

## PARTICIPATION OF RURAL YOUTHS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Youths are important entities that through their inputs such as physical strength, mental capabilities and exposure serve as a great tool for improving their communities which makes it essential to determine the extent of their involvement in the development of their community. It is based on this that the study assessed the level of participation of rural youths in community development process in Osun state. Data were collected on level of participation, constraints, attitude, and benefits. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to obtain data from 135 rural youth between the ages of 18-35 years. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were analysed using descriptive such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistical tools such as Chi-Square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at  $p=0.05$ . Result shows that majority of the respondents (53.3%) were male, single (74.80%) and have membership in at least one organization (81.50%). The result also shows that marital status ( $\chi^2=7.831$ ;  $p=0.005$ ), benefits such as increased self sufficiency, reduction in rate of unemployment, reduction in poverty rate ( $r=0.410$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), constraints such as lack of incentives, political constraints affected participation while (social constraint ( $p=0.006$ ) and personal constraint ( $p=0.028$ ) and attitude ( $r=0.410$ ;  $p=0.006$ ) were significantly related with their level of participation in community development. It is concluded that despite the constraints that youths face in their participation, lack of benefits that are afforded them, if given the opportunity to serve their communities, they are willing and ready to do so to the best of their abilities.

### INTRODUCTION

Youth can be seen to form a basic bedrock of the community, they are regarded as the future leaders of the community, therefore it is essential to include them in any developmental project or programs that may be available in the community from the planning stage to the implementation stage through the evaluation stage. According to reports from United Nations (2008) and World Bank (2010), about 50% of the developing world populations are youths estimated at about 1.2 billion aged between 15 and 24 years. Of this number, about one billion live in developing countries. In developing countries, up to 75 percent of the young people aged 15-25 years live in rural areas with few primary schools and poorly qualified teachers. Youths in Nigeria include people between the ages of 18 years and 35 years. Older youth especially in poor rural household are matured enough to make major contributions to development in their various communities.

Udensi *et al.*, 2013 opine that 'the role of the youths to accelerate community development programme has been recognized, particularly, in local communities where they have played pivotal role in education, health, environmental sanitation, mass mobilization, religious activities etc. The imperative of youth participation in the process community development programme, considering their numerical strength, is an unlimited window in which a larger and younger workforce who can drive economic development faster and play a significant role in national security, leadership and social development of their communities can be enhanced'. Community development is an opportunity for people living in a community to

come together, identify the problems and needs which they share, help them to discover the resources that they already have and the resources they need to source for, promote knowledge, skill, confidence and the capacity to work together, strengthen contacts between members of the community. Rural community development is a process conducted by community members. It is a process where local people can not only create more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also help their community become able managers of change.

Udensi *et al.*: (2013) explain that youth comprises of nearly 30 per cent of the world's population, these large numbers of young people are an opportunity; an investment to their communities. Adesope (2007) noted that youths have been cited for active involvement in community affairs, greater social propensity, faster reaction, time, innovative and prowess, therefore it becomes necessary to exploit their active features for progressive change in the community through active and meaningful participation in program directed towards their development. The development of community is a dynamic process involving all segments of the locality, including the often-overlooked youth population. As youth are brought into and connected with community development programmes that they have often times been ignored or excluded from, they can participate in actively and contribute in decision-making at multiple levels. Nitzberg (2005) argued that youth must be fully engaged and involved in change efforts at the community level if they are to learn to function as effective members of the society. Therefore, it is essential to assess the different capacities by which youths have been



actively involved in the development of their community, to determine the reasons why their participation is limited and what are the benefits that youths derive from participating in these development programs in their community. The objectives of the study are to;

1. describe the personal characteristics of youth in the study area;
2. identify the factors affecting the participation of youths in the process of development programmes;
3. examine the benefits derived from participating in these programmes;
4. ascertain the level of youths participation in the process involved in the programme;
5. there is no significant relationship between the factors affecting participation and participation in development programs.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Osun State, which is one of the six states in the South-western Nigeria. It covers a total land mass of approximately 9,251 square kilometers with a population of 3,423,535 (2006 population census) and shares boundaries with Kwara State in the North, Ekiti State and partly Ondo State in the East, Oyo State in the West, in the south by Ogun State. Osun State is divided into three federal senatorial districts namely: Osun West, Osun East and Osun Central. Each of these three senatorial districts is composed of two administrative zones.

A multi-stage random sampling procedure was used for the study. In the first stage, one (1) Local Government area each was chosen from the three (3) senatorial districts in the state. After which two (2) towns/ villages were selected. Subsequently, 10% of the total numbers of members of community based organization in the area were selected giving a total 135 as illustrated in the table below.

These were interviewed and primary data were obtained using structured questionnaire while data was analysed using both descriptive such as frequency, mean and standard deviation and

inferential statistical tools such as Regression analysis

Respondents were asked to state their actual age which was measured at interval level of measurement. Respondents were asked to indicate their sex and scores were assigned as follows Male = 1, Female = 2. This was measured at nominal level of measurement. Respondents were asked to tick their religion and scored as Christianity = 1, Islam = 2, Traditional = 3, and others specify. It was measured at nominal level of measurement. Respondents were asked to indicate their educational level from the options provided and was scored as Informal education = 1, Primary education = 2, Secondary education = 3, Tertiary education = 4. This will be measured at ordinal level of measurement. Respondents specified their marital status and it was scored as single = 1, married = 2, widow(er) = 3, separated = 4, divorced = 5, measured at nominal level of measurement. Respondents were asked to state their family size and it was measured at interval level of measurement. Respondents were asked to indicate if they are members of any youth association. Yes = 1, No = 0.

A list of factors affecting participation was provided such as lack of incentives, bureaucratic process, political and social constraints, personal constraints, financial constraints, lack of awareness and lack of technical skills and respondents were asked to indicate the factors that were affecting them by ticking the most important factors by using a 3-point Likert-type scale. Scores will be assigned with high=3, moderate=2 and low=1. The mean score was calculated to identify the extent at which these factors affect the participation of the respondents.

A list of 14 possible benefits derived from participating in community development was presented to the respondents to indicate the level of benefit derived from participation. The response options were not a benefit, mildly beneficial and highly beneficial. The scores assigned were not a benefit=0, mildly beneficial=1 and highly beneficial=2. The mean score of each of the statement was calculated which id then used in the ranking of the statements.

### Computation of sample size

Senatorial districts	Local government areas	Towns/villages	Total no in community based organization	Estimated no of respondent (10%)
Osun West	Ayedaade	Orile Owu	190	19
		Akiriboto-Oke	100	10
		Oogi	130	13
		Wakajaiye	80	8
Osun East	Ife-North	Asipa	100	10
		Yakooyo	60	6
		Moro	160	16
		Edun Abon	130	13

Senatorial districts	Local government areas	Towns/villages	Total no in community based organization	Estimated no of respondent (10%)
Osun Central	Odo Otin	Okua	80	8
		Ekosin	70	7
		Ekusa	100	10
		Ijabe	150	15
		<b>Total</b>		<b>1350</b>

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Personal characteristics** - The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows that 49.60% of the youths fall within the age range of 18-22 years old. Twenty-eight percent (28.90%) falls between the age ranges of 23-27years old. Fourteen percent (14.10%) falls between the age of 28-31years old while seven percent (7.40%) are 31 and above. The mean age is 23.8. This implies that majority of the youth can be classified as young youth (18-27 years old) making a total of 78.50% and the older youth making a total of 21.5%. This corroborates Brennan *et al* (2007) that older youths are more active, provide opportunities for community involvement. Also, that younger adolescents might be an untapped audience from which volunteers and future community activists could be recruited. Specialized efforts such as periodic training, public awareness could be used to reach younger audience.

The result also shows that 53.3% of the respondents are male while 46.7% are female. This backs up Akinboye *et al* (2007) that males participate more in community development than their female counterparts who have more pressing things to attend to such as youths taking care of the children and doing house chores.

From Table 1 below, about seventy-five percent of the respondents were single and about one-quarter were married. This is to be expected because the study is dealing with youth with majority of the being students within age 18-22years.

Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that 63.7% of the respondents have tertiary education, 26.7% had secondary education, 5.9% had primary education and 3.7% had informal education. This corroborates Akinboye *et al*. (2007) that the ability to write and read will increase or help understand the community development initiative. Olujide (2008) in his study stated that the high literacy level reveals that the youth that are more enlightened can easily organize themselves into formal and informal organizations that may lead to community development.

Table 1 also shows that the respondents that indicated a family size of 1-4 were 62%, family size of 5-9 were 39% while a family size of 10-15 were 3% with a mean of household size of 23.8.. This corroborates Beard (2007) who stated that households with lower socio-economic status generally contribute less time and money to community development.

Table 1 reveals that 81.50% of the respondents belong to an organization while eighteen point five percent (18.50%) indicated they were not in any organization. This implies that majority of the youths should be able to contribute to the decision making process. This also corroborates Akinboye *et al* (2007) that youths involved in social/youth organizations will contribute to the decision making process in form of sounding birds and/or initiating groups in relation to community development.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their Personal Characteristics (N=135)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
<b>Age</b>			
18-32	67	49.6	23.8
23-27	39	28.9	
28-32	19	14.1	
33 and above	10	7.4	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	72	53.3	
Female	63	46.7	
<b>Marital status</b>			
Single	101	74.8	
Married	34	25.2	
<b>Level of education</b>			
Informal education	5	3.7	
Primary education	8	5.9	
Secondary education	36	26.7	



Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Tertiary education	86	63.7	
<b>Family size</b>			
1-4	84	62.3	
5-9	50	37.0	4.6
10 and above	1	0.7	
<b>Membership of organization</b>			
Yes	110	81.5	
No	25	18.5	

Source: Field survey, 2016

#### Factors affecting participation in community development programme

Result of analysis from Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on the level at which the factors affecting their participation in the program

Table 2 shows that higher percentage (42.2%) of the respondents claimed lack of incentives as a high factor affecting participation of youth in community development while very few (3.7%) said that lack of incentive is a low factor. Majority (50.4%) of the respondents said that bureaucratic process is a moderate factor affecting

youth participation in community development program while few (9.6%) of them indicated it as a low factor. Also, a higher percentage (51.1%) of the respondents indicated financial constraints as a moderate factor affecting their participation while few of them (10.4%) considered it a low factor. Similarly, 44.4% of the respondents said that lack of awareness of the community development program is a factor affecting their participation in community development program while a small percentage of them (11.1%) said it is a low factor affecting their participation.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on the level at which the factors affect their participation in the program**

Factors	High F (%)	Moderate F (%)	Low F (%)	Mean	SD
Lack of incentives	57 (42.2)	39 (28.9)	5 (3.7)	1.88	0.43986
Bureaucratic process	20 (14.8)	68 (50.4)	13 (9.6)	1.55	0.43986
Political constraints	20 (14.8)	29 (21.5)	12 (8.9)	0.96	0.49875
social constraints	11 (8.1)	36 (26.7)	13 (9.6)	0.87	0.49953
Personal constraints	27 (20.0)	46 (34.1)	30 (22.2)	1.50	0.43136
Financial constraints	24 (17.8)	69 (51.1)	14 (10.4)	1.66	0.40149
Lack of awareness	60 (44.4)	26 (19.3)	15 (11.1)	1.83	0.43986
Lack of technical skills	18 (13.3)	19 (14.1)	10 (7.4)	0.76	0.47572

Source: Field survey, 2016

#### Categorisation of respondents based on factors affecting participation in community development

Table 3 shows that the mean of the categorisation of factors affecting participation in

community is 5.01. About thirty-two percent (31.9%) percent of the factors have high effect on their participation while about sixty-eight point one percent (68.1%) have low effect on their participation.

**Table 3: Categorisation of respondents based on factors affecting participation in community development**

Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
High (Below mean)	43	31.9	5.01	2.15	0.00	8.00
Low (Mean and above)	92	68.1				

**Benefits derived from participation in community development**

The results in Table 4 shows that the respondents consider better utilisation of community resources, decreased dependency on the government, increased self sufficiency, eased hardship and provision of a sense of belonging (49.6%, 51.9%, 51.1%, 59.3% and 59.3% respectively) as the benefit that are derived from participating in community development process. Alternately, the respondents cited that participation in community development programs has not helped to reduce poverty rate(53.3%), improved standard of living (48.1%), provision of market for farm produce (39.9%), creating an alternative way of getting income. This negates Kleiner *et al* (2004)

who said that community members who have the capacity to do something to enhance their quality of life are portrayed as having the ability to think, to decide, to plan and to take action in determining their lives. Therefore, in any community development programme both economic and individual growth must be given equal attention to ensure that the process of community development achieves its due balance (continuity and sustainability through adequate participation of all the key players in the community). Community development in the words of Gilchrist (2004) helps local community residents to identify unmet needs. It seeks to build capacity by improving skills and knowledge for individual and community as a whole.

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on the benefits of community development**

Statements	Highly beneficial F (%)	Mild Benefit F (%)	Not a benefit F (%)	Mean	SD
Adds more knowledge about several things	34 (25.2)	94 (69.6)	7 (5.2)	1.20	0.51543
Reduce unemployment among youths	28 (20.7)	88 (65.2)	19 (14.1)	1.06	0.58845
Better utilisation of resources	67 (49.6)	58 (37.0)	18 (13.3)	1.42	0.70824
Reduced dependency on government and the community	70 (51.9)	42 (31.1)	23 (17.0)	1.35	0.75625
Increased self sufficiency	69 (51.1)	54 (40.0)	12 (8.9)	1.42	0.65182
Improved standard of living	33 (24.4)	37 (27.4)	65 (48.1)	0.76	0.82142
Provision of an alternative way of getting income.	26 (19.3)	79 (58.5)	30 (22.2)	0.97	0.64578
Helped reduce crime among youths	30 (22.2)	93 (68.9)	12 (8.9)	1.13	0.54362
Reduced poverty rate	21 (15.6)	42 (31.1)	72 (53.3)	0.62	0.74179
Reduced cost of production through subsidized inputs	19 (14.1)	89 (65.9)	27 (20.0)	0.94	0.58288
Provision of market for farm produce.	26 (19.3)	56 (41.5)	53 (39.3)	0.80	0.74112
Eased hardship	80 (59.3)	46 (34.1)	9 (6.7)	1.52	0.57225
Reduced restlessness	37 (27.4)	79 (58.5)	19 (14.1)	1.13	0.63246
Provides a sense of belonging	80 (59.3)	46 (34.1)	9 (6.7)	1.52	0.62090

Source: Field survey, 2016

**Level of participation in the processes involved in community development**

The results in Table 5 shows that respondent participated more actively in the execution of plan (mean=2.43) which is closely followed by preparing for action (mean=1.89) and then monitoring (mean=1.88), situation analysis (mean=1.79), development of objectives (mean=1.57), evaluation (mean=1.46) and

reconsideration (1.38). This corroborates the study of Udensi *et al.* (2013) who stated that challenges to their participation in community development programmes includes: inadequate awareness, non-inclusion of youths in the planning stage, monopolizing the planning process and decision making structure at the local level by initiators and facilitators of community development programme will alienate citizens.

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on their level of participation in process involved in community development programme**

Development process	High F (%)	Moderate F (%)	Low F (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Situation analysis	14 (10.4)	79 (58.5)	42 (31.1)	1.79	0.76
Development of objectives	22 (16.3)	34 (25.2)	79 (58.5)	1.57	0.76
Preparing for	13 (9.6)	95 (70.4)	27 (20.0)	1.89	0.53





Development process	High F (%)	Moderate F (%)	Low F (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Execution of plan	79 (58.5)	36 (26.7)	20 (14.8)	2.43	0.73
Monitoring	21 (15.6)	78 (57.8)	36 (26.7)	1.88	0.64
Evaluation	12 (8.9)	38 (28.1)	85 (63.0)	1.46	0.65
Reconsideration	12 (8.9)	28 (20.7)	95 (70.4)	1.38	0.64

Source: Field Survey, 2016

**Categorisation of respondents based on their level of participation**

Table 6 shows that the mean of the categorisation of the level of participation in the processes is

12.437. About 25.9% of the respondents have low level of participation while 74.1% have high level of participation.

**Table 6: Categorisation of respondents based on their level of participation in the process involved in community development programme**

Level of participation	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std deviation
Low level (below mean)	35	25.9	7.00	21.00	12.437	2.63616
High level (mean and above)	100	74.1				

Source: Field Survey, 2016

**Relationship between the factors affecting participation and level of participation in development programmes**

The result in Table 7 shows that there is significant relationship between social constraints, personal constraints and level of participation. This supports Brennan *et al* (2007) who said that factor such as social constraint militates against youth participation in community development. This study also reveals that lack of incentives, bureaucratic process, political constraints, financial

constraints, lack of awareness and lack of technical skills have no significant effect on the level of participation of youths. This negates the findings of Effiong (2012) who posit that inadequate funding hampers the execution of major developmental projects in the community. Most youth organizations depend on voluntary donations by members or other organizations for the execution of their projects. Poor leadership within the organization is another major factor affecting youth participation in rural development.

**Table 7: Regression analysis that shows the effect of factors that influence the participation of youths in community development**

Factors	beta	t	P
Lack of incentives	-0.017	-0.145	0.885
Bureaucratic process	-0.064	-0.676	0.5
Political constraints	-0.008	-0.076	0.939
Social constraints	-0.302	-2.772	0.006
Personal constraints	0.258	2.227	0.028
Financial constraints	0.159	1.543	0.125
Lack of awareness	-0.038	-0.295	0.768
Lack of technical skill	-0.896	0.826	0.41

Source: Field survey, 2016

$R = 0.413$

$R^2 = 0.170$ ;

Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.118$

$P \leq 0.05$ - significant (S);  $P > 0.05$  – Not Significant (NS)

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study revealed that despite all the constraints that affect participation, there is still a high level of participation of youths in the community development process. The study also showed the benefits derived in participation which includes improved standard of living, reduced

dependency on the government, better utilisation of resources available in the community, increased self sufficiency. Government, local leaders and youth leaders should endeavor to form an interaction session in which all stakeholders will be involved to discuss the pertinent needs of all involved and to identify roles of stakeholders.

Also, training in the form of participatory seminars and workshops would help the youths to be more proactive.

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