



Research Paper

## Social Idiosyncrasies and Participation in Community Development among Women in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study focused on examining the influence of social idiosyncrasies and participation in community development among women in southern senatorial district in Cross River State, Nigeria. to achieve this purpose, two research questions were stated and two hypothesis stated. Literature was reviewed empirically and theoretically according to the sub variables of the study. The study adopted an *expost facto* research design. The population of this study consists all women of 18-50yrs of age of marriage in the seven local government area of Southern Cross River. with a population strength of seventy four thousand three hundred and thirty three (74333) women of reproductive age. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique with a purposive sampling technique in selecting the 743 women which is 10% of the total population of women. The instruments that were used for the study was a questionnaire titled "Socio-Characteristics and participation in community development scale (SCPCDS)". The face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by three Measurement and Evaluation experts and Cronbach Alpha procedure was used to establish the reliability which coefficient was 0.87 implying that it is consistently measuring what it purport to measure. Data were collected by the researcher and analysed using appropriate one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the result showed that educational qualification and occupation significantly influence women participation in community development . Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, it was recommended that; educational centers should be built more in various communities in order to facility the acquisition of skills, knowledge by women that can enhance their participation in the community activities and that women should be provided with more jobs in order to facilitate their contribution in community development

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Women constitute an important segment in the society. in fact, they are often regarded as the backbone of the family consequent upon their role in socio-economic development of the family. These characteristics have they demonstrated over the years in their contribution to in educational and social development of most communities in Cross River State. Women in most societies, whether developed or developing are regarded as currency with which political and economic alliances are cemented. Thus in social anthropology, the transfer of women between lineages and clans is regarded as a medium of communication more potent and clearest than language of marriage itself (Coleman, 2007). The woman as a person is an agent of reproduction of life itself. And this places her in the position of the life blood of the entire humanity. Thus their contribution to community development is non-negotiable.

Unfortunately, the present society tends to relegate women to the background. It will not be out of place to say that in most communities, women are subjected to house responsibilities. This is more evident in the statement that was attributed to the president of Nigeria, Mr. Muhammadu Buhari when he said that the wife belong to the inner room. This was a clear description of what women are subjected tin most communities in the North. The roles of women are perceived to be revolving around child rearing and general domestic care of the family. With the duties of women so rigidly defined they assume their duties of cooking, washing and

child bearing and then see themselves even in their martial homes as a figures to be seen and not to be heard (Fasugba, 2000). This situation creates a culture of male supremacy, superiority and dominance with little consideration given to the thoughts and feelings of women in larger scheme of things. In most communities, issues that borders on the planning of the community are done by the men alone and any attempt by women to get involved in it, to some reasonable extent brings sanctions either by the men or the entire leadership of the community. Consultations about how the community roads, bridges, markets and even health care centers are seen as the sole responsibilities of men. If women are to get involved, it could only be told by their husband either to come as laborers but neglected on key issues. The state of affairs have raised concerned among researchers and women development specialist over what will have been the cause of this problem. A lot of factors have been identified such as relegation of women to duties of cooking, washing and child bearing, patrilineal system of descent in which generation are identified through male offspring's , marginalization, discrimination and exploitation by the men folk through the implementation of their religions and cultural beliefs, traditional prejudices which placed men as super human beings. Women on their part do not often see themselves as viable instruments of political participation and growth, perception of self among women, lack of education, male dominance, cultural beliefs among others (Yomi , 2007; Fasugba, 2000 & Agoawike , 2000).

The effect of this alienation of women from community development is evident in lack of development in most communities. Lack of attraction of government projects to the communities, increased project failures or abandonment, heightened level of social vices, nobility of most community to file better candidates for better government responsibilities among others. Government and non-governmental organizations have tried through several efforts to ensure that women participate in community development programmes. For example, women are given political responsibilities and leadership positions in different quarters as well as featured in most community programmes but the problem still persists. The researcher is presuming that certain socio cultural factors such as age of marriage, level of education, occupation, cultural beliefs, and level of income, religious beliefs, community governance could be responsible for this problem

Socio-cultural factors are the larger scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviors. They are combination of two words which are social and cultural. Socio-cultural factors are customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society or group. Cultural aspects include concepts of beauty, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material culture, values and attitudes.. in this study, the researcher have carefully selected two of these factors such as level of education and occupation to find out whether they influence women participation on community development.

In the education sector, women fare worse than the men. Education is known to be the best investment in development, yet girls' education has become a major issue in most developing countries Nigeria inclusive. Educated girls develop essential life skills including self confidence and the ability to participate effectively in society. In Nigeria, girls' access to basic education especially in northern, states has remained low. According to UNFPA (1993) report about 67.3% of the Nigerian women are illiterates. Education brings benefits to the educated in the form of access to information and it equips men and women alike for greater participation in economic, political, and other forms of community development. Low level of education among Nigerian women, constitutes obstacle to development effort in the area.

In a study carried out by Mama (2011) on participation of women in community development in Nigeria: a case study of Igbo Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, The exercise was carried out due to the observed lag in women participation in community development all over the country. The work had four key objectives which it sought to realize. These include: to ascertain the barriers to women participation in agriculture within the local government, to ascertain the impact of low level of education on women participation in community development, to determine how to enhance women participation in the politics of Igbo Eze South Local Government Area and finally to identify ways of empowering the women for optimal participation in the overall development of the communities. The researcher made use of both primary and secondary sources of data to generate data used for the study. These data were presented in tables and analysed using simple percentage. The researcher found out the various barriers to women participation in community development to include cultural practices, low level of women education, poverty among the rural women and violent that characterize the country's politics.

Kongolo (2013) investigates factors influencing limited involvement in development process by women in South Africa's semi and rural areas. The influence of government development policy, education and cultural values on rural women was also investigated. The results suggest that the majority of the women in rural areas are illiterate. These women have been involved in development related work without knowing it, because they lack initiatives, innovations, self-reliance attitudes and they are isolated, not exposed to information and are marginalized through the non-interactive government development policies. These symptoms reflect a lack of structured development strategy to create needed opportunities for women. All these are a result of high rate of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and malnutrition. In other words, the development approach itself has failed them by not being able to enhance their welfare.

Mutiso(2013) carried out a study to investigate the socio-cultural factors influencing women's participation in the management of public primary schools in Kalama division of Machakos district, Kenya. The study was hinged on the objectives that revolved on, family responsibilities and their influence on women participation in management of public primary schools, the influence of cultural beliefs and values on women participation in management of public primary schools, the influence of women teachers' perception towards women participation in management of public primary schools, the influence of marital status and the relationship between women's age, occupation, experience and their participation in management of public primary schools. The study adopted the descriptive survey design because variables were not to be manipulated. Simple random sampling was used in data collection from the three categories of teachers in management positions which involved head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers. The instruments used in data collection were questionnaires for head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers. An interview guide was used for the DEO Machakos district and AEO Kalama division. The questionnaires were validated through appraisal from the supervisors and educational administration experts then subjected to a pilot study. The instruments' reliability was assessed through the results of the piloting which was done using test-retest technique and the reliability co-efficient was 0.87. The sample size was comprised of 34 headteachers, 34 deputy heads and 34 senior teachers from the public primary schools in Kalama division. They were selected using simple random sampling from each of the three zones in the division i.e Muumandu, Kola and Kalama. The data was analysed with the help of a computer statistical package of marriage for social sciences (SPSS). The data analysed was presented using tables, percentages, charts and figures. Findings revealed that, there is high rate of gender imbalance in leadership of the primary schools in Kalama division. This was attributed to several social-cultural factors such as marital status, family responsibility, women's negative attitude towards leadership, discouragement from others, child rearing, occupation, one's religious affiliation, one's education level and gender stereotypes. It is on the basis of this backdrop that the study sought to examine social idiosyncrasies and women participation in community development in in Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to examine social idiosyncrasies and women participation in community development in Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the researcher sought to examine the influence of;

- i. Educational qualification on participation in community development among women
- ii. Occupation on participation in community development among women

### **Research questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. What is the influence of educational qualification on participation in community development among women?
- ii. How does occupation influence participation in community development among women?

### **Statement of hypothesis**

The following hypothesis were stated in the null form to guide the study

- i. There is no significant influence of educational qualification on participation in community development among women
- ii. There is no significant influence of occupation on participation in community development among women

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. According to Idaka and Anagbogu (2012), it is a design where the researcher cannot manipulate the variables because their effects have already occurred. This research design was found suitable since variables in the study are already observed and cannot be changed. The population of this study consists all women of 18-50yrs of age of marriage in the seven local government area of Southern Cross River with a population strength of seventy four thousand three hundred and thirty three (74333) women of reproductive age. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique with a purposive sampling technique in selecting the 743 women which is 10% of the total population of women. The instruments that were used for the study was a questionnaire titled "Socio-Characteristics and participation in community development scale (SCPCDS)". The face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by three Measurement and Evaluation experts and Cronbach Alpha procedure was used to establish the reliability which coefficient was 0.87 implying that it is consistently measuring what it purport to measure. Data were

collected by the researcher and analysed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the result is presented below

**Presentation of results**

**Hypothesis one**

There is no significant influence of women educational qualification on participation in community development. The independent variable is women educational qualification categorized as FSLC/WASCE, OND/NCE and B.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D while the dependent variable is participation in community development measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and the result as presented in Table 1 showed that the mean value (X=30.33) for those who have obtained B.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D is different from the mean value (X=22.57) for those who have obtained OND/NCE and the mean value (X=21.10) for those who have obtained FSLC/WASCE, . This showed that those who have obtained B.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D participate more in community development than those of other educational qualification. When these mean differences were further compared using one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the result showed that (F=43.90, p<.05). Since p(.000) is less than p(.05), this implies that there is a significant influence of educational qualification on women participation in community development . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. A post hoc analysis was carried out using Scheffes post comparison test and the result as presented in Table 7 showed that the mean value for those who have obtained B.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D is higher than the mean of other categoriues as shown in their mean difference and significant values this implies that they are more involved in community development than women who have only NCE/OND and FSLC/WASSCE

**Table 1**  
One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of educational qualification on women participation in community development

Variables	N	Mean	S.D		
FSLC/WASSCE	248	21.5524	5.72703		
NCE/ND	242	21.3926	5.24017		
B.Sc/M.Sc/Ph.D	236	30.3390	7.03211		
Total	726	24.3554	7.32142		
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	5236.08	2	2618.040	43.90	.000
Within Groups	43118.10	723	59.63		
Total	38862.314	725			

\*p<.05

**Table 2**  
Scheffe’s post hoc comparison test result on the influence of educational qualification on women participation in community development

(I) Educational qualification (Binned)	(J) Educational qualification (Binned)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
FSLC/WASSCE	NCE/ND	.15986	.54538	.958
	B.Sc/M.Sc/Ph.D	-8.78656*	.54888	.000
NCE/ND	FSLC/WASSCE	-.15986	.54538	.958
	B.Sc/M.Sc/Ph.D	-8.94642*	.55219	.000
B.Sc/M.Sc/Ph.D	FSLC/WASSCE	8.78656*	.54888	.000
	NCE/ND	8.94642*	.55219	.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

**Hypothesis two**

There is no significant influence of women occupation on participation in community development . The independent variable is women occupation categorized as farmers, business women, civil servants and others while the dependent variable is participation in community development measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and the result as presented in Table 3 showed that the mean value (X=28.64) for those who are involved in other things is different from the mean value (X=28.2) for those who into business followed by the mean value (X=27.80) for those who are civil servants and then, the mean value (X=17.73) for those who are farmers . This showed that those who are involved in business and in other things participate more in community development than those who are fares and civil servants. When these mean differences were further compared using one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the result showed that (F=11.627, p<.05). Since p(.000) is less than p(.05), this implies that there is a significant influence of occupation on women participation in community development . Hence, the null hypothesis is

rejected. A post hoc analysis was carried out using Scheffes post comparison test and the result as presented in Table 4 showed that the mean value for those who are involved in other things others than business, civil service and farming is higher than the mean of other categories as shown in their mean difference and significant values . Also those who are involved in Business are also found to be more participatory than those in other categories. This implies that those involved in other activities and Business are more involved in community development than women of other categories of occupation

Table 3  
One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of occupation on women participation in community development

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev		
Farmers	268	17.7313	.44409		
Business	129	28.2248	4.94539		
Civil Servants	160	27.8000	5.91427		
Others	169	28.6450	8.24430		
Total	726	24.3554	7.32142		
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	2228.385	3	742.79	11.627	.000
Within Groups	46125.79	722	63.88		
Total	48354.180	725			

\*p<.05

Table 4  
Scheffes Post hoc analysis result on the influence of occupation on women participation in community development

(I) Occupation of women (Binned)	(J) Occupation of women (Binned)	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Farmers	Business	-10.49346*	.56630	.000
	Civil Servants	-10.06866*	.52797	.000
	Others	-10.91363*	.51909	.000
Business	Farmers	10.49346*	.56630	.000
	Civil Servants	.42481	.62533	.927
	Others	-.42016	.61785	.927
Civil Servants	Farmers	10.06866*	.52797	.000
	Business	-.42481	.62533	.927
	Others	-.84497	.58292	.552
Others	Farmers	10.91363*	.51909	.000
	Business	.42016	.61785	.927
	Civil Servants	.84497	.58292	.552

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

### III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis one that stated that there is no significant influence of educational qualification on participation in community development among women was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of educational qualification on participation in community development among women. The findings of the study showed that women who hold B.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D are more engaged in community development than women of other groups. This could be due to the fact that their level of education have exposed to them to the fact that they hold a duty in contributing tangibly to the development of the society irrespective of gender. They have been refined in thinking and as such weaned of subjective thinking and prejudice that hold most women who have not acquired their level of education. They see their participation in community development as a citizen responsibility or a patriotic duty rather a cultural activity. This s why most women who have gone to school can build schools, hospitals and provide scholarships to member for their communities.

The findings of the study were in line with that of Mama (2011) that carried out a study on participation of women in community development in Nigeria: a case study of Igbo Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, The exercise was carried out due to the observed lag in women participation in community development all over the country. The researcher made use of both primary and secondary sources of data to generate data used for the study. These data were presented in tables and analysed using simple percentage. The researcher found out the various barriers to women participation in community development to include cultural practices, low level of women education, poverty among the rural women and violent that characterize the country's politics. Hypothesis two that stated that there is no significant influence of occupation on participation in community development among women was rejected. This implies that there is a significant

influence of occupation on participation in community development among women. The findings of the study showed that women who are business and other activities are more engaged in community development than women of other groups. This could be due to the fact that those who are in other things may not be held tight as compared to civil servants who may claim not to have enough time to participate in community based issues. Those of other categories may be politicians who have adequate time to go for projects, lobby for their communities and those who are in business may be providing the necessary financial support that would facilitate the development of the community.

The findings were in line with that of Lelelit (2017) carried out a study on the influence of social cultural factors on women participation in wildlife conservation projects a case of Northern Rangeland Trust Samburu County. The specific objectives were; to establish the influence of cultural practices on women participation in wildlife conservation projects, to assess the influence of the level of education , occupation on women participation in wildlife conservation projects, to determine, the influence of gender roles and occupation on women participation in wildlife conservation projects, to examine the effects of religious beliefs on women participation in wildlife conservation projects in Northern Rangeland Trust in Samburu County. Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The findings showed that cultural practices, occupation , level of education, gender roles and religious beliefs had a significant influence on women participation in wildlife conservation projects.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION /RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that socio characteristics measured in educational qualification and occupation significantly influence women participation in community development . Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, it was recommended that;

- i. Educational centers should be built more in various communities in order to facility the acquisition of skills, knowledge by women that can enhance their participation in the community activities
- ii. Women should be provided with more jobs in order to facilitate their contribution in community development

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