Readings in Nigerian Agricultural Economics and Extension Practices

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Women's Participation in Community Development Activities in Kaduna South Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Summary

This study was conducted to assess women's participation in community development activities in Kaduna South Local Government Area, Kaduna State. Five (5) women associations were randomly selected out of the twenty (20) women associations in the study area. Thirty percent of the total number of respondents from each of the selected women associations in the study area was selected giving a total sample size of 130 respondents. The questionnaire was used to elicit data from the women for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Findings from this study revealed that the majority (87.7%) of the respondents were married, the mean age of the respondents was 36years, 60.8% had tertiary education, while their average monthly income was ₦ 34,163. The respondents had an average of 9years of experience in community development activities. A high awareness level on community development activities was observed among them. Based on the types of community development activities carried out, sanitation ranked 1st while in terms of participation, financial contribution ranked 1st. Chi-square test analysis showed that occupation (p=0.044) and educational qualification (0.075) were positively significant to the frequency of participation in community development activities. The study concluded that women in the study area participated in community development and mostly in environmental sanitation with a high reverence to financial commitment. Wrong timing was observed to be one of the major constraints militating against their participation. The study, therefore, recommends increased sensitisation and advisory services by extension organisations to enhance better participation of women in community development activities.

Introduction: Women and Community Development

Over the years, human societies have continually strived to develop in one way or the other. Everywhere, people are faced with the task of rising above material limitations by providing for their needs and improving the quality of their wellbeing (Scarre, 2005). Development is, however, not an isolated activity, it is a process in which requires the participation of members of a geographically defined area or environment increasingly make and implement socially responsible decisions affecting the well-being of the people. However, the general lack of consensus in the conception of community gives rise to the quick perception of the community as simply "rural". Nkwede (2009) sees community as the collection of members who share a common territorial area as their base of operation for daily activities. By this definition, a community may be both rural and urban; hence a person can belong to many and different associations but cannot belong to or become a member of all communities at the same time.

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From time immemorial, women have been key players as it concerns all-round development in any community. They have been essential tools for activating operational communal bodies; from the birthing of the children to major interventions in the developmental processes. In the present world of millennium development goals, socio-economic community development can never be achieved without women's effort (United Nations Development Programme, 2003). In Nigeria, women are crucial, beyond certain customary duties and procreation efforts. At both the grassroots and national level, more women associations have been formed since the 1990s, taking advantage of a new political opening to assert their leadership roles. Many rural women belong to all-women mutual-aid societies. Some of these groups allow women to pull resources to reduce their workload thereby investing in saving ventures. The progress and development of any nation rest squarely on the women in the society, thus, societal progress is premised on the level of women involvement in the development activities of the community where they live. From the pre-colonial era to date, women have contributed their quota to give room for development (Attoe, 2002).

According to Abison (2007), participation plays a major role in community development as it provides an opportunity for all members to have a say in developmental activities that affects them and helps to identify the need of the people. Community development promotes the opportunity for people to learn and develop individual skills and experience. Community development calls for respect and equal treatment of all stakeholders no matter their gender. One of such stakeholders in community development efforts in Nigeria is the women. Over the years, government and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria have made several attempts, both at national and international levels, in transforming communities. Such attempts include rural financial services, Nigerian Agricultural and Rural Development Banks, Community Banks, etc. Women in Nigeria are involved in the development of their communities. They participate in activities such as road construction, road maintenance, and market structuring, provision of water facilities, the building of community town halls, and environmental sanitation. Community development in Nigeria has contributed so much to national development and women are noted to have played a very prominent role (Mgbada, 2000; Rahman and Usman, 2004; and Ironkwe, Unanma & Asiedu, 2006).

However, the level of participation as well as the activities in which they feature in certain communities is still not very clear. Given the foregoing, this study is poised at providing an insight into what the women participation in community development is; and where their level of participation could be situated. The specific objectives of the study are to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the women in the study area, identify the preferred sources of information on community development

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activities, ascertain the level of women's involvement in community development activities in the study area and assess the severity of constraints faced by women in participation in community development activities in the study area.

The hypothesis of the study

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between some selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their level of involvement in community development activities.

Methodology

Study area

This study was carried out in Kaduna South Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State. The LGA is one of the twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas in the state. It has a land area of 950km^2. According to the 2006 census, it has a population of 402,390. It is located between latitude 10^0 5'N and longitude 7^0 4' E. The Local Government area shares boundary with Chikun, Kaduna North, and Igabi Local Government Areas on the south, east and north-west respectively. It consists of seven (7) districts: Tudun-wada, Kurmin-mashi, Sabongari, Angwan Muazu, Makera, Kakuri, Barnawa districts. The inhabitants of the Local Government Area engage mostly in trade, commerce, and agriculture.

The population of the study comprised all women in Kaduna South Local Government Area, Kaduna State who are members of community development associations. A two-stage sampling technique was used for this study. The first stage involved a purposive selection of five (5) women associations out of the 20 women associations in the study area. The women associations chosen were those with an average of eighty (80) registered members. The second stage of the selection involved a random selection of a third (1/3) each from the 5 selected women associations giving rise to a sample size of 130 women (26 each from the 5 associations). Data was collected through the use of a structured interview schedule. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as (Frequency distribution, mean score, and Ranking order), and inferential statistics (Chi-square) was used to test the hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of the women in the study

Table 1, shows the socio-economic characteristics of the sample for the study. According to the table, 39.2% of the sample fell within the age bracket of 36-44 years while 31.5% indicated 27-35 years. Only 1.4% of them indicated 54 years and above. The mean age of a typical woman in the study area was 36 years. This implies that the majority of the women involved in community development activities in the study area were relatively young and in their very active age. Youthfulness could probably account for the women's interest in participation in community development activities as results would further show in the study.

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In terms of marital status, table 1 shows that the majority (87.7%) were married while the remaining 12.3% were single. Realistically, marriage could confer additional responsibility on the people thereby making them seek attention through participation in community development activities. Also, the distribution based on educational qualification showed that the majority (60.8%) had tertiary education, 21.5% had secondary education, 13.1% of the respondents had primary education, and 3.1% had Quranic education while only 1.5% had no formal education. The high literacy level indicated by the women could translate to acceptance of innovation on community development. This is supported by (Ahmed, 1992) who concluded that education gives women a "voice" against social and political injustice and that women will contribute more in development when they have more education and knowledge.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
18-26	8	6.3	
27-35	41	31.5	
36-44	51	39.2	
45-53	28	21.5	
54 and above	2	1.5	36.25 years
Marital Status			
Single	16	12.3	
Married	114	87.7	
Educational Qualification			
Primary Education	17	13.1	
Secondary Education	28	21.5	
Tertiary Education	79	60.8	
Quranic Education	4	3.1	
No Formal Education	2	1.5	
Household Size			
1 - 4	86	66.1	
5 – 8	40	30.8	
≥ 9	4	3.1	6

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Average Monthly Income			
10,000-40000	91	70	
41,000-80,000	35	26.9	
81,000-120000	4	3.1	
120,000 and Above	0	0.00	₦ 34,163
Years of Experience in Community Development			
1-10 Years	100	76.9	
11-20 Years	26	20	
21-30 Years	4	3.1	9.29years
Total	**130**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Furthermore, table 1 showed that the majority (66.1%) had a household size of 1-4 persons, 30.8% had 5-8 persons while the rest (3.1%) indicated the household size of ≤9 persons. The average household size in this study was 6 persons. This figure is well above the average of 5 persons in a household as established by the National Bureau of Statistics (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). The study was conducted in northern Nigeria and this may probably account for the higher average household size rather than the 5 persons envisaged by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Table 1 further shows that the majority (70%) of the respondents indicated an average monthly income of ₦10,000 - ₦40,000, 26.9% earned between ₦41,000 - 80,000 while only (3.1%) earned between ₦81,000 and ₦120,000. The average monthly income of a typical respondent in the study area stood at ₦34,163 which is still considered as low according to current living standards in the country. This means that they may not have the resources to adopt innovation on community development as much as they would have wanted. Furthermore, 76.9% of the respondents had 1-10 years of experience in community development activities, 20% had between 11-20 years of experience while the other (3.1%) had between 21-30 years. The mean years of experience among the sampled women were 9 years. This further shows that the majority (>90%) of the women have been greatly involved in development activities for a long time.

Most preferred sources of information on community development activities

Table 2 shows the most preferred sources through which the women obtain information on community development activities. This shows that 60% preferred to get information from their friends and neighbours, 20% preferred to get it from community leaders, 1.5% preferred newspapers/magazines, extension agents served as the preferred source of information to 1.5%, workshop/seminars accounted

for 3.1% in terms of preference while the remaining 13.8% indicated radio as the preferred source of information.

Table 2: Respondents' most preferred source(s) of information

Sources of information	Frequency	Percentage
Community Leaders	26	20.0
Friends and neighbours	78	60
Newspapers/Magazines	2	1.5
Extension Agents	2	1.5
Workshops/Seminars	4	3.1
Radio	18	13.8
Total	130	100

Source: Field Survey (2018)

NB: The mean score was obtained using - Always (3), Sometimes (2), Rarely (1), Never (0).

Areas of participation in community development activities

Table 4 shows the respondents' responses in the areas of participation in community development activities which were presented on a 4 point Likert scale such as always, sometimes, rarely, never. According to the table, Financial contribution was ranked 1st in terms of the area participation, decision making ranked 2nd, planning of community development activities ranked 3rd while respondent's level of participation in advocacy was so poor that it ranked 10th. This implies that financial commitment is an important tool in carrying out developmental activities. According to Oyegbami et al. (2012) participation is based on the ownership or pulling of resources that exclude the very poor.

Table 4: Respondents' Areas of Participation in Community Development Activities

Areas	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Mean	Rank
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Decision Making	71	54.6	51	39.2	2	1.5	6	4.6	2.19	2nd
Planning	61	46.9	57	43.8	6	4.6	6	4.6	2.16	3rd
Advisory Services	53	40.8	60	46.2	9	6.9	8	6.2	2.13	4th
Financial Contribution	101	77.7	18	13.8	7	5.4	4	3.1	2.23	1st

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Labour Supply	54	41.5	48	36.9	22	16.9	6	4.6	2.10	5th
Project Evaluation	31	23.8	53	40.8	31	23.8	15	11.5	1.54	9th
Project Execution	31	23.8	57	43.8	28	21.5	14	10.68	1.67	8th
Project Monitoring	32	24.6	63	48.5	25	19.2	10	7.7	1.85	6th
Advocacy	24	18.5	74	56.9	16	12.3	16	12.3	1.34	10th
Training	34	26.2	66	50.8	9	6.9	21	16.9	1.79	7th

Source: Field Survey (2018)

N.B: mean score was obtained using Always (3), Sometimes (2), Rarely (1), Never (0).

The severity of constraints against participation in community development Activities

Table 5 shows the severity of constraints against women's participation in community development activities. It was found that poor timing ranked 1st, poor accountability ranked 2nd, poor leadership ranked 3rd, while the religious barrier ranked 11th. The timing was the most severe constraint against participation in community development activities among the women in the study area.

Table 5: Constraints against Participation in Community Development Activities

	Very Severe		Severe		Not Severe		Fairly Severe		Mean	Rank
Constraints	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**		
Illiteracy	27	20.8	32	24.6	66	50.8	5	38	2.38	6th
Culture	26	20	15	11.5	83	63.8	6	4.6	2.05	10th
Lack of Adequate Information on Community Development	25	19.2	18	13.8	83	63.8	4	3.1	2.21	8th
Poor Funding for Project Implementation	28	21.5	33	25.4	64	49.2	5	3.8	2.48	5th
Poverty	19	14.6	34	26.2	73	56.2	4	3.1	2.35	7th

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Religious Barriers	12	9.2	22	16.9	85	65.4	11	8.5	1.67	11th
Lack of Appropriate Skills	8	6.2	56	43.1	57	43.8	9	6.9	2.12	9th
Poor accountability	37	28.5	54	41.5	35	26.9	4	3.1	2.53	2nd
Lack of training	36	27.7	40	30.8	45	34.6	9	6.9	2.51	4th
Poor leadership	42	32.3	33	25.4	53	40.8	2	1.5	2.52	3rd
Timing	77	59.2	24	18.5	24	18.5	5	3.8	2.73	1st

Source: Field Survey (2018)
NB: mean score was obtained using Always (3), Sometimes (2), Rarely (1), Never (0).

Hypothesis Testing

The result of the hypothesis shows that average monthly income (p = 0:044) has a positive significant relationship with the frequency of participation in community development activities. This implies that the higher the average monthly income of the sampled women, the higher the frequency of participation in their community development activities. Furthermore, educational qualification (p=0.07) shows a significant relationship with the frequency of participation in community development activities. This implies that the higher the women are educated, the more likely they are involved in the community development activities.

Table 6: Relationship between some selected socio-economic characteristics of the women and their frequency of participation in community development activities.

Variables	**X^2**	**P-Value**	**Remark**
Average Monthly Income	5.930	0.044	Significant
Household Size	6.239	0.732	Not Significant
Educational qualification	3.952	0.075	Significant
Years of experience	4.51	0.814	Not Significant

Source: Field Survey (2018)

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Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the women's youthful age and relatively high educational status are responsible for their participation in community development activities. Their preference for information on community development activities from community members rather than extension agents has implications for a review of extension roles, particularly in the area of community development. Women in the study area participated mostly in environmental sanitation and they have very high affection for financial contributions. There was a direct relationship between the women's average monthly income, educational status, and frequency of participation in community development activities. However, poor timing of activities among members was observed as the most severe constraint to women's participation in community development activities.

The study, therefore, recommends that extension organisations should be more involved in the area of advisory services on community development activities to women in the study area. Relevant stakeholders should ensure the implementation of government policies that could foster the goal of community development through self-help to enhance better participation of rural women in these development activities.

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