

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE NORTHERN STATES OF NIGERIA

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Introduction

Within the last two decades, governments, international agencies and private individuals interested in development have begun to grapple with the question of how best to tap and integrate the resources represented by rural women into national economic development. But the dearth of empirical data on the contributions of women to development has left this question largely unanswered. The study reported in this paper attempts at least partly, to fill this gap.

Rural women in Nigeria like women in many developing countries are extremely active in agricultural activities—food production, food processing, distribution, animal husbandry, marketing and brewing. They are equally active in the physical rural development programmes like construction of roads, provision of public facilities such as schools, toilets, hospitals/dispensaries and general sanitation. They also take part in income yielding activities like handicrafts, sewing, knitting, embroidery, etc. in addition to their roles as mothers (Simmons, 1976).

As mothers, they are responsible for child bearing, home management, family health, nutrition and the general well-being of members of their families. These activities vary with the part of the country, the tradition practised in the areas and the availability of agricultural inputs and other facilities. They also vary from one country to another (see Table 1).

The extension programmes which are designed exclusively for women have not made noticeable impacts. This may be attributed to a

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TABLE 1 WORK INPUT BY WOMEN AND MEN IN AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

Country in which sample villages are located	Percentage of women in family labour force in agriculture	Average hours worked per week on own farm			Percentage of work on farm performed by		
		By active female members	By active male members	Female hour as percent	Active female family members	Active male family members	Hired labour of both sexes
Senegal*	53	8	15	53	29	66	5
Gambia	52	20	9	213	70	30	
Dahomey		2	24	8			
Nigeria	57	3	21	15	9	49	42
Cameroon	62	13	16	81	56	44	
Central African Republic	58	20	13	150	68	32	
Congo (Brazaville)	57	24	15	160	68	32	5
Uganda	61	20	15	136	68	32	

Note: Some of the sources from which the information was collected failed to specify the length of the work day or the type of activities classified as agricultural (for instance, it was sometimes not clear whether trekking and transport to and from the field were included). In cases where work days per year were given without specification of the length, the total number of hours worked per year was calculated on the assumption of a six-hour day.

* The sample refers to 1962.

Source: Easter Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, 1970, Table 1, page 21.

lack of adequate managerial supports, notwithstanding the fact that rural women have been actively engaged in these activities from time immemorial.

The reason for this "apatheid" might be due to the traditional belief of regarding women as subordinates to their male counterparts and that they act only as advisors to their husbands in the decision making process. On the other hand ECA/FAO (1972) has attributed this neglect to prejudice, custom and tradition. It is possible that the situation has been brought about by the women themselves who have assumed passive attitudes towards their problems and hence made it difficult for the various governments to fully appraise and appreciate their roles in rural development.

In view of this obvious gap and the complementary importance of the contributions of women to national development, it is considered pertinent to examine empirically the extent to which women are presently participating in rural development and women extension programmes

with a view to determining how best they can be helped to improve their contributions and this is basis of this study.

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to determine the level of participation of women in selected rural development programmes in five Northern States of Nigeria. Specifically the study aims:

- (a) To determine the extent of participation of the women respondents in selected rural development programmes and the factors that influence this, and
- (b) To determine the effectiveness of the change agents who worked with the local women in the areas covered by this study.

Methodology

This study forms part of a larger study looking at the impact of rural extension programmes in the Northern States of Nigeria. It also serves partly as an assessment of the contributions of the Division of Agricultural Colleges of Ahmadu Bello University which trains women extension workers (Home Economists) for all the Northern States.

The data for the study were collected in five states randomly selected by listing and numbering the states and then mixing and drawing the papers on which the identification numbers of all the ten Northern States had been written. The States selected include, Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Niger. After the selection of the states, a list of villages in which women extension programmes have been going on for at least five years prior to the study was obtained from each of the five States' Home Economics section. Depending on the size of each village, a proportionate random selection of the households was done. An adult female available in each household at the time of the study visit was then interviewed. A total of 348 women were interviewed distributed thusly: 69 (19.8%) from Benue, 86 (24.7%) from Kaduna, 73 (21.0%) from Kano, 71 (20.4%) from Kwara and 49 (14.1%) from Niger. The data were then analysed using descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages and chi-square tests.

Review of Previous Work

Studies on the role of women in development though scanty underwent a dramatic upsurge in the mid-fifties. The majority of the studies concentrated

on the occupational structure and participation of women in community activities and the factors which influence their participation.

For example, Lucas (1971) in a study of the occupational structure of Nigerian females aged 15 years and over found that about 80% of this population were gainfully employed mostly in primary production and trading, and that the rate of female participation in wage employment rose steadily from an estimated 2.1% in 1961 to 5.5% in 1965 and that the trend has been on the increase up till now.

Regular and continuous farming for the production of food crops and animals has been a woman's job in Africa, South of the Sahara. The male performs the heavy tasks of preparing land for farming in the open virgin forest and the felling of trees while the female does the numerous light farm operations. This is to say that there is a division of labour among a husband and his wife in carrying out farm work (ECA/FAO, 1972).

Boserup's (1970) findings indicate that the number of hours women in farming families devoted to agricultural work is higher than that of men. She observed that the annual average of work hours per week was between 15–20 for women and not more than 15 for men (see Table 1). She observed further that among the Ekpeya in Southern Nigeria, men do no farming at all. They only clear the land for their wives and spend their time hunting and producing palm oil while the women does the manual farm work.

In surveys conducted by Patel and Anthonio (1973), Williams (1974) and Berry (1975) among the Yorubas of south-western Nigeria, they observed that a more traditional division of labour prevails; women do light farming tasks, such as weeding, while men handle the heavy work and determine planting schedules with minor inputs from their wives.

Northern Muslim husbands in Nigeria dominate both in participation and decision-making in farming. In the report of a research project conducted by Simmons (1976) in three villages of Dan Mahawayi, Hanwa and Doka in Zaria Province of Kaduna State, he divided acceptable occupation (Sanaa) for married women into four categories—food processing, trading, crafts and herbal medicine. He observed in his report that some women undertake more than one of these occupations at a time; that there is no specialization and that these Northern women frequently change commercial activities when domestic situations, availability of capital, or personal preferences indicate that a change is necessary or possible. The usual pattern is a shift from one food processing product line to another or from a food processing activity to a service or craft enterprise.

Simmons observed further in his findings that some of the influences on women decision-making about employment opportunities include the incentives to earn money of one's own, the need for them to pursue money-earning activities, the need to integrate domestic responsibilities and business affairs and the size and composition of their household.

Handicraft production is another occupation for women in many countries. Although husbands participate in craft making as well, it appears to be a female dominated activity. According to an FAO/German Foundation for International Development Report (1975), it was observed that in 1967 about 440 Lesotho women were trained in handicrafts and over US\$11,000 (about ₦7,333) worth of goods were sold.

In the food processing industry, rural women are not lagging. Simmons (1976) observed that women in the Northern States of Nigeria take part in the processing of grain legumes and starchy roots to ready-to-eat foods. The industry, he said, is characterised by small scale and simple technology. The raw materials are produced to final products by one person, sometimes with the assistance of a young child.

He said further that ordinary simple household equipment is used, no formal standards of quality and quantity are observed by the producers and production performance is measured by sales and profits.

Most women who engage in food processing take it as part-time job in addition to farming and/or others like trading, weaving, pottery making etc. Self-employment in the industry offers the "owner-operator" advantages other than a means of accumulating wages and profits (Simmons, 1976). First, married Muslims may maintain wife seclusion and related social patterns while earning money. Most of the raw materials needed are available in the villages; husbands and children arrange for their purchase and delivery to the processor (the wife) in her house. Secondly, entry into the industry has little or no educational restrictions. Thirdly, the amount of equipment and capital needed to take up employment in the industry is minimal. While weaving and trading, for example, may demand relatively large investments in stock or equipment, food processing can be profitably done in fairly small amounts with normal household utensils.

In the Zaria survey referred to earlier (Simmons 1976), out of the 465 women interviewed, five percent reported that they were not working on any independent economic activity. But of the 95% reporting such employment, 90% were engaged in at least one food processing activity or the other. The small amount of capital available to most women limits their ability, not only to expand operations but even to remain employed in current enterprises. In spite of this limitation, Giwa (1976) observed that rural women are business conscious and that they give priority to their occupations rather than any other activity.

In the areas of agricultural cooperatives and marketing associations, women are known to have proved their worth in using such forum in the development of rural communities. Although their membership in agricultural cooperatives seem to be the prerogative of their husbands, women have gradually gained the right to participate with or without the permission to do so from their husbands.

The market women often form associations which deal with specific

commodities and each association sees to it that a non-member does not engage illegally in the sales of such commodities and that no male trader deals in certain commodities customarily regarded as the business of women (Little 1965). The market women association may take it upon itself to buy farm produce from farmers at cheap prices and later sell it at prices which will give reasonable profit margins. Each member may contribute a fixed monthly amount which is used in carrying out specific development projects like the building of town halls, community schools or dispensaries, etc.

In Southern Nigeria for example, Little (1965) observed that a female society has run a bakery, calabash factory and a gari mill. This association (Egba Women Union, Abeokuta) also conducted classes for illiterate women to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of English and or French which is useful in trading. Little observed further that the formation of voluntary associations helps the women to arbitrate in their own affairs and it puts them in a better position to bargain with the opposite sex.

The association assists women to compete for social prestige—not only with men, but also with other women. It also enables them to receive instructions in modern hygiene and modern-craft, to learn sewing, crochet work and other new handicrafts and to be up to date in etiquette.

Women generally participate in self-help and government sponsored development projects. Reports in our daily newspapers indicate that Nigerian women are prime movers in self-help work. The decision to participate is usually taken by the wife who is more enthusiastic than the husband, and who in turn convinces her husband to participate. But in government sponsored projects, there are variations. From personal experience Nigerian women follow their husband's lead, cooperating in government work if their men show interest. This follows from the fact that there are more men than women in government and policy-making positions.

The role performed by women in the various rural development programmes could either be on an individual basis or cooperatively. In a study carried out by Akinbode and Mosadomi (1977), among rural inhabitants of Isoya villages in Ife, Oyo State, the analysis show that a large proportion of the villagers engaged in various types of cooperative activities in community development such as road clearing, school building, etc. apart from cooperative activities in marketing agricultural products and agricultural production. The factor that was observed to have influenced the high degree of participation was the reactions of the respondents to the locations of the headquarters building and the maize drier. They were satisfied with the location of the building and the drier.

In another study conducted among the Ndeaboh people of the former East Central State with respect to a road construction project, Akinbode (1977) identified three factors as being responsible for the high degree of participation in the project. These were:

- (1) Awareness of the problem of transportation by the community members,
- (2) Democratic decision making process among participants, and
- (3) Good leadership.

Other reasons for participation could be due to external intervention, but this might be less effective as pointed out by Williams (1978). On the other hand reasons advanced for non-participation include faulty communication link between the planners and the beneficiaries, a conflict of interest among the people, while other people thought they could not benefit from the programme and hence refused to participate (Akinbode and Mosadomi, 1977 and Akinbode, 1977).

We have gone into this extensive review of previous studies so that we can draw from these findings for comparative purpose. It is however hoped that this study will throw more light either by confirming or refuting earlier findings on the participation of women in rural development and the factors which determine the level of such behaviour.

Findings of the Study

1. Participation in Rural Development Programmes

There were several women extension programmes going on in the areas of this study at the time of the interview. When respondents were asked whether they participated or not in these extension programmes, 293 respondents (87.5%) said they took part in such activities, 42 respondents (12.5%) said they did not. Participation was highest in Kano state (98.6%), followed by Kwara (92.9%), Kaduna (90.0%), Benue (86.2%) and Niger (60.4%) in this order.

The high percentage participation recorded is an indication of the success of the women extension programmes in the States included in this study. It shows also that the people had confidence in the change agents and as such were able to cooperate and work together.

The respondents who claimed participation in extension projects were asked to mention three such projects. The number and proportion of the respondents who identified each of the projects as the first project they participated in are shown below: sewing/knitting/crocheting/embroidery 167 respondents (48.0%); agricultural show/food demonstrations, 72 respondents (20.7%); 23 respondents mentioned handicrafts; sanitation/home improvements 13 respondents (3.7%); gardening 11 respondents, and childcare 7 respondents (2.0%). One respondent each mentioned soappit, poultry/livestock and beadwork. Fifty two respondents (14.9%) did not mention any project as being the first they participated in.

The following number and proportion of respondents who mentioned

the following activities as the second project in which they participated were sewing/knitting/embroidery/crocheting 106 respondents (30.5%); agricultural show/food demonstration 82 respondents (23.6%); while 23 respondents (6.6%) mentioned gardening. Twenty-two respondents (6.3%) said they participate in sanitation/home improvement and child care as the second project, while 16 respondents (4.6%) mentioned handicrafts; 5 respondents (1.4%) identified poultry/livestock and 2 respondents (0.6%) indicated that they dug soak pits. Seventy respondents did not mention any activity as being the second project they participated in.

As for the third project which the respondents participated in, the proportion of the respondents are as follows: agricultural show/food demonstration 17.2% sewing/knitting/embroidery/crocheting 16.1%; sanitation/home improvement 11.2%; childcare 6.0%; gardening 5.5% and beadwork 0.9%. Fifteen people (4.3%) mentioned handicrafts and 8 people (2.3%) dug soak pits. Over 30% of the respondents did not name any third project they participated in.

From this analysis, it is observed that the order of prominence of the projects in which the respondents participated is as follows: sewing/knitting/embroidery/crocheting followed by agricultural show/food demonstration and, thirdly, sanitation/home improvements.

The female extension staff who worked with the rural women were trained mainly in the aspect of home economics at the Division of Agricultural Colleges of the Ahmadu Bello University. These extension workers must have been exposed to some courses in agriculture in the course of their training. For this reason, the ability of the extension staff to involve the women respondents in agricultural show/food demonstration was not surprising. And the order of prominence of the projects in which the respondents participated as shown above was expected too.

Simons (1976) observed that the programmes in which Northern women participated, particularly food processing are characterised by small and simple technology and that little or no educational restrictions are placed on them. From these observations, it can be said that the women respondents who can be regarded as poor and educationally backward (judging from their income and educational levels) took part in the programme that reflected these two characteristics.

However, when the attitudes of the respondents to the home economics programmes being offered by the field workers were examined, a different picture emerged. Out of the two hundred and eighty respondents who volunteered to express their attitudes, only one quarter said they were satisfied with what was going on (see Table 2). Almost seven-tenths (68.6%) expressed their readiness to join hands and cooperate with the agents if brought into the programme. The remaining respondents (6.5%) did not have quite positive attitudes towards the programmes, while 65 respondents declined to express their attitudes. These additional data cast

TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAMMES

Attitudes towards H.E. Programmes	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Ready to Cooperate	41 (21.4) (67.2)	43 (22.4) (56.6)	44 (22.9) (62.0)	45 (23.4) (88.2)	19 (9.9) (90.5)	192	66.6
Satisfied	16 (22.9)	31 (44.3)	20 (28.6)	2 (2.9)	1 (1.4)	70	25.0
Agents should increase efforts	1 (14.3) (1.6)	2 (28.6) (2.6)	4 (57.1) (5.6)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	7	2.5
Not impressed	3 (30.0) (4.9)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2 (20.0) (2.8)	4 (40.0) (7.8)	1 (10.0) (4.8)	10	3.6
Reject Home Economics Programmes	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1 (100.0) (1.4)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1	0.4
Total	61 (21.8)	76 (27.1)	71 (25.4)	51 (18.2)	21 (7.5)	280	100.0

Figures in first brackets = % of horizontal totals

Figures in second brackets = % of vertical totals.

some doubts on the large number of respondents who indicated that they have been participating in the programmes under study. What we suspect might have happened is that the respondents introduced elements of 'social acceptability'. On answering the question on participation, they seemed to have been pre-occupied with presenting a good image (or what is socially acceptable) of the agents who have been working in their area. But on further probing, the original attempt to cover up seemed to have broken down and the facts just emerged voluntarily.

2. Community Problems and Ways of Solving them

In order to compare the programmes the women participated in with the problems prevalent in their various localities at the time of the study, the participants were asked to mention the most important problems in their communities and the methods they were adopting to solve them. A little more than two-fifths (41.1%) identified shortage of water, 15.8% mentioned poor roads, 11.2% worried over lack of electricity while 8.9% expressed concern over lack of medical services. Another 5.2% considered food shortage as the most important problem while less than one-hundredth (0.9%) each identified means of transport and lack of adequate accommodation respectively as their major concerns. However, 53 respondents (or 15.2%) were unable to identify any community problems.

The way people solve problems is one indicator of their orientation to life in general, hence our respondents were asked to indicate how they tackled these problems. Their responses are summarized in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY PROBLEM SOLVING METHODS

Method of Solving Problem	Freq.	%
Take it as her luck or Allah's/God's wish	60	17.2
Ask for help from neighbours and friends	60	17.2
Ask for help from member of household	56	16.1
Ask for help from appropriate government workers	56	16.1
Go to herbalist/native doctor for help	47	13.5
Try to solve the problem by herself	40	11.5
No response	29	8.8
Total	348	100.0

Sixty respondents each (17.2%) said they take whatever happen to them as their luck or Allah's/God's wish and ask for help from neighbours or friends respectively. An equal number of respondents (16.1%) said they asked for help from appropriate government workers and asked for help from a member of their household.

Forty-seven respondents (13.5%) said they seek help from native doctors/herbalists. Forty respondents (11.5%) said whenever they have problems they tried to solve them by themselves, while 29 respondents could not mention the method they usually adopt in solving their problems.

3. Factors Associated with Participation

In order to further determine the factors which contributed to the level of participation revealed in this study a null hypothesis was tested. Specifically, the hypothesis states: there is no relationship between the per-

TABLE 4 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Characteristics	Chi-Square Value	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	Relationship
Age	0.428	1	0.51	Not Significant
Marital Status	0.152	2	0.93	"
Literacy Status	7.530	2	0.02	Significant
Level of formal education	9.030	2	0.01	"
Children living	9.030	2	0.01	"
Respondent's occupation	13.520	6	0.00	"
Respondent's spouse occupation	18.480	8	0.02	"
Respondent's personal income	17.050	3	0.00	"
Social participation score	0.600	2	0.74	Not Significant
Respondent's religious beliefs	0.140	2	0.93	"
Knowledge of change agents	2.920	1	0.08	
Sources of information	20.770	4	0.00	Significant
Clientele attitude towards change agents	1.280	4	0.86	Not Significant
Over quality of life score	2.460	2	0.29	"

Level of Significance used is 0.05.

sonal, social and economic characteristics of the women respondents and their participation in selected rural development programmes. The level of statistical significance was arbitrarily fixed at 0.05 using chi-square statistics.

The result of the test of the hypothesis shows that literacy status, level of formal education, number of respondents' children living, respondents occupation, respondents' spouse occupation, respondents personal income and respondents sources of information about rural programmes were related to participation, while age, marital status, social participation score, respondents' religious beliefs, knowledge of change agents and the overall quality of life of the respondents showed no significant relationship.

Table 4 contains the chi-square values obtained in this test.

The section that follows contains a more detailed discussion of those factors which show a statistical relationship with participation in women extension programmes.

Literacy Status

This characteristic was significantly related to participation at the 0.02 level, showing that there was a relationship between participation in rural development programmes and literacy status. This is expected because educated individuals are usually more aware of the existence of community development programmes through different media—radio, T.V., posters, pamphlets, etc. than the illiterates who cannot read or understand some media languages. Since effective participation requires communicative and human relations skills which must be learned, those who are better educated would be better equipped for participation.

From the detailed analysis, one could see that out of the 138 respondents who were literate, 88.4% of them participated in women extension programmes while 11.6% did not. Among the 205 respondents who were illiterate, 80.0% of them participated in women rural development programmes while 20.0% of them did not participate.

This analysis revealed that the proportion of participants decreases from 88.4% for the literates to 80.0% for the illiterates. However, observations for the non-participants showed a departure from this trend. The proportion of the respondents who did not participate rose from 11.6% for the literates to 20.0% for the illiterates. This further confirmed the hypothesis that there was a positive relationship between participation in women extension programmes and literacy status.

Number of Respondents' Children Living

There was a significant relationship between this characteristic and participation at the 0.01 level. This can be explained in two ways: firstly, if the children are grown up and are of school age, they will be in a position to tell and teach their parents what they have learnt at school and their experiences

regarding rural development and the need to participate in this effort. Secondly, grown up children should be able to take care of themselves, thereby giving more time for their parents to engage in their own programmes including participation in rural development work.

The detailed analysis showed that the more the number of children, the less the percentage of participants in the women extension programmes.

This might be due to the fact that with an increase in the number of children to cater for, the less amount of time available for the mother to take part in other activities including the women rural programmes.

The data for non-participants showed the opposite trend with an increase in the proportion of the non-participants in women extension programmes from 9.8% to 31.8% for 4 children or less and 7 children or more respectively. This is, therefore, a negative relationship.

Respondents' Occupation

This characteristic was found to be related to participation. It is very probable that those whose occupations do not take them away from the community where they live and where the projects are taking place are more likely to participate than others. Also those whose duties are related to community development are more likely to participate in women extension work than others.

Among the 35 respondents who were housewives, 96.9% of them participated in women rural development work, while 88.2% of the 19 respondents who were farmers also participated. Out of the 147 business women/traders, 86.6% of them participated while 86.3% of the 51 seamstresses participated in women extension programmes.

This downward trend shows that those respondents who were engaged in additional occupations that would likely take them away from their communities such as teaching, trading/business, and seamstressing participated less in women extension programmes as opposed to those who were farmers or full-time housewives. The result of the non-participants showed an opposite trend to those of the participants, confirming the hypothesized relationship between respondent's occupation and participation in women extension programmes.

Respondents' Spouse Occupation

This factor showed a significant relationship with participation. This relationship is expected, more so, if the spouse's occupation is related to community development work. The spouse will be in a position to influence his wife and advise her on the need to take part in women rural development programmes.

The detailed analysis showed that all the respondents whose spouses were artisans and students participated in women rural development programmes. Out of the 67 respondents whose spouses were in govern-

ment employment, 93.9% of them took part in women rural development programmes. Also while 93.5% of the 32 respondents whose spouses were soldiers/policemen participated in women rural development programmes, 92.6% of the 28 whose spouses were teachers also participated. Sixty-four (79.0%) of the respondents whose spouses were farmers participated in women rural development programmes.

The results for the non-participants showed opposite trends.

The variations observed in the proportion of the participants' spouse occupations confirm the hypothesis that there is a relationship between participation and respondents' spouse occupations.

Respondents' Personal Income

The significant relationship which this factor showed with participation is expected, since most rural development projects may involve financial contribution. If a respondent's income is high enough, she will be able to contribute to the project financially. If income is low the opposite is expected. With a high income level a respondent might not be willing to take part in the physical process of a project, but rather prefers to give only financial support.

The detailed analysis showed that out of 86 respondents who earned ₦100 or less, 90.7% of them participated while 9.3% did not participate.

For the 37 respondents earning between ₦101 and ₦200, 34 of them (91.9%) participated in women rural development programmes while 8.1% of them did not participate. About two-thirds of the 42 respondents who earned between ₦201 and ₦500 participated while 34.2% did not participate. Over 90% of the 46 respondents who earned ₦500 or above participated in women rural development programmes while less than 10% did not participate. It can be observed from the analysis that income level has influence on the level of participation in rural development programmes but surprisingly in an 'n' shaped graph.

Respondents' Source of Information

The significant relationship of sources of information to participation is normal because the source of information about rural development work can influence respondent to participate or not. If such information is from a change agent or from respondents' neighbours, it is likely to be more effective than if it is through other means like mass media since communication will be direct if the change agent is in direct contact with the clientele.

Over 90% of the 295 respondents who had information about women rural programmes through change agents participated, 85.7% of those who got their information through friends or neighbours participated, while 66% of those who got their information through members of their households participated as revealed by the detailed analysis.

Other Factors

In this analysis, the result showed that age and marital status were not related to participation. Adeola (1979) in studying participation in rural development programmes among the inhabitants of Sekona in Ife, Oyo State, observed that there was a significant relationship between marital status and community development work, with married people participating more than single, divorced or separated women contrary to the result of this analysis.

Little (1965) and Mbitbi (1974) in their separate studies observed, contrary to the result of this analysis, that there was a relationship between membership in organizations and participation in development programmes with members participating more in social organizations. Nelson, *et.al.* (1960), also contrary to the result of this analysis, observed that participation in formal associations is generally low for young adults, increasing sharply in the late twenties and early thirties, remaining fairly constant to about age fifty and then declining slowly until age sixty, when the rate of decrease accelerates rapidly.

4. Role of Change Agents

Change agents are known to have some influence on community development programmes. They can act as accelerators of programmes if they know what is expected of them and do exactly that. On the other hand, they can retard development programmes if they do not know what is expected of them or if they are not competent in their job. The sections below discuss the contributions of the professional change agents as seen by the clientele.

Knowledge of Women Extension Change Agent

When respondents were asked whether they had any knowledge about women change agent(s) in their area, the majority (93.6%) said they did. Twenty-two respondents (6.4%) said they did not. The high percentage of the respondents who knew the change agents is an indication that women extension activities had been going on in these areas and, as such, the activities were expected to have had an impact on the local people for whom the programmes were designed.

Extent of Contact with Women Change Agents

When respondents were asked how many times they had meetings/discussions/demonstrations with women change agents within the last year, 53 respondents (15.4%) said they had it ten times or less, 285 respondents (82.6%) had such meetings/discussions/demonstrations between eleven and thirty-one times, 7 respondents (2.0%) had it thirty-one times or over, while 49 respondents (14.1%) did not have any meetings/discussions/demonstrations with the change agents.

The high percentages of respondents (86.0%) who had discussions/meetings/demonstrations with extension agents showed the extent of the awareness of the existence of women extension activities and the participation in such programmes by the people in the various communities.

A respondent who was initially not interested in a programme might later develop interest in such a programme with an increase in the frequency of meetings with the change agents.

Assessment of Change Agents' Technical Competence

Respondents were asked to give personal comments about the efficiency of the change agents working with them. One hundred and two respondents (29.3%) said the change agent was technically competent in her job, 27 respondents (7.8%) said she was friendly, 19 respondents (5.5%) said she was hardworking and less than one percent of the respondents said they could not assess her.

Whether Change Agent Interested Clientele in Her Work or Not

When respondents were asked whether the change agents approached them with a view to interest them in their work or programmes, over 80% gave a positive answer while 34 respondents (9.9%) said the agents did not do so. Twenty-seven people did not respond to the question.

The high percentage of respondents who claimed that the change agents approached them with a view to interest them in the programmes is an indication of the efforts the agents were putting in their work to make sure the clientele took part in the extension programmes.

The Clienteles' Attitude Towards Change Agents' Human Relations

The respondents were also asked about their attitudes towards the human relation approach adopted by the change agents. Over 50% of the respondents said they liked their approach and were willing to participate in extension programmes. Seventy respondents (20.1%) said they were happy and satisfied with the agents' approach, while 10 respondents (2.9%) did not approve of the approaches adopted by the change agents. Another 68 respondents (19.5%) could not comment on the agent's methods of approach.

From the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that the change agents had some interactions and discussions with the clientele. In order to find out if there was any relationship between the personal, social and economic characteristics of the respondents and the number of times the change agent had discussions with them (the respondents), a null hypothesis was tested.

This hypothesis states that there was no relationship between the personal, social and economic characteristics of the women respondents and the number of times these respondents had discussions with the change agents.

The level of statistical significance was arbitrarily fixed at 0.05. The results of the test of this hypothesis showed that the social participation score was significantly related to the number of times the change agent had discussions with the clientele, while age, marital status, literacy status, level of formal education, respondent's personal income, religious beliefs, knowledge of the change agent, sources of information about women rural development programmes and the clientele's attitude towards the change agents showed no significant relationship. See Table 5 for the chi-square values.

TABLE 5 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NUMBER OF MEETINGS CHANGE AGENTS HAD WITH THE RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	Chi-square Value	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	Relationship
Age	0.45	2	0.80	Not Significant
Marital status	2.34	4	0.67	//
Literacy status	4.66	4	0.32	//
Level of formal education	5.00	4	0.29	//
Respondents occupation	16.27	12	0.18	//
Respondents' spouse occupation	25.59	16	0.06	//
Respondents' personal income	11.90	6	0.08	//
Social participation score	24.19	4	0.08	Significant
Respondents religious beliefs	6.90	4	0.14	Not Significant
Knowledge of change agents	3.60	2	0.78	//
Source of information	4.74	8	0.78	//
Clienteles attitude towards change agents	9.86	8	0.27	//

Respondents' Social Participation Score

This is a measure of the number of social organizations the respondents belonged to which was found to be significantly related to the number of times the clientele had discussions with the change agents.

It is very likely that some or most of the social organisations of which these respondents were members deal with self-help development projects as commonly found among town/village unions. Such unions might require technical help from change agents and hence the relationship found in this study.

The detailed analysis shows that out of 53 respondents who claimed to belong to one social organization, 83% of them had discussions with change agents 11–30 times, while 78.6% of the 11 respondents who claimed to belong to more than one social organisation had between eleven and thirty meetings with the change agents. This reveals that as the number of organizations clientele belonged to increased, the proportion of the respondents which the change agents could have meetings with decreased.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although some of the findings of this study seem to contradict each other (e.g. attitudes of respondents to home economics programmes versus those on the impact of the programmes), there appears to be overwhelming evidence that rural women in the Northern States are prime movers of development efforts thus supporting Lucas' findings of the seventies. This means that the 'social acceptability' postulate which propounded the high degree of participation is not supported by our data on knowledge of change agent, agents' contact with the clientele, agents' effort to interest clientele in development programmes, high dependence on change agents as the main source of information and the commendable human relations approach adopted by the change agents.

The factors which were found to be related to participation are expected and reasonable. Efforts should be made to improve the literacy status of home economics clientele and such efforts should emphasize functional literacy.

High participation in development programmes notwithstanding, our data further reveal that such programmes were limited only to areas in which home economics field workers were competent and that no effort was made to mobilize expert resources from outside of home economics. This we submit may not be the fault of the field workers but that of the institutions which train them on the one hand, and for which they are working. If no effort is made to relate their training to that for rural health workers, rural water engineers, rural educators, road engineers etc.; they are likely to see themselves as being alone in the struggle for rural development. Secondly, employers also have a responsibility to foster a team spirit among professions working towards the same goal.

Furthermore, our data reveal that there is no congruency between the programmes the respondents claimed they participated in and the problems they identified as being prevalent in the areas studied. This finding together with the inference made above that the programmes were restricted to those in the areas of competence of home agents seems to suggest that the women rural development programmes run in the states studied are usually pre-planned by the agents rather than being based on the recognized needs of the clientele, as demanded by adult education principles. This situation requires thorough examination and improvement.

Our findings also reveal that our clientele are fatalistic in their approach to problem-solving. This may be because they lack confidence in their own ability to solve problems or it may be a cultural orientation. Whatever it is, the point is that the situation is not healthy and efforts should be made through education to change this so that the clientele can develop a 'development-oriented' attitude.

Finally, we observed that heavy dependence was being placed on home agents as the primary source of information on development programmes. This we suspect is not unconnected with the literacy level of the respondents and the level of development in general in the areas studied. It is suggested that if information could be developed in vernacular languages as well as in pictorial forms, the efforts of the home agents would be multiplied several fold using mass media.

APPENDIX

Tables Showing the Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents by States of Origin.

Key to the Tables

1. Bn = Benue State. Kd = Kaduna State. Kn = Kano State.
Dw = Kwara State. Mg = Niger State.
2. The first set of decimal figures in brackets are the percentages of the row totals (i.e., total along the horizontal); while the second set are percentages of the column totals (i.e., total along the vertical).

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LITERACY STATUS

Literacy Status	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Literates	34 (24.6) (50.0)	52 (37.7) (60.5)	24 (17.4) (32.9)	24 (17.4) (35.8)	4 (2.9) (8.2)	138	40.2
Illiterates	34 (16.6) (50.0)	34 (16.6) (39.5)	49 (23.9) (67.1)	43 (21.0) (64.2)	45 (22.0) (91.8)	205	59.8
Total	68 19.8	86 25.1	73 21.3	67 19.5	49 14.3	343	100.0

TABLE II DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION

Level of formal Education	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Illiterates	34 (16.6) (42.0)	34 (16.6) (41.5)	49 (23.9) (67.2)	43 (31.0) (68.3)	45 (22.0) (91.8)	205	59.4
Class Seven and below	46 (33.8) (57.0)	45 (33.1) (54.9)	21 (15.4) (32.8)	20 (14.7) (31.7)	4 (2.9) (8.2)	136	39.4
Above Sec. education	1 (25.0) (1.0)	3 (75.0) (3.5)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	4	1.2
Total	81 23.5	82 23.8	70 20.3	63 18.3	49 14.2	345	100.0

TABLE III DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN

Number of Children Living	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
4 or less	33 (15.8) (73.3)	55 (26.3) (74.3)	47 (22.5) (82.5)	44 (21.1) (65.7)	30 (14.4) (65.2)	209	72.3
5-6	8 (14.3) (17.8)	13 (23.2) (17.6)	5 (8.9) (8.8)	19 (33.9) (28.4)	11 (19.6) (23.9)	56	19.4
7 or more	4 (16.7) (8.9)	6 (25.0) (8.1)	5 (20.0) (8.8)	4 (16.7) (6.0)	5 (20.8) (10.9)	24	8.3
Total	45 15.6	74 25.6	57 19.7	67 23.2	46 15.9	289	100.0

TABLE IV DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Housewife	15 (42.9) (22.4)	16 (45.7) (21.6)	2 (5.7) (5.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2 (5.7) (4.5)	35	11.8
Farming	16 (84.2) (23.9)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2 (10.5) (2.8)	1 (5.3) (2.3)	19	6.4
Trading/Business	21 (14.3) (31.3)	26 (17.7) (35.1)	24 (16.3) (60.0)	56 (38.1) (78.9)	20 (13.6) (45.5)	147	49.7
Seamstress	2 (3.9) (3.0)	11 (21.6) (14.9)	8 (15.7) (20.0)	11 (21.6) (15.5)	19 (37.3) (43.2)	51	17.2
Teaching	3 (37.5) (4.5)	3 (35.7) (4.1)	1 (12.5) (2.5)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1 (12.5) (2.3)	8	2.7
Civil Servant	1 (16.7) (1.5)	4 (66.7) (5.4)	0 (0.0) (0.)	1 (16.7) (1.4)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	6	2.0
Unemployed	9 (30.0) (13.4)	14 (46.7) (18.9)	5 (16.7) (12.5)	1 (3.3) (1.4)	1 (3.3) (2.3)	30	10.1
Total	67 22.6	74 25.0	40 13.5	71 24.0	44 14.9	296	

TABLE V DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION

Spouse's Occupation	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Soldier/Police- man	10 (31.3) (15.9)	6 (18.8) (8.2)	10 (31.3) (14.9)	1 (3.1) (1.5)	5 (15.6) (10.4)	32	10.1
Farming	24 (27.9) (38.1)	12 (14.0) (16.4)	6 (7.0) (9.0)	37 (43.0) (56.9)	7 (8.1) (14.6)	86	27.2
Teaching	5 (17.9) (7.9)	8 (28.6) (11.0)	11 (39.3) (16.4)	2 (7.1) (3.1)	2 (7.1) (4.2)	28	8.9
Businessman	9 (14.5) (14.3)	12 (19.4) (16.4)	4 (6.5) (6.0)	8 (12.9) (12.3)	29 (46.8) (60.4)	62	19.6
Student	2 (33.3) (3.2)	1 (16.7) (1.4)	2 (33.3) (3.0)	1 (16.7) (1.5)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	6	1.9
Clergyman	1 (20.0) (1.6)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2 (40.0) (3.1)	2 (40.0) (4.2)	5	1.6
Civil Servant	10 (14.9) (15.9)	23 (34.3) (31.5)	24 (35.8) (35.8)	7 (10.4) (10.8)	3 (4.5) (6.3)	67	21.2
Total	63 19.9	73 23.1	67 21.2	65 20.6	48 15.2	316	100.0

TABLE VI DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY INCOME

Income in	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
100 or less	1 (1.2) (2.4)	28 (32.6) (65.1)	22 (25.6) (66.7)	21 (24.4) (42.0)	14 (16.3) (32.6)	86	40.8
101-200	6 (16.2) (14.3)	4 (10.8) (9.3)	9 (24.3) (27.3)	7 (18.9) (14.0)	11 (29.7) (25.6)	37	17.5
201-500	8 (19.0) (19.0)	2 (4.8) (4.7)	2 (4.8) (6.1)	15 (35.7) (30.0)	16 (35.7) (34.9)	42	19.9
501	27 (58.7) (64.3)	9 (19.6) (20.9)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	7 (15.2) (14.0)	3 (6.5) (7.0)	46	21.8
Total	42 19.9	43 20.4	33 15.6	50 23.7	43 20.4	211	100.0

TABLE VII DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Sources of Information on H.E. Projects	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Home Agent	57 (19.3) (86.4)	60 (20.3) (75.0)	70 (23.7) (95.9)	64 (21.7) (98.5)	44 (14.9) (93.6)	295	89.1
Member or Household	7 (35.0) (10.6)	8 (40.0) (10.0)	1 (5.0) (1.4)	1 (5.0) (1.5)	3 (15.0) (6.4)	20	6.0
Neighbours/ Friends	2 (14.3) (3.0)	11 (78.6) (13.8)	1 (7.1) (1.4)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	14	4.2
Mass Media	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1 (50.0) (1.3)	1 (50.0) (1.4)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2	0.6
Total	66 19.9	80 24.2	73 22.1	65 19.6	47 14.2	331	100.0

TABLE VIII DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age in Years	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
14 or less	1 (11.1) (1.4)	2 (22.2) (2.5)	5 (55.6) (6.8)	1 (11.1) (1.4)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	9	2.6
15-65	68 (20.4) (98.6)	79 (23.7) (97.5)	68 (20.4) (93.2)	69 (20.7) (98.6)	49 (14.7) (100.0)	333	97.4
Total	69 20.2	81 23.7	73 21.3	70 20.5	49 14.3	342	100.0

TABLE IX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Married	60 (18.6) (87.0)	83 (25.8) (96.5)	73 (22.7) (100.0)	59 (18.3) (86.8)	47 (14.6) (95.9)	322	98.3
Single	9 (69.2) (13.0)	2 (15.4) (2.3)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	2 (15.4) (2.9)	0 (0.0)	13	3.8
Separated/ Divorced or Widowed	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1 (10.0) (1.2)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	7 (70.0) (10.0)	2 (20.0) (4.1)	10	2.9
Total	69 20.0	86 24.9	73 21.2	68 19.7	49 14.2	345	100.0

TABLE X DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social Participation	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Low	22 (16.3) (40.0)	27 (20.0) (73.0)	68 (50.4) (93.2)	11 (8.1) (36.7)	7 (5.2) (100.0)	135	68.8
Medium	26 (49.1) (47.3)	10 (18.9) (27.0)	5 (9.4) (6.8)	12 (22.6) (40.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	53	26.2
High	7 (50.0) (12.7)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	7 (50.0) (23.3)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	14	6.9
Total	55 27.2	37 18.3	73 36.1	30 14.9	7 3.5	202	100.0

TABLE XI DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Religious Beliefs	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Islam	12 (6.1) (17.6)	49 (25.0) (58.3)	65 (33.2) (89.0)	27 (13.8) (38.0)	43 (21.9) (87.8)	196	56.8
Christianity	55 (37.2) (80.9)	35 (23.6) (41.7)	8 (5.4) (11.0)	44 (29.7) (62.0)	6 (4.1) (12.2)	148	42.9
Traditional	1 (100.0) (1.5)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1	0.3
Total	68 19.6	84 24.8	73 21.0	71 20.5	49 14.1	345	100.0

TABLE XII DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF CONTACT WITH HOME AGENTS INSTRUCTORS

Number of contact in year	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
10 times or less	10 (18.9) (14.5)	8 (15.1) (9.3)	25 (47.2) (34.2)	8 (15.1) (11.8)	2 (3.8) (4.1)	53	15.4
11-30 times	59 (20.7) (85.5)	77 (27.0) (89.5)	46 (16.1) (63.0)	57 (20.0) (83.8)	46 (16.1) (93.9)	285	82.6
30+ times	0 (0.0) (0.0)	1 (14.3) (1.2)	2 (28.6) (2.7)	3 (42.8) (4.4)	1 (14.3) (2.0)	7	2.0
Total	69 20.0	86 24.9	73 21.2	68 19.7	49 14.2	345	100.0

TABLE XIII DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HOME AGENT/ INSTRUCTOR IN THE AREA

Knowledge of Agents	States					Total	
	Bn	Kd	Kn	Kw	Ng	No.	%
Yes	60 (18.7) (88.2)	77 (24.0) (92.8)	72 (22.4) (98.6)	63 (19.6) (90.0)	49 (15.3) (100.0)	321	93.6
No	8 (36.4) (11.8)	6 (27.3) (7.2)	1 (4.5) (1.4)	7 (31.8) (10.0)	0 (0.0) (0.0)	22	6.4
Total	68 19.8	83 24.2	73 21.3	70 20.4	49 14.3	343	100.0

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