

# Impact of Community Participation on Environmental Management in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

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## ABSTRACT

The paper impact of community participation on environmental management focused on the importance of engaging local community members in the management of the environment. In the absence of proper environmental management, communities may engage in unsustainable practises which might be harmful to man and the environment, hence the need to get community members actively involved in the management of the environment. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Three objectives, three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study consist of 1000 members of community based organisations in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State, while the sample size consist of 100 members from the population which was randomly selected to get 10% of the population. A self structured questionnaire used for the study has a reliability index of 0.81. The data collected was analysed using the mean and standard deviation while t-test was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level. From the analysed data the study revealed that community members got more involved in the management of their environment; that community participation positively influenced environmental management outcomes by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibilities and that communication, education, strong local leadership and adequate resources among others are factors affecting successful community participation in the management of the environment. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that regular educational programmes, workshops and training sessions be organised to empower community members with requisite knowledge and skills needed for effective environmental management.

**Key Words:** Community; Management; Impact; Environment and Participation.

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental management is a serious aspect of sustainable development, including the planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies and practices aimed at maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment. It addresses issues such as pollution control, resource conservation, and biodiversity protection to ensure a healthy and resilient ecosystem. As global environmental challenges continue to intensify, the need for effective environmental management becomes increasingly evident. The Earth faces various environmental threats, including climate change, deforestation, pollution, and depletion of natural resources. To mitigate these challenges, environmental management plays a crucial role in promoting responsible resource use, reducing ecological footprint, and fostering long-term environmental sustainability. Community participation becomes imperative in this context as it engages local residents in

decision-making processes, ensuring that their unique perspectives and knowledge are considered in environmental management initiatives. One key factor in achieving successful environmental management is the active involvement of local communities (Reed, Vella, Challies, *et al.*, 2018).

According to Rijal (2023), community participation involves the active involvement of individuals, groups, and organizations within a community in the decision-making processes that affect their environment. This participation can manifest in various forms, including consultations, public hearings, collaborative planning, and volunteer efforts. Effective community participation empowers local residents, encourages environmental stewardship, and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the well-being of their surroundings. To understand the impact of community participation in environmental management, it is essential to explore the key elements of effective community engagement. These include communication, education and awareness, collaborative decision-making as well as capacity building. The active involvement of communities in environmental management can have far-reaching effects on society. It not only leads to more sustainable and locally adapted solutions but also fosters a sense of community cohesion and pride (Steiner & Atterton, 2015).

When communities are engaged in environmental plans, there is a higher likelihood of successful implementation and long-term maintenance of environmental projects. The relationship between community participation and environmental management is interdependent. Community participation enhances the effectiveness of environmental management by tapping into local knowledge, leveraging social capital (ability to work together, interact meaningfully and solve complex problems together) and fostering a shared sense of responsibility (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Conversely, successful environmental management can positively impact communities by improving living conditions, protecting natural resources, and promoting overall well-being. This study aims to explore the intricate dynamics between community participation and environmental management, emphasising the importance of a collaborative approach in addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sustainable environmental management involves effective community planning, implementation and monitoring of environmental policies and practices that will help in maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment. Communities are faced with various environmental threats including climate change, deforestation, pollution and depletion of natural resources due to man's activities on the environment. In mitigating these challenges, environmental management plays a crucial role in promoting responsible resource use, reducing ecological footprints and fostering long term environmental sustainability through the community by engaging local residents in decision making process and ensuring their contributions to environmental management. Thus the need for the study to investigate the impacts of community participation on environmental management.

### Objectives

1. Assess the extent of community participation in environmental management.
2. Evaluate the influence of community participation on environmental management.
3. Identify factors affecting the success of community participation in environmental management.

### Research Questions

1. What is the extent of community participation in environmental management?
2. How does community participation influence environmental management outcomes?
3. What are the factors affecting the success of community participation in environmental management?

## Hypothesis

**Ho<sub>1</sub>**: There is no significant impact of community participation in environmental management outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Community Participation

Community participation is a dynamic force that empowers individuals within a community to actively engage in decision-making processes, take ownership of their destinies, and collectively shape the future of their shared environment. At its core, community participation is a powerful vehicle for fostering social inclusion, amplifying voices, and driving sustainable change (Lucy, 2021). Community participation transcends the mere involvement of individuals; it is about giving voice to the collective aspirations, concerns, and unique perspectives of a community. By actively involving community members in decision-making processes, it empowers them to contribute to the development and implementation of initiatives that directly impact their lives.

As coined out from Jami and Walsh (2016), this concept is a catalyst for breaking down barriers that may impede progress. Whether these barriers are social, economic, or political, community participation dismantles them, creating a platform where every member, irrespective of background or status, can actively contribute to the betterment of their community. It is a powerful antidote to marginalisation and exclusion. One of the defining features of community participation is the sense of ownership it instills. When individuals actively participate in shaping policies, projects, or programmes, they develop a deeper connection to the outcomes. This sense of ownership, in turn, fuels a heightened sense of responsibility for the well-being of the community and its environment.

Community participation is a binding force that fosters social cohesion. As community members come together to address common challenges or pursue shared goals, the fabric of social unity strengthens (Ziakas, 2016). Shared experiences, collaborative problem-solving, and collective celebrations create a sense of belonging that goes beyond individual interests. At its essence, community participation is about democratising decision-making. It advocates for inclusivity, ensuring that decisions affecting the community are not made in isolation by a select few but are the result of collective deliberation. Inclusion in decision-making processes promotes transparency, accountability, and ultimately, the legitimacy of actions taken.

According to Too and Bajracharya (2015), communities that actively participate in their own development are better positioned for sustainable change. Whether it's in the realm of environmental management, social justice, or economic development, the collective wisdom and commitment of community members create a resilient foundation for lasting positive transformation. Community participation is a vibrant force that unleashes the potential within communities to shape their own destinies. It is the heartbeat of democracy at the grassroots level, an instrument of empowerment that, when embraced fervently, has the power to build resilient, vibrant, and sustainable societies.

### Environmental Management

Environmental management is a multidisciplinary concept and practice that involves the careful and strategic coordination of human activities to preserve, protect, and enhance the quality of the environment (Restall & Conrad, 2015). It encompasses a broad range of activities, policies, and practices designed to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. At its core, environmental management seeks to balance human needs and aspirations with the conservation of natural resources and the protection of ecosystems for current and future generations. Environmental management involves the

responsible and sustainable use of natural resources. This includes strategies to prevent over-exploitation, depletion, and degradation of ecosystems, ensuring that resources are used in a way that maintains their long-term viability.

A crucial aspect of environmental management is the control and reduction of pollution. This involves implementing measures to minimise air, water, and soil pollution, as well as addressing the impacts of waste generation. Laurila-Pant, Lehtikoinen, Uusitalo and Venesjärvi (2015) affirmed that pollution control is essential for safeguarding human health and the health of ecosystems. Protecting biodiversity is a key goal of environmental management. This includes the preservation of diverse ecosystems and the species they support. Conservation efforts aim to maintain the balance of ecosystems, prevent the loss of species, and protect habitats from destruction or fragmentation. Given the global challenges posed by climate change, environmental management plays a pivotal role in both mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the changing climate. Strategies may include the promotion of renewable energy, sustainable land use practices, and the development of climate-resilient infrastructure.

Effective land use planning is central to environmental management. This involves zoning areas for specific uses, considering ecological sensitivities, and promoting sustainable land practices (Metternicht, 2017). Well-managed land use helps prevent habitat destruction, deforestation, and urban sprawl. Robust environmental management is often supported by comprehensive legislation and policies. Governments and organisations develop regulatory frameworks to set standards, monitor compliance, and enforce measures that protect the environment. These regulations provide a legal foundation for sustainable practices.

### Principles of Environmental Management

1. **Precautionary Principle:** This principle emphasises the need to take preventive action in the face of uncertainty or potential environmental harm. It suggests that lack of scientific certainty should not be a reason to postpone measures to prevent environmental degradation.
2. **Polluter Pays Principle:** According to this principle, the party responsible for pollution should bear the costs associated with cleaning up the pollution or mitigating its. It encourages accountability and responsibility for environmental damage.
3. **Sustainability:** The principle of sustainability underlies environmental management, emphasising the need to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. It involves the responsible use of resources to ensure their availability in the long term.
4. **Integration:** Environmental management is most effective when integrated into broader decision-making processes. It encourages the incorporation of environmental considerations into economic, social, and political decision-making to achieve a more holistic and sustainable approach (Kristensen, Mosgaard & Remmen, 2021).

### Tools and Approaches in Environmental Management

1. **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** EIA is a systematic process for evaluating the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project or development. It helps decision-makers identify and mitigate potential adverse effects before they occur.
2. **Ecosystem-Based Management:** This approach considers the entire ecosystem, including the interactions between species and their environment. It aims to maintain the health and resilience of ecosystems, recognising that this is crucial for human well-being.
3. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Many businesses incorporate environmental management principles into their CSR strategies. This involves taking responsibility for the environmental impacts of business operations and implementing practices that contribute to sustainability.
4. **Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM):** CBNRM involves local communities in the management of natural. It recognises the importance of community participation

and traditional knowledge in achieving sustainable environmental outcomes.

5. **Environmental Monitoring and Reporting:** Regular monitoring of environmental indicators and reporting on the state of the environment are essential tools for assessing the effectiveness of environmental management initiatives. These activities inform decision-making and policy adjustments (Rusko, Kralikova & Mikulova, 2016).

Environmental management is a dynamic and evolving field that addresses the complex interplay between human activities and the natural environment. It requires collaboration among governments, businesses, communities, and individuals to navigate the challenges posed by environmental degradation and promote a future where ecological integrity and human well-being coexist harmoniously. Through the thoughtful application of principles, tools, and collaborative efforts, environmental management paves the way for a sustainable and resilient global ecosystem.

### **Impact of Community Participation in Environmental Management**

Community participation in environmental management is a transformative force that goes beyond the conventional models of conservation and regulation. It empowers local communities to actively engage in the protection and sustainable use of their natural resources, fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility, and collaboration. The impact of community participation in environmental management is far-reaching, influencing ecological health, social dynamics, and the overall well-being of both the community and the environment (Terraube, Fernández-Llamazares & Cabeza, 2017). Community participation in environmental management empowers individuals to become stewards of their local environment. By involving community members in decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of environmental initiatives, a sense of ownership is cultivated.

This empowerment is a powerful motivator for sustained commitment to conservation efforts. Local communities, intimately connected to their ecosystems, play a crucial role in biodiversity conservation. Their traditional knowledge and practices often contribute significantly to the preservation of local flora and fauna. Community participation ensures that conservation strategies are culturally sensitive, sustainable, and adapted to the specific needs of the ecosystem (Bisht, Rana, Yadav & Ahlawat, 2020). Through active involvement, communities contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources. This includes responsible practices related to water use, land management, and the extraction of forest products. Community-based natural resource management fosters a balance between human needs and environmental preservation, ensuring the long-term viability of essential resources. Community participation enhances social networks, trust, and shared values within a community. Socially cohesive communities are better equipped to address environmental challenges collectively.

The relationships forged through participation create a foundation for collaboration, information sharing, and collective decision-making. Community participation promotes environmental justice by ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive and consider the needs of all community members (Black & McBean, 2016). It helps prevent the disproportionate burden of environmental risks on marginalised groups, fostering equity in the distribution of environmental benefits and costs. Engaging communities in environmental management can contribute to local economic development. Sustainable practices often open avenues for eco-friendly businesses, ecotourism, and the development of community-based enterprises. This economic dimension reinforces the connection between environmental health and community prosperity. Communities actively participating in environmental management are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Local knowledge and adaptive practices, often embedded in traditional ecological wisdom, can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Community-led initiatives, such as afforestation projects and sustainable agriculture, enhance resilience to changing environmental conditions (Tidball, Metcalf, Bain & Elmquist, 2018).



Community participation serves as an educational platform, raising awareness about environmental issues and fostering a deeper understanding of ecological interdependencies. This educational aspect is essential for building a culture of environmental responsibility and encouraging sustainable behaviours within the community. Involving communities in environmental decision-making can reduce conflicts related to resource use. By addressing concerns and ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered, community participation contributes to the development of mutually agreed-upon solutions, minimising conflicts over resource access and use. The impact of community participation extends to governance structures. Engaged communities often demand and contribute to more adaptive and inclusive governance models (Brown & Hay-Edie, 2014). This responsiveness to local needs and aspirations can lead to more effective and sustainable environmental policies.

**Factors Impeding Community Participation on Environmental Management** While community participation in environmental management holds immense potential for positive change, various factors can impede its effectiveness. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing strategies to overcome barriers and ensure the meaningful engagement of communities in environmental initiatives. Below, according to Sattayapanich, Janmaimool and Chontanawat (2022), are some key factors that may hinder community participation in environmental management:

1. **Lack of Awareness and Education:** Limited awareness and understanding of environmental issues can impede community participation. When communities are not well-informed about the importance of environmental management or the potential impacts of their actions, it becomes challenging to garner active participation.
2. **Socio-economic Disparities:** Communities facing economic challenges may prioritise immediate survival over long-term environmental concerns. Socioeconomic disparities can hinder the ability of certain groups within a community to participate actively, as they may lack the resources, time, or capacity to engage in environmental management efforts.
3. **Institutional Barriers:** The presence of institutional barriers, such as bureaucratic complexities and rigid policies, can limit community participation. Complex regulations, unclear procedures, and a lack of transparency in decision-making processes can deter community members from actively engaging in environmental initiatives.
4. **Power Dynamics and Social Inequities:** Unequal power dynamics and social hierarchies within communities can hinder inclusive participation. Certain groups may be marginalised or excluded from decision-making processes, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives in environmental management efforts.
5. **Limited Access to Resources:** Inadequate access to financial resources, technical expertise, and information can impede community-led environmental management. Lack of funding for community projects, limited technical support, and insufficient access to relevant data can hinder the effectiveness of environmental management efforts.
6. **Cultural and Linguistic Barriers:** Cultural differences and linguistic barriers can pose challenges to effective communication and participation. In multicultural communities, ensuring that information about environmental issues is presented in a culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate manner is essential for fostering engagement.
7. **Resistance to Change:** Resistance to change, either due to cultural conservatism or fear of economic impacts, can hinder community participation. Communities may be hesitant to adopt new practices or technologies, even if they are environmentally sustainable, out of fear of disrupting existing norms or livelihoods.
8. **Lack of Trust:** Trust is a fundamental factor in community participation. If community members do not trust external entities, such as government agencies or non-governmental organisations, they may be reluctant to participate in environmental initiatives. Building trust requires transparent communication and a demonstrated commitment to community well-being.

9. **Short-Term Priorities:** Communities facing immediate challenges, such as poverty, health crises, or natural disasters, may prioritise short-term needs over long-term environmental. Meeting basic needs takes precedence over participation in environmental management activities.
10. **Insufficient Capacity Building:** Communities may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in environmental. Insufficient capacity building efforts, including training programmes and educational initiatives, can hinder the community's ability to contribute meaningfully to environmental initiatives. contributions.
11. **External Interference:** External interests and interventions that do not align with community values and priorities can impede local ownership of environmental management initiatives. When communities feel that their voices are not heard, or decisions are imposed upon them, it can lead to disengagement.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Putra, Mutiani, Jumriani and Handy (2020) in their study stated that increasing waste intensity becomes an environmental problem because it is not followed by environmental-based waste management. They also asserted that environment-based waste management solutions can be realised in the waste bank through the role of the waste bank, which can be seen from the management and customers' activities who implement 3Rs (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle) activities that can increase community environmental awareness. The results of their study indicated that the community is capable of sorting and processing waste and changing people's views on the waste that was previously disgusting to become promising. It was therefore suggested that there is need for writing articles aims to increase understanding of the importance of waste banks to increase awareness of the community's environment, which is reflected in the roles of management and customers, namely knowledge, concrete attitudes, and consistent behaviours.

Purba, Meidiana and Adrianto (2014) proposed one sort of solutions to prolong the landfill's age through waste minimisation involving community participation. The primary survey in form of deep interview with related stakeholders has been conducted to gain the data used for community participation analysis. The scenario approach was used based on the level of participation in Kepanjen District. The result showed that Kepanjen District has three kind of participation rate which are low, medium, and high participation. Consequently, the scenarios proposed are pessimist scenario, fair scenario, and optimist scenario for low, medium, and high participation respectively. Pessimist scenario focuses on avoiding the community to do open burning causing air pollution and health injury. Meanwhile, the fair scenario starts to introduce the institution to the community to conduct the capacity building of the community in waste separation. The optimist scenario proposes the implementation of waste bank involving the community.

Sattayapanich, Janmaimool and Chontanawat (2022) carried out a study on Factors affecting community participation in environmental cooperate social responsibility projects: Evidence from mangrove forest management project. The study focuses on community members participation in an environmental CSR (cooperate social responsibility) project, a type of project which requires community members participation in several stages of the project. The study adopted a quantitative technique in carrying out the study, where questionnaire was developed and distributed to get response from the sample size of 355 persons. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used in determining the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.90 while multiple linear regression analyses were used in testing the hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that: the significant predictors of community members participation at each stage of the project were significantly different and that community members decision to participate or engage in the planning stage are influenced only by expected monetary related benefits. It was recommended that monetary incentives are important to promote the greater participation of community members in forest management.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is a descriptive survey design because the researchers intend to sample the opinions on the extent of respondents on the impact of community participation in environmental management. The population comprises of 1,000 members of community-based organisations (CBO's) in the study area and the sample comprises of 100 members from the population selected via simple random sampling technique, making up 10% of the total population. Self-structured questionnaire complemented with the key informant interview were employed for the collection of data, which was duly validated and tested for its reliability given at 0.81. Mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools used in answering the research questions while t-test statistics was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent of community participation in environmental management?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent of community participation in environmental management**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	St.D	Remark
1	Many communities actively engage in the planning and implementation of environmental projects.	40	41	15	4	3.17	0.83	Agree
2	The extent of community participation in environmental management can be gauged by the frequency and effectiveness of public consultations.	39	51	10	0	3.29	0.64	Agree
3	The rise of citizen science programmes demonstrate a growing trend of community involvement in environmental monitoring and data collection.	42	58	0	0	3.42	0.49	Agree
	<b>Average</b>					<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data in the table above shows the mean response of the respondents on the extent of community participation in environmental management. From the analysis done, it can be seen that all the items were all agreed with as their respective mean scores are above the criterion-mean score of 2.50. Based on this, and also in line with the average mean score of 3.29, it can therefore be agreed upon that community members got more involved in the management of their environmental.

**Research Question 2:** How does community participation influence environmental management outcomes?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing how community participation influence environmental management outcomes**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	St.D	Remark
4	When communities actively participate in environmental management, there tends to be a greater emphasis on sustainable practices.	45	55	0	0	3.45	0.5	Agree
5	Community participation positively influence environmental management outcomes by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.	58	42	0	0	3.58	0.49	Agree



6	Community involvement often brings diverse perspectives and ideas to the table which can lead to the development of innovative solutions to environmental challenges.	61	39	0	0	3.61	0.49	Agree
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.55</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data in the table above shows the mean response of the respondents on how community participation influenced environmental management outcomes. From the analysis done, it can be seen that all the items were all agreed with as their respective mean scores are above the criterion-mean score of 2.50. Based on this, and also in line with the average mean score of 3.55, it can therefore be agreed upon that community participation has an influence on environmental management in communities.

**Research Question 3:** What are the factors affecting the success of community participation in environmental management?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation showing the factors affecting the success of community participation in environmental management.**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	St.D	Remark
7	Effective communication and education play a crucial role in the success of community participation in environmental management.	49	45	6	0	3.43	0.6	Agree
8	The presence of strong local leadership and a sense of empowerment within the community significantly influence the success of participation in environmental management.	59	39	0	2	3.55	0.61	Agree
9	Adequate resources, both financial and material, are essential for successful community participation in environmental management.	51	48	0	1	3.49	0.56	Agree
10	The alignment of institutional support and policies with community initiatives is critical for success.	46	52	2	0	3.44	0.54	Agree
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data in the table above shows the mean response of the respondents on the factors affecting the success of community participation in environmental management. From the analysis done, it can be seen that all the items were all agreed with as their respective mean scores are above the criterion-mean score of 2.50. Based on this, and also in line with the average mean score of 3.48, it can therefore be agreed upon that factors such as effective communication and education, strong local leadership and empowerment, adequate resources as well as institutional support and policies determines the success of community participation in environmental management in communities.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of community participation on environmental management outcomes.

**Table 4: t-test statistics on significant influence of community participation in environmental management outcomes**

Variables	$\bar{x}$	St.D	n	df	t-calculated	t-critical	Decision
Community Participation Vs Environmental Management	3.55	.49	100	99	50.7143	1.66	Reject

Data in the table above revealed that the mean score is 3.55, while the standard deviation score is .49 with a degree of freedom 99, the t-calculated value of 50.7143 at 0.05 level of significance is higher than the t-critical. The null hypothesis is then rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of community participation on environmental management outcomes.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the analyses presented in Table 1 indicated that community participation is being implemented for environmental management in communities, as majority respondents agreed to this fact. The study revealed that embarking on different strategies to aid the success of community participation can help in the strengthening of environmental management. For this to be actually attained, it requires the contribution of each and every individual that can be found in the respective communities for the purpose of environmental management to be achieved. This was corroborated with by Rijal (2023) who affirmed that community participation involves the active involvement of individuals, groups, and organisations within a community in the decision-making processes that affect their environment.

The result of the analyses presented in Table 2 indicated that community participation has an influence on environmental management in communities, as majority of the respondents agreed to this fact. The study revealed that community participation, if implemented properly and duly, can have a great level of influence on the rate at which environmental management can be successfully achieved. This was further supported by Steiner and Atterton (2015) who ascertained that the active involvement of communities in environmental management can have far-reaching effects on society. It not only leads to more sustainable and locally adapted solutions but also fosters a sense of community cohesion and pride. The implication of this is that community participation can be very much effectual in promoting environmental management if combined with effective strategies and patterns.

The result of the analyses presented in Table 3 indicated that factors such as effective communication and education, strong local leadership and empowerment, adequate resources as well as institutional support and policies determines the success of community participation in environmental management in communities, as majority of the respondents agreed to the fact that all these factors, if present, can enhance the effect of community participation in environmental management. The study revealed that adequate establishment of measures to aid in the sustenance of positive factors for community participation in environmental management is therefore essential. This finding falls in-line with Sattayapanich, Janmaimool and Chontanawat (2022) who coerced that understanding the challenges for community participation in environmental management is crucial for developing strategies to overcome barriers and ensure the meaningful engagement of communities in environmental initiatives.

The result of the hypothesis on table 4, established that there is a significant influence of community participation in environmental management outcomes. Buttressing this, Terraube, Fernández-Llamazares and Cabeza (2017) said that the impact of community participation in environmental management is far-reaching, influencing ecological health, social dynamics, and the overall well-being of both the community and the environment. This then leaves us with the ideal that community participation in environmental management is very much effectual for the sustainability of the world that we live in.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings made, it can therefore be concluded that community participation in environmental management is a germane tool that provide the assurance of a safe and sustainable environment that each and every one can thrive in. With this in mind, it is also very much essential that the incorporation of several avenues and strategies such as effective communication; strong local leadership; empowering communities with adequate resources and institutional support and policies to aid peoples participation for successful environmental management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion made, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Provide regular educational programmes, workshops, and training sessions to empower community members with the knowledge and skills needed for effective environmental management.
2. Ensure that sufficient financial, human, and technical resources are allocated to support community-led environmental initiatives.
3. Foster a culture of diversity and inclusion to enhance creativity and innovation in environmental management initiatives.
4. Strengthen collaboration between community groups and governmental or non-governmental institutions to ensure ongoing support for environmental initiatives.

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