



## **Women's Perception on Community Based Development Organization Activities in Imo State, Nigeria**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author JCO designed the study, wrote the protocol, performed some of the statistical analysis and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author JOO managed the literature searches and field data collection and author JCIU proof-read the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women's community based organization serves as the apex organization for rural development and their perception in the activities involved should not be overlooked. This is because perception precedes action. The study assessed women's perception on Community Based Development Organization activities in Imo State, Nigeria. These women organizations were purposively selected from 10 communities with developmental projects. Random sampling procedure was adopted to select 120 members of the organization, thus 12 respondents from each community. Primary data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and mean scores. The result on personal/socio-economic characteristics revealed that a good proportion of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 31-50 (58%), married (75%) with household size of 1-5 (66.7%). Also

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66% of the respondents had a secondary and tertiary education while the majority were farmers and traders/artisans (80%) with a minimum income of N10, 000 – 200,000 per month. The result also revealed that the respondents were involved in all the developmental activities listed. The major activities include: attending meetings (100%), mobilization of funds (100%), contribution of time/labour (83.3%), actual execution of projects (83.3%), awareness creation (75%), environmental sanitation (66.7%) and healthcare provision (66.7%) respectively. The respondents' perception on community-based development activities involved showed high and positive perception (M = 3.2) while rural development in the community ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, non-recognition of women as partners in development by government, feeling of joy and satisfaction in involvement and no compensation from the government ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively. The study therefore, recommends that the government should identify and recognize the efforts of the women organization as supportive to rural development and try to compensate through awards/training. The women organization should organize to get assistance from national and international agencies as well as consult with governmental development agencies.

*Keywords: Women; perception; community; development; organization and activities.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The need for rural development outside government's provision has become imperative. These needs serve as a driving force to help in development [1]. Affirmed that projects provided solely by the government could not be sustained without the involvement of the people. This is because there is no commitment on the part of the people especially the local people. [2] also confirmed that the success of many rural development projects in many parts of the world has been linked up with the use of participation of local groups. Thus community development comes to play whereby local people themselves have the primary aim of bringing some social benefits to the locality. This intention brought about community based organization with a general note of providing the mechanism by which people relate with their environment. On other words, the idea of community participation cannot be removed from community development [3].

In view of this, there are presently many forms of community based organizations existing in rural areas in Nigeria such as age grades association, women community based organization but to mention a few [4]. However, women community based organization is an organization where women are mobilized into grass root association in order to step up the idea of rural development. According to [5] and [6] women participate in rural development in their various communities. Besides, women have an under social network due to their social activities which are community based. Hence [7] confirmed that women play a potential role that is crucial to the overall success of efforts directed at rural development [8]. Also

affirmed that WCBO serve as instrument by which communities embark on rural development and other rural economic activities. More so, participation in groups increases women's intervention in overall community-based development activities.

Furthermore, the organizational members have had the ability to execute projects that influence the lives of the rural communities. For this reason most communities have sought the support of these organizations. Imo state is one of the states with various communities as well as registered women community-based organizations that have executed projects/activities [5]. However, the perception of the members of the organization should be looked into because perception proceeds action [9] stated that perception modifies in terms of people's behaviour/action. Thus, not all women perceived WCBO activities the same way and therefore their reactions and attitudes towards the activities of the WCBO's differ.

In view of the foregoing, it becomes imperative to study the perception of women in community based organization in Imo State. The study therefore looked at the perception of women community based organization activities which the following specific objectives:-

- Describe the personal/socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
- Determine the activities involved in by the respondents
- Ascertain the level of perception in the activities involved.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Imo-state, Nigeria. It lies within latitude 4°45'N and longitude 6°50'E within an area of about 4200sq km. Its capital is Owerri. The state has three agricultural zones namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe with 27 Local Government areas and various communities. However, for the purpose of the study one L.G.A. was randomly selected in each of the agricultural zone while two (2) communities with women community based organization was also randomly selected. In all 6 communities with WCBO were randomly selected based on the functionality of the group. 30 women from each of the WCBO were also randomly selected. Giving a total of 180 women from the 6 WCBO in the State. However, 120 respondents returned administered questionnaires and were used for the analysis. Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentages and means.

Objective 1 and 2 were analyzed with percentages while objective 3 – to ascertain the level of perception on the activities involved in was measured by asking the respondent to react to 10 set of perceptual statement on a 4-point Likert type scale of strongly agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2); and strongly disagree (1). Perception score was completed by summing the responses of the respondents score for each item to obtain a weighted sum. The weighted score was further divided by the number of the respondents to obtain a weighted mean for each of the item. Thus, the weighted mean was classified into >2.50 (high and favourable) while <2.50 (Low and unfavourable).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Personal/Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

The distribution of personal/socio-economic characteristics of respondents in Table 1 revealed that over half of the respondents were living with husbands (75%) while 25% were widows. It shows that the women are ready to contribute to the developmental welfare of the communities in which they will benefit from it. Also most respondents fall within the age bracket of 31 and 70 years. By implication all married women who were strong and capable were carried along the drain. The aim which could be to achieve peaceful co-existence, ensure proper

conduct of women and a unified body for the execution of developmental projects. Furthermore, high proportion of the respondents (66.7%) had household size of 1-5, with educational level of secondary and tertiary (67.7%). It is an indication that level of education of an individual is never a criteria for membership rather marriage. It implies that education can predispose them to be committed. This assertion is in line with [10,11] that educational status influence the level of community participation. However, 75% of the respondents had farming and Trading/artisan as their primary occupation while 25% were civil servants. This suggests that most of the respondents were involved in income generating activities than government paid jobs. The respondents estimated monthly income were between ₦50,000 – ₦200,000 (91.6%). By implication members can contribute financially to development activities.

### 3.2 Activities of Respondents

Table 2 shows that the respondents were highly involved in attending meetings and mobilization of funds (100%). This is an indication of commitment on the part of the members and serves as effective instrument for achievement of the group. It is also a way of motivating the local people to use their resources/time for the good of the communities. Furthermore, the respondents were involved in actual execution of the projects (83.3%), contribution of time/labour (83.3%), sensitization and awareness creation to communities (75%), healthcare provision (66.3%) and environmental sanitation (66.7%) respectively. However, the result shows that the members were dedicated and played critical roles for which the organization was formed in bringing about desired changes.

### 3.3 Women Perception on the Activities Carried Out

Table 3 shows that the respondents' perception on the activities carried out was high with a grand ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.2) which is very much above the bench mark of ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.5) used for the decision making. However, the women perception was high on: Rural area is developed ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.75); No compensation to the women group both by government/community ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.64); Non-recognition of women as partners in rural development by government ( $\bar{x}$  =3.63) feeling of joy and satisfaction in involvement, ( $\bar{x}$  =3.6), fund consuming ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.42); reduces migration of youths to Urban Centres ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.33), Age limit for

members ( $\bar{x} = 3.08$ ), attract the presence of visitors ( $\bar{x} = 2.75$ ) and attract bad boys to the communities ( $\bar{x} = 2.50$ ) while time consumption wasn't much problem to the members ( $\bar{x} = 2.25$ ). The reason deduced could be that the mode of operation is not frequently done while they stick to time whenever activities are called upon.

Similarly, having a bench mark of more than 2.5 indicated a favourable perception. Therefore, the result from the study suggests that there is need for the government to recognize the WCBOs as partners in rural development and try to compensate them in a special way either through awards or training.

**Table 1. Distribution of personal/socio-economic characteristics of respondents**

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Freq – n=120</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married with husbands	90	75
Widow	30	25
Divorced	-	-
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30	10	8.3
31 – 50	70	58.3
51 – 70	35	29.2
> 70	5	4.2
<b>Household size</b>		
1 – 5	80	66.7
6 – 10	35	29.2
>10	5	4.2
<b>Educational status</b>		
No formal education	20	16.7
Primary	20	16.7
Secondary	50	41.7
Tertiary	30	25.0
<b>Occupation status</b>		
Farming	40	33.3
Civil servants	30	25.0
Trading/Artisan	50	41.7
Retiree	10	8.3
<b>Estimated monthly income (N)</b>		
50,000 – 70,000.00	10	8.3
80,000 – 100,000.00	40	33.3
<100,000 – 200,000.00	70	58.3

Source: Field Survey, 2017 Activities of Members in WCBO

**Table 2. Distribution of activities of the respondents in WCBO**

<b>Activities involved in WCBO</b>	<b>Freq – n=120</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Training of members	70	58.3
Attending meetings	120	100
Sensitization and awareness creation	90	75
Mobilization of funds	120	100
Contribution of time/labour	100	83.3
Environmental sanitation	80	66.7
Visitation of fellow members	60	50.0
Actual execution of projects	100	83.3
Healthcare provision	80	66.3

Multiple Responses recorded

Source: Field Survey, 2017

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on their perception about the activities involved**

<b>Perception statement</b>	<b>SA = 4</b>	<b>A = 3</b>	<b>DIS = 2</b>	<b>SD = 1</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Feeling of joy and satisfaction of involvement	75(300)	40(120)	5(10)	-	3.6
Rural area is developed	90(360)	30(90)	-	-	3.75
Reduces migration of youths to Urban	56(200)	50(150)	20(40)	10(10)	3.33
Attracts Bad boys to the communities	20(80)	30(90)	50(100)	30(30)	2.50
Attracts the presence of visitors	40(160)	30(90)	30(160)	20(20)	2.75
Time consuming	20(80)	25(75)	40(80)	35(35)	2.25
Fund consuming	60(240)	40(120)	20(40)	10(10)	3.42
Non-recognition as partners in rural development by government	90(360)	20(60)	5(10)	5(5)	3.63
No compensation by communities/govt.	70(280)	47(141)	5(10)	-	3.64
Age limit for members	40(160)	60(180)	10(20)	10(10)	3.08
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.2</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Most of the women in WCBO are in active age with minimum household size, averagely educated and more of farmers and Traders/Artisans. They are majorly involved in all the activities of the association. On a general note, the respondents' perception in terms of their views towards their involvement in rural development is high and favourable. However, their perceptions were high in the areas of: development of rural areas ( $\bar{x}$ =3.75), No compensation by communities/ government ( $\bar{x}$ =3.64) and no recognition as partners in rural development by government ( $\bar{x}$ =3.63). Nevertheless, their perception on time consumption is less ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.25). This could be attributed to the fact that the women derive pleasure in being part of the developmental activities, thereby making their presence to be felt in the communities. Thus, the study recommends that, the government at all levels should recognize and acknowledge the women are partners in progress in development. Also, the women should utilize their numerical strength and unity that exist among them in fostering development in their communities.

#### 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were limitations that affected the study which include financial constraint that limited the frequency of travelling and other logistics involved such as convenient time of meeting with the women leaders / members.

#### 6. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The perception of women in community based organization from other states within the

South- eastern region of Nigeria should also be studied in order to have a comprehensive knowledge of what is happening in other places. Findings from further research on this study will also help policy makers form concrete policies to address women issues especially in the rural areas.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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