

Women Leadership Role as Correlate of Sustainable Community Development Programmes in Ogbomosho North of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Despite the traditional belief that the role of women is limited in the society, in modern communities, women are at the fore-front in working towards sustainable community development in Nigeria. Women leaders have taken up the challenges to contribute effectively towards community driven development instead of over-relying on government support. This paper, therefore, examined the extent to which women leadership has fostered community development despite men domination in African communities. A descriptive research design and self designed questionnaire was used in collecting data from a sample of 292 respondents in the study area. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result revealed that there was significant relationship between leadership roles and women's participation in community development programmes. The study also revealed that there was a significant relationship between marginalization of women leadership and their involvement in community development programmes. It was further revealed that there was a significant relationship between respondents' perceptions of leadership and community development programmes. It is, therefore, recommended that women leaders should be more encouraged in community development programmes in order to contribute more to the development of the community.

Key words: Women, leadership, role, sustainable community development, programmes,

Introduction

Since the beginning of human race till the present, women have made vital contributions to smooth and proper functioning of their respective households; even if not acknowledged. It will be wrong to speak of women as leaders without taking into account the vital contributions made by women at the family and community level. Women have been very active at the level of transforming the society; making important

contributions towards mobilizing of resources in support of homes (Anifowose, 2004).

Women are recognized as very important, dependable and untiring fenders for the immediate needs of the family. In actual fact, the role of the women in the developmental process of society at the level of various communities and the totality of their contributions to national development are yet to be fully



documented. In most of the communities, women endure the most in getting farm produce across to the markets and they combine this with important chores at home. Despite all these, women participation in the building of a nation and being seen as leaders appear not to have been accorded a deserved mention in approximating contributions to different households (Alese, 2010).

Women's primary roles in the household in traditional times were to bear and rear children at the same time taking care of the family (Okunrinmeta, 2011). Women were the solely managers of homes at this early period of society. The peace and stability of homes depend largely on the managerial abilities of womenfolk because women plan, organize, direct and coordinate all the resources of the home- both human and materials to the benefits of all the members of the family including their husbands (Yahaya, and Lasele, 1999). Initially, women did not take up any job outside their households but engaged in tending to the house chores, their children and husbands. However, in the modern society the trend has been changing for better.

Statement of the Problem

Gender is no longer a major issue in the community participation as observed that women are now being given more opportunity for participating in local leadership in the community. Factors like cultural barriers, lack of respect for women, domestic engagements and entrenched gender stereotypes had been responsible for their low participation in local leaderships. Women are now important to community development and welfare as many women are now involved in meeting needs of their communities in terms of social, education, health and environmental projects.

Brief Literature Review

The expansion of women's role was as a result of the Industrial Revolution. This led to the rising status of women by the end of the nineteenth century. Women began extending their work outside home in the form

of domestic and other jobs were expected to take second place next to marriage and child bearing (Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin and Frame, 2005). There was the separation of home and the workplace, which led to men competing with women for factory jobs. Men disliked this, especially since women were often preferred by factory owners who could more be easily overworked and underpaid. Therefore, working class men did what they could to push women out of what they saw as male occupations in order to keep their jobs (Osaghae, 2012).

Omankhanlen (2008) submitted that women's contribution to development have in no small measure enhanced the standard of living and quality of lives in their different communities. The contribution of women to national development cannot be underestimated. Alese (2010) further noted that women organizations and groups have become increasingly active since the 1990s as great strides have been made in the recognition of women's leadership skills in development and advancement.

Similarly, Manuh (1998) believed that the women's leadership skills in their communities, groups, and associations need to be harnessed and formalized to give them political and decision-making power. Women's commitment to their household, to local and national food security, local production and the environment should be reflected on equitable representation on all bodies that make decision in these areas as well as in broader economic programmes that affect women's lives.

In a research conducted by Osaghae (2012) the contributions of Igbo Women's Home Town Associations (socio-cultural associations) to the community development to their towns and villages brought improvements to the communities and also solved problems. The women leaders championed the programmes, motivating and encouraging their members' participation. Her findings show that the projects that they successfully implemented include water projects, cloth making industry, grinding mills and

others. Abiona and Osaghae (2009) noted that the Igbo Women's Home Town Association leaders affected change in their communities, making community members to participate in development programmes. Participation of community members in community development created a sense of belonging cohesion, solidarity and also fosters societal values. Community development inculcates a sense of patriotism, citizenship and a spirit of civic and environmental consciousness in the people. Community members are committed to develop their immediate community. They willingly cooperated towards the advancement of the community. Through selfless efforts, they placed the general interest of the community above self-interest. Thus, the community members shun corruption, embezzlement of fund, nepotism and other social vices that can affect the progress of the community (Abiona, 2009).

Moreover, community development motivated and encouraged individual to participate in self-help programmes. People learn to develop and maintain cooperative relationship which serves self-help initiatives. Community members learn to rely on their efforts for development which brings about a self-generative, self-sustaining grass root development (Anyanwu, 1992).

Community development focuses on citizen participation. This means that all members of the community; including men, women, youth and even children have an important role to play. It involves the commitment of age grades, women associations, professional bodies such as carpenters, bakers, and so on, both old and young in the process of community building. This means that members of a community should be willing to participate actively in programmes for development. They should readily commit the available resources to development of their community. The cooperative efforts of the people are paramount for the success of any community development programme. Citizen participation should include identification of needs, planning programmes to satisfy

the needs, taking necessary action to actualize solving the problems and evaluating the programmes. Women leaders were identified by Anyanwu (1999) in leading other women to boycott a project that was not in their interest. They preferred a water project in order to solve problem of water in the village.

Anyanwu, (1992) and Abiona (2003, 2009) argued that sustainable community development needs citizen interest in the project/programme to ensure its sustainability. Members of the community should have interest in the programme that affects their welfare. Community members should participate actively in the programme that is to meet their needs. The principle implies that the people in the community should take part in identification of their needs, planning, and execution of programme, utilization and evaluation. Thus, participation yields greater interest in sustainability. It brings about an attachment between the community member and the programme. It fosters cooperative attitude among the people to solve their problems.

The agents and organs for mobilization in community development include market women and cooperative societies. Women are very formidable in mobilizing community members, especially women for participation in community development. It is reflected above that they are deeply involved as members of youth organizations; youth service corps members, local leaders, market women etc. (Abiona, 2009). Community development process is the empowering and enabling those who are traditionally deprived of power and control over their common affairs. It claims as important the ability of people to act together to influence the social, economic, political and environmental issues which affect them. Community development aims to encourage sharing and to create structures which give genuine participation and involvement. Community development is about developing the power, skills, knowledge and experience of people as individuals and in groups, thus enabling them to undertake initiative of their own to combat



social, economic, political and environmental problems, and enabling them to fully participate in a truly democratic process (Maimunah, 2001).

Community development takes the lead in confronting the attitudes of individuals and the practices of institutions and society as a whole which discriminates unfairly against women, people with disabilities and different abilities, religious groups, elderly people and other groups who are disadvantaged by society. It also takes a lead in countering the destruction of the natural environment on which all depend. Community development is well placed to involve people equally on these issues which affect development. It seeks to develop structures which enable the active involvement of people from disadvantaged groups.

Stereotyping leadership as the characteristics confined to only men, which is obvious in many social sectors like family structure, religious institutes and in most countries education, makes women accept and agree to cultural stereotypes against women in leadership position. Women have strong leadership skills based on the nature of women as a mother. They can be organized, pre-planned and strong in making decision, since their nature as a mother promotes those characteristics (Hewlett and Luce, 2005).

Some societies justify women's role absence in leadership position through religious reasons, which often condemns women's roles in leadership. Most common examples are women leadership in religious sectors, like churches and mosques where women cannot take leading roles. In some religious extremist ideologies like Taliban women's leadership is considered similar to sin. Patriarchy based on its hard and religious interpretation is the strongest and the most obvious factor that restricts women's participation in the socio-political sector and restricts the women's movement (Ajayi and Otuwa, 2006).

Anyanwu (1992) noted that the contribution of women in community development issues was very high and significant. One strong reason in their favour

is that in most rural communities, they constitute the greater population than in the urban areas.

Equity Approach

This approach according to Karubi (2006) is original in women in development policy approach introduced during 1975 – 1985. It is targeted at women. The main goal of the approach is to accomplish women's equality with men in development, through changing legal and institutional frameworks that subordinate women. This approach recognizes that women who are active participants in the development process through both their productive and reproductive roles provide a critical (often unacknowledged) contribution to economic growth (Moser, 1993).

An equity approach advocates for women's place in development processes through access to employment, to parity and the right to earn a livelihood or through direct state intervention. The underlying logic is that livelihood is that women beneficiaries lost ground to men in the development process. Therefore, in a process of redistribution, men have to share in a manner that entails women from all socio-economic classes as 'gaining' and men from all socio-economic classes as 'loosing', through positive discrimination policies if necessary. According to Snyder and Tadesse (1995), the main thrust of the 'equity' approach, an offshoot of the concern for equity between the sexes, relies on legal methods. Thus, Snyder and Tadesse argued that equity approach is rooted in the vision of justice, 'where women, men, girls and boys are valued equally and are crucial partners for sustainable development'. They uphold that families and communities are strengthened when men recognize and support women in all aspect of their lives, especially their education, access to resources and decision-making opportunities.

The relevance of this approach to this study is that it addresses the problem of women's equality with men in all aspects of life such as access to employment, to parity, education, the right to earn a livelihood, access

to resources and decision-making etc. It equally seeks for redistribution and removal of the legal and institutional frameworks that subordinate women, disempowering them and contributes to women's poverty. These are major issues for the call for women empowerment seeking for equity, justice and far play for both men and women to bring about sustainable development, peace and progress in the society.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study to elicit information on the Women Leadership role as Correlate of Sustainable Community Development Programmes in Ogbomoso North Local Government Area, Nigeria. The population for research was drawn from women in Ogbomoso North community in Nigeria. Based on the information gathered during pilot study, the sample for the study was 292 respondents. Multi-stage sampling method was adopted to select the sample from the entire population. In doing this, Ogbomoso North was categorized into four wards namely; ward A, B, C and D. Furthermore, from each category, proportionate sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. This was done such that the proportion in the sample exactly matched the proportions in the overall population.

The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire for the participating respondents. The instrument was to derive information from the 292 respondents selected for the study in order to establish the extent at which the independent variable will influence the dependent variable. A modified four-point Likert rating scale was adopted to elicit respondents' responses to the questionnaire. Prior to its being administered, the questionnaire was peer reviewed. Cronbach Alpha and Kuder Richardson (KR21) were used to provide reliability estimate of the instrument. KR21 was used for items that were dichotomously scored, while Cronbach Alpha was used for 3 and 4 point items scales. A pilot study was carried

out on a sample of 60 respondents in Lagelu Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. A test re-test was carried out in three weeks interval and the data collected were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation analysis which yielded 0.68 coefficients which indicated that the instrument is reliable.

Simple percentage and frequency distribution counts were used for demographic characteristics of the respondents. Pearson Product Movement Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse data collected in order to test the significant relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1: Analysis of the Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Items	Variables	Frequency	
			(F=292)	%
1	Sex	Female	230	78.7
		Male	62	21.3
2	Age	25 - 30yrs	95	32.6
		31 - 35yrs	72	24.6
		Above 36yrs	125	42.8
3	Marital Status	Single	70	23.9
		Married	183	62.6
		Separated	15	5.1
		Divorced	12	4.1
		Widowed	13	4.3
4	Religion	Christianity	135	46.3
		Muslim	147	50.3
		Traditional	10	3.4
5	Educational Qualification	Pry/Koranic	108	36.9
		Secondary	133	45.5
		Tertiary	51	17.6

Table 1 shows that 78.7% of the respondents were females while 21.3% were males. Thus women dominated the sample. The age bracket of respondents below 25 to 30 years, 31 to 35 years and above 36 years were analysed as 32.6%, 24.6%, 42.8% and 9.8% respectively. As regards the marital status of the respondents, 23.9% were single, 62.6% were married. Also, 5.1% respondents were separated, 4.1% were divorced while 4.3% were widowed. The religious affiliation of the respondents showed that 46.3% were Christians, 50.3% were Muslims and 3.4% were African Traditional worshippers. On the educational attainment level of the respondents, 36.9% had primary / Quranic education while those with secondary school education constituted 45.5% and respondents with tertiary education constituted 17.6%.

Inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze the data to measure the relationship, using at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between women leadership roles and women's participating in community development programmes

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Leadership Roles and Women's Participating in Sustainable Community Development Programmes.

Variable	Mean	N	R	P	Remark
Leadership roles	26.5925				
Women's participating in sustainable community development programmes	21.5377	292	0.197*	.000	Sig.

It is shown in the table 2 that there was significant relationship between leadership roles and women's participating in sustainable community development programmes ($r = 0.197^*$, $N = 292$, $P < 0.05$). Null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative accepted. This shows that the effect of good and exemplary leadership had positively enhanced women's participating in sustainable community development programmes.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between perception of marginalization of women as leaders and their involvement in community development programmes.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Marginalization of Women as a Leader and their Involvement in Sustainable Community Development Programmes

Variable	Mean	Std.Dev	N	R	P	Remark
Marginalization of women as a leader	26.5925	4.5824				
Involvement in community development programmes	14.0685	2.7724	292	0.398*	.000	Sig.

It is shown in Table 3 that there was significant relationship between perception of marginalization of women as a leader and their involvement in sustainable community development programmes ($r = 0.398^*$, $N = 292$, $P < 0.05$). Null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative accepted. It implies that involving women

as a leader are not given enough recognition in community development programmes..

Discussion of Result

Hypothesis one indicated that there was significant relationship between leadership role and women's participating in sustainable community development programmes ($r = 0.197^*$, $N = 292$, $P < 0.05$). Findings shows that through women leadership, more women are participating in community development and making significance contributions in decision making, project implementation, and evaluation. This finding is supported by Omakhanlen (2008), Alese (2010) and Osaghae (2012) who submitted that the role of women as leaders had contributed immensely to the development of many communities in Nigeria .

Hypothesis two revealed that there was significant relationship between perception of marginalization on women as leader and their involvement in sustainable community development programmes ($r = 0.398^*$, $N = 292$, $P < 0.05$). It implies that despite the contributions of women in the households and the communities there is still marginalization of women. This significantly affected the pace of community development in many communities since it affects motivation and encouragement of women leaders to participate. The finding is collaborated by Amartya (1994), Okunrimeta (2011), Tinklin, Croxford and Frame (2005) who argued that the issue of gender inequality is a major indigenous community. They asserted that there are problems of discrimination against women in the development process that lies on survivorship difference between men and women under social conditions and social discrimination against women. The discrimination has affected full participation of women leaders as they are not given enough chance to direct the course of development process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that there is need to be involving women in community development programmes since

all members of the community are expected to participate full without any inhibition or marginalization. The pace of development should be faster if women leaders are given equal chance. The study therefore recommended that;

- i. Women leaders should be more encouraged to be a leader in any community development programmes in order to have sense of belongings to the programme and contribute to the development of the community.
- ii. Women association should be more involved in community development programmes.
- iii. Women leaders should participate more in decision making in the communities.
- iv. Government and stakeholders should organize seminars where women leaders can be trained in community development programmes.

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