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ROLE OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORMULATION IN NIGERIA: A SCENARIO OF ADAMAWA STATE (2019 – 2022)

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the role of citizens' participation in policy formulation in Nigeria, with specific reference to Adamawa State between 2019 and 2022. Recognizing that democratic governance thrives on the active engagement of citizens in public decision-making, the research investigates the extent to which individuals and civil society organizations contribute to policy processes at the state level. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires distributed across three senatorial districts in Adamawa State with qualitative insights gathered via interviews and document analysis. Findings reveal that citizens' participation in policy formulation during the period under review was largely limited, often hindered by factors such as political apathy, lack of awareness, low trust in government institutions, and weak institutional frameworks for inclusive governance. Despite constitutional provisions and government pronouncements encouraging participatory governance, the practical mechanisms for meaningful engagement remained underdeveloped. The study concludes that effective citizen participation requires deliberate institutional reforms, civic education, and the strengthening of participatory platforms to ensure that public policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the populace. It recommends the establishment of community-level policy forums, increased transparency in governance processes, and the empowerment of local actors to enhance democratic accountability and inclusive development in Adamawa State and beyond.

Keywords: Citizens' Participation, Policy Formulation, Democratic Governance, Public Engagement, Inclusive Development

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Engaging citizens in the decision-making process is becoming an important priority for governments in different countries of the world. Citizen participation is seen as the core of democratic governance, and it ensures the legitimacy of the political process (Box, 1998; King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998; Pateman, 1970). Citizen participation in the decisions that affect their lives is an imperative of contemporary society.

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For the first half of the 20th century, citizens relied on public officials and administrators to make decisions about public policy and its implementation. The latter part of the 20th century saw a shift toward greater direct citizen involvement. This trend is expected to grow as democratic societies become more decentralized, interdependent, networked, linked by new information technologies, and challenged by "wicked problems" (Eriksson, Reestorff & Stage, 2018). In recent years, the issue of citizen participation has received increasingly serious attention from researchers, policy-makers, and international development institutions. In fact, citizen participation in shaping and implementing public policies is regarded as a critical ingredient of participatory democracy (Dean, 2018). Citizen participation in policy-making and implementation is an integral part of public administration and an essential ingredient of grassroots development in Nigeria. Hence, the present study tends to analyze the role of citizen participation in policy formulation and implementation in Adamawa State (2019–2022). The Adamawa State Planning Commission (2022) emphasizes that the Citizen Engagement and Participatory Planning Policy (CEPP) is a strategic initiative by the Adamawa State government aimed at building trust and accountability in governance. It promotes inclusive, grassroots decision-making to overcome development barriers and ensure equitable service delivery. The policy reflects a commitment to social sustainability and aligns with global standards (e.g., the World Bank), targeting broad stakeholder inclusion and effective state-community collaboration. Against this background, the study aims to examine the level of citizen participation in policy formulation and implementation in Adamawa State, assess the impact of citizen engagement on policy outcomes, identify the barriers to effective citizen participation in the policy-making process, and evaluate the mechanisms adopted by the state government to enhance public involvement in governance between 2019 and 2022.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The review of related literature was presented under the following sub headings: Conceptual clarification, theoretical literature, review of empirical studies and theoretical framework. Systematic literature was used in study.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

In this section explained major concepts in the study. These include: citizen participation, public policy and fragile state.

2.1.1 Citizen Participation

Gaventa and Valderrama, (2024). highlights a shift in the concept of participation from community-based development to a broader connection with citizenship and democratic governance. This evolution is most evident in decentralization efforts, which raise important questions about democracy and how to effectively engage citizens at the grassroots level.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022), asserts that citizen and stakeholder participation is fundamental to open government, enhancing transparency, accountability, and democratic legitimacy. When citizens are informed, involved, and able to evaluate public decisions, it leads to better governance outcomes and strengthens trust in government over time.

Ortiz, Arboleda, and Ramírez (2020.). suggest that in the context of open government, citizen participation must be meaningful and active not limited to mere consultations. True participation involves citizens directly in policymaking and decision processes, thereby enhancing democracy, legitimacy, and civic engagement.

2.1.2 Public Policy

O.P. Jindal Global University. (2023). “Public policy is the framework of laws, regulations, and actions governments implement to achieve social and economic goals. It’s a statement of the government’s intent and commitment to address a particular issue or problem. Public policy shapes the decisions of government officials and agencies, and it affects society, the economy, and politics.”

Knoepfel, Varone, and Hill (2011), views public policy as a strategic interaction among public, para-state, and private actors aimed at solving collective problems. Public policy involves coordinated legislative and administrative actions, characterized by intentional coherence, defined target groups, and formal measures. The chapter emphasizes the central role of public actors and outlines the key components and stages of the policy cycle.

According to Dye, (2013), policy analysis goes beyond identifying what policies are adopted—it seeks to understand who benefits, why certain policies are chosen, and their impacts. The use of various political science models helps explain different dimensions of political and policy behavior, offering diverse insights rather than a single definitive explanation.

2.1.3 Local Government

According to Makinde, Hassan and Olaiya (2016) local government is being defined as “a political subdivision of a nation (in a Federal or State system), which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the power to impose taxes as well as exact Labour for prescribed purposes”

Ugwu, and Ugwuja (2016), presents local government as a legally constituted political subdivision with autonomy over local affairs, including taxation and service delivery. Citing the UN’s widely accepted definition, the author emphasizes citizen participation, local governance, and development through efficient service provision and resource mobilization.

Agbodike, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah(2014), argues that while local government is intended to drive rural development and political mobilization, it is hindered by interference from higher levels of government and misuse as a tool for political patronage. These challenges undermine its effectiveness. The author concludes that sustainable development at the local level in Nigeria requires true federalism, good governance, transparency, accountability, and adherence to global best practices.

2.4 Empirical Review

This section reviews existing literature relevant to the study's subject matter, offering insights from both local and international contexts.

Kasymova and Schachter (2014) explored the global prevalence of citizen participation occurring predominantly after key policy decisions have been made. Their study revealed that this practice is not unique to the United States but is a widespread phenomenon observed across municipalities worldwide. This suggests a systemic pattern where citizen involvement is often delayed until after major decisions are finalized, thereby limiting its influence on governance outcomes. Their findings underscore the universal nature of post-decisional engagement and highlight its implications for participatory governance.

Yang and Pandey (2011) underscored the critical role of citizen participation in reinforcing democratic governance. Their research emphasized that active civic engagement strengthens democratic institutions by fostering inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability. Importantly, they found that the success of participation initiatives is heavily influenced by both institutional and citizen-related factors. On the institutional side, elements such as governance structure, administrative capacity, and mechanisms for inclusion significantly affect outcomes. On the citizens’ side, factors like civic awareness, level of

engagement, social cohesion, and accessibility to participation platforms play a vital role. Their study highlighted the interdependence between institutional capacity and citizen characteristics in shaping the quality and effectiveness of participatory governance.

Similarly, studies by John (2009) and McKenna (2011) focused on the role of knowledge and skills among participants in determining the success of participatory processes. They found that citizens with a higher level of understanding and proficiency particularly in communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving—are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to discussions. Such individuals enhance the depth and quality of deliberations, thereby improving decision-making outcomes. These findings affirm that participant competence is a key determinant of effective engagement, influencing both the process and its results.

Laurian and Shaw (2008) further reinforced the value of citizen participation by linking it to increased public accountability, improved policy-making, and poverty reduction. However, they also noted that several variables influence the success or failure of participation, including who initiates the process, the nature and reliability of information, participant representativeness, interaction dynamics, power relations, and the distribution of knowledge on the subject matter (Golubovic, 2010; Wang, 2001). Yang and Callahan (2011) argued that these factors must be critically examined within the context of the intended goals of citizen participation and the specific governance environment.

Ebdon and Franklin (2006) highlighted the educative and consultative value of public participation. They argued that involving citizens in decision-making can enhance their understanding of complex trade-offs and promote informed input regarding policy priorities. However, they also cautioned that the effectiveness of participatory processes is shaped by variables such as inclusivity, transparency, communication quality, and the willingness of authorities to genuinely consider public input. They identified key factors that determine success: (a) the broader participation environment (e.g., political culture, institutional frameworks); (b) the design of the process (e.g., timing, agenda-setting, selection of participants); (c) the mechanisms for engagement; and (d) the anticipated outcomes.

Yang and Callahan (2007) observed that, in many instances, citizen engagement is initiated only after critical decisions have already been made, resulting in a reactive form of participation. This limits the capacity of citizens to influence decision-making meaningfully and often renders their involvement symbolic rather than substantive.

Bake, Baker, Addams, and Davis (2005) surveyed city managers and identified key factors contributing to successful civic engagement. Their findings highlighted the importance of effectively publicizing participatory events, taking citizens' input seriously, and implementing follow-up mechanisms to sustain engagement and trust.

Further contributions from Fung (2006) and Yang and Pandey (2011) emphasized the significance of representativeness in participation processes. Fung stressed that the inclusion of diverse and marginalized voices is essential for democratic legitimacy and effective decision-making. A representative framework allows for a broader spectrum of perspectives, enhancing the quality and credibility of public deliberations. Yang and Pandey reinforced this perspective, asserting that participatory processes are most effective when they are inclusive and reflect the heterogeneity of the population. The representativeness of participants not only strengthens the democratic character of decision-making but also ensures that the outcomes address a wide range of societal needs.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of new institutionalism, along with the decisional and non-decision-making models of power (Hall & Taylor, 2006). The institutional approach traces its roots to Thorstein Veblen, whose *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) introduced the concept of "conspicuous consumption." The terms *institutionalism* and *institutional economics* were first introduced in 1919 by Walton Hamilton. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) describe *new institutionalism* as an evolving perspective within organizational theory and sociology that challenges the rational-actor assumptions dominant in classical economics.

In the context of local governance, key players include elected local officials, administrative officers, and the citizens. The interaction and structure among these entities influence the degree of accountability in policymaking and execution (Shah, 2006).

New institutionalism consists of three main strands: sociological, rational choice, and historical (Hall & Taylor, 2006). The sociological strand explains that institutions like local assemblies are often created as a means for governments to legitimize their social role. The rational choice perspective argues that institutions tend to act based on fixed preferences, which may conflict with broader public interests. To address this, both sociological and rational choice theorists recommend mechanisms—such as the creation of norms, rules, procedures, and dissemination of information—to align institutional behavior with public accountability and

social objectives (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Meanwhile, the historical approach emphasizes that these mechanisms are shaped by past political, economic, and social developments (Barzelay & Gallego, 2005).

In addressing divergent interests within institutions, Leftwich (2007) maintains that institutions are inherently non-neutral, though they can be made more equitable through balanced power dynamics. The distribution of power within institutions is further analyzed through the non-decision-making and decisional models developed by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1970). These models challenge traditional power frameworks by examining how certain issues are deliberately kept off the decision-making agenda. According to these models, the power within institutions can be assessed by analyzing which issues are discussed, what decisions are made, and how the institutions behave in practice (Leftwich, 2007; Lukes, 1993). In this context, power is defined as the ability of one institution to compel another to act against its own preferences (Ham & Hill, 1993). When citizens possess power, their concerns are more likely to be considered and addressed through public policy.

Ultimately, institutions are established to serve specific governmental functions. In fragile settings, the institutionalism theory underscores that citizen participation and institutional processes are inherently linked. Institutions are not value-neutral—they are intentionally shaped to represent and serve the interests of citizens, influencing policy decisions that directly impact their lives. Therefore, citizens cannot be divorced from the realm of public policy.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employs a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of citizen participation in policy-making in Adamawa State. A descriptive research design was adopted, enabling the collection and analysis of both numerical and narrative data to capture trends, perceptions, and practices. The population comprised residents across the three senatorial districts of the state, with a stratified random sampling technique used to ensure balanced representation. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 400 respondents via the Kobo Toolbox platform, focusing on demographics and experiences with government consultations between 2019 and 2023. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and document analysis of relevant government reports and policy documents. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the quantitative data using Stata software, while qualitative data were subjected to content analysis to identify themes and insights. Ethical standards

were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality, and the assurance of anonymity, with all data used strictly for academic purposes.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presenting and analyzing data, using tables to display the collected information, which includes various response categories impacting the final outcomes. Through the Kobo Toolbox platform, 400 questionnaires were randomly distributed across three Local Government Areas in Adamawa State, each representing one of the zones, ensuring the sample size accurately reflects the total number of respondents. Each selected local government represent one of the three senatorial districts in Adamawa State. The data gathered from these respondents is organized in tables, showing the number of responses to each questionnaire item along with their respective percentages.

4.1 Table Distribution of Respondents by Educational Background

Educational Background	Frequency.	Percent
Bachelor Degree.	198	49.50
Diploma.	86	21.50
Master Degree.	116	29.00
Total	400	100.00

Source: Computed using Stata from field survey data 2024

The table reveals the educational background of the 400 respondents, with nearly half (49.50%) holding a Bachelor's degree. Respondents with a Master's degree constitutes 29.00%, while those with a Diploma represent 21.50%. This distribution indicates that the majority of participants in the study have attained a relatively high level of education.

The high percentage of respondents with Bachelor's and Master's degrees suggests that the participants likely have a substantial understanding of policy issues and the importance of their involvement in the policy-making process. This can lead to more informed and articulate contributions to policy discussions.

While the dominance of respondents with higher education degrees is evident, the presence of 21.50% with Diplomas indicates that there is still a significant portion of participants with varied educational experiences.

4.2 Table Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency.	Percent
Retired	69	17.25
Employed full-time	296	74.00
Employed part-time	17	4.25
Student	18	4.50
Total	400	100.00

Source: Computed using Stata from field survey data 2024

The table reveals the employment status of the 400 respondents, with the majority (74.00%) being employed full-time. Retired individuals account for 17.25% of the respondents, while students and part-time employees represent 4.50% and 4.25%, respectively. This distribution highlights the dominance of full-time employed individuals in the study. Meanwhile the high percentage of full-time employed respondents suggests the views and concerns of groups that are likely to be well-represented in the policy formulation process. Issues such as job security, workplace policies, and economic stability might be prioritized.

The significant representation of retired individuals (17.25%) indicates that their perspectives, particularly on matters related to pensions, healthcare, and senior citizen welfare, are also important. Their involvement brings valuable life experience and long-term perspectives to the policy-making process.

Although students and part-time employees constitute smaller percentages (4.50% and 4.25%, respectively), their participation is crucial for comprehensive policy development. Policies that address educational opportunities, part-time job conditions, and youth employment can benefit from their input.

4.3 Table Assessment of Government Consultations on Policy Matters: Frequency of Engagement (2019-2023)

On average, how often did government officials or representatives consult you between 2019 and 2023 regarding policy matters?	Frequency.	Percent
Rarely (1-2 times)	103	25.75
Never	199	49.75
Never Rarely (1-2 times)	6	1.50
Occasionally (3-5 times)	17	4.25
Very Frequently (More than 10 times)	75	18.75
Total	400	100.00

Source: Computed using Stata from field survey data 2024

Table 4.2.2 provides an overview of how often government officials or representatives consulted respondents regarding policy matters in Adamawa State between 2019 and 2023.

The table indicates varying levels of government consultation with respondents on policy matters. Almost half of the respondents (49.75%) reported that they were never consulted by government officials. A significant portion (25.75%) were rarely consulted (1-2 times), while 18.75% were consulted very frequently (more than 10 times). A smaller percentage experienced occasional consultation (3-5 times) at 4.25%, and 1.50% fell into the ambiguous category of "Never Rarely (1-2 times)."

There is a significant flaw in the consultation process, as evidenced by the fact that nearly half of the respondents (49.75%) never received consultation from government representatives. This implies that a sizable segment of the populace is not participating in policy talks, which could result in policies that do not accurately represent the needs and opinions of the community.

However, 18.75% of respondents who were consulted very frequently (more than 10 times) demonstrate that there are segments of the population who are regularly involved in policy discussions. This group likely includes community leaders, activists, or those particularly interested in governance and public affairs.

The smaller group of 4.25% who were consulted occasionally (3-5 times) shows some intermediate level of engagement, suggesting that these respondents might have been involved when specific issues of interest arose.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the data on respondents' educational background, employment status, and frequency of government consultations reveals critical insights into the socio-demographic composition of respondents and the dynamics of government-citizen interaction in policy-making within Adamawa State. These findings provide a foundational understanding of how educational attainment, employment status, and consultation frequency influence citizen engagement in policy processes.

From the educational background distribution, it is evident that the majority of respondents possess high levels of formal education. A combined 78.5% of respondents hold either a Bachelor's or Master's degree, indicating a highly literate sample population. This level of education suggests a strong capacity among the populace to understand, analyze, and contribute meaningfully to policy discourse. The remaining 21.5% with Diploma qualifications also represent a substantial share, underscoring the presence of diverse educational experiences. The prevalence of well-educated individuals implies a population equipped with the knowledge necessary for civic engagement and policy advocacy, which, ideally, should translate into active participation in governance.

The employment status of respondents shows that 74% are employed full-time, while 17.25% are retirees. The dominance of full-time workers suggests that the active workforce forms the bulk of those engaging with policy issues, likely due to their direct stake in economic policies, labor laws, and public service delivery. The significant representation of retirees also implies that older citizens remain invested in policy matters, especially those relating to healthcare, pensions, and social welfare. Meanwhile, the minimal representation of students (4.5%) and part-time employees (4.25%) highlights a gap in youth and part-time worker engagement, which could point to either limited access to participatory mechanisms or a lack of motivation or awareness among these groups.

The evaluation of the extent of government consultations with citizens on policy matters between 2019 and 2023 is particularly revealing. Alarming, 49.75% of respondents reported never being consulted by government officials, while 25.75% said they were rarely consulted. This indicates a serious deficit in inclusive governance and participatory democracy. The lack of engagement with a majority of the population undermines the representativeness and legitimacy of public policies, as they are formed without the input of most citizens. In contrast, only 18.75% of respondents reported being consulted very frequently (more than ten times), suggesting that consultation is often limited to select individuals, possibly elites or politically active persons. The data points to systemic exclusions and weaknesses in participatory frameworks, where only a minority of the population experiences regular engagement with policymakers.

Taken together, these findings reveal a participatory imbalance where educationally and economically capable individuals exist but are not being fully leveraged in policy consultation processes. While the human capital is evidently present, the mechanisms for engagement appear insufficient or selectively applied. This gap between capacity and opportunity underscores the need for more inclusive, deliberate, and structured policy engagement strategies that reach broader segments of the population in Adamawa State.

4.5 Discussion Based Content Analysis

Using thematic analysis, four central themes emerged from the review of secondary sources and content analysis: (1) Institutional Exclusion and Limited Consultation, (2) Communication Barriers and Policy Complexity, (3) Untapped Potential of Technology, and (4) Citizens' Willingness vs. Systemic Inertia. These themes collectively illustrate the structural and procedural limitations hindering effective citizen participation in governance in Adamawa State.

1. Institutional Exclusion and Limited Consultation

One of the dominant themes was the lack of inclusive institutional frameworks that facilitate citizen participation. Content from policy reports and governance reviews revealed that government structures often fail to consult citizens meaningfully during the formulation and implementation of policies. Participation is largely symbolic, with key decisions being made without grassroots input, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. This institutional exclusion not only weakens trust but also leads to policies that are misaligned with the actual needs and aspirations of the population.

2. Communication Barriers and Policy Complexity

Another recurring theme is the ineffective communication between government and citizens, compounded by the technical complexity of many policy documents. Policies are frequently presented in formats and languages inaccessible to the average citizen, reducing understanding and discouraging engagement. This communication gap results in misinterpretations, misinformation, and a sense of alienation from governance processes. The data suggests that even when mechanisms for engagement exist, they are underutilized because citizens are either unaware of them or lack the capacity to engage with highly technical policy content.

3. Untapped Potential of Technology

Thematic analysis also revealed that, while digital platforms and mobile technologies are increasingly available, their potential for fostering engagement remains largely underutilized. Technology could bridge the gap between government and citizens by making consultations, feedback collection, and public debates more accessible. However, the findings show inconsistent use of digital tools for civic engagement. Many platforms

are not user-friendly, lack interactivity, or do not provide feedback to users, which limits their effectiveness in enabling meaningful citizen participation.

4. Citizens' Willingness vs. Systemic Inertia

Perhaps the most striking theme is the contrast between citizen readiness and government inaction. Evidence indicates that a significant portion of the population, especially the youth and educated middle class, is willing and capable of participating in governance. However, systemic inertia—rooted in bureaucratic resistance, political gatekeeping, and outdated processes—prevents this potential from being realized. This disconnect creates frustration, apathy, and sometimes civic unrest, as people feel unheard and excluded despite their readiness to contribute to public discourse.

Synthesis

These themes collectively suggest that the challenge is not merely citizen apathy, but rather a failure of governance structures to create enabling environments for participation. Qualitative analysis underscores the need for targeted reforms to dismantle exclusionary practices, simplify policy communication, leverage digital technology, and align state responsiveness with citizen capacity.

4.6 Conclusion

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the nature and extent of citizen participation in the policy-making process in Adamawa State. The quantitative data, drawn from survey responses across selected Local Government Areas, revealed that despite a relatively high level of education and economic activity among respondents, active participation in governance remains significantly low. Statistical trends pointed to limited involvement in public consultations, low awareness of policy initiatives, and minimal trust in government institutions. These figures underscore the gap between citizens' potential for engagement and the realities of systemic exclusion.

To complement the survey findings, a qualitative content analysis of secondary data—including policy reports, official documents, media sources, and academic literature—was conducted. Using thematic analysis, four dominant themes emerged: institutional exclusion and limited consultation, communication barriers and policy complexity, untapped potential of technology, and citizens' willingness versus systemic inertia. These themes provided deeper insights into why participation remains weak, even among willing and capable citizens. The analysis revealed that political structures are often non-inclusive, public communication is

inaccessible, and civic engagement mechanisms are either underutilized or poorly integrated into governance processes.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies proved valuable in offering a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. While the quantitative data offered measurable evidence of low civic engagement, the qualitative approach provided rich, contextual explanations for the patterns observed. Together, they illustrate that the challenge is not rooted in citizen apathy, but rather in institutional design, policy communication, and governance culture.

To foster a more inclusive and responsive governance system, the study recommends strengthening participatory mechanisms, simplifying policy communication, leveraging technology for civic engagement, and ensuring that citizen input is meaningfully integrated into policy outcomes. Promoting broad-based, continuous, and transparent citizen engagement is critical for building trust, improving service delivery, and ensuring that governance in Adamawa State reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of its people.

4.7 Recommendations

1. The government of Adamawa State should institutionalize regular consultation mechanisms at all levels local, ward, and state through town hall meetings, public hearings, and stakeholder forums. This will enhance transparency and ensure that citizens are meaningfully involved in policy development processes.
2. Participation mechanisms should be designed to accommodate all demographic groups, including women, youths, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities. This can be achieved by removing cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic barriers and adopting more inclusive outreach strategies.
3. Government institutions should develop clearer, simpler, and more consistent communication strategies that inform citizens about policy proposals and invite their input. Feedback loops should be established to show how citizen contributions influence final decisions, thereby building trust and accountability.
4. Policy documents and discussions should be presented in simplified formats and local languages where necessary, to make them more understandable and engaging for the average citizen. This will help address the deterrent effect of policy complexity on participation.

5. The government should invest in improving digital platforms (websites, mobile apps, social media tools) that allow citizens to provide feedback, monitor projects, and access government services. Efforts should also be made to bridge the digital divide by enhancing digital literacy and internet access, especially in rural areas.
6. Civic education campaigns should be intensified to sensitize citizens on their rights and responsibilities in governance. This includes educating the public on how to engage with policy processes and the importance of their contributions to democratic development.

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