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Socio-economic Factors Affecting Women Participation in Community Development Activities in Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria: Implication for Agricultural Transformation Agenda

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Abstract

Agricultural transformation is a microcosm of the community development effort. The major challenge is that Nigerian women face various degrees of setback in an attempt to contribute in community development as a means to agricultural transformation agenda. The present study examined the socio-economic characteristics of rural women in the study area, and identified community development activities that women participate in the study area. The population of the study was composed of 1152 members of the 23 registered women associations in the study area. Data were collected through a structured and validated questionnaire administered to a sample size of seventy five (75) women selected using a 2-stage random sampling technique from the population. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean and linear regression. The result shows that greater percentages of the respondents (30.7%) are within the age range of 40-49 years, majority of the women (61.3%) are married, (40%) of them attained secondary education level, majority of the respondents (48.7%) are traders, majority of the household (45.3%) have a household size of between 4-6 persons, majority of the women (80%) have a monthly income level of N10, 000 to N50, 000. Results also indicated that the community development activities that rural women participated include provision of credit and loans to members of the community (2.72), cleaning of market square (2.93), cleaning of community town hall (2.83), offer welfare services (2.84), participation in sanitation exercise (3.15), mobilizes support for community members (2.71), provide rental services (3.35), among others. The result also shows that at 0.05 probability level, there is a significant relationship between educational level ($t = 0.046$), occupation ($t = 0.019$) and income level ($t = 0.087$) and women participation in community development activities. It is recommended that Government and Non-governmental Organizations should organize adult education and skill acquisition Programs to improve their women's level of education and employable skills to increase their chances for employment, improved their income and attitude towards community development activities in their community.

Keywords: *Community Development Activities, Agricultural Transformation*

Introduction

Community development has been identified as one the basis for economic development and agricultural transformation in any society. Consequently effort has been made by successive governments in Nigeria in conjunction with international agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, local groups and individuals towards the development of rural communities. According to Oyabami and Adekola (2008), Community development is a process by which the effort of members of a

community are united with the government and Non-Governmental bodies for a gradual and positive reconditioned process with much reliance on local initiatives, leadership and resources for improvement in the physical and social structure of the community and general wellbeing of the inhabitants. Community development embraces improvement in agriculture, infrastructure, social amenities, human and natural resources. Community development activities have contributed to national development, social development, and help in poverty alleviation in developing countries like Nigeria (Oyebamiji 2005).

According to Enuke and Oyita (2005), community development contributes to the process of building democracy and human development, promote popular culture and education, assert the values and attitudes required to change and develop realities both locally and nationally and make community members to become protagonists of their lives. It also injects positive changes in the social and physical structure of the society. For effective community development Process, it is expected that all members of a community are actively involved in making and implementing decisions. Abison (2007) says participation plays a major role in community development as it provide opportunity for all members to have a say in the development that affects them and helps to identify the need of the people to provide the service, with the information of what is needed. Community development promotes opportunity for people to learn and develop their own 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.

According to Nigeria Population Commission (NPC) (2006), the population of women in Nigeria was 69,086,302. Despite this population, it has been revealed that women are inadequately represented in community development activities (Wema, 2010). The possible explanation for this could be that gender issues at the community level have not received due attention and redress. However, it is expected that women use their massive population and strength to their advantage in contributing meaningfully in the life of their community. This becomes more critical when viewed against the backdrop that women are more acutely affected by various negative social actions and processes. Especially in agricultural transformation since women are deeply involved in household food security. However, the major challenge is that Nigerian women face various degrees of handicaps in their quest for relevance in the mainstream of community development. Hence this study was carried out to investigate the socio-economic factors affecting women participation in community development activities in the area of study. Specifically, the study is designed to; examine the socio-economic characteristics of rural women in the study area; identify the community development activities that women participate in; and examine the socio-economic factors affecting women participation in community development activities in the study area.

Methodology

The population of the study was composed of all members of registered women association in Uvwie Local Government Area. The population was one thousand, one hundred and fifty two (1152) women in the twenty three (23) registered women associations in the study area. The sample size for the study was seventy five (75) women selected through a two (2) stage-random sampling techniques from the study population. In the first stage, fifteen (15) women associations were randomly selected from twenty three (23) women associations in the study area. In the second stage, five (5) members were randomly selected from each of the fifteen (15) selected women associations. Data were collected with the aid of a questionnaire which was structured and validated by the researchers. The responses on community development activities women participate in the study area were weighted on a 4-point likert-type summated rating scale of agreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The values of the scale (4, 3, 2 and 1) were summed up to obtain 10. The mean value of the sum gave 2.50, which served as the cut-off mean. This became the benchmark for accepting any item as a community development activity women participate in the study area. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools which includes frequency, percentage, mean and linear regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

Description of the Socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents.

The result of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents presented in Table 1 shows the age category of the respondents, 18.7% of the female respondents are within ages 20-29 years, 26.7 % are within ages 30-39years, 30.7% are within ages 40-49years, and 14.7% are within ages 50-59years, while 9.2 % of the female respondents are between the ages of 70 and above. The result indicates that majority of the respondents are in their active working age, which according to Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, (1997), are the economically active population. The marital status of the respondents on the Table above shows that 4.0%, of the respondents are single, 61.3% are married, 16.0% are divorced, while 18.7% are widowed. Majority of the respondents are married, this implies that women with family responsibilities were involved in the community development activities in the study area. This is because they as mothers, responsibilities demands that they give reasonable contributions to the development that concerns their communities.

The result on the educational level of the respondents shows that 6.7% had no formal education, 18.7% attained primary education, 40.0% attained secondary school education while 34.7% attained tertiary education, the number of respondent that had secondary and tertiary education shows that women in the area of study are literate and that women are benefiting from various government policies and programmes on education and women development. The findings on the Table 1

also revealed that 14.7% of the respondents are farmers, 48.0% are traders, and 30.7% are civil servants while 6.7% are engaged in other activities in order to generate income. This implies that majority of women in the study area are traders. The result in Table 1 also shows that the majority (45.3%) of the respondents has a household size of 4-6 persons. The findings of the study also reviewed that 33.3% of women have been in the association for 1-5years, 44.0% for 6-10years, 20.0% for 11-15years, while 2.7% for 16 years and above. Finally Table 4.1 also shows the yearly income level of the various associations, 80.0% get N10, 000 – N50, 000 level of income, 13.3% gets N51, 000 – N100, 000, while 6.7% gets N151, 000 – N200, 000. This implies that majority of the members of the women associations in the study area has a low income level, which may affect their financial commitment to their association in the study area. According to Mayoux (1995), cited in Oyegbami *et. al* (2012) participation is based on the ownership or pulling of resources which exclude the very poor. This implies that income may be a major factor in community development activities.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age categories		
20-29	14	18.7
30-39	20	26.7
40-49	23	30.7
50-59	11	14.7
60-69	7	9.2
Total	75	100
Marital status		
Single	3	4.0
Married	46	61.3
Divorced	12	16.0
Widowed	14	18.7
Total	75	100
Educational level		
Non-formal education	5	6.7
Primary	14	18.7
Secondary	30	40.0
Tertiary	26	34.7
Total	75	100
Occupation		
Farmer	11	14.7
Trader	36	48.7
Civil servant	23	30.7
Others	5	5.9
Total	75	100
Household size (non of persons)		
1-3	24	32.0
4-6	34	45.3
7-9	17	22.7

Total	75	100
Membership (years)		
1-5	25	33.3
6-10	33	44.0
11-15	15	20.0
16 and above	2	2.7
Total	75	100
Income level (₦)		
10,000-50,000	60	80.0
51,000-10,000	10	13.3
151,000-200,000	5	6.7
Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Community Development Activities Women Participate in.

Results on community development activities women participate in the study area are presented in Table 2. Based on the findings it is revealed that rural women associations participate in the following community development activities such as: cleaning of the market square (mean = 2.93), cleaning of community town hall (mean = 2.83), participate in sanitation exercise (mean = 3.15), provides rental services (mean = 3.35), this may be due to the fact that these activities are within their reach and does not require huge sum of money but more labor which they can provide through the mobilization of the members in the community. It was also found that the women provide credits and loans to members of the community (mean = 2.72), since majority of the respondent are engaged in one livelihood activity and other of forms income generation, members can mobilize funds through thrifts which are disbursed to members as soft loans for immediate needs and investment purposes. The result also shows that women carries out intervention measures for the less privileged in the community (mean = 3.48), women association contribute food items and clothing for vulnerable women and children, offers welfare services (mean = 2.84), this findings is in line with the view of (ECA, 1990) that women associations carries out intervention measures for members of its community. The finding agrees with Farinde and Adisa (2005) that women associations promote economic prosperity of their members and provide them with credit facilities and assistance in time of need. The study also shows that women association are also involved in public enlightenment and campaigns (mean = 3.59), which according to (ECA, 1990) that women associations carries out information dissemination activities. The result also indicated that women associations mobilize support of community members for project execution (mean = 2.71), this findings collaborates with the view of Bruxell (1999) that rural women associations initiate community-driven development which is initiated by the needs of the community. The result also indicated that women associations provide resources for the maintenance of road, schools etc in the community (mean = 3.01), they also provide labor at project sites (mean = 2.64), this confirms the view of Farinde and Adisa

(2005) that rural women associations in form of community development associations (CDAS) have as their major goals to develop their communities, which is done principally by participating in building of infrastructures in the community which is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents Rating of Community Development Activities Women Participate in

Item	Mean score	Remarks
Provides credit and loans to members of the community	2.72	Accept
Cleaning of market square	2.93	Accept
Cleaning of community town hall	2.83	Accept
Offer welfare services	2.84	Accept
Participate in sanitation exercise	3.15	Accept
Organized actions to make demand for increased social facilities in the community	2.41	Reject
Mobilizes resources to support community projects	2.45	Reject
Mobilizes the support of community members	2.71	Accept
Provide rental services	3.35	Accept
Promote resources for maintenance of road, schools etc	3.01	Accept
Involve public enlightenment and campaign	3.59	Accept
Organize skill training workshop for community members	2.11	Reject
Donate resources for the establishment of rural water	2.16	Reject
Donate resources for the establishment of electricity	1.97	Reject
Advices intervention agencies on the areas of needs	1.93	Reject
Carries out intervention measures for the less privileged	3.48	Accept
Provision of labour at project site	2.64	Accept

Source: Field Survey (2014)

NOTE: Items with mean score ≥ 2.50 implies acceptance while items with mean score ≤ 2.50 implies rejection.

Socio-economic Factors affecting Women Participation in Community Development Activities

The result of the statistical test for the relationship between socio-economic variables and participation in community development activities is presented on Table 3. The result shows that educational status (0.046) had a positive significant relationship with women participation in community development activities. This implies that the more women are educated the more they are involved in communities. Therefore when people are educated they will be able to access information, they will be more disposed to accept positive changes, which are geared towards development in their communities. Furthermore, it was found that occupation has a positive significant relationship with women participation in

community development activities ($t = 0.019$), this implies that the more women are engaged in income generating livelihood activities, the more their capacity to participate in the development activities of their community. Also the result revealed that income level is a significant factor affecting women participation in community development activities ($t = 0.043$). This implies that the increase in the income level of women, the more their participation in community development activities. This is because community development activities require financial supports from members of the community.

Based on the findings, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected in respect to the above variables (educational level, occupation and income). Therefore there is a significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and women participation in community development activities in the study area.

Table 3: Linear Regression Result showing the relationship between socio-economic factors and participation in Community Development Activities.

Variables	T values	(Coefficients) Parameter estimates	Decisions
Constant	8.304	0.000	
Age	-297	0.769	NS
Marital status	.536	0.593	NS
Education	2.029	0.046	S
Occupation	-2.404	0.019	S
Household size	1.639	0.106	NS
Years of membership	-1.236	0.221	NS
Income	1.702	0.043	S
Adjusted R-squared		0.087	
F- Ratio		2.009	
N		74	

Source: Field survey (2014)

Note: Significant at 0.05, where NS – not significant and S – significant.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, It is concluded that participation of women in community development activities in the area of study is affected by some socio-economic factors which include age, educational level and income level. The conclusion is too poor and shallow.

Recommendations

Based on the finding from the study the following recommendations are made

- Government and Nongovernmental Organization should organize Adult Education Programs for women in the area of study so that women can attain good level of education which will increase their knowledge and improve their attitude thereby enhancing their contributions in community

development activities in their community, women in the study area should take advantage of the available educational opportunity.

- Rural women association should liaise with donor's agencies and non-governmental organizations to be involved in planning and decision making process of community development projects.
- Women participation in community development should be encouraged; this will entail defining the need in the community, putting in place services to meet the objectivities and evaluation.

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