

Factors Affecting Youth Participation in Community Development in Remo North Government Area of Ogun State

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Abstract: This study investigated the factors affecting youths participation in community development projects in eight rural communities in Remo-North Local Government Area of Ogun state. Eighty youths were randomly sampled and interviewed through a well-structure interview schedule. The data were analyzed with the aid of frequency counts, percentages and chi-square analysis for testing the research hypothesis. The study reveals the various constraints militating against the participation of youths in community development projects which include lack of cooperation from other community members, parental influence, inadequate assistance from the government at the grass root level and inadequate recognition of the youths as a formidable labour force in the community. The finding also reveals the socioeconomic characteristic of the youths as well as their level of participation in community development project. Statistically, it was revealed that there was significant relationship between the youths occupation, level of education and access to information and factors affecting youths participation in community development projects.

Key words: Youth participation, community development, factors effecting, socioeconomic

INTRODUCTION

The nature and scope of rural development are very important factors upon which the dimensions of development in rural communities are based (Adedoyin, 1997). This is well understood amidst a thorough study of rural communities and the basic environment for rural development. Jibowo (1992) however, defined development as the transformation of rural community into a socially, economically, politically, educationally, orderly and materially desired condition with the purpose of improving the quality of life of the rural population. He defined it further as a socioeconomic process which seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and income within a society. It involves the integration of the rural poor, which constitute the vast majority of the population of most developing countries into national economy.

Furthermore, Fadayomi (1998) observed that viable rural development could only be achieved when there is sustained growth in rural income and standard of living which could be brought about primarily from agriculture. Oyebamiji (1992) opined that community development can be defined as a process and a movement. As a process, it lays emphasis on what happens to people psychologically in the course of community development. Individual in this process are assisted through organized effort to acquire the attitude, skill and concept required for

their participation in programme designed to promote their well-being. Thus, community development process is a problem solving process. And as a movement, community development is seen as involving movement from one point of dissatisfaction to a point of satisfaction or to another point of dissatisfaction in the life of community. It stresses the idea being interpreted and promoted by the citizens of the community.

Also, Ekong (2003) stated that the concept of community development in developing countries generally entails emphasis on participation initiative and self-help by the local community. He further stated that involvement of people in programme entails understanding the nature of the problem at hand, the need or interest involved, those directly involved and those peripherally affected. Therefore, Ogbuozobe (1997) concluded that the totality of community development process and movement is embedded in the principle of citizen participation which enjoys whatever is done to improve the welfare of the people. Agboola (1998) maintained that participation is the process by which the person in question takes part in the initiation and implementation of decision.

In the pre-independence era, many African communities including Nigeria witnessed a vibrant community development process through the participation of both youth and the community elders. During this period and beyond, community infrastructures

were constructed out of the community efforts, with immersed youth participation. In view of all these, youth participation are known to be pre-requisites for overall development of the community (UN, 2000).

Similarly, Adeleke (1991) defined youth as the time person's latent power and attributes are exploited to their highest potential i.e., when intellects is at its sharpest and energy is at its most promising hence he describe people between the ages of 16-36 years as youth. In many countries, little is done to collect information on rural youth (Kevin, 2004). As a result, knowledge about rural youth's livelihoods and their participation in community development remains fragmented among service providers. Often key rural policy documents make no mention of youth at all and even when they are mentioned, it does not reflect informed policy.

Policies relating to youth and rural development tends to fall into categories either youth is seen as a marginal and dependent category or they are considered dangerous to themselves and a problem to the society hence these approaches undermine the capacity of development workers to see young people as a source of solution to the challenges of rural development. Though many projects had been executed with the intention of involving every segment in the society but it is assumed that youths are not participating well in most of the community development project due to some hindering social and economic factors, therefore, in view of this, the study intends to investigate the factors that affect youth participation in community development project in Remo North Local Government Area of Ogun State. Specifically, it intends to: Identify the socioeconomic characteristics of the youths, identify the various problems affecting youth participation in community development project and ascertain their level of participation in community development projects. It was hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and factors affecting their participation in community development projects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Remo-North Local Government Area of Ogun State. It has a growing population of about 43,464 people and has about 13.789 km² area of land which lies within humid tropical zone, bounded in the north by Oyo state, south by Ikenne local government while to the east by Ijebu-North Local government and to the west by Obafemi-Owode local government area. The study area is characterized by 2 distinct seasons namely wet and dry season, respectively.

Agriculture is known to be the primary income generating activity of the people in the study area while other secondary income generating activities such as blacksmith, tailoring, trading weaving, carpentry etc abound in the area. By virtue of its location in the tropical region, it has quite substantial resources for cultivating permanent crops like cocoa and kola nut while natural resources like Kaolin, clay and phosphate are also available. The study area is dominated by the Ijebu though other tribes can be found in the study area.

The population of the study consists of all the youths who are members of a registered associations/organizations in the study area. The local government was divided into 10 wards and 4 wards were purposively selected for the study due to the existence of different types of development projects and the selected wards include, Ipara-remo, Ilara-remo (ward 1) Ode-remo and Ilara-remo (ward 2). Two communities were randomly selected from each of the wards namely Garage, Ayegbami, Moborode, Obalende, Oke-Oja, Agaro, Ita-oba and Itunkaro. Similarly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 respondents from each community based on the lists of registered members of prominent youth associations in the communities thus giving a total of 80 respondents, which constitute the sample size. Well structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of data. The descriptive statistics used were frequency counts and percentages. The inferential statistic used to test the hypothesis was chi-square analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents: Data presented on Table 1 reveals that majority of the sampled respondents (86.3%) were within the age group of 16-29 years. This favours increase rate of youth participation in community development projects since these youths are still very active to cope with the rigours involved in community development projects. The implication of the age distribution is that many youths will actively participate in community development project if given chance and needed encouragement.

Table 1 further reveals that 75% of the sampled youths were single, 22.4% were married and the remaining 2.6% accounted for those respondents who were divorced. It could also be seen that 67.5% of the respondents were male while the remaining 32.5% were female. This indicates that the higher percentage of male

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their socioeconomic characteristics

Socioeconomic characteristics	Frequency	(%)
Age (Years)		
16-23	22	27.5
24-29	47	58.8
30-36	11	13.7
Total	80	100.0
Marital status		
Single	60	75.0
Married	18	22.4
Divorced	02	2.6
Total	80	100.0
Sex		
Male	54	67.5
Female	26	32.5
Total	80	100.0
Occupation		
Farming	06	7.5
Trading	13	16.3
Scholar	61	76.2
Total	80	100.0
Level of education		
Primary education	12	15.0
Secondary education	24	30.0
Tertiary education	44	55.0
Total	80	100.0
Membership of social organization		
Yes	69	86.2
No	11	13.8
Total	80	100.0
Access to information		
Yes	43	53.7
No	37	46.3
Total	80	100.0
Level of awareness		
High	41	51.2
Low	39	48.8
Total	80	100.0

Sources: Field Survey, 2004

in community development project is as a result of the fact that the male participate more in community development project than their female counterpart who have other pressing issues to attend to such as caring for the children as well as taking care of the home chores.

Further findings reveals that 76.2% of the youths were scholars while 16.3% engaged in trading as their occupation and only 7.5% were farmers. This implies that majority of the respondents that participate in community development projects are students who will be able to use their knowledge and acquired skills to bring about improvement in the way and manner in which community development project are being initiated and implemented. The table further shows that majority of the youths sampled (55%) had tertiary education, 30% had secondary education and only 15% had primary education. This implies that all the sampled respondents could either read or write which will enhance their level of understanding of community development projects initiatives.

Tale 2: Distribution of respondents according to constraints militating against their participation in community development projects

Characteristic	Frequency	(%)
Lack of cooperation	243	0.0
Parental influence	19	23.8
Inadequate govt. assistance	17	21.2
Inadequate recognition youths	20	25.0
Total	80	100.0

Sources: Field Survey, 2004

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their level of participation in community development projects

Level of participation	Frequency	(%)
High	62	77.5
Low	18	22.5
Total	80	100.0

Sources: Field Survey, 2004

Similarly, 86.2% of the respondents were members of social organizations in the study area while the remaining 13.8% do not belong to any social organizations but participate in community development project. This implies that the majority who were members of social organization will contribute to the decision making process in form of sounding birds and/or initiating groups' in relation to any community development project in the study area. Also, 53.7% of the sampled respondents have access to information while 46.3% do not have access to information. This implies that these respondents who have access to information will be highly informed as well as having high level of awareness about community development projects thus will be able to take rational decisions about the projects.

Moreover, it can be seen on the table that 51.2% of the respondents indicated that their level of awareness of community development projects is high while the remaining 48.8% indicated that their level of awareness of community development projects is low. This implies that those who have high level of awareness may be as a result of their being having access to information which gave them an edge over other who have no access to information.

Constraint militating against youth participation in community development project:

Table 2 shows the constraints militating against youth participation in community development project. Majority (30%) of the youths indicated that lack of cooperation from other members of the community militate against their participating in community development project while 25% indicated that inadequate recognition of the youths as a formidable labour force in community development hinders their participation in community development project and 23.8% perceived parental influence on the youth as a problem militating against their participation in

Table 4: Relationship between respondents socioeconomic characteristic and factors affecting youth participation in community development project

Characteristic	X ² cal	X ² tab	Df.	Remarks
Age	7.30	16.92	9	NS
Gender	2.33	7.81	3	NS
Marital status	6.27	16.92	9	NS
Level of education	56.39	16.92	9	S
Occupation	17.33	16.92	9	S
Membership of social org.	1.12	7.81	3	NS
Access to information	8.92	7.81	3	S
Level of awareness	1.44	7.81	3	NS

At 5% level of significance

community development projects. Hence their impact cannot be adequately felt in course of any developmental project in the study area.

Respondents level of participation in community development project: The perusal of Table 3 shows that majority of the sampled respondents (77.5%) indicated that their level of participation in community development projects is high while 22.5% accounted for those respondents who have low level of participation in community development project. This implies that majority of the sampled respondents participated in community development projects which probably may be due to the fact that they knew and understood the advantages of having adequate and needed infrastructural facilities in their communities through community development efforts.

Hypothesis testing: Table 4 shows the relationships between the respondents socioeconomic characteristics and factors affecting youths participation in community development projects. It could be seen that there was significant relationship between respondents' occupation, level of education and access to information and factors affecting youth participation in community development projects while age, gender, marital status, membership of social organization and level of awareness were insignificant. This implies that respondents' occupation, level of education and access to information positively affects youths participation in community development projects.

CONCLUSION

The study examined factors affecting youth participation in community development projects in Remo-North Local Government Area of Ogun State with a particular focus on 8 rural communities namely Garage, Ayegbami, Moborode, Obalende, Oke-Oja, Agaro, Ita-Oba and Itunkaro. The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study:

- Majority (86.3%) of the sampled respondents were between the ages of 16-29 years, single (75%), male (67.5%) and were scholars (76.2%).
- A large proportion (55%) had tertiary education, were members of social organization (86.2%), have access to information, have high level of awareness of community development projects (51.2%) and actively participate in community development projects (77.5%).
- There were problems militating against the youths in participating in community development projects. These include among others the problems of lack of cooperation from other members of the society (30%) inadequate recognition of the youths (25%), parental influence (23.8%) and inadequate assistance from the local government authorities (21.2%).
- There were significant relationships between the respondents occupation, level of education and access to information and factors affecting youths participation in community development projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Project initiation should involves the youths and adequate source of information should be used in dissemination information to the youths so that they will have first hand information about what is happening in their community.
- Public enlightenment programmes should be organized from time to time to educate the parents and the communities as a whole on the significance of youth participating in community development projects in the society.
- Adequate assistance and encouragement should be provided by the grass root government to the youths to enhance their participation in community development project.

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