

The position of youths and women participation in community-based self-help projects and policy implications for community development in Nasarawa state

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ABSTRACT:

The ever-growing and dwindling resources at the disposal of African Governments, particularly Nigeria in providing or addressing the basic needs of citizens gave rise to the heightened glamour for private sector involvement in public services delivery. This is the logic behind the recognition of community efforts in promoting self-help projects and the formation of Community Development Groups and Associations (CDGs/As) as vehicle for the initiation and execution of community-based development projects. This paper reports the findings of a study carried out on the contributions of these private community-based initiatives in Nasarawa State at the micro level with focus on the mechanism of member-participation within the CDGs with particular reference to the level of youth and women involvement in community development in the state. The inquiries for the research involved two aspects of data-primary and secondary. The former involved field work, while the latter concerned and relied on review of official records. One hundred percent (100%) of membership lists was systematically drawn from a collection of alphabetically arranged row of CDGs from three designated Community Development Project Zones where each centrally occurring group was picked. A total of 125 respondents (45, 20, and 60 respectively), including group officials were found expedient for the research. One interview schedule of questionnaires and one informants' interview formed the data acquisition instruments, in addition to audio-visual and focus-group discussion. Data was analyzed and presented using simple descriptive statistical techniques. Results obtained showed dismal ratios of 19%, 29%; 10%, 0% and 28%, 22% respectively, in Youth and Women participation in the groups studied, with values varying distinctively between urban and rural communities. The findings indicate facts concerning the performance and outcome of member-participation in self-help project planning in Nasarawa State and by implication, their role in rendering their quota in collaboration with government in community development. The study recommends that policy attention at strengthening member-participation in community-based self-help projects should focus on the teeming youths and women population by improving their educational or literacy level to arouse their awareness on the need for participation.

Keywords:

Youths, women participation, self-help, community development groups, project zones.