respectively. At a probability threshold of less than 1%, the p-value of 0.000 indicated a substantial impact of leadership on involvement in LED activities.

Table 7 Response to Monitoring and Evaluation

Response about monitoring and evaluation	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED activities	Not Participated in LED activities	
Poor	95(64.6%)	50(89.3%)	145(71.4%)
Medium	37(25.1%)	6(10.7%)	43(21.1%)
Good	15(10%)	0(%)	15(7.3%)
Total	147(100%)	147(100%)	203(100%)

$X^2 = 4.68$; P-value 0.030**; Df = 1

**Significant at a 5% probability level

Source: Own Survey, 2020

Continuous monitoring of the local economic development strategy’s implementation is required. As a result, the municipal services office’s capacity building and community engagement section handles the majority of the M&E work related to community participation in LED. Table shows how the sample respondents answered two questions about the amount of monitoring and evaluation work and how it influences community engagement by selecting “Yes” or “No.” Consequently, the result was computed, and it was determined that a monitoring and evaluation system that is above average indicated a good system; a system that is below average indicated a poor system. The average was found to be medium. Consequently, Table 7 showed that the community involvement monitoring and assessment system received responses of 71.4%, 21.1%, and 7.3%, respectively, for poor, medium, and good participation. 64.6%, 25.1%, and 10% of the participant group, respectively, have poor, medium, and high health. Regarding the non-participant group, the percentages are as follows: 89.3%, 10.7%, and 7.3% have poor, medium, and good, respectively. At less than a 5% probability level, the p-value (0.030) indicated that monitoring and evaluation have a substantial impact on participation in LED activities. This could be the result of the necessity for constant monitoring of the local economic development strategy’s implementation.

Table 8 Response to Partnership Arrangement

Response about a partnership arrangement	Response about a partnership arrangement		Total
	Participated in LED	Not participated in LED	
Yes	129(87.5%)	8(14.3%)	137(67%)
No	18(12.5%)	48(85.7%)	66(33%)
Total	147(100%)	56(100%)	203(100%)

$X^2=25.83$; P-value 0.000***

***Significant at < 1% probability level

Source: own survey, 2020

According to the survey results for the sample respondents in the above table, an average was determined for the three questions concerning

partnership arrangements and community participation in LED. Table 8 shows that 67% of respondents gave a positive response and 33% gave a negative one. 87.5% of the participant respondents gave a positive response to the questions, while 12.5% gave a negative response. Conversely, 14.3% of the respondents who were not participants gave a good response, while 85.7% gave a negative response. At less than 1% probability, the p-value (0.000) demonstrated that well-functioning partnership arrangements have a significant impact on community participation. This might be because local economic development emphasizes the potential of the local region and specifies what local stakeholders can and should do to guarantee that their local community realizes its potential; as a result, improved partnerships are crucial for cooperation at every local level.

Table 9 Response to Directives

Response about directives	Frequency		Total
	Participated in LED activities	Not Participated in LED activities	
Yes	137(92.9%)	47(84.3%)	184 (91%)
No	10(7.3%)	9(15.7%)	19 (9%)
Total	147(100%)	56(100%)	203(100%)

$X^2 = 14.569$; P-value = 0.031***; Df = 1

*** Significant at less than 5% probability level

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The results of the survey, which was conducted with a sample of respondents, are shown in Table 9. The three questions asked concerned the existence of a directive pertaining to community participation in LED, its implementation to achieve local economic development strategy, the calculation of its contribution, and the taking of an average. The above data shows that 19% of respondents gave a negative response, while 91% of respondents gave a good response. 92.9 percent of the participant respondents gave a positive response to the questions, and 7.3 percent gave a negative response. Conversely, 93.3% of the respondents who were not participants gave a good response, while 9% gave a negative one. The variable's significance at a probability level lower than 5% was demonstrated by the p-value. This may be the result of highly structured directives that

promote local creativity and innovation, mobilize communities and resources, redistribute resources, provide technical support and training for self-employment and business start-ups, and generally address social and economic challenges at the local level beforehand.

Summary of Independent Variables Used for this Study

Econometric Analysis

Logit Regression Model

There is no colinearity among the variables, as the multicollinearity test revealed. As a result, the binary logit model was used to assess all independent variables that were postulated under this section. The statistical program SPSS 16.0 was used to conduct the analysis. The table below displays the model's output.

Table 9 Binary Logit Estimates for Factors Affecting Community Participation in LED

Variables	Contingency Coefficient (β)	Odds ratio Exp (β)	Wald statistics	Std error	P-value
SEX	0.093	0.911	0.012	0.844	0.912
AGE	0.187	1.206	0.772	0.213	0.380
FAMSIZ	-0.093	0.911	0.012	0.844	0.34
RELIGN	0.623	1.865	2.587	0.388	0.829
EDULVL	2.368	0.823	0.232	0.404	0.000***
INCOME	3.536	1.004	15.879	0.887	0.000***
LAWARE	0.225	21.591	0.042	1.101	0.006***
ATITDE	1.443	4.235	0.000	0.039	0.012**
INTRST	0.950	2.586	9.066s	0.688	0.025**
LDRSHP	1.443	5.540	6.270	0.576	0.000***
MONEVA	2.072	7.944	5.056	0.494	0.003***
PRTARG	1.429	0.437	3.445	0.77	0.000***
DDIRCTV	0.783	2.749	0.855	0.847	0.031**

Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.692$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 1.000$

***Significant at <1% probability level

**Significant at <5% probability level

*Significant at <10% probability level

Source: Own survey, 2020

The explanatory factors that were statistically significant and indirectly related to community involvement in local economic development were revealed by the Binary Logit Regression analysis.

According to the Cox and Snell R^2 results, the logit model explains 69.2% of the variation in community members' participation in local economic growth. This is indicated by the model's goodness of fit, which stands at 0.692. For a relationship, the Nagelkerke modification with a range of 0 to 1 is a more accurate indicator. According to (Gujarati), Nagelkerke's R^2 is typically greater than the Cox and Snell metric. The most commonly reported R-squared estimate is Nagelkerke's R^2 , which may be found in the 'Model Summary' table of the SPSS output. It was 1.000 in this investigation, meaning that there is a 100% strong correlation between the predictor and the prediction.

Interpretation of Econometric Results

Nine of the thirteen explanatory factors in the binary logistic model table above are significant for community engagement in LED. These include leadership, monitoring and evaluation, collaboration arrangements, education and income levels, awareness and attitude levels, interest in participating, and instructions. The following is how those important variables are discussed:-

Education Level: At 1%, the education level is significant and positively correlated with community involvement in local, sustainable economic growth. When other factors remain constant, the community's support for engaging in some form of local economic development activities rises by 2.368 for every degree of education attained. Better educated community members participate than illiterate ones; extra class attainments rise by 0.862. The results of the focus groups and the qualitative analysis were in agreement with each other. The educated members of the community are exhibiting superior performance and dedication in their kebeles, leading to remarkable accomplishments. This might be because well-educated community members understand their duties and responsibilities as well as the advantages of local economic development. They are also sufficiently engaged to welcome and put new development concepts and tactics into practice. The outcome is consistent with research showing that involvement in the Garissa sewerage development project is positively and significantly impacted by education. The majority of locals said that the

community's engagement in development initiatives was greatly influenced by their level of education, and they had a positive attitude about taking part in such programs (Abdi Ali). Furthermore, the study by (Mwiru) on the significance of community participation in local development projects in the case of the Dodoma Municipal Council revealed that citizens' ignorance is one of the reasons they do not participate in development projects in their wards, and their lack of education makes them unaware of the significance of participation, which is their legally mandated right.

Income Level: At a 1% significance level, the results of a logit regression analysis indicated that income is a significant economic variable that positively and significantly correlates with community members' involvement in local community economic development initiatives. Participation in LED activities and income have a positive correlation, as indicated by the contingency coefficient of 3.536. When all other factors remain constant, the odds ratio of engaging in LED activities increased by a factor of 1.004 for each unit of additional revenue earned by a community member. This suggests that community members with higher incomes engage in LED more frequently. This might be as a result of their capacity to provide monetary or in-kind contributions to community development projects, which support the establishment of various infrastructures that assist the development of an environment that is favorable for regional economic growth. Qualitative analysis corroborated the findings as well, showing that individuals with higher incomes are more likely than those with lower incomes to participate in local economic development initiatives. Focus group participants were persuaded of the relationship between income and participation in LED works. Furthermore, they stated that it provides them with the financial independence to freely and voluntarily contribute to community economic development initiatives such as offering goods and services to the community that enhance the local economy. Conversely, they claimed that it provides individuals with the self-assurance to make choices and actively engage in exercising their rights regarding local development projects. Furthermore, the evaluation of the Local Economic Development

(LED) Approach in Ethiopia was carried out with consideration to the financial limitations of the community in contributing to development projects, as well as the cultural barriers that prevent the community from participating in local economic development practices (Gebre-Egziabher and Clacey).

Level of Awareness: The result revealed that awareness has a significant and positive association with participation in LED at a 1% significance level. The contingency coefficient of 0.225 showed that participation in LED and awareness of it are positively related. The odds ratio indicates that members of the community are in favor of participating in local economic development works 21.591 as they are aware of the role of participation in local economic development, *ceteris paribus*. This may be due to citizens are not given seminars on awareness of their roles and responsibilities. This implies that citizens who have access to information about their contribution to community economic development participate well, and on the other hand, those who have no access to information do not participate. The reasons for this include, on the one hand, the inability of local leaders to educate people about their roles and responsibilities and the lack of information that they provide, and, on the other hand, the public's apathy and lack of interest in what is happening in their communities, as well as miscommunication between local leaders and the community at large. The results of the focus groups and the qualitative analysis supported each other. The focus group participants felt that awareness had a direct impact on participation in local economic development (LED) and that awareness also had an impact on the model's output. Citizens who are more aware of their rights and responsibilities in the community are more likely to participate in local economic development initiatives, and vice versa. The outcome is consistent with awareness research, which has a strong and favorable impact on involvement. It was said that when the community has taken ownership of the project and is aware of it, effective community participation is feasible.

Attitude: It is one of the independent factors influencing community engagement with LEDs. At a 5% significant threshold, the p-value shows

its impact on LED involvement. The community's involvement in LED and its favorable attitude are positively correlated, as indicated by the contingency coefficient of 1.443. The chances ratio of 4.235 means that one step adds 4.235 if attitude in its unit rises. The logit model will lead one to the conclusion that community engagement in local economic growth is positively correlated with attitudes toward participation. This could be the result of cultural thinking that disregards the advancement of the group or views this as the responsibility of the government rather than something that affects the individual. The outcome was corroborated by qualitative analysis, as focus group participants were persuaded by the impact of attitude toward LED engagement. Most locals said that they were greatly influenced by the way other people in the community felt. The majority of participants in the focus group discussion stated that the main obstacle to LED participation is still the local community's attitude of waiting for government funding for local development projects, asking for reimbursement even for volunteer work, and waiting for government jobs. The results (Asaduzzaman) showed a substantial correlation between participation and attitude toward community development.

Interest to participate: At a 5% significance level, this is one of the independent variables influencing community engagement in LED. The positive correlation between interest and community engagement in LED is indicated by the contingency coefficient of 0.950. This implies that engagement in local economic development rises in tandem with interest. The odds ratio of 2.586 shows that community involvement in LED also raises the odds ratio's value when it rises in a certain unit. The results of the quantitative analysis were also supported by the qualitative analysis, which found that the lack of motivation and self-interest among key informants and FGD participants in the current study is impeding community participation in local community economic development. This is because there is a lack of an inviting environment for participation, as well as improper organization of necessary time, skill, and resource inputs by relevant bodies. However, as a result of the communities' lack of initiative in engaging in local economic

development initiatives, need-based community development has become more prevalent than asset-based community development. This is primarily due to the communities' perception of impossibility and development of an untrustworthy mentality. Congruent with this, (Jackson) stated that the obstacles to involvement include conflicting interests, loss of interest, and inadequate local management.

Leadership System: At the 1% significance level, there was a noteworthy and affirmative correlation between leadership and involvement. When all other factors remain unchanged, community involvement in LED projects rises by a 5.540 odds ratio for every unit increase in leadership quality. Since LED involves bringing together several stakeholders to lead a strategy or program, leaders are tasked with organizing the initiative, authorizing initiatives, and allocating funding. They should also be able to mobilize financial and in-kind local resources, which will greatly increase its sustainability. The results of the focus groups and key interviews supported the findings of the qualitative analysis, which showed that local government was the driving force behind community participation in local economic development. This was done in order to create job opportunities, ensure the security of local governance, and stabilize the local economy by enlisting the help of other partnerships and the community. As a result, community coordination is crucial for LED engagement. Likewise, they noted that every level committee needed to put in a lot of effort to coordinate resource mobilization if they were to bring about genuine and well-planned local economic development.

The results of (Abdi Ali) also showed that community involvement in development projects was influenced by managerial involvement. Furthermore, he pointed out that the presence of inept ward leaders who take their jobs for granted and even don't know how to involve citizens in development projects is one of the main reasons why people don't participate in them.

Monitoring and Evaluation: At a 1% likelihood level, it is one of the explanatory variables influencing involvement for LED. The relationship between engagement in LED activities and the tracking and assessment of such activities is favorable, as indicated by the contingency coefficient of 2.072.

The odds ratio of 7.944 shows that increasing monitoring and evaluation within the unit will improve community engagement in LED. This could be the result of the necessity for constant monitoring of the local economic development strategy's implementation. The model result was also validated by the focus group discussion's qualitative outcome. Regarding this, KPI and the focus group discussion with the interviewee highlighted that local economic development policies are deficient in monitoring and evaluation as well as intervention details. There are difficulties with the local economic development process in the local government domain, from policy to execution, as the results of (Mbugua et al.) showed. These include the following: policies don't always translate into action; better skill levels are needed; staff and funding shortages must be addressed; low levels of community involvement exist in the planning and execution of local economic development projects; and inadequate monitoring and evaluation.

Directives: Is among the explanatory factors influencing the involvement of the community in LED. At the 5% significance level, the model result demonstrated a substantial and positive link between highly specified directives and community engagement in LED. while guidelines are implemented appropriately, community participation in LED works is favored by a 2.749 odds ratio, increasing by one unit while other variables remain constant. *Ceteris paribus*. The above conclusion is further supported by the qualitative results, which show that highly structured directives, when followed, secure local economic development through community mobilization, resource redistribution, local creativity and innovation promotion, technical assistance and training for self-employment and business start-up, and, generally, by addressing social and economic challenges ahead of time at the local level. It also facilitates compliance by committees and councilors, including high-ranking officials. Similar to this, (MUDH) claimed that strong community involvement in the area and the honest and methodical assessment of administrative and regulatory barriers or bottlenecks to private sector development are necessary to create an atmosphere that is favorable for LED.

Partnership Arrangement: At the 1% significance level, this variable also exhibits a positive and significant link with community participation on LED. The factors show a positive and significant association, suggesting that well-functioning partnership arrangements to encourage community participation in LED at various levels raise community participation in LED. When all other factors are held equal, communities with well-arranged partnerships have a 0.437 chances ratio in favor of taking part in LED. Paribus Citreous. This may be because local economic development emphasizes the potential of the area and specifies what local stakeholders must do to guarantee that their community realizes its full potential. As a result, improved partnerships are crucial for cooperation at every local level. While standalone self-help initiatives are not considered participation in and of itself, participatory techniques built upon pre-existing urban development processes assist them when feasible and increase their efficacy by integrating them into the framework of urban systems. Similarly, the model result was also validated by the qualitative outcome of the focus group discussion. According to a key informant, the establishment of organizational clusters is based on people's constitutionally guaranteed rights to participate in the community and resolve issues of good governance in an orderly manner, which in turn opens up prospects for better resolution. As a result, the organizational clusters are better positioned to increase engagement and fortify their support of local development initiatives. Because the aforementioned descriptive data demonstrated that effective participation occurs when structures work effectively, and vice versa, there is a positive association between successfully functional structures and community participation. On the other hand, the research conducted by (Kassa) revealed that municipal structures still lack a strong foundation for local economic development. This is demonstrated by fact that municipalities do not have units dedicated to local economic development, in certain cases, there are no funds at all allocated for it.

Summary

In this study, the community's involvement in locally driven, sustainable economic development

was evaluated using Wolayta Sodo town as a case study. Wolaita Sodo is a large town in Ethiopia that is frighteningly growing. Numerous circumstances necessitate the investigation of this research issue. Even though it has been acknowledged as important, elements that influence community involvement in sustainable local economic development have long been ignored and excluded from the study field. This study made an effort to evaluate local economic development efforts in the neighborhood. The primary factor in choosing the issue was its proportional significance to the town's sustainable growth. Both quantitative and qualitative data obtained through survey questionnaires and focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were evaluated.

In addition to analyzing the function of community involvement and the factors influencing it in the study region, the study was carried out to evaluate the current state of community engagement in local economic growth. Of all the sample respondents, 72.5 percent participated in some capacity in local economic development initiatives, while the remaining 27.5 percent did not participate at all.

Qualitative investigation revealed that the main ways in which community involvement contributes to local economic growth are through fostering a sense of ownership and belonging, establishing structured performance mechanisms, and Efficient engagement with the community can result in economic growth, socio-political change, and individual and social empowerment, all of which can lead to sustainable development.

The econometric model's results showed how several variables' determinants influenced community engagement in the research region in relation to one another. Three continuous and ten discrete explanatory variables made up the total of thirteen in the model for community involvement in local economic development. Nine (9) of the total thirteen (13) factors had a significant correlation with the research area's local economic development engagement from the community. Thus, it was discovered that a number of factors, including income, attitude, degree of awareness, desire in participating, leadership structure, monitoring and

evaluation processes, partnership arrangements, and instructions, had a favorable and substantial impact on community involvement in local economic development. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses yielded consistent results for all explanatory variables. Age, sex, family size, and religion were among the demographic variables that were below average. The community's participation in sustainable local economic growth was significantly impacted by the elements as well as the individual, socioeconomic, technological, institutional, and regulatory framework.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is a remarkable country that is reducing poverty and growing, thus community involvement is essential to boosting local economies and battling unemployment and poverty there. Particularly in Ethiopia's cities, unemployment and poverty are on the rise. The development challenge could not be resolved by the government alone without a cooperative effort with the community. Local economies stand to gain much from community involvement in local economic development. It might also be employed as a tool to carry out the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) that the nation is now carrying out.

The study's conclusions regarding participation status revealed, although not always continuously and permanently, the majority of the respondents were involved in some form of sustainable local economic development projects in their communities, providing either cash or in-kind support.

Regarding the role of community participation in sustainable local economic development, the study's qualitative findings demonstrated that local communities were actively involved in initiatives such as revenue collection, job creation, infrastructure provision (such as the installation of water and electricity lines), access roads, walk ways, drinking water pipes, health posts, sports centers, and community policing). These initiatives aid in the development of a sense of ownership and belonging as well as the creation of structured performance systems and social and personal empowerment, all of which eventually contribute to sustainable local economic development.

The statistical results demonstrated a statistically significant and positive correlation between community participation in local economic development and factors such as income level, attitude, awareness, interest in participating, leadership system, monitoring and evaluation, partnership arrangement, and directives. That is to say, these institutional, technical, demographic, socioeconomic, personal, and regulatory elements influence how actively communities participate in the economic development of their places, independent of other unanticipated factors.

Recommendations

Community involvement makes a huge contribution to local economic growth that is sustainable. Despite its contribution, it is insufficient in the study region in terms of efficacy and consistency of involvement to achieve sustainable local economic development. A number of socioeconomic, individual, and technological elements, including education, income, awareness, interest, and attitude, as well as leadership and monitoring systems, had a significant impact on community involvement and, in turn, local economic development. Additionally, the institutional and regulatory framework—which includes partnerships between various stakeholders and the community as well as the implementation of highly organized directives - was not up to par with expectations. The study's recommendations to enhance community involvement and boost local economic growth are based on its findings.

- The government's directive to aggressively incorporate local communities in economic development projects has been shown to have a positive impact by increasing involvement in various community development initiatives. However, since a large number of community members, private organizations, and non-governmental organizations are still poorly integrated with LED works, much effort needs to be done to increase the degree of community participation. In order to fill basic knowledge and skill gaps and increase their effort in participating in various LED activities, community members and stakeholders must be aware of training in LED strategies for intensive participation. This

includes looking for funding from NGO's, the private sector, and other organizations that can support the development of their local communities.

- It was discovered that a larger range of variation in involvement and its divergence among community members was partially caused by lower earnings. Thus, fostering a culture of conservation, generating employment from locally accessible resources, and fostering a favorable business environment for local enterprises to enable them to engage in revenue-generating activities through local economic development through the creation of jobs through MSE with others empowers them to take part in LED and ultimately generate revenue.
- Raising interest in participating in local economic development initiatives, fostering forums that foster a good attitude regarding LED engagement, and offering technical trainings, seminars, and awareness-building are all vital.
- By enhancing the institutional and regulatory framework and offering technical assistance to the organizations in charge of coordinating the LED initiatives, there is still room to increase community participation. To improve community participation in local economic development, it is necessary to strengthen regular monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. Tough leadership and the enactment of structured directives help to create strong and functional partnership arrangements, such as technical and steering committees, to mobilize local resources in kind and cash from various sources that contributed significantly to its sustainability at different levels.

Funding Statement

The authors declare they have received no specific funding from any fundraising organization.

Availability of Data and Materials

The data from the current study were generated and evaluated and are presented in this article, as well as on request from the contributing authors.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability

Data will be made available on request.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge Wolaita Sodo University for permitting to do this research. We also thank the respondents for their willingness to provide the real data for this study. The authors thank the participating households, their communities, and the Wolaita Sodo City Administration Office.

Ethiopia Technical Names

- Woreda means District
- Kebele denotes Village
- Dega implies Highland
- Woyenadega indicates Mid-Highland
- Kolla means Lowland

References

- Abdi Ali, Hussein. *Determinants of Community Participation in the Implementation of Development Projects: A Case of Garissa Sewerage Project*. University of Nairobi, 2013.
- Asaduzzaman, Mohammed. *Governance in Practice: Decentralization and People's Participation in the Local Government of Bangladesh*. University of Tampere Press, 2008.
- Cunningham, Shawn, and Jorg Meyer-Stamer. "Planning or Doing Local Economic Development? Problems with the Orthodox Approach to LED." *Africa Insight*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2005, pp. 4-14.
- Cupples, J. *What is Community Capacity Building?*. 2005.
- DPLG. *Stimulating and Developing Sustainable Local Economies: National Framework for Local Economic Development (LED) in South Africa 2006-2011*. Department of Local Government and Provincial Affairs, 2006.

- Gebre-Egziabher, Tegegne, and Richard Clacey. *Assessment of Local Economic Development (LED) Approach in Ethiopia*. United Nations Development Programme and Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Government of Ethiopia, 2011.
- Gujarati, Damodar N. *Basic Econometrics*. McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Jackson, Tony. "Mainstreaming Sustainability in Local Economic Development." *Local Economy*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2007, pp. 12-26.
- Kassa, Lisanu. *Assessing Community Participation in Sustainable Local Economic Development: The case of Wolayta Sodo Town*. Addis Ababa University, 2017.
- Marsland, Rebecca. "Community Participation the Tanzanian Way: Conceptual Contiguity or Power Struggle?." *Oxford Development Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2006, pp. 65-79.
- Mbugua, John, et al. *Community Participation for Sustainable Water and Sanitation*. 1993.
- Meyer-Stamer, Jorg. "Why is Local Economic Development so Difficult, and What can we do to make it more effective?." *Mesopartner Working Paper 04*, 2003.
- MUDH. *Local Economic Development Guideline for Ethiopian Cities*. Ministry of Urban Development & Housing, 2018.
- Mwiru, Marsela N. *The Importance of Community Participation in Development Projects at Local Level: A Case of Dodoma Municipal Council*. Mzumbe University, 2015
- National Population and Housing Census*. Central Statistical Agency, 2007.
- Nel, E., and Christian Myles Rogerson. *Local Economic Development in the Developing World: The experience of Southern Africa*. Transaction Publishers, 2005.
- Oakley, Peter. *Project with People: The Practice of Participation in Rural Development*. International Labour Organization, 1991.
- Rodriguez-Pose, Andres, and Sylvia A. R. Tijmstra. "Local Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2007.
- Rogerson, Christian M. *Strategic Review of Local Economic Development in South Africa*. 2009.
- Sahilu, Teshome. *Challenges and Determinants of Household Food Security: The Case of South Bench Woerda in Bench Maji Zone, South Western Ethiopia*. 2010.
- Swinburn, Gwen, et al. *Local Economic Development: A Primer Developing and Implementing Local Economic Development Strategies and Action Plans*. The World Bank, 2006.
- Yamane, Taro. *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis*. Joanna Cotler Books, 1967.

Author Details

Degu Kassa, Social Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Economic, Social and Infrastructure Affairs Directorate, Wolaita Zone Chief Administrator Advisory Office, Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia, **Email ID:** kassadegu@gmail.com

Deneke Dana, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, College of Social Science and Humanities, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia, **Email ID:** danadeneke@yahoo.com

Mariesennayya Senapathy, Associate Professor, Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia, East Africa, **Email ID:** dresenapathy@wsu.edu.et