



THE EFFICACY OF IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT (IMPROVED O&OD) ON THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY PROJECT: A CASE OF MSEYU VILLAGE

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Abstract: This study explored the efficacy of Improved O&OD on Community Project Sustainability in Tanzania A case of Maseyu Village. The aim of the study was to explore potential of Improved O&OD on promoting community project sustainability in Tanzania specifically at Maseyu village. To achieve the objective, naturalism research methods building on constructivism philosophical stance a qualitative in nature was employed with the use of case research design building from inductive theory. Saturation theoretical sampling was deployed to arrive at the required sample size that generated sufficient information with the use of purposive and convenient sampling techniques. In-depth interviews and focus group discussion were used as data collection methods as well as thematic analysis was deployed in the course of data analysis. Insights from the study revealed study Improved O&OD has rendered sustainability of community development projects. The balanced of the elements/factors for community sustainability as a PLSD framework used by the Improved O&OD is fundamental for community project sustainability in Maseyu Village. Importantly, Social Preparation conducted by Ward Facilitators formed a critical factor for sustainability of community projects within the Maseyu Village.

Keywords: *Improved O&OD, PLSD Framework, Social Preparation, Community Project Sustainability, Ward Facilitators.*

1.0 Introduction

Project sustainability has been critical across Sub-Saharan countries. Fabietti & Giovannoni (2014) posted that nearly 40 percent of many new projects fall short of life after first few years since the termination of initial fund. Project sustainability is perceived as ability to continue meeting objectives defined in term of benefits level (Hodgkin, 1994). Further, project sustainability can be viewed as the ability of a project to initiate a process by which benefits are maintained. In the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010 defined the term sustainability as ensuring that institutions supported through projects and benefits realized are maintained and continue after end of the project.

The evolution of project sustainability is dated following existence of several approaches and methodology. In the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s the philosophy, approaches and



methods known as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) received considerable attention in the third world development (O'Reilly, 1996). The approaches and methods were thought as way of organizing people and response to overcome the limitations of 'top-down' approach to development. Importantly, PRA was considered as a way of enabling local (rural and urban) people to analyze their living conditions, to share the outcomes and to plan their activities. Despite the literally understanding application of RRA and PRA community project sustainability remained at failing edged. In the late 1990s and 2000s the Project Cycle Management (PCM) gained the hegemonic stance proceeding the RRA and PRA. PCM was introduced by the European Commission in the early 1990's to improve the quality of project design and management and thereby to improve aid effectiveness.

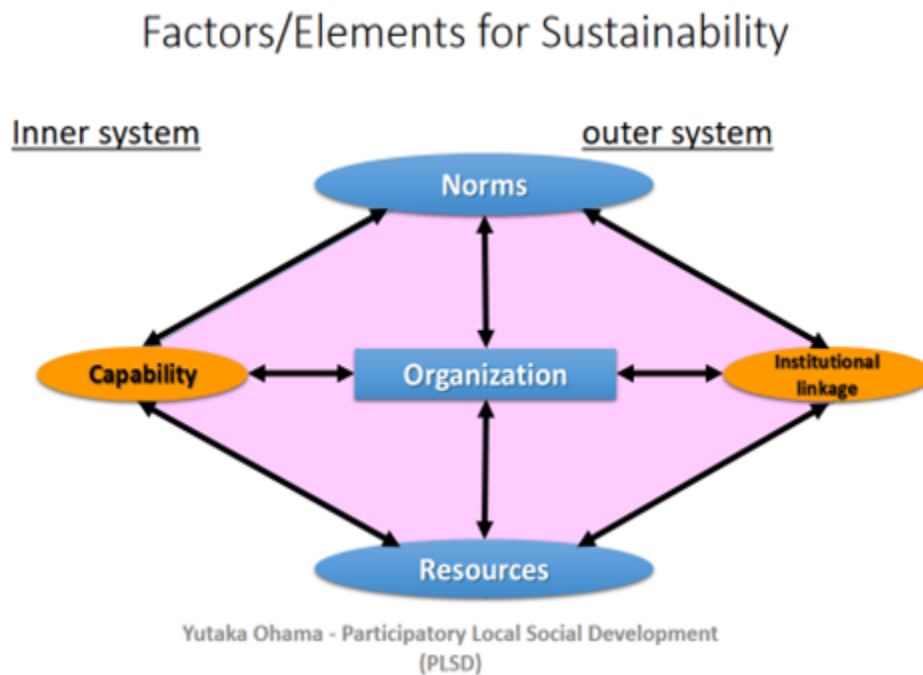
Despite the dominance and attention received by RRA, PRA and PCM community project sustainability remained in critical failing with Tanzania in particular. In this context Tanzania resolutely in the designing its home-made blended approach and methodology famous known as Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) in 2001 and official initiated in 2002. O&OD was thought as participatory planning methodology to realise bottom-up planning and budgeting with maximum community participation by reflecting the real needs of respective local communities. The methodology was then rolled in 105 out of 132 LGAs by 2006 at same time faced several challenges including; people's participation fatigue, lack of people's ownership, people's dependency on government support. The changelings were identified following the study that was commissioned by the Government of Tanzania to JICA in 2006-2008. In 2009 the Government of United Republic of Tanzania (URT) resolutely efforts to improve the methodology by concluding the project known Strengthening Participatory Planning and Community Development Cycle for Community Development Cycle for Community Development Cycle for Good Local Governance Good Local Governance (O&OD Project) by JICA. This Project was a result of recommendations made by the Study on Improvements of Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) Planning Process which was carried out from 2006 to 2008. The Study found out various areas to be improved, including strengthening of Ward Facilitators' functions and promotion of social preparation in communities.

In 2019 the URT the Improved Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) was official introduced. The Improved O&OD is considered as a methodology to build and sustain collaborative relationships between LGA and community for better service delivery and local development by empowering communities and promoting Community Initiatives (CIs). Following empowered communities independently and proactively reproduce CIs based on people's felt-needs by mobilising their own resources and capability through Improved O&OD Methodology entails rendering of community project sustainability. The



methodology strongly posts that project community sustainability is enviably as it renders to realize strong ownership of people since the projects are “decided based on people’s felt-needs”, “planned based on people’s capability and available resources”, “implemented and monitored by people themselves”. However, since inception in 2009 and its official launching in 2019 scant information have been produce on the methodology with regard to community project sustainability in Tanzania. Therefore, this paper explored the efficacy of the Improved O&OD on community project sustainability as part of enrich information regarding the methodology.

The development of Improved O&OD has been informed by Participatory Local Social Development (PLSD) Framework which offers key factors/elements for community project sustainability. The framework call for consideration of Resources, Organization and Norms (RON) being fundamental elements for any activity and/or project to happen. The Capability and Institutional linkage offer the importance on effective utilization and management of resources, organization and regulations as well as vital for securing required resources and necessary arrangement among different actors. The framework strongly argues a fair balance of the elements in order to ensure sustainability of the community development project(s) as presented in figure hereunder. Thus, this paper utilizes the factors/elements for sustainability as a conceptual framework that guided findings and conclusions.





2.0 Methodology

This paper utilized data that were collected during the case research in Mseyu Village in 2019. The case research employed naturalism research methods building on constructivism philosophical stance which is qualitative in nature. The case research was built from inductive theory, as it infers theoretical concepts and patterns from observed data (process of drawing conclusions based on facts or observed evidence). The case research being a research design in itself enshrined in theory building with ability to discover a wide variety of social, cultural, and political factors potentially related to the phenomenon of interest that may not be known in advance. Therefore, this paper considered a case research design because its findings mainly based on observations of the studied phenomenon and with the use of in-depth interviews from key informants. Furthermore, it has to be noted that case research is relevant in studying events that actions are on progress so that actors may have reflections over such actions and do better.

2.1 Sampling Strategies and Sample Size

Theoretical sampling was deployed to arrive at the required sample size that generated sufficient information as per requirement of the study. Theoretical sampling enable researcher to reach at the point called theoretical saturation and no new analytical insights can further be generated. In order acquire coherence in the methodological aspect the purposive and convenient sampling techniques was deployed to select Maseyu Ward and study participants. Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002 asserts that criterion/purposive is used to select households and/or individuals in study with particular features or characteristics which enables detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. In this ground the study gathered information from the selected study informants to the level that no new insights were forthcoming and thus the theoretical saturation was reached.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The study applied In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions to examine the contribution of Improved O&OD on sustainability of community development projects. In one hand the in-depth interviews with key Village leaders were used consisting of open-ended questions. While, in the other hand focus group discussions was employed to gather views from the Maseyu community in groups of few people composed of diversities. The case research utilized thematic analysis whereby transcription of the



related themes emerged from both in-depth and focused group discussion were grouped to form case research conclusions.

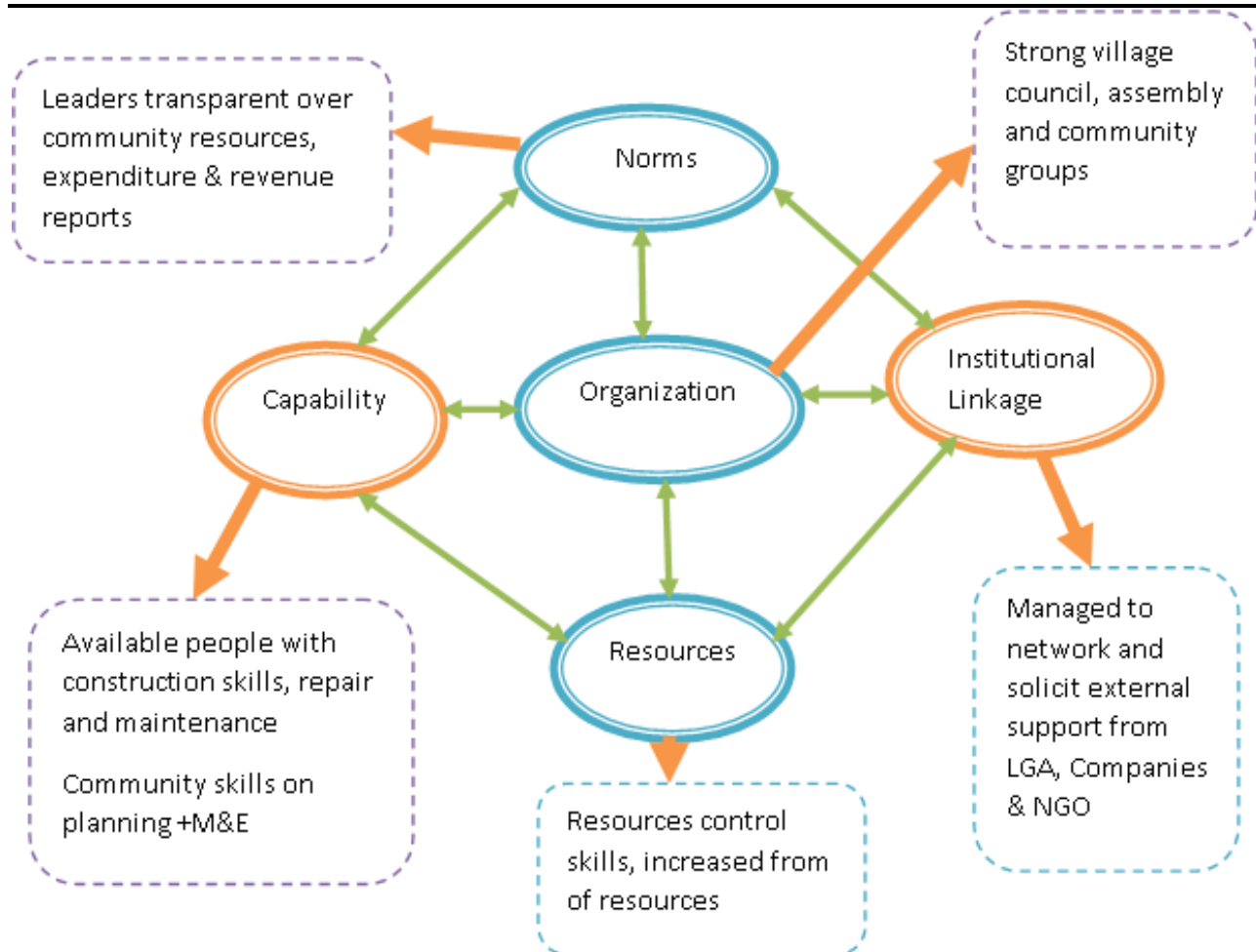
3.0 Discussion

The discussions from the case research were folded in respect to the grouped themes generated from the study area. The discussions presented in this case research follows in the exploring the extent the way factors for sustainability have been balanced and the attributed factors in the study area.

3.1 Elements/factors for sustainability

The study analyzed the balance of the elements/factors for sustainability aiming to uncover the way Maseyu community has inculcated in projects undertaking. The study revealed that the RON, Capability and Institutional linkage as key factors for sustainability has been inculcated in the Maseyu community. The study found that community has strong organization embedded with available operational norms that promises effective and efficient utilization of resources contributed by different partners. Interestingly, is that the community has its own members with different skills who support construction and repair of different community projects. The existence of community members with necessary skills to undertake repair/maintenances of community projects provides a promising factor of the project sustainability. Also, the existence of community members with skills of networking with different development partners this presents significant existence of institution linkages in the community. Based on the finding it can be argued that the fair balance of elements/factors for sustainability is critical toward sustainability of community development projects. The findings conform with the writing of Muriuki (2019) who underscored the issue of capacity building and project implementers in terms of accountability and transparency are key to community project sustainability. Similarly, in the writing of Persson (2016) underscores the factor of lack of technical capacity influences community project failure whereby in Maseyu Village have managed to have people with technical skills as a base for sustainability of the available projects.

Figure 1: Consolidate Modified Conceptual Framework for Factor of Sustainability



Source: Researcher (2020)

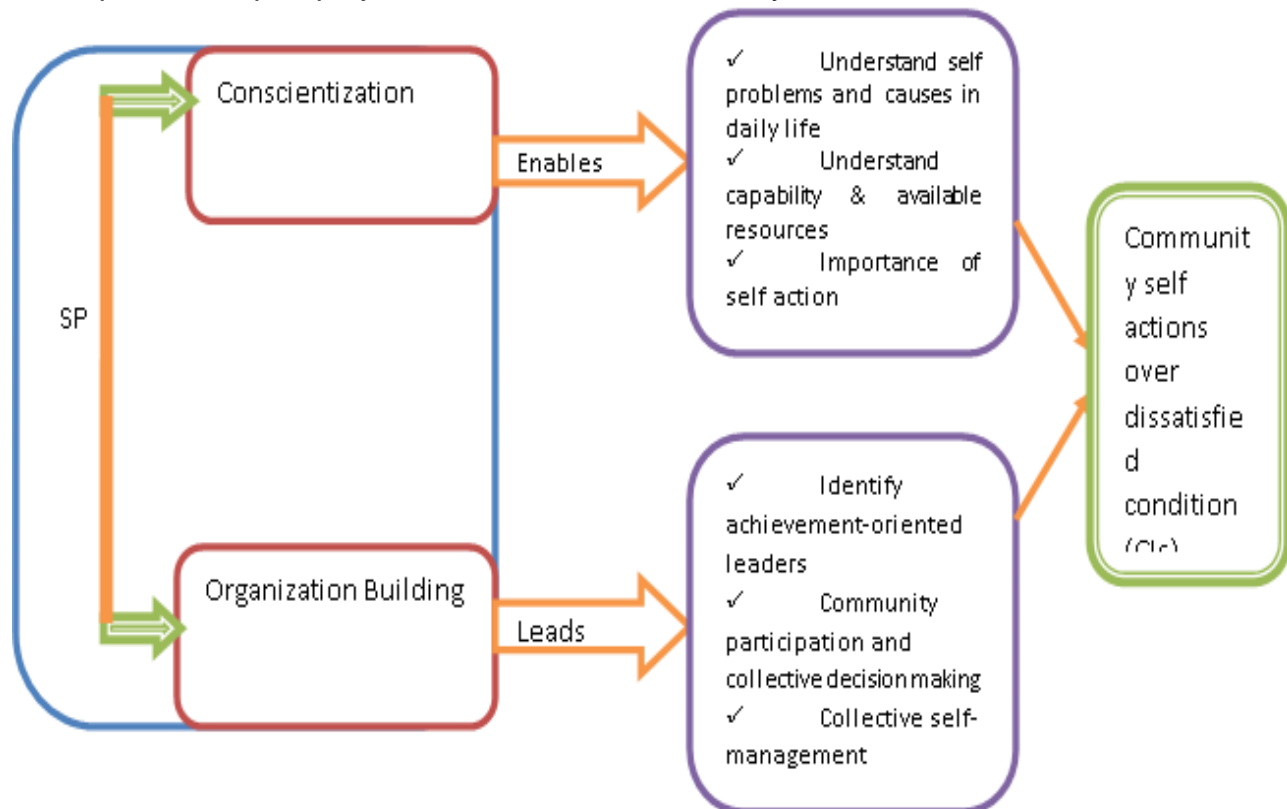
3.2 Factors Triggered on the Balance of Elements/Factors for Sustainability

3.2.1 Social Preparation

Social preparation (SP) that entails conscientization and organization building was fundamental factor to community initiatives (CIs) in Maseyu village. According to the village report pointed out that the improved O & OD enabled the community to attain self-actualization of their problems, needs and own capability to address them. It was observed that SP (critical awareness building and sensitization as well as organization building) by the WFs rendered a self-organizing capability of the Maseyu community. In this view it can further be argued that slow down of community participation in development projects in main influenced with insufficient awareness in terms of benefits accrued when people take part of the respective project. Similarly, self-actualization of people’s capability is mainly influenced when they are made aware and thus social preparation in this context was critical element that has triggered community project



sustainability. The benefits of people taking part in the projects are now clear within Maseyu community and thus ensuring ownership among community members. In the writing of Williams (2003) posted that failure by the communities and other stakeholders to take up ownership of projects it threatens sustainability.



3.2.2 Three Development Elements

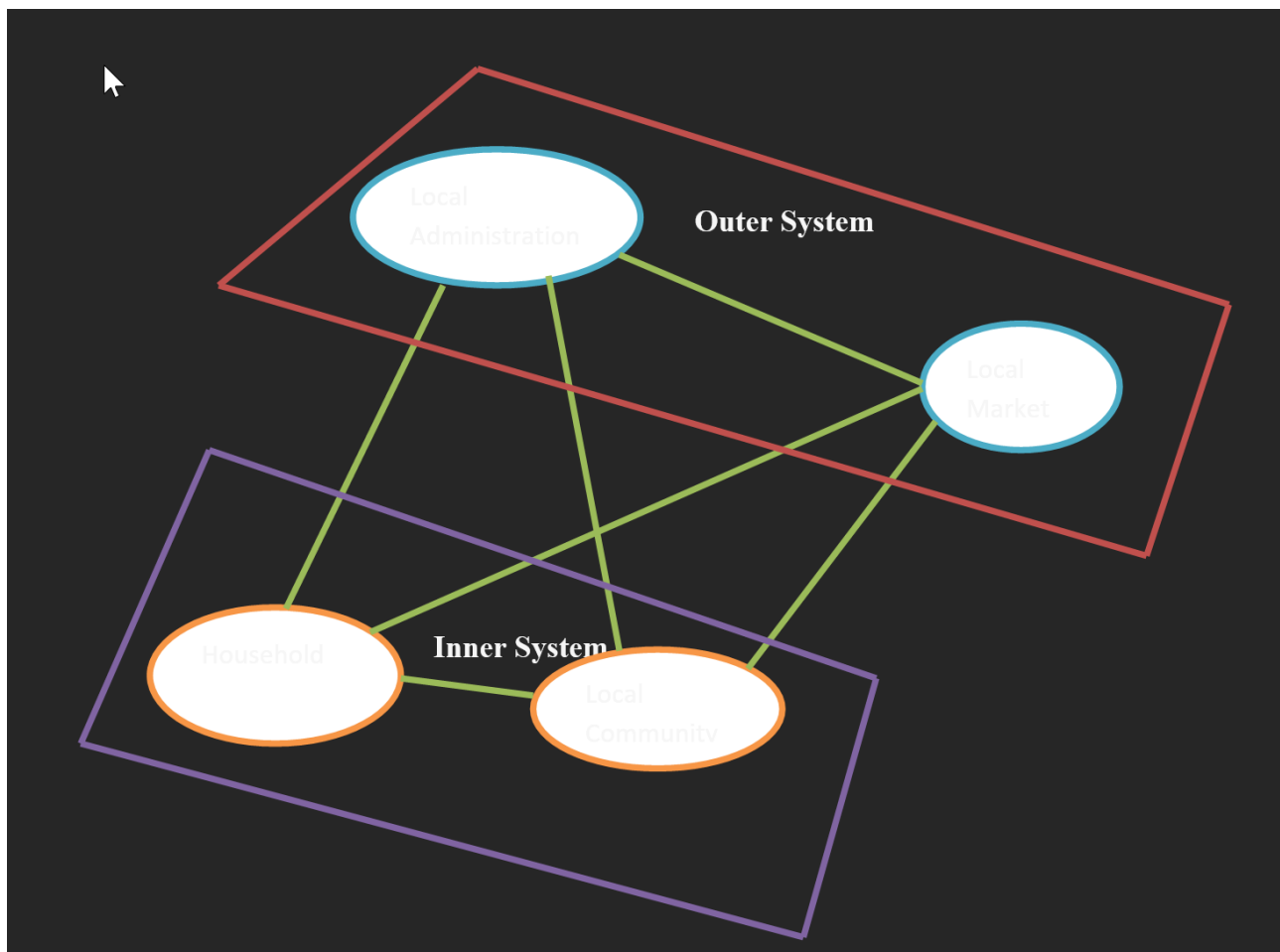
The PLSD framework offers theoretical reminder on consideration and balancing of the development element is most important. The observation from the study in Maseyu gives an interesting linkage between the theory and the reality over balancing the three-development element; Resources, Organization and Norms (RON). It was clearly observed that the Maseyu community has first established the capability mechanism of management of resources before being provided. This indicates that stable and strong organization has been in place and accompanied by norms before resources provision. As the result the community has strong base to self-management of the resources being provided from different stakeholders to support development project in the village.

3.2.3 Local Societal Systems

The local societal system analyzes the existing relationship of different institutions and organs in particularly community. According to the PLSD framework it presents the inner system (Household and Community) as well as the outer system (Local Administration



and Local Market). Maseyu community exciting community that has registered a strong existence of the relationship between the inner and outer system. It was observed that the community has quick information flow system from individual (household) to other people (community). According to explanation of one of the community leader sais “in our community if one person saw an individual/group of people appearing to be strangers standing/crossed in one of our projects then do not surprised information reaches the community very faster”. Moreover, people in the community have self-confidence to express issues before their leaders and participate in decision making meeting. This situation provides a picture that there is sold relationship between the individual (HH), community and the Local government. Also, there have been great support in terms of resources from other development in the village this implies good linkage with local market. In this context the consolidation of inner and outer system in any community signifies the togetherness in tackling community projects. In case a project initiated by community members and it requires both technical and financial support it easily accessed from the outer system and thus assure attainment of its goal and sustainability is assured due to presence of consolidate inner system.





The arrows in the local societal system of Maseyu village presents a well-integrated and strong connected community which is easy foster development initiatives.

3.2.4 Function Typology

In the lieu the study analyzed function typology as part of the PLSD Framework aiming to discover the level of people's capability in managing resources. The function typology tries to allocate the level of people's capability basing of the five levels namely: Mutual Support; Resources Pool; Asset Management; Collective Resource Management for Surplus Generation and Village Autonomy. Findings from the study revealed that Maseyu community attained Common Asset Management in some of the community owned projects. This was evidently after realizing that community has managed to build pre-primary school in every Kitongoji (hamlet) and village dispensary where by its management is under the community. Management of pre-primary school is managed by Kitongoji people while the dispensary is under the village community. This situation indicates that this community has ability of asset management because the assets are for community benefits. Further, active engagement of community members within a respective project it increases sense of ownership and further promotes sustainability since local people will be more concerned with the projects itself.

3.2.5 Socio-Geographical Unit

The study considered Socio-Geographical Unit as one of the PLSD framework and key determinant for community project sustainability. It was revealed that Maseyu community has a significant reflection of socio-geographical unit in respect with community development project implementation and management. PLDS framework informs that the appropriate geographical unit to implement a project is unit/area where local people can daily interact with one another. According to the framework PLSD elite in Tanzania do appreciate that Kitongoji level is an appropriate unit where project can easily be managed by the community. During the study at Maseyu it was observed that some projects are implemented and managed at Kitongoji level where people easily interact. The capacity accumulated at level of Kitogoji in managing community projects it offers a lived experience of managing projects at Village level and in turn assure community project sustainability since active participation has emanated from the unit where people daily interact.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has revealed the power of Improved O&OD on community project sustainability by considering elements/factors for sustainability. The presence of Ward Facilitators presents a leading factor to enable balances of the elements/factors for sustainability in the community. Social Preparation once done at acceptable level enables transformation



of the people's mind set in turn people realize their potential and capability of taking proactive part in project implementation and management which eventually assures ownership and sustainability. Consolidation of the PLSD framework to include Three Development Elements; Local Societal System; Function Typology for Collective Action and Socio-Geographical Unit revealed to have aggregated the balance of the elements/factors of sustainability and in turn promises community project sustainability. Since Improved O&OD has been officially launched from 2019 by government of the United Republic of Tanzania country wide. The paper recommends players with the government machineries to spearhead the use of the methodology to ensure active participation of community members that guarantees development project sustainability across sectors.

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