

**Assessment of women participation in community and social development projects in Kwara state, Nigeria**

Olatinwo, L. K.

Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, Faculty of Agriculture, Kwara State University, Malete

latifatolatinwo01@gmail.com, +2348063134705

**Abstract:** The study assessed women's participation in community and social development projects in Ilorin West local government, Kwara State, Nigeria. A two-stage random sampling procedure was used to select 120 respondents for the study. An interview schedule was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and Chi-square analysis. The result shows that most of the respondents were young (mean=43.5years), married (74.2%), had a secondary level of education (50%), and were Muslims (55%). Findings also revealed that most of the women were aware (67.5%) and participated (69.2%) in community and social development projects. The women played an active role in the monthly environmental sanitation in the community (mean=3.0). Leading factors hindering participation were lack of proper education for women (mean=3.24) and inconsistency of women's behaviour (mean=3.22). At  $p < 0.05$ , the results of Chi-Square test revealed that age ( $\chi^2=24.212$ ) and education ( $\chi^2=31.599$ ) influences women's participation in community and social development projects. The study concluded that the level of participation of women in community and social development projects in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria was high. This study, therefore, recommends that women should always be encouraged to participate in community development projects. The Government should provide even more assistance for women in rural areas to empower them and give them a sense of belonging.

**Keywords:** Women participation, community development and social development

**INTRODUCTION**

In the world today, women excel in various fields of human endeavours, from academia, manning positions in government, leading the nations as presidents and so on. Women have the largest untapped reservoir of talents which needs to be discovered. Women have the potential to effectively engage in developmental roles in their communities (Obbo, 2015). In recent times women have showcased their talents as they scale new heights and have equally expanded their horizons as they engage constantly in the struggle to overcome the shackles of all forms of discrimination and inequality to improve their livelihood (Ajayi and Okunlola, 2020; Ochebo *et al.* 2018).

Women and girls in recent times cannot be denied their rights any longer if the world must make lasting progress because it is commonly believed that the denial of their rights goes hand in hand with the socioeconomic instability of every nation (Igbuzor, 2012). As mothers of the home, they play critical roles in the education and socialization of the children in teaching new trends of home management, maintenance of the body, environmental cleanliness, physical development of the society, and as well contributing to their income (Owolabi *et al.*, 2018). In any form their services are required; they are always willing to do so. No limit should be placed on what they can collectively contribute to community development because women constitute a powerful social class.

However, the attempt by women to come together and work in such groupings has been hindered by several factors. Often, the role of women in community development in Nigeria is perceived as secondary and most times, very inferior

to that of men. In our society, the factors militating against women's role in community development have caused a lot of economic, social, and political setbacks. At times, the principal obstacle to the roles of women in community development in Nigeria are not intentional but a result of unexamined assumptions about women's care, interest, unquestioned over time (Oluwole, 2018).

In Kwara State, the major problem facing the Ilorin west community is that of deprivation of women's right to participate in their full capacity in religious, economic, political, and social activities just like their male counterparts (Okoji and Ayuba, 2018). This hinders their ability to operate in their full capacity in development projects. The literate women in Ilorin west outnumber the illiterate but still create little ignorance among some of the other women defending their rights. Another major source of the problem is that men still dominate in controlling the affairs of their families, preventing or sanctioning their wives from participating or partaking in some activities of women from the local government (Ojo and Osundina, 2021).

Despite the struggle of women for their right by participating in community and social development projects that concern them in recent times (Ojo and Osundina, 2021), it is unfortunate that no information is available in the literature of roles played by women in their participation in community and social development projects, most especially in Ilorin Local Government Area (LGA) of Kwara State. It, therefore, becomes imperative in this study to assess women's participation in community and social development projects in Ilorin West local government, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specific objectives were to:

- i. ascertain the level of awareness of women on community and social development projects in their communities;
- ii. examine the roles women played in the community and social development projects in their study area; and
- iii. determine the factors hinder women participation in community and social development projects.

The study's hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics of women and their participation in community and social development projects.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study was carried out in Kwara State Nigeria. Kwara is located within the North Central geopolitical zone. Kwara State is situated between parallels 8° and 10° north latitudes and 3° and 6° east longitudes, with Niger State in the north, Kogi State in the east, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun States in the south and an international boundary with the Republic of Benin in the west. Agriculture is the main source of the economy. The average temperature ranges between 27°C and 35°C with a mean annual rainfall of 1,000-1,500mm. It has two main seasons- wet and dry. The wet season is between early April and late October while the dry season is between November and late March.

The population of the study involves all women in Ilorin West local government, Kwara state. A two-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. The first stage involved the random selection of two (2) wards out of twelve (12) wards in Ilorin West local government due to concentration of community and social development projects in these wards. In the second stage, 60 women were randomly selected from each of the wards to give a total sample size of 120 respondents. A structured questionnaire was designed and used to gather information from the respondents. Awareness of women to participate in community and social development projects was measured on a 5 point rating scale of Highly Aware (5), Aware (4), Not Sure (3), Not Aware (2), Highly Not Aware (1), Roles of women and factors hindering women participation in community and social development projects were measured on 5 point scale: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Not sure=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5. Descriptive statistics (weighted mean, frequency, percentages) were used to analyze the objectives while Chi square analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Socioeconomic characteristics**

The result presented in Table 1 shows that the minimum age of the respondents was 20 years while the maximum age was 60 years. Most of the respondents (62.5%) were between the age range of 30 and 49 years. The mean age of  $43.50 \pm 11.03$  implies that the respondents were in their active, economic and productive age where they can participate in the design, implementation and monitoring. This corroborates with the findings of Ajayi *et al.*, (2019) in their study on Women Participation in Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in Ondo State, Nigeria. They reported that women participants in CSDP were young, active, and desire a good living standard

As shown in Table 1, most of the respondents (74.2%) were married while only 10 percent were single. About 16 percent were either divorced or widowed. This would influence their decision positively to participate in CSDP. This finding agrees with Farinde *et al.* (2004) that most of the women who participated in the rural community project were married. From Table 1, the result reveals that 24.2% of the respondents were civil servants, 45.8% were into farming, 23.3% were into trading and only 6.7% were into crafting. The result implies that most of the respondents were farmers. This distribution shows the relative importance of farming to other occupations in the study area, implying that most of the respondents (farmers) would like to participate in any project that may improve their livelihood activities. This finding supports Ogunbameru *et al.* (2006) that most women were involved in agricultural activities.

As presented in Table 1, all the respondents had one form of education or the other. Half of the respondents (50%) had a secondary level of education while 29.1% had only a primary level of education. Only 20.9% of the respondents had a tertiary level of education. The result implies that all the respondents could either read or write. This implies that the level of education might affect the respondents' exposure to sources of information and participation in Community Social Development Project that are related to their livelihood activities. The result shows that more than half of the respondents (55.0%) were Muslims while 45% were Christians. Religious institutions could be a means of getting information of community projects.

**Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>		
20-29	25	20.8
30-39	39	32.5
40-49	36	30.0
≥50	20	16.7
Mean=43.5±11.03SD		
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	12	10.0
Married	89	74.2
Divorced	11	9.2
Widowed	8	6.6
<b>Occupation</b>		
Civil Servant	29	24.2
Farmer	55	45.8
Petty Trader	28	23.3
Crafting	8	6.7
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Primary	35	29.1
Secondary	60	50.0
B. Sc.	25	20.9
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	54	45.0
Muslim	66	55.0

**Awareness of women to community development projects**

As shown in Table 2, the result reveals that the respondents were mostly aware that community development project is not all about the fund (MS=3.12) and that community development project reduces urban-rural migration (MS=3.00). In descending order, the respondents were aware that community development projects can be driven by individuals too (MS= 2.98), the government has participated in women empowerment project(s) with great impact to women in the community (MS=2.83), government has undertaken community project(s) in my area in the last five years (MS=2.80). The project(s) embarked upon by the government in my community has greatly improved my way of life (MS=2.53). The respondents were least aware of the real meaning of community development projects (MS=2.34). Awareness is central to the success of any developmental effort as it helps people to better appreciate and understand how to negotiate their local contexts and design and implement interventions that are more contextually adapted. This may lead to more efficient use of

resources and more functional outcomes, including, but not limited to reduced capture and/or corruption by local elites (Sheree and Alyoscia, 2014). It also increases the level of participation by community members in developmental projects in their communities. The People will feel a better sense of belonging when they have information about the happenings in their communities and they feel more concerned and be able to contribute better towards the accomplishment of such efforts. Findings by Echeme and Nwachukwu (2010), also affirmed that community sensitization and participation have positive effects on the implementation of the CDD project.

The result presented in Table 3 shows women’s awareness on community and social development projects in Ilorin west local government of Kwara State, Nigeria. The result shows that most of the respondents (67.5%) had a high level of awareness while 32. 5% had a low level of awareness. A mean score of 2.80 implies a high level of awareness of community and social development projects in the study area.

**Table 2: Awareness of Women to Community Development Projects**

Awareness	HNA	NA	NS	A	HA	Score	MS
Community development project is not all about fund	6(5.0)	22(18.3)	50(41.7)	36(30.0)	6(5.0)	375	3.12
Community development projects reduce urban-rural migration	8(6.7)	24(20.0)	54(45.0)	28(23.3)	6(5.0)	360	3.00
Community development projects can be driven by individuals too	12(10.0)	29(24.2)	35(29.2)	38(31.6)	6(5.0)	357	2.98
The government has participated in women empowerment project(s) with great impact on women in the community	13(10.8)	26(21.7)	53(44.2)	24(20.0)	4(3.3)	340	2.83
The government has undertaken community project(s) in my area in the last five years	12(10.0)	31(25.8)	48(40.0)	26(21.7)	3(2.5)	337	2.80
The project(s) embarked upon by the government in my community has greatly improved my way of life	11(9.2)	55(45.8)	37(30.8)	13(10.8)	4(3.4)	304	2.53
I am aware of the meaning of community development projects	16(13.3)	68(56.7)	19(15.8)	13(10.8)	4(3.4)	281	2.34

Source: Field Survey, 2021. MS-Mean Score; HA-Highly Aware, A-Aware, NS-Not Sure, NA-Not Aware, HNA-Highly Not Aware

**Table 3: Level of Awareness of Women to Community Development Projects**

Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
≤ 2.50 (Low)	39	32.5	2.80
≥ 2.50 (High)	81	67.5	

Source: Data Analysis, 2021

**Roles played by women in community and social development projects**

Table 4 shows that women mostly participate actively in the monthly environmental sanitation in the community (Mean score=3.0). Other roles by women include vigilant watch of the community for information to security agents (Mean score=2.98), proper child upbringing (Mean score=2.98), part of

the agricultural development and/or poverty eradication programme for women and children (Mean score=2.96), contribution to the development of the community financially and/or morally (Mean score=2.91). The respondents' least role was that they belong to women's group/society in the community (Mean score=2.60).

**Table 4: Roles Played by Women in Community and Social Development Projects**

Roles	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Score	MS
I participate actively in the monthly environmental sanitation in my community	7(5.8)	26(21.7)	53(44.2)	28(23.3)	6(5.0)	360	3.00
Vigilant watch of the community for information to security agents	7(5.8)	32(26.7)	42(35.0)	34(28.3)	5(4.2)	358	2.98
Proper child upbringing	6(5.0)	33(27.5)	46(38.3)	29(24.2)	6(5.0)	356	2.97
I am part of the agricultural development and/or Poverty eradication programme for women and children	8(6.7)	32(26.7)	45(37.5)	27(22.5)	8(6.6)	355	2.96
I belong to a women's group/society in my community	5(4.2)	38(31.7)	49(40.8)	19(15.8)	9(7.5)	349	2.91
I have had the opportunity to participate in women empowerment programme in the past	5(4.2)	57(47.5)	33(27.5)	18(15.0)	7(5.8)	325	2.71
I have contributed to the development of my area financially and/or morally	10(8.3)	59(49.2)	28(23.3)	15(12.5)	8(6.7)	312	2.60

Source: Data Analysis, 2021; Strongly Disagree-SD, Disagree-D, Not sure-NS, Agree-A, Strongly Agree-SA, MS-Mean score, f=frequency, %=percentage

The result presented in Table 5 shows the level of participation of women on community and social development projects in Ilorin west local government of Kwara State, Nigeria. Result shows that most of the respondents (69.2%) had a high level of participation while 30.8% had a low level of participation. A mean score of 2.88 implies a

generally high level of participation of women in community and social development projects in the study area. This finding differs from report by Ajayi, Ajiboye and Oluwatosin (2019) who indicated that women's participation in community and social development projects is low.

**Table 5: Level of Participation of Women to Community Development Projects**

Range	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Below 2.50	(Low)	37	30.8	2.88
2.5 and above	(High)	83	69.2	

Source: Data Analysis, 2021

**Factors hindering women participation in community and social development projects**

The result in Table 6 reveals the factors hindering women participation in community development projects. The major factors identified were lack of proper education for women (MS=3.24) and inconsistency of women's behaviour (MS=3.22). This implies that the provision of education and information would enhance women's participation in CSDP. The finding agrees with Ajayi *et al.* (2019) that lack of adequate information affects participation in CSDP projects in Ondo state. Ndambiri (2018) similarly found that education

levels hindered women participation in community development projects in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Other factors in order of severity were lack of government support in women empowerment and participation (MS=3.18), the dominant character of men towards women (MS=3.18), women are less respected in the community (MS=3.16), poverty (MS=3.09) and biological, cultural and financial factors (MS=3.05). The least factor identified as a hindrance to women's participation in community and social development projects was the lack of women at top places thereby reducing their roles (MS=2.98).

**Table 6: Factors Hindering Women Participation in Community and Social Development Projects**

Problems	SD	D	NS	A	SA	MS	Rank
Lack of proper education for women has been a problem	9(7.5)	16(13.3)	42(35.0)	43(35.8)	10(8.4)	3.24	1st
Inconsistency of women's behavior	10(8.3)	22(18.3)	34(28.3)	40(33.3)	14(11.7)	3.22	2nd
Lack of Government Support is one of the factors responsible for the dearth of women empowerment and participation	11(9.2)	18(15.0)	38(31.7)	44(36.7)	9(7.4)	3.18	3rd
The dominant character of men towards women has been a problem	9(7.5)	26(21.7)	31(25.8)	43(35.8)	11(9.2)	3.18	3rd
Women are less respected in the community	9(7.5)	23(19.2)	37(30.8)	42(35.0)	9(7.5)	3.16	5th
Poverty	11(9.2)	24(20.0)	36(30.0)	41(34.2)	8(6.7)	3.09	6th
Biological, cultural and financial factors are responsible for the lack of women participation in community development	9(7.5)	24(20.0)	51(42.5)	24(20.0)	12(10.0)	3.05	7th
The lack of government assistance has hindered the empowerment of women and community development	9(7.5)	27(22.5)	43(35.8)	34(28.3)	7(5.9)	3.03	8th
Lack of women at top places thereby reducing their roles	12(10.0)	26(21.7)	48(40.0)	21(17.5)	13(10.8)	2.98	9th

Source: Data Analysis, 2021; Strongly Disagree-SD, Disagree-D, Not sure-NS, Agree-A, Strongly Agree-SA, MS-Mean score, f=frequency, %=percentage

**Test of Hypothesis**

Result in Table 7 shows the result of chi-square analysis of the relationship between socio-economic characteristics and participation of women in community and social development project. Result

reveals that age ( $\chi^2=24.212$ ;  $p\leq 0.05$ ) influences women participation in community and social development projects. This finding corroborates with Ajayi *et al.* (2019) that age of women significantly influenced their participation in



community and social development project. Results also show that education ( $\chi^2=31.599$ ) influences women participation in community and social development projects. This finding shows that education played a significant role in women participation in community and social development

projects in the study area. This finding is similar to that of Anselm and Taofeeq (2010) who reported that education plays a significant role in positively influencing the status of women in firm decision making and participating in development projects.

**Table 7: Relationship between women socioeconomic characteristics and participation in CSDP**

Variable	Value( $\chi^2$ )	p-value	Decision
Age	24.212	0.029	Significant
Marital Status	3.861	0.722	Not Significant
Occupation	5.331	0.283	Not Significant
Education	31.599	0.012	Significant

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the level of participation of women in the community and social development projects in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria was high. The level of awareness of community and social development projects was also high among the respondents. Socio-economic characteristics such as the age and level of education of the women also influenced the extent of their participation in community and social development projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, therefore, recommends that:

1. Women should be always encouraged to participate in community development projects
2. The Government should provide even more assistance for women in the rural areas to empower them and give them a sense of belonging.

## REFERENCES

- Ajayi, G. T., Ajiboye A., and Oluwatusin, F. M. (2019). Women Participation in Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in Ondo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 4(1): 271-277.
- Ajayi, G. T. and Okunlola, J. O. (2020). Women's Perception of the Effects of Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) on their Livelihood Activities in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics and Sociology*, 38(11): 142-154
- Anselm, A. E. and Taofeeq, A. A. (2010). Determinants of women's contribution to farming decision making in cocoa-based agroforest household of Ekiti State, Nigeria. *The journal of field actions*, 4: 228-320.
- Echeme, I. I. and Nwachukwu, C. C. (2010). An Investigation on the Impact of FADAMA II Project Implementation in Imo State. *American Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research*, 1, 523-538.
- Farinde, A. J., Okunade, E. O. and Laogun, E. A. (2004). Community Perception of Women Occupying Leadership Position in Rural Development Projects of Osun State, Nigeria, *The Anthropologist*, 6:4, 273-278, DOI: 10.1080/09720073.2004.11890867
- Ndambiri, A. M. (2018). Determinants of Women Participation in Community Development Projects. A Case of Mombasa County, Kenya. *International Journal of Social Science and Technology*, 3(1); 9-24.
- Obbo, E. (2015). Gender Equality, Human Rights and Development, in CODESRIA Bulletin, Special Issue, Re-thinking African Development: Beyond Impasse, Towards Alternatives, 6-10 December 2005, Maputo, Mozambique.
- Ochepo, C.O., Ejembi, E.P., Agada, M.O., and Jiriko, R.K. (2018). Effects of community and social development projects on rural communities in north-central Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences*, 5(6), 650-655.
- Ogunbameru, B. O., Gwary, M. M., Idrisa, Y. L., Ani, A. O. and Yero, A. B. (2006). Empowerment of women through Urban Agriculture Development in Maiduguri Metropolitan, Borno State: Proceeding's 11th Annual national conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON), 3rd- 6th April, Pp 147-156.
- Ojo, M. and Osundina, O. (2021). Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Women Empowerment in Ilorin West Local Government, Kwara State, Nigeria. *KIU Journal of Humanities*, 6(2): 41-47.
- Okoji, O.O. and Ayuba, O. T. (2018). The clogs on women participation in community development programmes in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria: implications on sustainable development. *Gender and Behaviour*, 16 (3)
- Oluwole, S. (2018). Women in the Rural Environment; A paper presented at the

- International Conference on Women in the Rural Environment, Nov, 29. UNDP. (2015). Millennium Development Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality. Retrieved October 26, 2021, from [www.undplao.org/mdgs/mdgs3.php](http://www.undplao.org/mdgs/mdgs3.php)
- Owolabi, K. E., Okunlola J. O., and Mafimisebi T. E. (2018). Influence of participation in community and social development projects on beneficiaries' income in Ondo and Kwara States, Nigeria. *International Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 6(3):203-214.
- Igbuzor, O. (2012) Challenging Patriarchy and Promoting Women's Rights. Abuja
- Sheree, B. and Alyoscia, D. (2014). Beyond Critique: Revised Approaches to Community-Driven Development. An Inception Paper 30th April