

The role of women organizations in community development in Delta State

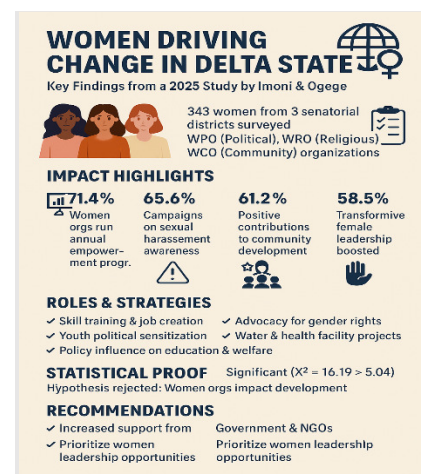
Imoni, Nelson Ejiro and Ogege, S. O.

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.
Corresponding author email: nelson ejiro96@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study highlights the role of women organizations in Delta State Nigeria. The paper argues that Women organizations have played crucial role in community development, they mostly advocate for women's rights and seek for empowerment, and social justice for women. They work at the grassroots level to address issues such as gender inequality, poverty, education, healthcare, and violence against women. Three local government areas were critically selected from the three senatorial district of Delta State with a sample size of 343, respondents. Respondents were women who strategically selected both from political, religious and social women organizations from the State. They were interviewed maintaining a 0.5 level of confidence. Questionnaire was adopted to collect data from respondents from the women organizations in the three selected senatorial district of the state. chi-square was adopted to analyze data acquired and 54.51 to 58.31% of response was achieved the hypothesis of the study which shows that there is no significant relationship between the role played by women organization and community development in Delta State was rejected. The researcher therefor resolve that women organizations can contribute to communities in Delta State. The government via policy makers and NGOs should encourage and support women organizations in various communities in Delta State mostly in activities relating to development.

Keywords: Women, organizations, community, development, Delta State



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INTRODUCTION

Community development involve series of efforts put in place to help community to become more empowered in the arear of human resources that can be optimized so that they can increase in their capacity and ability to take advantage of their potential and economic capacity through self-help activities (Issalillah *et al.*, 2022). In order words, community development is an activity of people living in a particular area or people joined together by a

common interest mainly for the sole purpose of a development agenda (Ohaeghuchi, 2014). Community development can broadly be said to be a process whereby government organizations, voluntary associations or public-private partnership including women organizations to ameliorate adversities in a community's economic, political, social, physical environment and to prevent future adversities (Yidau *et al.*, 2021).

The attainment of community development is not only the responsibility of the government but also of all parties. Strong social organizations can provide added value to people's life. Women organizations in Nigeria over the years have played crucial role in the development of their various communities. They majorly advocate for women's rights and seek for empowerment, and social justice for women. These women organizations work mostly at the grassroots level to help address issues such as gender inequality, poverty, education, healthcare, and violence against women. According to Ajadi *et al.*, 2010, women organizations have impacted greatly towards the achievement of sustainable development, encouraging progress and promoting development which have helped in reducing poverty, aid socialization and strengthen the community's economy. Community development do not only take place in communities where there are organizations that can carry out community development programs. Each citizen can make his own contribution (Darmawan, 2021). This come to play by being directly involved in the economic development activities like the opening a business that will create jobs and improve society economically. All parties can contribute to community development and have their respective roles. This role is irrespective of a person's age, economic strata, gender, religion and culture. Khindula (2011), has it that women involve are noticeable in many stages of community development process beginning from the identification of felt needs to the stage of execution and evaluation of projects. They carry out enlightenment programs for government policies in tracking their members, the value of family childcare and home economics. According to Abogunrin (2003), the fact that women play certain irreplaceable roles in society cannot be disputed, but most times these unique roles are not adequately recognized and sometimes not acknowledged at all.

The issue of equality is maintained and developed for the sake of progress. There is still the presence of gender discrimination both in the developing and developed nations. In Nigeria, Women have different preferential treatment as men. It is observed that Women are left behind or disadvantaged more than their male counterparts. Community development is a series of efforts to help the community to be more empowered in increasing human resources and trying to optimize these resources so that they can increase their capacity and ability to take advantage of their potential while at the same time increasing their economic capacity through self-help activities Ohaegbuchi, M.U. (2014). Women played significant roles within their families and communities. Their roles are important in economic, social and political areas. Women organizations try to influence government policies on matters, such as the franchise for women, taxation of women, educational opportunities for girls and property rights and conditions of service for women which determine the status and roles of women in society. Okwakpam and Eni (2012) in their study, argued that

women have been involved in community development programs since the 19th century. Since 1950, women have contributed greatly to the development of their communities (Moser, 2010); especially in area of anti-poverty approach or reduction of poverty aimed at improving and advancing women's productivity

Women are generally keen and enthusiastic to get involved in programs that will improve their well-being and that of their communities (Akpanam, 2010). Women engage in community building to improve their own lives, those of their families and others living around them. They have created innovative, comprehensive programs to help meet the demands of their communities. They have established themselves as leaders in the community development field and acquired the skills that have brought positive change to their communities (Gittell *et al.*, 1999). Women act as volunteers to work for the development and growth of their various communities. Indeed, they are responsible for development issues of the community (Deekor and Nnodim, 2005). They have created groups or organizations so as to have the capacity to move their communities forward. Women organizations are primarily aimed at helping people within a local community to identify their social needs, they try to find effective ways of meeting these needs as far as their available resources permit. Previous findings into the activities and performance of women organizations has revealed that women did not effectively succeed in empowering others. Government interference in the activities of women especially appointed top women group leaders and the social welfare orientation of these organizations, conspired to make them toothless bulldogs. This is as a result of gender based discrimination against Nigerian women in almost every aspect of life before now remained rampant. Discriminatory laws and practices remained in place on such matters as inheritance, marriage and divorce, custody and maintenance of children, employment related benefits such as housing allowance for married women in public service and maternity leave. Discriminatory practices and punitive action for women and girls who get pregnant while attending government sponsored educational programs, physical, and psychological violence against women and the manipulation of common and customary law to deny women their basic rights. Many of these discriminative practices are cultural in nature, they create barriers to women empowerment and gender equality, thereby placing a clearly greater burden on women. The shrouding different exclusions and deprivations faced by women in cultural and traditional beliefs often deprive them access to information, education and wealth-creating assets, such as land, capital (including credit facilities), labour, and entrepreneurial skills (Aina, 2012). Community development activities are being promoted by these women organizations through the provision of social services like deep wells, sinking of bore holes, creation of bus stops and building of waiting sheds; advancement of economic activities through creation of markets; provision

of health facilities; creation of efficient agricultural sector, leadership development, neighborhood revitalization, job training or education, public policy advocacy, child care, mentoring and community organizing. In the past, women in the local government area are mostly trusted with child bearing and caring. A women's contribution in a community is greatly related to the number of worthy children she has brought up in the community. With the creation of women organization, some of the problems affecting them and their communities are addressed collectively, rather than as individuals. This study therefore looks at the roles of women organizations in community development in Delta State, Nigeria. In Nigeria, it is believed that the government should provide basic necessities like good roads, education, electricity, and markets. But, human needs are endless and cannot be met by the government alone. To address developmental needs, people must form organizations to express their concerns, identify needs, and work towards solutions. Notably, women have made significant strides in community development by forming groups to drive positive change. Hence, this study tends to examine the roles of women organizations in community development in Delta State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this present research is to examine the roles of women organizations in community development in Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine women organizations and the development of communities in Delta State.
- ii. Examine the roles that women organizations play in the development of the communities in Delta State?
- iii. Determine the ways in which women organizations contribute to the development of communities in Delta State.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. How do women organizations lead to the development of the communities in Delta State?
- ii. What roles do women organizations play in respect to development of the communities in Delta State?
- iii. In what ways have women organizations contributed to the development of the communities in Delta State?

Research hypothesis

To explore the research problem, three null hypotheses were formulated and statistically tested at a 5% significance level to guide the investigation.

Ho: There is no significant difference between women

organizations and the development of the communities in Delta State.

H1: There is no significant difference between women organizations and the development of the communities in Delta State.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the role of women organizations and development of the communities in Delta State.

H1: There is no significant difference between the role of women organizations and development of the communities in Delta State.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The researchers' chose to use the survey method for this study. Osuala (2011), cited by Muogbo *et al.*, 2019 states that survey interprets and synthesizes useful data for sound conclusion. Surveys are designed to scientifically describe phenomena and their relationships in the actual environment after a given time. The survey method of study was used by applying both the quantitative and qualitative approaches and paradigm (Creswell, 2003). The design was useful in giving out accurate data on the role of women organizations in community development in Delta State.

Study area

The area of the study for this research is Delta State, Nigeria, and is characterized by its diverse population and vibrant culture. Delta State was created on August 27, 1991, during the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. It was carved out of the former Bendel State, which was itself created in 1963 and comprised the old Western and Midwestern regions. Delta State presently has 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs), and the state capital is Asaba. Besides Asaba, other important towns in the state include the commercial city of Warri, Sapele, Ughelli, Oghara, Agbor, Koko, Ogwashi-ukwu, Burutu, Ozoro and Okpanam.

Population of the study

A sample size of 343 respondents were strategically selected for this study from the population of 2400 women that make up the entire members of different notable women organizations in the three senatorial districts of Delta States which includes Delta Central consisting of Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Udu, Okpe, Sapele, Ughelli Norths, Ughelli South and Uvwie local government areas. The second senatorial district (Delta North) consist of Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Ika North-East, Ika South, Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West, Oshimili North, Oshimili

Table 1: Specification for the distribution of questionnaire.

Senatorial Districts	Local Government Areas	Categories of women organizations	Sample Size	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
Delta Central	Ethiope East	WPO	31	122	36%
	Sapele	WRO	35		
	Ughelli South	WCO	56		
Delta South	Isoko North	WPO	28	114	33%
	Warri South	WRO	39		
	Patani	WCO	47		
Delta North	Ika South	WPO	21	107	31%
	Ukwuani	WRO	29		
	Aniocha North	WCO	57		
Total				343	100%

Key: WPO = Women Political Organizations

WRO = Women Religious Organizations

WCO = Women Community Organizations

Source: Researchers survey, 2024.

South and Ukwuani local government areas while the third senatorial district is Delta South which is made up of Bomadi, Burutu, Isoko North, Isoko South, Patani, Warri North, Warri South and Warri South West local government areas. To attain equitable result and the effective distribution of questionnaires to each district for this study, three local government areas from each senatorial districts were selected (Table 1).

Sample and sampling technique

From the total population of 2400 women that make up the entire members of different notable women organizations in the three selected districts of Delta State. Three-hundred and forty-three (343) women were selected randomly from three local government areas of the three senatorial districts; which comprises of women from Women Political Organizations (WPO), Women Religious Organizations (WRO) and Women Community Organizations (WCO) in Delta Central, Delta North and Delta South respectively, as presented in (Table 1). The sampling techniques was done using Taro Yamane's by which most members of the organizations were identified and then grouped according to their senatorial district. Yaro Yamane's formula: $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$ (1)

5% level of significance.

Total population = 2400;

Therefore, $n = 2400$, $e = 5/100 = 0.05$

$e = (0.05)^2 = 0.0025$

Therefore: $= 2400 / 1 + 2400(0.0025)$

$= 2400 / 7$

$n = 342.8571 = 343$

Research instrument

The research instrument used is questionnaire, which consists of two sections; section A and B. Section A: calls

for personal information or bio-data about the respondents e.g. sex, marital status and educational background. Section B: contains questions and the respondents are expected to tick (✓) on the optional answers that they agree with in line with research questions raised in chapter one.

Validation and reliability of instrument

The researcher adopted face and content validity of respondents. Comments and observations and necessary corrections were effected. The test re-test reliability approach was adopted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. In this regard, the instrument was administered twice, on a group of 20 respondents who were not part of the study sample their responses were collected and correlated using the Pearson product moment correlation statistics to obtain the coefficient index.

Administration and collection of data

The direct delivery method of administration was introduced for the questionnaires to the respondents. Before administration, the researchers seek the permission of the women organizations before administering the questionnaire to the respondents. The researchers collected some of the questionnaires on the spot while others were collected after a few days. This was made possible with the assistance of few leaders of the women organizations who also helped in the collection of the questionnaires back to the researchers. The researcher also engaged the respondents in an in-depth interview and group discussion for data collection.

Method of data analysis

Data gathered from the study were analyzed using Chi-

Table 2: Women organizations encourages the growth and development of communities in Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	187	54.51
Agree	86	25.07
Undecided	31	9.04
Disagree	19	5.54
Strongly Disagree	20	5.83
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 3: Women organization contributes to the positive development of the communities in Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	210	61.22
Agree	77	22.45
Undecided	25	7.29
Disagree	19	5.54
Strongly Disagree	12	3.50
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 4: Women organization will foster communities' development in Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	200	58.31
Agree	100	29.15
Undecided	22	6.41
Disagree	12	3.50
Strongly Disagree	9	2.62
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

square for the testing of hypotheses. Chi-square

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \quad (2)$$

Where:

fo = Frequency observed.

fe = Frequency expected.

Σ = Summation sign

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1: How does women organization lead to the development of the communities in Delta State?

From the (Table 2), 54.52% respondents agreed that women organizations can lead to community development. 25.07% rated their acceptance level while those who were undecided in their view had 3.79% of the respondents. Also, 5.54% of the respondents disagreed while 5.58% strongly disagreed. Therefore, with 54.52% of the respondents holding the view that women organizations lead to the development of communities in Delta State, we could strongly say that responses from the respondents are liable as they come largely from people with idea of the subject matter.

From the (Table 3), it was evident that 61.22% respondents strongly agreed that women organizations contribute to the positive development of the communities in Delta State. Also, 22.45% of the respondents agreed with such assertion. Only 7.29% of the respondents were undecided. However, about 5.54% and 3.50% respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on the assertion. This indicates higher number of respondents accepted that women organizations contribute to the positive development of the communities in Delta State.

The data in the (Table 4), showed that 58.31% of the respondents' samples were of the view that women organizations will foster communities' development in Delta State. 29.15% agreed. 6.41% respondents were undecided, 3.50% and 2.62% respondents chose to disagree and strongly disagree. This therefore, indicates that women organization will foster communities' development in Delta State.

Question 2: What role do women organizations play in the development of the communities in Delta State?

Table 5 shows that 53.06% of the respondents' samples strongly agreed that women organizations hold seminars and create awareness on child abuse in Delta State.

Table 5: Women organizations creates awareness and holds seminars on child abuse in the communities of Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	182	53.06
Agree	132	38.48
Undecided	11	3.21
Disagree	10	2.92
Strongly Disagree	8	2.33
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 6: Women organizations advocates for women rights in the communities of Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	218	63.56
Agree	84	24.49
Undecided	16	4.66
Disagree	14	4.08
Strongly Disagree	11	3.21
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 7: Women organizations campaigns on female sexual harassment in higher educational institutions in the communities of Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	225	65.60
Agree	71	20.70
Undecided	26	7.58
Disagree	18	5.25
Strongly Disagree	3	0.87
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

38.48% agreed, 3.21% respondents were undecided, 2.92% and 2.33% respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This therefore, indicates that women organizations creates awareness and hold seminars on child abuse in the communities of Delta State.

From (Table 6), 63.56% of the respondents agreed that women organizations advocate for women's rights in communities in Delta State. A good number of respondents agreed having 24.49% but 4.66% undecided. 4.08% disagreed and 3.21% strongly disagreed. Therefore, with about 88.05% of the respondents were of the view that women organization advocate women's rights in communities of Delta State. From the responses of (Table 7), it was clear that 65.60% of the respondents rated the use of campaigns on female sexual harassment by women organizations in higher institutions in Delta State. 20.70% agreed to this assertion but 7.58% chose to remain undecided. 5.25% disagreed and 0.87% strongly disagreed.

Question 3: In what ways have women organizations contributed to the development of the communities in Delta State?

From the (Table 8), 56.27% agreed and 20.41% strongly agreed respectively that women organizations encourage the female youths to become leaders in political affairs. Only 6.41% and 6.71% disagreed and strongly disagreed

to this report. Table 9, shows that 71.43% which is the highest score of the respondents strong agreed to the opinion that women organization in communities of Delta State runs empowerment programs annually. The data in the (Table 10) showed that 59.48% of the respondents samples were of the view that women organization primary aim is the transforming of women in Delta State yearly, in other to make them more effective in their society. 23.03% agreed to this assertion and 3.80% were undecided. 6.12% disagreed to this statement and 7.58% respondents strongly disagreed. However, the higher percentage report prove that women organizations contributes to the development of communities in Delta State through their transformation programs.

Degree of Freedom

$$Df = (C - 1)(R - 1) \\ (5 - 1)(3 - 1) \\ 4 \times 2 = 8$$

Df = 8 @ 5% level of significance

Df = 8, 0.05 = 5.041

Decision Rule

Since the calculated value (test statistics) $X^2 = 16.19$ is greater than the critical table value of 5.041, therefore we reject H_0 , which state that there is no significant difference

Table 8: The women organizations encourages the youth on the importance of female leaders in today politics.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	193	56.27
Agree	70	20.41
Undecided	21	6.12
Disagree	22	6.41
Strongly Disagree	23	6.71
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 9: Women organizations currently runs various women empowering and community development products that are recursive every year in Delta State.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	245	71.43
Agree	65	18.95
Undecided	6	1.75
Disagree	15	4.37
Strongly Disagree	12	3.50
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 10: Women organizations primary aim is transforming women in Delta State by providing them with the knowledge and tools they need to take their rightful place in society.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	204	59.48
Agree	79	23.03
Undecided	13	3.80
Disagree	21	6.12
Strongly Disagree	26	7.58
Total	343	100

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

Table 11: Test Statistics

O _i	E _i	(O _i -E _i)	(O _i -E _i) ²	(O _i -E _i) ² /E _i
187	199	12	144.00	0.72
210	199	-11	121.00	0.61
200	199	-1	1.00	0.01
86	87.67	1.67	2.79	0.03
77	87.67	10.67	113.85	1.30
100	87.67	-12.33	152.03	1.73
31	26	-5	25.00	0.96
25	26	1	1.00	0.04
22	26	4	16.00	0.62
19	16.67	-2.33	5.43	0.33
19	16.67	-2.33	5.43	0.33
12	16.67	4.67	21.81	1.31
20	13.67	-6.33	40.07	2.93
12	13.67	1.67	2.79	0.20
22	13.67	-8.33	69.39	5.08
Total				$\chi^2 = 16.19$

between the role of women organization and development of the communities in Delta State (Table 11).

Women's participation in community development programs have been identified to take different forms, more often than not, women mobilize for community development works on the basis of membership of community development, associations and rarely on individual basis. The findings on research question one: How women organizations can lead to community

development in Delta State revealed that women organizations involve positively in community need identification activities among the communities to a high extent. This report is in collaboration with Ajayi and Ogunjuyigbe, (2012) who observed that women serve as catalyst for positive change particularly in rural areas. Women play crucial roles during community development initiatives: promoting education, healthcare and economic empowerment mostly at the grassroots level. The analysis shows that the respondents accepted that women

organizations participate in brainstorming sessions on better quality of lives of people. It was observed in the Table 4.5 that 54.51% of the respondents also accepted that women organizations encourage the growth and development of communities. This fact is reflected in Table 4.6 where 61.22% strongly agreed that women organizations contribute to positive development of communities in Delta State. The result of this study is in an accordance with the earlier report of Nwosu *et al.*, 2017 who carried out a study in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, primarily assessed women's participation in rural community development projects. Their result showed that a high percentage, (60.83%) of rural development projects embarked on by women was mainly in the area of water supply while 3.33% of the projects embarked on by women were in the area of road maintenance and construction. The result further revealed that there was high level of women's participation at the planning stage of the rural development projects with a grand mean score of 3.36. The responses of the respondents to research question two (2) in the study shows that with higher percentages of 53.06%, 63.56% and 65.60% of the respondents strongly agreed on the roles played by women organization on community development in Delta State, as depicted in Tables 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 respectively. The study is in line with the report of Odurukwe *et al.*, 2007 who examined the role of women organization in the development of rural community in Orlu Agricultural zone of Imo State. Their results show that women organizations/associations for the purpose of community development in the study area are formed at different levels (community, village, and kindred) and among different ties (religious, family and social). There was a remarkable high involvement rate of women organizations in the provision of infrastructural amenities as renovation/furnishing of town halls (80%), renovation of village schools (81.7%), Churches (82.5%), and provision of communal environmental sanitation services (88.3%). Other development programs include those aimed at economic and educational empowerment of women and community youths such as: provision of grants/loans for enterprise development of women (81.7%), award of scholarships to children of the community (77.5%), and awareness creation on HIV/AIDS (94.2%). Family health and child care programs (81.7%) and other general health matters (60.0%). Hence women organizations in the rural communities should be encouraged by way of adequate recognition, training and funding by the state and local government authorities.

The data obtained from the respondents to research question three (3) in this study indicates that with higher percentages of 56.27%, 71.43% and 59.48% of the respondent's samples strongly agreed on the ways women organization contributes to the development of the communities in Delta State. This present study is in agreement with Attamah *et al.*, (2020), who in their study ascertained the involvement of women in rural community development (RCD) in Enugu North senatorial zone,

Enugu State, Nigeria. Their findings reveal that agricultural related projects (96.7 %), social projects (91.7 %), educational projects (81.7 %) and health projects (81.7%) were areas of RCD women were involved in. A more conducive environment such as the provision of soft loans and jobs should be created by government authorities to sustain women's motivation and encourage them to delve into other areas of rural community development like Information and Communication Technologies that their presence is not so pronounced (Attamah *et al.*, 2020).

Conclusion

The findings of the study established that women organizations play active roles in community development activities in Delta State, Nigeria. The null hypotheses show there is no significant difference in the mean responses regarding the contributions of women organization in community development activities Delta State, Nigeria, hence the hypotheses were rejected.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. The governments should give policies that will encourage women organizations. N.G.Os and the likes should give support and adequate funding to women organizations that are involved in community development activities in Delta State.
2. Women organizations should be sensitized on the need to carryout developmental programs in Delta State.
3. The government should provide opportunities for women to join in the leadership positions so they will effectively contribute to the development of their various communities in Delta State.

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