



ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SELF-HELP COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN REMO DIVISION OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

Ilori, Afolasade R., Fadipe Mubarak O., Oladoja, Muhammed A. and Mufutau Rafiu A.

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology,
Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author's E-mail: saderosemary@hotmail.com **Tel.:** 08059371025

ABSTRACT

Community development constitutes a part of the overall development strategy in many nations. Over the years, women self-help efforts have been relegated to the background most especially in Nigeria. The study assessed women's participation in self-help community development projects in Remo division of Ogun State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used for selecting total sample size of 234 respondents. Data were collected on respondents' socio-economic characteristics, types of self-help community development projects, reasons for their participation, and constraints limiting their participation. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency count, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (chi-square and Spearman rho) at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Results revealed that majority of the respondents (59.4%) were below 50 years of age. Majority (81.6%) of the respondents were married, educated (23.9%) up to post-secondary level. Humanitarian service ($\bar{x} = 1.97$), betterment of the community ($\bar{x} = 1.92$) were some of the reasons for women self-help efforts. The level of participation of the respondents was high with a score of (51.3%). Test of hypothesis revealed that significant relationship existed between participation in self-help development project and age ($\chi^2 = 39.740$), marital status ($\chi^2 = 9.132$), religion ($\chi^2 = 13.852$), educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 11.087$), possession of landed properties ($\chi^2 = 20.602$). It was recommended that Individuals and NGOs should be encouraged to be of help to women, women associations, rural communities through execution of rural development project which has direct influence on women health status.

Keywords: Community, Constraints, Development, Participation, Projects, Self-help.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, African communities have sought to improve their lot through self-help efforts otherwise known as community development activities. Even before the advent of the colonial era, people had at different times in history organized themselves into groups and had employed combined resources to provide working facilities and bring about improvement in their respective localities. This has been a common experience particularly at times of great need, such as during catastrophe situations or emergency. Neighbours, relatives and friends help each other in times of need. At other times, the whole community come together to work on common needs or problems which they may face. For instance, they may build local roads and bridges, clear farmlands, or form a neighbourhood watch group to defend against intruders, or even construct some public utility buildings, such as Obas palace, town halls, market stalls, schools and churches (Akinsorotan and Olujide, 2006).

Community development is therefore a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems as posited by Yahaya and Olowu (2008) and Ademola (2008). Community development ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives that involve the broader community. It was



also defined as a process that involves the combination of efforts of the rural people with those of the government to improve the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the community; thus, enabling them to contribute more meaningfully to national progress (Okoro, 2005). It has been an indigenous mechanism and technique employed by the people to identify their felt needs, choose what they want and take cooperative action to satisfy their needs.

Rural women are actively involved in rural development activities ranging from agricultural to community programmes and they provide 60 – 80% of the agricultural labor in Africa. In many cases, women are responsible for all the domestic works such as clearing, cooking, washing, raising children, tending crops and animals and processing of harvested crops (Huq and Mallik, 2003). They also go out to work to buffer their husbands' income. In some households, women have become the sole economic support because of death of spouse or male migration to town and cities in search of white-collar jobs (Yahaya and Olowu, 2008; Akinboye, 2007).

Community self-help projects are very important intervention strategies for social empowerment, alleviation of poverty, income generation and provision of employment. Thus, the main idea of self-help projects and community development is that a community should help itself by providing its felt needs. Sustainable community development cannot take place through force or order, but will most likely happen when all actors (men, women and youth living in the community) equally and democratically participate and share their ideas, vision and responsibilities to steer and implement their community or village development projects (Ajayi and Otuya, 2006).

However, in a typical rural community, development activities are believed to be the domain or responsibility of men while women have been assumed to be passive beneficiaries of such development projects. The vital roles women play in their various communities are not only complementary to those played by their male counterparts but also some of the roles are very significant (Qualls, 2011). According to Okunade *et al.* (2018) they do not participate in some decision-making process even in the issues that affect them directly. Many reasons explain this; Cultural rules prohibit their presence in certain gathering or active participation in some context such as certain kinds of formal meetings or rituals while Ugbo (2007) observed that women participate in the execution of very few projects in most communities. For meaningful development to be attained, there is need for women to be actively involved in the development process. Therefore, this study assessed women's participation in self-help community development projects in Remo division of Ogun State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: i). Describe the socio-economic characteristics of women; ii). Identify types of community based rural development projects executed; and iii). Ascertain the reasons given by women for participating in community based rural development projects. The following hypotheses stated in null form were tested: i). There is no significant relationship between the selected socio-economic characteristics of women and their level of participation in self-help community-based development projects; and ii). There is no significant relationship between the reasons for women's participation in community development projects and their level of participation in self-help community development project.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Remo Division of Ogun State. Remo division of Ogun State comprises of Sagamu Local Government Area, Remo North Local Government Area and Ikenne Local Government Area (LGA). Sagamu LGA is blessed with numerous and abundant natural and mineral resources. The Local government area is populated by all tribes in Nigeria,



though Remo dialect of Yoruba language is the main local language. The population of this LGA is about 253,421 (National Population Commission [NPC], 2006). The people are predominantly farmers and traders while a few engage in craftsmanship.

The population consist of all women participants in self-help community development projects in Remo division of Ogun State.

Sampling Procedure

Simple Random sampling technique was used for the purpose of selecting location and targeted audience respectively. First, Remo division consists of three Local Government Areas (LGAs) from which 2/3 was selected randomly. This led to the selection of two Local Government Areas which are Sagamu LGA and Ikenne LGA, respectively. Sagamu LGA has 15 wards while Ikenne LGA has 10 wards. Secondly, from each LGA, 50% of the wards were randomly selected, leading to the selection of eight (8) wards from Sagamu LGA and five (5) wards from Ikenne LGA and 20% of the women population were randomly selected. The selection exercise led to the total sample size of 234 respondents as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Sampling Procedure and Sample Size in Remo Division

Table with 9 columns: Division, No. of LGAs, 2/3 of LGAs, LGA, No. of wards/LGA, 50% of wards, Selected wards, Population of women involved in each ward, Sample size (20% of population size). Rows include Sagamu and Ikenne LGAs with their respective wards and a total row.

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

The distribution of respondents based on socio economic characteristics as shown in Table 2 revealed that the respondents were strong, energetic and can still participate in self-assisted community development projects. This result is in consonance with the findings of Emefesi and Timothy (2007) which also indicated that women of productive and active age group constitute majority of those that participate in community development projects. Majority were Christian and possessed land. Land is a fixed factor of production which strengthens women' improved productive capacity, enhances livelihood diversification and serves as important element in executing self-help development project. The result indicates that majority of the women had one form of education or the other which is likely to improve their level of participation in community development projects/programmes. The result is also similar to the findings of Emefesi and Timothy (2007) that most of women who participated in development projects are literate.



Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Religion			
Islam	81	34.6	
Christianity	153	65.4	
Traditional	0	0.0	
Marital status			
Widowed	43	18.4	
Married	191	81.6	
Age (years)			
31-40	39	16.7	
41-50	100	42.7	
51-60	77	32.9	
61-70	12	5.1	
71-80	6	2.6	48.5
Owner of residential building			
Land	76	32.5	
Land and Building	48	20.5	
Household head	10	4.3	
Spouse	82	35.0	
Extended family	94	40.2	
Rented apartment	48	20.5	
Educational Status			
No formal education	6	2.6	
Primary Education	87	37.2	
Secondary Education	85	36.3	
Post secondary Education/University	56	23.9	
Are you the head of your nuclear family			
No	194	82.9	
Yes	40	17.1	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Types of Community Based Rural Development Projects

From Table 3, majority (91.3%) of the respondents were involved in construction of town hall/cultural ceentr. This will also serve as income generating activities for the communities. This is followed by soap making and market stall construction, roads maintenance, rural electrification, bead making, tie and dye making, group farming, water project, school rehabilitation and maintenance of Oba’s palace. This is an indication that women were more interested in projects that had the tendency of increasing their income generating capabilities in order to reduce their poverty level/status. This result agrees with the findings of Emefesi and Timothy (2007) which indicated that many women were involved in water projects, road maintenance, rural electrification, sewing and dispensary center.



Table 3: Types of community based rural development projects executed (n = 234)

Variables	*Frequency	Percentage
Town hall/cultural centre	214	91.5
No	20	8.5
Yes		
Rural electrification		
No	121	51.7
Yes	113	48.3
Water project		
No	135	57.7
Yes	99	42.3
Maintenance of Oba's palace		
No		88.0
Yes	28	12.0
Animal rearing		
No	212	90.6
Yes	22	9.4
School rehabilitation		
No	183	78.2
Yes	51	21.8
Tie & Dye making		
No	125	53.4
Yes	109	46.6
Soap making		
No	115	49.1
Yes	119	50.9
Orphanage home		
No	179	76.5
Yes	55	23.5
Cloth weaving		
No	225	96.2
Yes	9	3.8

*Multiple responses exist
 Source: Field Survey, 2021.



Table 3: Types of community based rural development projects executed (n = 234) **Cont'd.**

Variables	*Frequency	Percentage
Bead making		
No	122	52.1
Yes	112	47.9
Group farming		
No	129	55.1
Yes	105	44.9
Palm oil processing mill		
No	218	93.2
Yes	16	6.8
Cassava grating industry		
No	228	97.4
Yes	6	2.6
Road maintenance		
No	119	50.9
Yes	115	49.1
Market stall construction		
No	115	49.1
Yes	119	50.9
Construction of Health centre/ Dispensary		
No	82	35.0
Yes	152	65.0

*Multiple responses exist
 Source: Field Survey, 2021.

From Table 4, it can be deduced that 51.3% of the women had high level of participation in self-help projects while 48.7% had low level of participation in self-help projects. This is an indication that women now take responsibilities to see that the community moves forward and it means that they are not relying on government to help them put things in place, they believe in themselves and put together their resources both human and materials together to proffer solution to their problems and this is in line with Ilori 2016 assertion that youth now participate in agricultural development programmes for them to be secure both economically and socially.

Table 4: Categorization of level of women’s participation in community development project

Level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. dev.
Low	114	48.7	48.7	10.00	10.00	48.00	25.581	9.753
High	120	51.3	51.3	100.0				
Total	234	100.0	100.0					

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Reasons for Women for Participating in Community Based Rural Development Projects

From Table 5, the reasons given by women for participating in self-help projects are interest in humanitarian service (97.4%), followed by betterment of the community (94.9%), promote unity (90.6%) and cooperation in the community and welfare of all the individuals in



the community (81.6%). Interest in humanitarian service implies that women were intrinsically motivated owing to the reason adduced for their involvement in self-help project.

Table 5: Reasons for women for participating in community based rural development projects

Reasons for participating	Never		Minor		Major		Total		Mean
	Frg.	%	Frg.	%	Frg.	%	Frg.	%	
Welfare of all the individuals in the community	6	2.6	37	15.8	191	81.6	234	100.0	1.79
Betterment of the community	6	2.6	6	2.6	222	94.9	234	100.0	1.92
Am a household head	18	79.9	29	12.4	18	7.7	234	100.0	.28
Anticipate benefits	0	0.0	61	26.1	173	73.9	234	100.0	1.74
To promote unity and cooperation in the community	6	2.6	16	6.8	212	90.6	234	100.0	1.88
Participation was voluntary	6	2.6	73	31.2	155	66.2	234	100.0	1.64
Interest in humanitarian service	0	0.0	6	2.6	228	97.4	234	100.0	1.97
To avoid sanction	68	29.1	117	50.0	49	20.9	234	100.0	.92
Encouragement by leaders	22	9.4	82	35.0	130	55.6	234	100.0	1.46

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of women and their level of participation in self-help community-based development projects. Chi-square analysis of relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of women and their level of participation in self-help community-based development projects is as shown in Table 6. The table shows that there is significant relationship between participation in self-help development project and age ($\chi^2 = 39.741$), marital status ($\chi^2 = 9.132$), religion ($\chi^2 = 13.852$) and educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 11.087$).

Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship between Selected Socio-economic Characteristics of Women and their Level of Participation in Community Based Development Projects

Variables	Participation Level		Total	χ^2 -value	Df	P-value	Remark
	Low	High					
Age (years)							
31-40	29(12.4%)	10(4.3%)	39(16.7%)	39.741 ^a	4	.000	Sig.
41-50	33(14.1%)	67(28.6%)	100(42.7%)				
51-60	34(14.5%)	43(18.4%)	77(32.9%)				
61-70	12(5.1%)	0(0.0%)	12(5.1%)				
71-80	6(2.6%)	0(0.0%)	6(2.6%)				
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				
Years of residence							
31-40	41(17.5%)	46(19.7%)	87(37.2%)	28.733 ^a	4	.000	Sig.
41-50	31(13.2%)	16(6.8%)	47(20.1%)				
51-60	27(11.5%)	21(9.0%)	48(20.5%)				
61-70	9(3.8%)	37(15.8%)	46(19.7%)				
71-80	6(2.6%)	0(0.0%)	6(2.6%)				
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				

Source: Field Survey, 2021.



Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship between Selected Socio-economic Characteristics of Women and their Level of Participation in Community Based Development Projects **Cont'd.**

Variables	Participation Level		Total	χ^2 -value	Df	P-value	Remark
	Low	High					
Marital status							
Widowed	12(5.1%)	31(13.2%)	43(18.4%)				
Married	102(43.6%)	89(38.0%)	191(81.6%)	9.132 ^a	1	.003	Sig.
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				
Primary occupation							
Farming	12(5.1%)	15(6.4%)	27(11.5%)				
Trading	46(19.7%)	73(31.2%)	119(50.9%)				
Civil Service	28(12.0%)	12(5.1%)	40(17.1%)				
Farming and Trading	22(9.4%)	10(4.3%)	32(13.7%)	33.227 ^a	5	.000	Sig.
Three or more occupations	6(2.6%)	0(0.0%)	6(2.6%)				
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				
Religion							
Islam	53(22.6%)	28(12.0%)	81(34.6%)	13.852 ^a	1	.000	Sig.
Christianity	61(26.1%)	92(39.3%)	153(65.4%)				
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				
Farm size (ha)							
1-5	77(32.9%)	79(33.8%)	156(66.7)				
6-10	37(15.8%)	41(17.5%)	78(33.3%)	.077 ^a	1	.781	Not Sig.
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0)				
Head of nuclear family							
No	96(41.0%)	98(41.9%)	194(82.9%)				
Yes	18(7.7%)	22(9.4%)	40(17.1%)	.267 ^a	1	.605	Not Sig.
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				
Educational attainment							
No formal education	0(0.0%)	6(2.6%)	6(2.6%)				
Primary Education	51(21.8%)	36(15.4%)	87(37.2%)				
Secondary Education	35(15.0%)	50(21.4%)	85(36.3%)	11.087 ^a	3	.011	Sig.
Post secondary Education	28(12.0%)	28(12.0%)	56(23.9%)				
Total	114(48.7%)	120(51.3%)	234(100.0%)				

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between women participation in community-based development projects and reasons for participation. Spearman ranked correlation of relationship between women participation in community-based development projects and reasons for involvement is as shown in Table 7. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between women participation in community-based development projects and anticipate socio-economic benefits, avoidance of sanction, interest in humanitarian service, encouragement by leaders, promotion of unity and cooperation in the community. All these are reasons why women participate in self help projects.



Table 7: Spearman Ranked Correlation of Relationship between Level of Participation in Community Based Development Projects and Reasons for women’s participation

Variables	r-value	p-value
Anticipate socio-economic benefits	.212	.001
To avoid sanction	.271**	.000
Interest in humanitarian service	.158*	.015
Encouragement by leaders	.271**	.000
To promote unity and cooperation in the community	.143*	.029
Participation was voluntary	.228**	.000
I am a household head	.200**	.002
To the betterment of the community	.227**	.000
For the welfare of all the individuals in the community	.204**	.002

Note: *and **Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn; Rural women are capable of and are indeed contributing to the development of their communities. They have been found to participate in various kinds of social and economic projects which are aimed at achieving community development as well as improve their economic status; however, their general participation is concluded to be high. Base on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Socio-economic factors which influenced implementation of self-help projects among the women, community, unions/associations should be looked into for improved participation;
2. Efforts should be geared towards improving anticipated socio-economic benefits, avoidance of sanctions, interest in humanitarian service by leaders, for the betterment of the community, and improved welfare of all the individuals in the community. This brings about more participation of women in community development projects.
3. All these go a long way in promoting a sustainable rural development policy in Nigeria as well as appreciate, recognize and improve the contribution of rural women to the development of their communities and Nigeria as a whole. The participation of women in social and economic projects is an indication that rural women are capable of saving and re-investing in agricultural and other rural development projects thereby improving their socio-economic status.

REFERENCES

Ademola, O. G. (2008): “Achieving Project Sustainability Through Community Participation”. *Journal Social Science*, 17(1): 21-29.

Ajayi A. O. and Otuya, B. E. (2006). Womens’s Participation in Self-help Community Development Projects in Ndokwa Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria. *Community Development Journal*, 41 (2): 189-209.

Akinboye, O. A. (2007). Factors affecting youth participation in community development in Remo North Government of Ogun State. *The Social Sciences*, 2(3): 307-311.

Akinsorotan, A. O. and Olujide, M. G. (2006). “Community Development Associations’ Contributions in Self- help Projects in Lagos State of Nigeria”. *Journal Central Europe Agriculture*, 7(4), 609-618.



- Emefesi, B. O. and Timothy, B. (2007). *The role of women in infrastrucural development Challenges for agricultural and rural development*. Proceedings of the 21st annual national conference of the farm management association of Nigeria (FAMAN) held at college of agricultural science, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ayetoro, 3rd-6th September 2007, Pp. 281-285.
- Huq, H. and Mallik, M. (2003). "Who takes credit? Gender, power and Control over loan use in rural credit programme in Bangladesh." *World Development*, 24(1), 45 – 64.
- National Population Commission [NPC] (2006). *Census figure*. National Population Commission, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Okoro, C. I. (2005). "*Contribution of Women to National Development: Imo State Example*". Ibada, Vintage Publishers. Pp.77-89.
- Okunade, E. O., Farinde, A. J. and Laogun, E. A. (2018). "Participation of Women Local Leaders in Women – Based Rural Development Projects in Osun State, Nigeria". *Journals Social Science*, 10(1): 37-41.
- Qualls, A. (2011). "*Women in Nigeria Today*" <http://landow.stgbrown.education/post/nigeria/contwomen.html>
- Ugbo, M. (2007). "*Gender difference in role of local leaders in rural and community development in Delta State, Nigeria*". *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4): 534 -539.
- Yahaya, M. K. and Olowu, T. A. (1998). An Assessment of the socio-economic Profile of Women Farmers in North Central Nigeria: Lessons for Rural Development Planning in Nigeria. *Journals of Rural Sociology*, 2 (1): 56-61.