

Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community Development Activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria

UMAR, Faruk Hussaini¹ & MUSTAPHA, Isah Dan Abdu²

Department of Educational Foundations¹ & Department of Research and Development Center²
Sokoto State University, Nigeria^{1&2}

Abstract: *This research assessed factors influencing women participation in community development activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria. A total of 270 respondents constituted sample of this study. Data collected were analyzed using percentage and frequency count. Finding reveals that, micro credit, material support, cash donation, and monthly contribution influenced women participation in economic development activities in the study area and donation of fund, political awareness and sensitization campaign of voters registration influenced women participation in political development activities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government and non-governmental agencies to provide support for women in the area of economic activities in the study area.*

Keywords: *Women, Participation, Community, Community Development.*

Introduction

In the ancient days, women were restricted by tradition and religion. Not only that high degree of illiteracy among women further worsened the problem. Women were thought of as only good for child-bearing and rearing, cooking and feeding the entire family, giving only helping hands in agriculture and petty business (Aguene, 2014). Enemu (2016) noted that women major inhibitions stem from the prevailing culture mores which restrict them to the kitchen and assign them the roles of wife, mother and home manager.

Pant (2014) submitted that women face abject poverty in want of adequate food, clean water, sanitation and healthcare. He noted that women lack access to the critical resources of credit, land and inheritance. In view of the above, it is obvious that women are denied opportunities in decision-making both at home and in the entire community.

Ajayi and Otuya (2017) observed that in most societies of Nigeria, women are socially, culturally and politically barred from participating in community development planning and decision making processes. Ike (2015) reveals that women who constitute a substantial percentage of the total population in Nigeria are illiterate, and they continue to lag far behind the men. In support of this assertion, Stronguist (2015) reveals that women earn less because they are in fields that are less important and less remunerated.

The concept of community development has been used in different contexts and for different purpose by different scholars. For example, Frank and Smith (2016) define community development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solution to common problems. Community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collection action being taken at grassroot level. Nkwede (2019), define community development as an education which would raise levels of local awareness and increase the confidence and ability of community groups to identify and tackle their own problems. Community development is a progression of building or creating sustainable communities through the establishment of natural, financial, human, social and physical resources within a particular community (Neefjes, 2015).

One of the assumptions behind community development is that everyone has something to contribute to the improvement of the community, from this assumption, it becomes pertinent that women command a large proportion of Nigeria's population, at an estimated fifty percent of the population (National Population Census, 2006). Out of this population majority seem to live in the rural areas where they immensely

contribute to rural development and by implication, to the national growth and development. However, despite this, the participation of women has not been adequately encouraged in the development of local government in Nigeria. Agalamanyi (2017), noted that most researchers and particularly census enumerators totally ignore and underestimate any productive roles that women play in socio-economic development of their communities.

Statement of the Problem

Women's population of 68.3million constitutes almost half of the entire country population of 140 million (NPC, 2006). This numerical strength has not been allowed equal treatment in the society. Apart from numerical strength, women have great potential to evolve a new economic order, thereby helping in accelerating social and political development and consequently transforming the society into a better one. Olawoye (2014) describe Nigerian women as a crucial factor in production. According to her, they are largely responsible for the bulk production of crops, agro-based food processing preservation, and distribution from farm centers to market in both rural and urban areas.

Despite that disparities still exist between men and women in education, employment and income opportunities, control over assets, personal security and participation in the development process (Rahman, 2017). This may be as a result of lingering constraints including poor economic condition of Nigeria women, lack of adequate legislation and policies to support the rights of women, unequal access to education, limited access to land, lower income level and men's perception on the need for women's participation in development all this has been viewed as determined factors in women's participation in development processes.

There is a gross under representation of women who make up almost 50 percent of Nigerian population (WACOL, 2018). There is still low level of education among women for participation in political activities.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine factors influencing women participation in economic development activities in Sokoto State;
2. Find out women participation in political development activities in Sokoto State;
3. Determine participation of women in social development activities in Sokoto State;
4. Ascertain the challenges affecting the participation of women in community development activities in Sokoto State; and
5. Determine the strategies for enhancing women participation in community development activities in Sokoto State.

Research Questions

This study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions;

1. What factors influenced women participation in economic development activities in Sokoto State?
2. What factors influenced women participation in political development activities in Sokoto State?
3. What factors influenced women participation in social development activities in Sokoto State?
4. What are the challenges affecting the participation of women in community development activities in Sokoto State?
5. What are the strategies for enhancing participation of women in community development activities in Sokoto State?

Literature Review

The concept of community development has been used in different contexts and for different purpose by different scholars. The general conception of community development, give rise to the quick perception of community development as rural development. This is because over 80 percent of the population of developing countries besides in the rural community (Udu and Onwe 2016).

(Frank and Smith, 2014) define community Development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solution to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at grassroots level. Community development ranges from small initiatives that involve the broader community. However, effective community development should be a long-term endeavor, well-planned, inclusive and equitable holistic and integrated into the bigger picture Initiated and supported by community members, benefit to the community, grounded in experience that leads to best practices.

Noted by Ndukwe (2015), community development is a process of social action which the people of a community organize themselves for planning an action, define their common and individual needs and problems; execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resource and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community. This means that community development is not concerned with one aspect of life, but involves total community life

and needs. Ideally, it involves all the members of community, it require their fullest participation in decision making and then decision implementation. People work together with or without extra support to shape their future and that of the community.

The activities of women in relation to community development are developmental in nature, such as agricultural activities, health and environmental activities, socio economic activities and educational activities which are merchants and craftswomen in nature. According to Ogunlela and Mukhtar, (2019), the role that women play and their position in meeting the challenges of agricultural production and development are quite dominant and prominent. Their relevance and significance therefore, cannot be overemphasized. Findings from a study financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) revealed that women make up some 60-80% of agricultural labour force in Nigeria, depending on the region and they produce two-thirds of the food crops. Ironically, women are known to be more involved in agricultural activities than men in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, Nigeria inclusive. As much as 73% were involved in cash crops, arable and vegetable gardening while post-harvest activities had 16% and agro forestry 15%. Their involvement in agriculture in Nigeria has attracted greater attention in recent years.

Reasons for their involvement are as many as are diverse. In some states rural women have virtually taken over the production and processing of arable crops, being responsible for as much as 80% of the staple food items. Estimates of women's contribution to the production of food crops range from 30% in the Sudan to 80% in the Congo; contributing substantially to national agricultural' production and food security, while being primarily responsible for the food crops.

Methodology

This chapter describes the methods and procedure for collecting data for this research and will be presented under the following sub-headings; Research design, Population of the study, Sample size and sampling techniques, Instrument for data collection, Validation of the research instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection as well as method of data analysis.

The Research design for this study is descriptive survey design.

The population of this study constitute 914 members of 17 registered women groups in Sokoto.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

sample size of 270 respondents were used for the study. The researchers apply stratified sampling A technique in selecting 270 respondents to represent the total population.

Stratification in the dimension of senatorial zones.

Results

This chapter focuses on the presentation of data, analysis and discussion of findings.

Research Question One: What Factors Influenced Women Participation in Economic Development Activities in Sokoto State?

Table 1: Factors Influenced Women Participation in Economic Development Activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	The Micro – credit loans given to women has enabled them to be self reliance in the community.	208 (77)	62 (23.0)
2	The participation in Community Activities has created more jobs in the community.	212 (78.5)	58 (21.5)
3	The material assistance to women as improved their standard of living in community	246 (91.1)	24 (8.9)
4	The Cash Donation to women has enable women to establish small scales enterprises in the community	210 (77.8)	60 (22.2)
5	The monthly Contribution has motivated in reducing poverty among women in the community	239 (88.5)	31 (11.5)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Item 1 shows that 77% of the respondents agreed that micro – credit loans given to women has enable them to be self reliance in sustainable economic development, while 23% disagreed. The result implies that micro – credit loans has significant contribution to women participation in sustainable economic development. The results also show that participation in community activities has created more jobs for women in Sokoto State, this is because 78.5% of the respondents agreed that participation in community activities has significant contribution for job creation for women, while 21.5% disagreed. The result of item 3 shows that 91.91% agreed that material Assistance to women help to improved their standard of living in the community, while 8.9% disagreed. This result implies that material Assistance to women has positive contribution towards the development of their standard of living in the study area.

Furthermore, the cash donation (financial Assistance) has favourable support to women in establishing small scales enterprises in the sample area. This is because 77.8% of the respondents agreed with the item, while 22.2% disagreed. Additionally, it is revealed that 88.5% of the respondents agreed that monthly contribution among the women in the study area assist in reducing the rate of the poverty; however, disagreed and 11.5% objected the claim.

Research Questions Two: What Factors Influence Women Participation in Political Development Activities in Sokoto State?

Table 2: Factors influence Women Participation in Political Development Activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	The donation of Fund has enable more women to run for different political offices in the community	123 (45.6)	147 (54.4)
2	Participation in politics has increase the number of female aspirant in the community.	111 (41.1)	159 (58.9)
3	The political awareness on women against vote buying has enable more women to vote for their candidates of their choice in the community.	248 (91.9)	22 (8.1)
4	Sensitization campaign on Voters registration has improved more women to register in the community.	193 (71.5)	77 (28.5)
5	Sensitization on Voting has increase the number of female voters in the community.	242 (89.6)	28 (9.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The presentation in Table 2 reveals that 45.6% of the respondents agreed that the donation of fund has enable more women to run for different political position, however, 54.4% disagreed. The study shows that participation of women in politics does not increase the number of female aspirants in Sokoto State, because only 41.1% of the respondents agreed 58.9% disagreed. The result of the items 3 shows that 91.9% of the respondents agreed that political awareness against vote buying has enable the women to vote for the candidate of their choice, although 8.1% disagreed.

The result of item 4 shows that 71.5% of the respondents agreed that sensitization campaign on voters registration has increase the number of number of women to participate in voters registration in the community, however, 28.5% disagreed with the claim. Item 5 shows that 89.6% respondents strongly agreed that sensitization on votes casting has increase the number of female voters in the community, yet, 9.6 remain negative about this claim.

Research Question Three: What Factors Influenced Women Participation in Social Development Activities in Sokoto State?

Table 3: Factors Influenced Women Participation in Social Development Activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	The Construction of community halls has served as avenue for community meetings and conferences which has in turn reduced ethnic conflict in the community	207 (76.7)	63 (23.3)
2	The frequent awareness campaign on gender sensitive issue as reduce rape an domestics violence against women in the community.	252 (93.3)	18 (6.7)
3	The Financial aid given to internally displaced persons as provided opportunities for women access to social amenities in the community	210 (77.8)	60 (22.2)
4	The recognition of People with disability and vulnerable women as top priority has bridged the gap of social exclusion in the community.	141 (52.2)	129 (47.8)
5	The campaign against Gender sensitive issue has motivated in promoting social cohesion in the community.	227 (84.1)	43 (15.9)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The illustration to table 3 shows that 76.7% respondents were adamant that the construction of community has served as avenue for community meetings and conferences, which has in turn reduced ethnic conflicts in the community, however, 23.3% of the respondents disagreed. The result of the item 2 shows that 93.3% of the respondents agreed that frequent awareness campaign by groups on gender sensitive issues has reduced rape and domestic violence against women in the community, but 6.7% disagreed.

The table also shows that 77.8% of the respondents accepted that the financial aid by groups given to internally displaced person has provided opportunities for women access to social amenities in the community, although 22.2% disagreed. Item 4 shows that 52.2% of the respondents affirmed that recognition of people with disability and vulnerable women as a top priority by groups has bridged the gap of social exclusion in the community, however, 47.8% disagreed. Item 5 shows that 84.1% of the respondents agreed that, the campaign against gender sensitive issues by groups has motivated in promoting social cohesion in the community, but 15.9% disagreed.

Research Question Four: What are the Challenges Affecting the Participation of Women in Community Development Activities in Sokoto State?

Table 4: Challenges on Women Participation in Community Development Activities in Sokoto State.

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	Higher rate of illiteracy among the women affects their participation in community activities	207 (76.7)	63 (23.3)
2	Gender inequality in educational opportunities lower the level of women participation in community development activities.	252 (93.3)	18 (6.7)
3	Lack of management and technical skills affects participation of women in community development.	210 (77.8)	60 (22.2)
4	Political discrimination of men against women mitigate their participation in community development.	141 (52.2)	129 (47.8)
5	Women are restricted in some community development activities by their husbands	227 (84.1)	43 (15.9)

Sources: Field Survey, 2024.

The presentation in Table 4 reveals that 76.7% of the respondents agreed that higher rate of illiteracy among women affects their participation in community development activities, whereas 23.3% disagreed. The result of the item 2 shows that 93.3% of the respondents agreed that gender inequality in educational opportunities lower the level of women participation in sustainable community development, whereas 6.7% disagreed. Item 3 shows that 77.8% of the respondents agreed that lack of management and technical skills affect participation of women in community development project, however, 22.2% disagreed.

The result of item 4 reveals that political discrimination of men against women mitigate their participation in community development activities, as affirmed by 52.2% of the respondents and disagreed by 47.8%. In Item five, 84.1% of the respondents agreed that women in the community development are restricted in some community activities by their husbands, although only 15.9% objected the claim.

Research Question Five: What are the Strategies for Enhancing Participation of Women in Community Development Activities in Sokoto State?

Table 5: Strategies for Enhancing Participation of Women in Community Development Activities in Sokoto State.

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	Empowering women through skills basic acquisition increase their participation in community development	231 (85.6)	39 (14.4)
2	Vocational training improves women participation in community development.	233 (86.3)	37 (13.7)
3	Equality in political participation encourages women to participate in community development.	228 (84.4)	42 (15.6)
4	Equality in the access to education opportunities would increase women participation in community development.	241 (89.3)	29 (10.7)
5	Adopting participatory approach to community development will improves performance of women in the community.	255 (94.4)	15 (5.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The illustration to table 5 shows that 85.6% of the respondents agreed that empowering women through skills basic acquisition increase their participation in community development, although 14.4% submitted their objection. Item 2 of the table reveals that 86.3% of the respondents affirmed that vocational training improves women participation in community development, however, disagreed. The result of the Item 3 on the table shoes that 84.4% of the respondents agreed that equality in political participation encourages women to participation in community development activities, although 15.6% were against this submission. Furthermore, item 4 shows that 89.3% of the respondents agreed that equality in the access to education opportunities between male and female would increase women participation in community development activities in the community; however, 10.7% disagreed. Lastly, item 5 illustrate that 94.4% of the respondents submitted that adopting participation approach to community development will improved the performance of women in community development activities. This submission was however objected by 5.6% of the respondents.

Conclusion

The study shows that Micro-Credit, material support, cash donation, and monthly contribution influenced women participation in community economic development. However, the study also shows that donation of fund, Participation in Politics, Political awareness and sensitization campaign of voters registration influenced women participation in community political development. The study also revealed that construction of community halls, frequent awareness, financial aid, recognition of people with disability influenced women participation in community social development activities. The also revealed challenges such as Illiteracy, Gender inequality, lack of management and technical skills, political discrimination of women have adversely affect the participation of women in community development. Finally, this study concludes that strategies such as empowering women through skills acquisition, vocational training, equality in political participation, equality in the access to education opportunities are adopted women participation in community development will be of great significant in Sokoto State.

Recommendations

Based on findings, this study recommends the following: first, Government and non- Governmental agencies to provide support for women in the area of economic activities; Second, There is need for proactive campaign from the stakeholders and community leaders in the business of politics to increase their campaign via printed and non- printed media on the importance and positive contribution of women participation in political activities. Third, The government in collaboration with non-governmental organization and other social related agencies to increased their sensitization campaign on the importance of women participation in social development; Four, Government should collaborate with expert by recruiting qualified and enough facilitators to addressed the challenges of women participation in community development; Finally, Government in collaboration with non- governmental agencies should use the principle of participatory appraisal in identifying the effective strategies that is useful in increasing women participation in community development.

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