



Empowering communities: The key to sustainable forest and wildlife management in Ethiopia

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1. Introduction

- The Ethiopian government is engaging local communities in rural development projects.
- However, the extent of involvement in management processes remains unclear.
- This study evaluates the level of community involvement in participatory projects.

2. Methods

- Sherry Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation model was employed to measure the extent of community involvement across four major project phases:
 - ✓ Planning
 - ✓ Implementation
 - ✓ Monitoring & Evaluation
 - ✓ Benefit Sharing

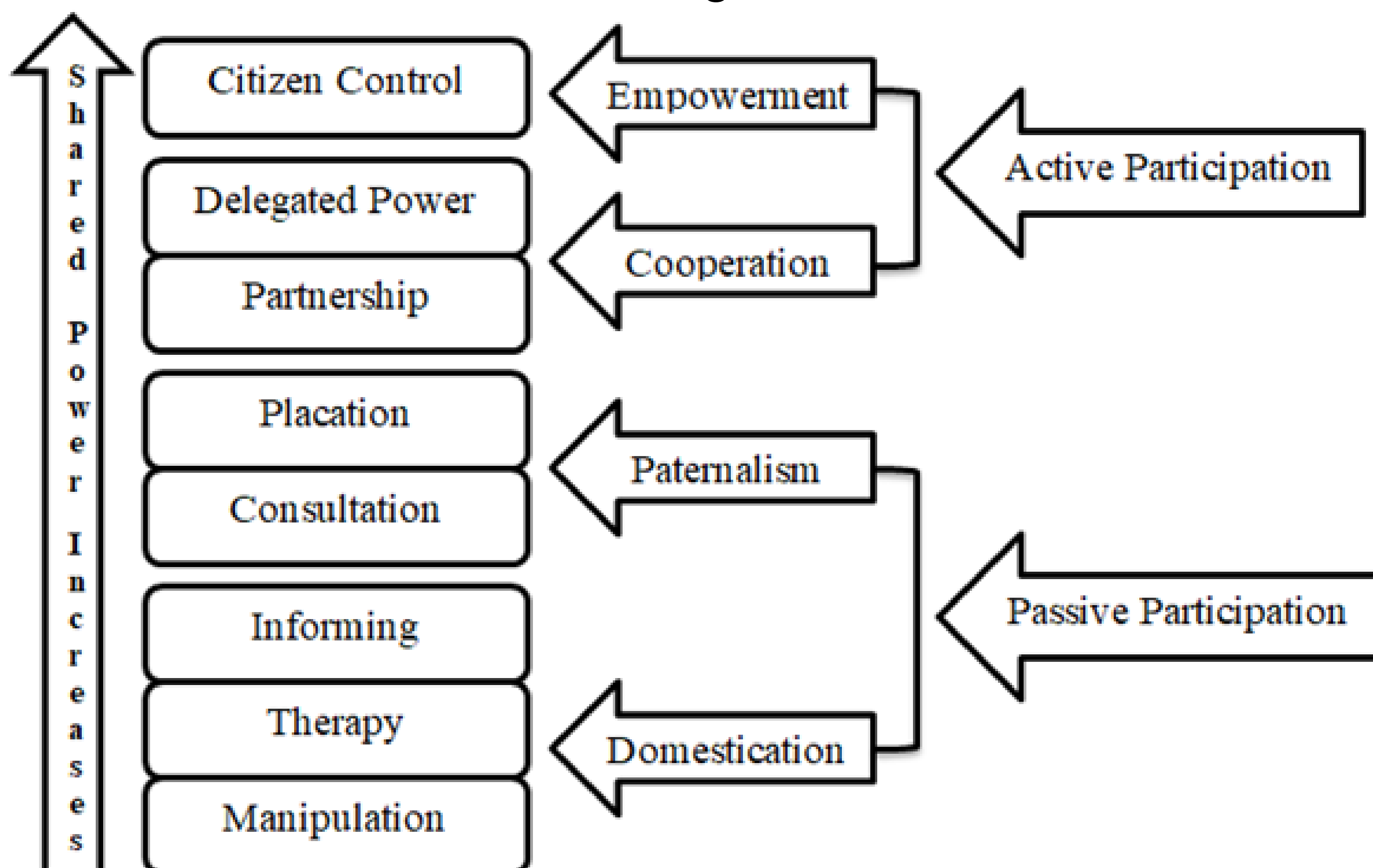


Figure 1 Levels of Participation (adapted from Haruta & Radu, 2010)

- Four key activities were identified where participation could be assessed and classified as either active or passive.
 - ✓ If three out of four responses for an activity reflected active participation, it was categorized as active.
 - ✓ Otherwise, it was deemed passive.
 - ✓ An equal number of active and passive responses indicated a mixed type of participation.

3. Results

Table 1 Summary of Forest dwellers participation across the four phases

Phases	Level of forest dwellers participation (percentages)			
	Domestication	Paternalism	Cooperation	Empowerment
Planning	37.59	36.84	18.04	7.53
Implementation	13.53	31.39	29.32	25.76
Monitoring & Evaluation	21.80	30	36.84	11.36
Benefit Sharing	44.36	23.31	19.55	12.78

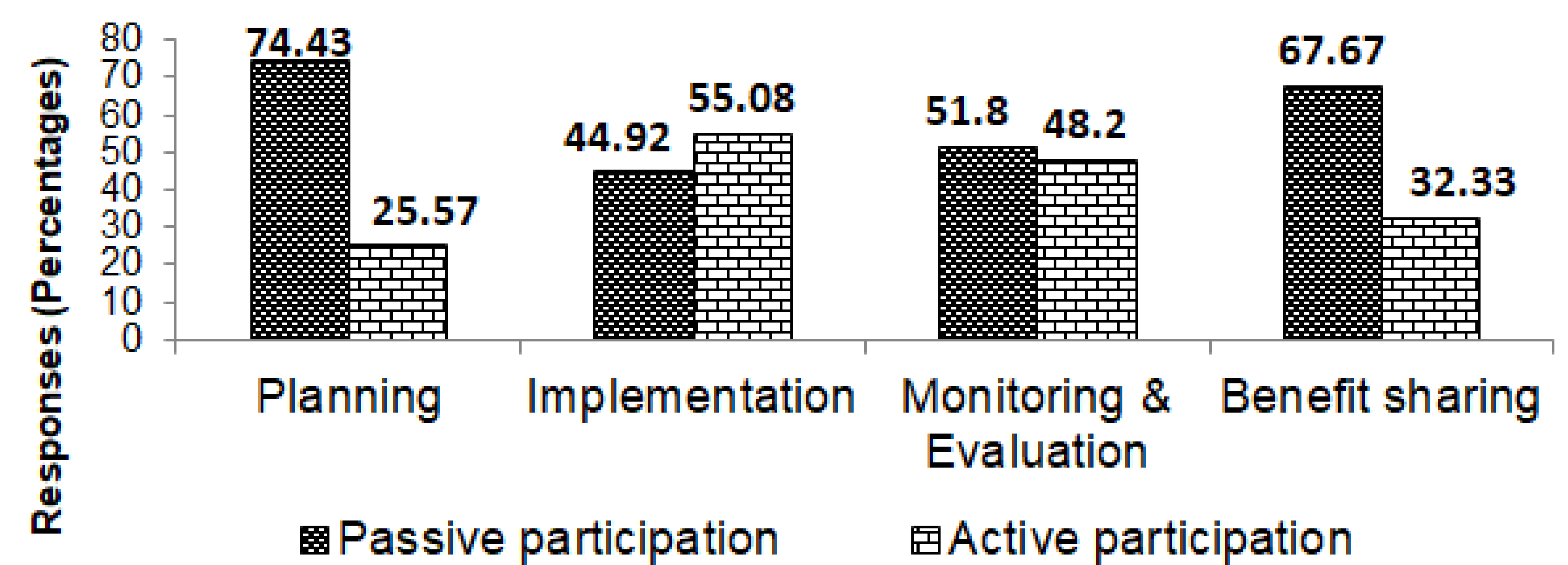


Figure 2 Trend of Passive versus Active Participation Across the Phases

4. Discussion

- Interventions that overlook local needs and knowledge risk being ineffective (Halim et al., 2011).
- Genuine involvement enhances sustainability and welfare (Treves et al., 2009)
- Participation during implementation often reflected instrumental involvement, treating communities as labor (Chirenje et al., 2013).
- Ensuring equitable access to benefits is essential for long-term conservation success (Dyer et al., 2014).

5. Conclusion

- The top-down approach has undermined the principles of community-based natural resource management.
- Recognizing local communities offers the most promising pathway to achieving both ecological sustainability and social well-being.