

Youth Participation in Rural Development Projects in Surulere Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study was carried out in Surulere Local Government Area of Oyo State primarily to assess the youths level of participation in rural community projects. The study identified the type of rural community development projects in which youths participated, various types of contribution of rural youth to community development projects, problems encountered by youth in community developments and to determine the level of contribution of youth to community developments projects. Multistage sampling techniques was used. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was used to select ten rural based community from 5 cells out of the eight cells in one block of the study area. Secondly, 2 villages was purposively selected from each cells where ten respondents were selected for the study. Data was collected with the use of well structured interview schedule while data collected was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The findings revealed that a larger proportion of the respondents were educated farmer, participated in road construction and maintenance and contributed at different level of rural community development. However, problems that prevents youths from participating fully in rural development projects was identified as fund mismanagement, low price of agriculture produce, lack of government assistance and land dispute and rivalry among community leaders. Statistical analysis performed revealed that there was significant relationship between respondents personal characteristics and their level of participation in community development projects.

Key words: Youth participation, development projects, multistage, community development

INTRODUCTION

The nations progress and development depends on some extent on the growth, modernization and development of some rural areas because without sound rural development, there can be no balance. National economic development. Akubuilu (1990) stated that for any change to be considered as development, such a change must connote progress and must result to the upliftment of the quality of human life. However, since rural development is also important in the direction of self-help, a way of improving the development of rural areas, by understand the roles played by youths in the development of rural areas.

Farinde (1999) defined youth as the time a person's latent powers and attributes are developed to their highest potential, also when intellect is at its sharpest and energy is at it's promising. Rural youths are both young male and female between the age of 15 and 30, who, own their existence and identify to the rural areas and whose family life depends directly on agriculture, that is those who live and function in rural setting (Jibowo *et al.*, 1988).

Odebode (2000) reported that rural youths also constitute a strong and very important labour force in development activities of rural communities. Therefore, the youth participation in rural development project are geared towards bringing an improvement in the standard of living of the people and change in their attitudes, knowledge, behaviors and skills.

Development in its own concept is a self generating process whereby human potentials and relationship are optimized for the purpose of satisfying needs within the context of changing belief and value systems of cultural unit and the large community, this is seen as a strategy aimed at improving the economics and social life of the society (Anyawu, 1992). Rural development is a process of structural changes in the increasingly complex economic, social, culture technology and sphere of rural environment. It aims at improving standards of living and quality of life in equitable, sustainable and efficient way (Lissete, 2000).

Farinde (1999) stated that, rural youths participation in rural development projects can increase social responsibility and decrease risky behaviour. Moreover,

rural youth participation in development projects has motivated the youth to against the negative effect of social and economic hardship (Lisette, 2000). There are needs for the youth to participate in development project because their strength and receptiveness to new idea through various youth programmes designed to accomplish various social educational are recreational purpose as a means of improving standard of living in rural areas (FAO, 1988).

The participation of youths in rural development projects is very impressive, reports have shown that many factors militate against the effective participation of youth in developments (Odebode, 2000). Such factors are the situation for the youth of low income farm families is particularly serious and unimaginable, these young people tend to have very low level of functional literacy, also there is frequently an obligation to work as a family or casual labour from a very early age. Among other factors, the constraints youth participation in development are that youth work long during the busy or peak season and virtually unemployed during the dry season or slack period, they are expected to contribute in most cases, if not all, earning in support of the family also they marry very early mostly on the choice of their parent, but their lack of formal education make them to be unwilling and generally unable to mix with more literate youths, even of the same age group and they want to leave the rural areas and farming in particular and they are faced with diminishing farm size and income with the prospect for living near or below the poverty level (Farinde, 1991).

There is an economics potential for agricultural extension to improve the future of rural youth through the development of community based rural youth and young farmer organizations by providing training on improved methods of agricultural production, training in income generating skills and by organization extension programmes that would contribute to better family life, including nutrition improvement and population or family planning education (Gobeli, 1996; Jibowo *et al.*, 1988). All these cannot be enhanced if the activities or roles of rural youth are not identified. Based on the identified problems faced by the rural youths Swanson and Claar (1993) recommended that there should be wide spread need for practical training in agriculture.

Ekong (2003) defined rural development as a process of socio-economic changes involving the transformation of the agrarian society so as to reach a common set of development and goals which are based on the capacity and needs of rural populace.

Development of the rural areas has often met with failure especially in its lack of sustainability. Some of the

failure have resulted from the policies used and uncommitted programme implementation (Farinde, 1999). The hope is that self sustaining development will take place where the masses are generally motivated and properly organized for productive activities within the context of freedom orderly progress and social justice (Anyawu, 1992). Events have shown that many factor militate against the youths participation in community development projects for change in behaviour and attitude towards rural development. Thus, the potential of youths are known to be remarkably under utilized Odebode (2000).

Gobeli (1996) reported that the vast roles which youths played in developing countries like Nigeria cannot be over emphasized because they still form a formidable force in enhancing rural development, that is a high value must be placed on the importance and the role that youths can play in rural development. The particular of youths in rural development cannot be ignored, this is because there are number of characteristics which when nurtured and utilized by the rural youths are valuable assets to rural development. These characteristics include reduced fear of failure, minimal risk aversion, faster reaction time greater physical strength, social propensity and innovation proneness. These assets are utilized in youth programmes for rural development (Jibowo, 1989).

The success and strength of rural projects like educational project, water project, electrification project and health project in which youths may participate depends on cultural elements, level of income, type of education and the assistance made available to them (Burr, 1996). However, many national and international development agencies as well as government policy makers have tended to overlook the historical and contemporary role of youths in community level efforts to identify and prioritize their problems and seek solutions to them. It is apparent that indigenous knowledge and decision making operationalized through youth association such as Age grade association, occupational association (Awa and Ema, 1992). Youth association serve as the apex and fulcrum of organizations by which communities can embark on any self help project. In essence, the whole idea was to instill in rural people the spirit of wanting to help themselves thus killing the syndrome of government will provide and do it all (Odebode, 2000).

Rural development is a concept for planning and executing changes in the rural areas with the primary objective of reducing or eradicating rural poverty. It also involves the transformation of the rural community into a socially economically, politically, educationally, orderly and materially desirable condition with the

purpose of improving the quality, of life of rural population (Jibowo, 2000). He stated further that rural development is aimed at bringing full and productive employment along with availability of infra- structural facilities in the rural community, to change the situation in which many rural people operate only at the subsistence level. Rural development is thus the outcome of series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate, the standard of living and favorable changes in the way of life of the people concerned (Ekong, 2003).

Okuneye and Idowu (1990) reported that rural development identifying the needs of rural community assessing its resources and potential as a view towards formulating strategies which will improve the existing level of productivity and well being of rural populace. Further by emphasized that whatever the dynamic nature of development strategies, certain basic fundamental needs of the population must be met, such needs include health facilities, education facilities, housing communication, transport, infrastructure, storage facilities, extension services and other facilities required for the day to-day activities in the rural community.

Rural youths are very receptive to new ideas and can make a considerable contribution influencing the attitude of the older generation. Self sustaining development will take place where the youths are generally motivated and properly organized for productive activities within the context of freedom, orderly, progress and social justice (Anyawu, 1992). The main reason of promoting the participation of rural youths in rural development project is to investigate and promote those rural factors that foster positive youth involvement in development. (Lissete, 2000).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: The study was carried out in Surulere Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Surulere local government lies in the Savannah zone of the country in the North-West of Oyo state. Ten villages namely: Ijado, Poro, Baasa, Adudu, Egele, Onikeke, Owosoke, Biro-Oloyo, Bale-Oba and Idi-Iya. Were purposively selected because of their rurality. Multistage sampling technique was used, in which 5 cells was purposively selected from 8 cells in one block of the study area. Thus, 2 villages were purposively selected from each cell where 10 respondents were randomly selected from each village. In each village the houses were numbered 1 to 30 and the first male/female youth who is between the ages of 15 to 30 years of every 5 houses were interviewed for data collection. Thus a total of 100 young people were selected for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents: Data in Table 1 shows that majority (68%) of the respondents were male while 32% were female. This revealed that there is no gender bias in community development once gender has their own quatar to contribute to development of their respective community. Also 57% of the respondents were between the age of 21-25 years, while 24%, 19% of the respondents were between the age of 26-30 years and under 20 years, respectively. This implies that aged people of the age that are regarded as youth that is 15-30 years were the majority of the respondents.

This findings agreed with Jibowo *et al.* (1988) as they reported that rural youths are both young male and female between the ages of 15 and 30, who own their existence and identify to the rural areas and whose family life depends directly or indirectly on agriculture, that is those who live and function in rural setting.

Further, in the table 61% of the respondents were married while the remaining 39% were single. This implies that rural youth marry early. This agreed with findings of Farinde (2000) as reported that factors that constraints youth participation in community development are that

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	(%)
Male	68	68.0
Female	32	32.0
Total	100	100.0
Age		
Under 20 years	19	19.0
21-25 years	57	57.0
26-30	24	24.0
Total	100	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	39	39.0
Married	61	61.0
Divorced	00	00.0
Separated	00	00.0
Total	100	100.0
Religion		
Christian	66	66.0
Muslim	30	30.0
Traditional worshipper	04	04.0
Total	100	100.0
Educational level		
No formal education	03	3.0
Primary	20	20.0
Secondary	61	61.0
Tertiary	12	12.0
Others	04	04.0
Total	100	100.0
Occupation *		
Farming	67	50.0
Trading	09	06.0
Bricklayer	05	03.7
Carpentry	06	04.5
Civil servant	03	02.2
Student	14	10.5
Others	30	22.39

Field survey, 2004, * Multiple responses

youth work long hours during the peak season and unemployed during the slack period and also they marry very early mostly on the choice of their parent. Also the Table reveals that majority (66%) of the respondent were Christians, while 30 and 4% of the respondents were respectively Muslim and traditional believers. While majority (97%) of the respondents were educated. This implies that most of the rural youth in the study area can read and write in their dialect Yoruba and that majority (67%) of the respondents were farmers. 30% of them were either, okada riders, produce buyer, drivers, hunter, firewood seller, tailor, machine mechanic etc while 9 and 3% of the respondents were traders and civil servant, respectively.

This implies that youth in the study area was determined to developed their villages due to other economic activities that are available apart from farming.

The result agreed with Odebode (2000) who reported that rural youths also constitute a strong and very important labour force in developmental activities of rural communities, he emphasized further that the youth participation in rural development are geared towards bringing an improvement in the standard of living of the people and change in their attitudes, knowledge, behaviour and skills.

Distribution of respondents base on their level of contribution to community development: Result in Table 2 shows that predominance of the respondents 56% were average contributors while 23 and 11% of the respondents were respectively low contributors and high contributors to their community development.

Type of community development progress participated: Data in Table 3 reveals that majority (92%) of the respondents contributed time money, material and labour. This indicates their high level of interest in community development project.

Distribution of respondents base on the type of community development projects they participated: Results in Table 4 shows that the project of highest priority with highest participation is construction of roads with (29%) followed by market stall construction with (22.5%) and respondents indicates further that 18.6, 17.3 and 12.6% of the respondents were, respectively participated in school, rehabilitation, sinking of well and building of motor and machine park in the study area.

Distribution of respondents base on problem encountered in rural development activities: Result in Table 5 shows that 19.1% of the respondents indicated fund

Table 2: Distribution of respondents base on their level of contribution to community development

Contribution level	Frequency	(%)
No. contribution	10	10.0
Low contributions	23	23.0
Average contributions	56	56.0
High contribution	11	11.0
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2004

Table 3: Distribution of respondents base on their type of contribution made to community projects

Type of contribution *	Frequency	(%)
Contribute money only	34	21.0
Contribute labour only	47	29.0
Money contribution, time material and labour	16	9.9
Contribute material, serve as member of supervisor and implementation committee	52	32.1
Others: motivated other youths etc.	10	6.2

Source: Field survey, 2004, * Multiple responses

Table 4: Distribution of respondents base on the type of community development project they participated

Type of projects *	Frequency	(%)
Deep well	40	17.30
School rehabilitation	43	18.60
Market stall construction	52	22.50
Construction of roads	67	29.00
Building of motor and machine park	29	12.60

Source: Field survey, 2004, *Multiple response

Table 5: Distribution of respondents base on problem encountered in rural development activities

Problem	Frequency	(%)
Lack of government assistance	53	16.8
Lack of commitment	45	14.3
Fund mismanagement	60	19.1
Low price of agricultural produce	56	17.8
High cost of transport	51	16.2
Others: Land dispute, rivalry among community leaders	50	15.8

Source: Field survey, 2004, * Multiple response

mismanagement as the problem encountered while 16.8 and 15.8% also indicated that lack of government assistance and others i.e., land dispute rivalry among community leaders etc are the problems encountered, respectively. This implies that corruption has spread to the rural area; where decent people were usually produce.

Testing of hypothesis: The result or relationship between respondents socio-economics characteristics and their level of participation in community development, there were positive and significant relationship found between sex ($X^2 = 10.240$) Age ($X^2 = 16.820$) Marital status ($X^2 = 64.000$) Level of education ($X^2 = 323.920$) Cosmopolitaness ($X^2 = 64.000$) at 0.05% level of significant (Table 6).

This implies that there is strong positive relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their level of participation which enable them to fully participated in community development

Table 6: Summary of (χ^2) Analysis of relationship between youth socio economic characteristics and their level of participation

Socio economic characteristics	χ^2		Df	Remark
	Calculated	Tabulated		
Sex	10.240	3.840	1	Significant
Age	16.820	5.991	2	Significant
Marital status	64.000	3.841	1	Significant
Religion	1.440	3.841	1	Not significant
Level of education	90.800	7.815	3	Significant
Occupation	323.920	12.592	6	Significant
Cosmopolitaness	64.000	3.641	1	Significant

projects. This finding is similar to the findings of Jibowo (1989) who stated that the participation of youths in rural development cannot be ignored, this is because there are number of characteristics which when nurtured and utilized by the rural youths are valuable assets to rural development. These characteristics include reduced fear of failure, minimal risk aversion, faster reaction time, greater physical strength, social propensity and innovation proneness. These assets are utilized in youth programmes for rural development.

CONCLUSION

The result of the findings and other analysis showed that youth participation in rural community development projects is the pre-requisite for effective mobilization of all rural people for self-help projects. It was found that all levels of government had failed to assists in community development projects with other factors which constituted problems to the youth in rural development project participation and majority of the respondents were educated, this enable them to think of what they need in their community and how they can get it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendation are made:

- Education enhances participation and performance in community development projects, therefore government should endeavour to establish adult literacy classes to raise education level of the rural dwellers.
- The rural youths should be always allow to be involve in the design, planning and implementation of all infra-structural facilities required in their localities with appropriate assistance from government.

- The community leaders should unite themselves in order to encourage the youth in their localities by given them whatever support they need.
- Government should develop mechanisms for rural youth and sustainable rural development.
- Government should make use of the community development workers in assisting the members of rural youths associations at various stages of their project implementation, especially in training and evaluation of these projects.

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