

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH KWARA PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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I. Introduction

People's participation constitutes a key factor to the success of any local development process and can be widely seen as necessary condition for any meaningful rural development effort. It is one of the most important determinants of effective achievement of rural development goals.

In the context of rural development, people's participation deals with how to bring about some meaningful involvement in the rural sector on the part of those who depend on this sector for livelihood (Oakley and Marsden, 1984); it includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programs, as well as in their sharing in the benefits of development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs (Lisk, 1981).

The level of people's participation in rural development programs may be a product of some factors that are personal, sociodemographic, economic, psychological and communication, in nature.⁽¹⁾

This paper primarily focuses on important factors which have been found to be significantly associated with the participation of Kwara people in the local government rural development projects (LGRDP) of their communities during the period 1988.

II. People's Participation in Local Government Projects

The local governments in Kwara State of Nigeria were designed to fully utilize and motivate the people at the local level; and to ensure

popular participation by encouraging the nation's talents to be actively involved in the development of their localities.

These governments at the grassroots level determine and implement community development projects to complement the activities of the State and Federal Governments in their areas.⁽²⁾ They are to ensure that local initiatives and response to local needs and conditions are maximized through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions.

Since action at the local (grassroots) level is very crucial to the success of Nigeria rural development, the active involvement of the rural people to participate in the planning and implementation stages of development is fundamental to the whole concept of rural development of the country (Olatunbosun, 1977).

III. Kwara State: Administrative Set-up and People

Kwara State is one of the twenty-one States that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fig. 1). It stretches from Kogi Local Government in the eastern part of the State to Borgu Local Government in the north-west and shares boundaries with Oyo, Ondo, Bendel, Plateau, Benue and Niger States, and the Republic of Binin in the western part of Borgu Local Government. The Niger river creates a natural boundary in most of the northern and eastern parts of the State.

As a result of the local government reforms introduced in 1976, Kwara State is divided into twelve administrative units or Local Governments, namely: Asa, Borgu, Edu, Ifelodun, Ilorin, Irepodun, Kogi, Moro, Okehi, Okene, Oyi, and Oyun.

The total area of the State is 66,869 square kilometers with a population of 2.5 million people (MRDWR/CD, 1986).

In spite of the heterogeneity of its population, the people of Kwara State work as a team with one destiny and every community embarks on self-help projects to supplement the Government's state-wide development efforts.

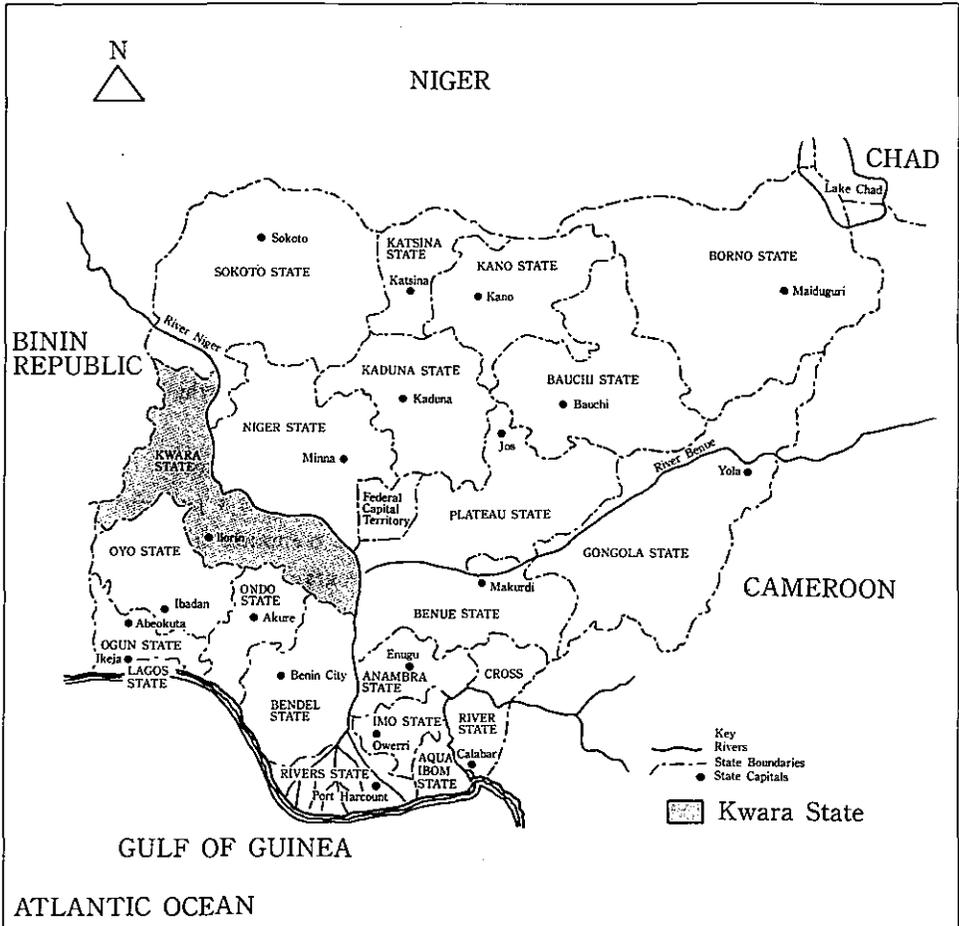


Figure 1. Map of Federal Republic of Nigeria
(Showing the location of Kwara State)

IV. The Data

One set of interview schedule prepared by the author was used to gather information (relevant for this study) from 480 residents in 48 purposively selected villages of the 12 Local Government Areas (LGA) in Kwara State, Nigeria. The criteria for the purposive selection were those villages that are easily accessible to transportation, and had undertaken or implemented LGRDP in 1988.

In order to determine the appropriateness, applicability and clarity of the questions and statements, the instrument was pretested involving 25 respondents outside the study sample areas. Thereafter, the instrument was revised.

The interview was conducted in the five major local languages or dialects namely, Bariba, Hausa, Igbirra, Nupe and Yoruba, which are commonly spoken by the residents.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the association between the independent variables and people's participation. The statistical analysis was done through the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

V. Discussion and Summary of Results

This section discusses the results obtained from the research data of this study.

The findings in Table 1 show correlations of some important social and psychological characteristics of Kwara people with their participation in local government rural development projects (LGRDP).

The negative correlation of marital status with Kwara people's participation in LGRDP indicates that the married residents had lesser participation than those who were unmarried. This was because they had no spare time to participate due to their families and nursing children that they had to take care of, in addition to their daily livelihood work activities (Olsen, 1968; Arocena, 1986).

Organization or social group affiliation has a significant relationship with Kwara people's involvement in LGRDP. This implies that one of the effective channels for Kwara people's participation in their

communities' development projects is their community based organizations.⁽³⁾ Table 1 shows also that the longer the Kwara people had resided in their villages, the more likely they participated in LGRDP undertaken there; implying that the people must have become very much aware of their villages' pressing needs. Consequently, they appreciated and embraced the LGRDP being undertaken in their villages.

Table 1. Correlations of Social and Psychological Characteristics with People's Participation in LGRDP (1988)

Independent Variables	People's Participation (corr. coeff. value)
(1) Social Characteristics:	
Marital Status	-.13**
Membership in Organization	.23**
Length of Residence	.11*
Attendance of Seminars and Training Programs	.32**
(2) Psychological Characteristics:	
Derivation of Benefits or Rewards from LGRDP	.13**
Expectation of Benefits or Rewards from Future LGRDP	.28**
Encountered Pleasant Experiences	.35**
Encountered Unpleasant Experiences	-.17**

** significant at .01 level.

* significant at .05 level.

The residents' attendance in seminars and training programs had a significant relationship with their participation in LGRDP; such attendance had widened the participants' horizon regarding the projects (Gordon, 1963). The need to stimulate people to respond to and participate in rural community development programs demands

replacement of traditional unfunctional skills with better and unsophisticated appropriate technology. Such technology must continuously be provided through seminars, trainings and other similar process.

The deriving of benefits from the LGRDP undertaken in their villages, as well as the ones they expected to derive in future similar projects, had significant relationship with Kwara people's participation in such projects. Benefits or rewards are therefore important in motivating Kwara village residents to participate in LGRDP. Moreover, when the people anticipate some economic, moral, personal, and social benefits from LGRDP and similar development tasks, they will perceive such activities as worthwhile to participate in.⁽⁴⁾

Generally speaking, Kwara people who encountered pleasant experiences during their participation in LGRDP of 1988 participated more actively. Conversely, those who encountered more unpleasant experiences participated less. These indicate that pleasant experiences motivated the people to be actively involved in LGRDP, while unpleasant experiences poured cold water on their zeal and may have contributed to their negative participation in that wise.

The results of the association of Kwara people's participation in LGRDP with their communication and peer stimulation characteristics are presented in Table 2.

In general, contacts, and the discussion of matters related to their village improvements and development, with village officials⁽⁵⁾ as well as encouragement and persuasions from these officials contributed to the motivation of the residents' participation in LGRDP. This implies that effective communication and dissemination of relevant information through frequent discussion of village development matters, coupled with encouragement and stimulation from the village officials spurred residents' active involvement in LGRDP.⁽⁶⁾ In like manner, residents who were encouraged by their kins and friends (namely: wife, children, parents, other relatives and peer-friends) were motivated to take active part in the LGRDP.

Table 2. Correlation of Communication and Peer Stimulation Characteristics with People's Participation in LGRDP (1988)

Independent Variables	People's Participation (corr. coeff. value)
(3) Communication-Peer Stimulation:	
Contact with Village Officials	.22**
Discussion of RD-related Matters with Village Officials	.26**
Encouragement from Village Officials	.21**
Encouragement from Kins and Friends	.20**
Regularly Attended Village Meetings	.20**

** significant at .01 level.

The data in Table 2 reveals that Kwara residents who regularly attended village meetings that discussed village development and welfare matters, tended to be more interested and actively involved in LGRDP of their villages. This means that being physically present regularly in village meetings increased the opportunity for social interaction among the residents; it indicates that they possessed substantial interest in or identification with their village development and progress. It was noted that the Kwara village residents were not actively involved in projects which they considered irrelevant to meeting their basic needs; they participated in only those projects acceptable to them, probably based on the important beneficial contributions directly or indirectly offered by these projects.

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Notes

- (1) The significance of these factors in relation to people's active involvement in community development projects and programs were reported in various dimensions. See Reeder (1963); Hsieh (1966); Olsen (1968); Guthrie (1971);

Anderson (1973, 1976); Hansen (1974); Lassen (1980); Pradhan (1980); Valera (1983); Arocena (1986); Awotunde (1989).

- (2) It is worth noting, however, that in most parts (especially the rural areas) of Kwara State, the residents usually on their own initiatives embark on self-help community development projects. In this kind of endeavor, the people usually launch such self-help projects in fund raising activities. In addition, they would levy themselves and absentee properous and rich sons and daughters of the community for this purpose.
- (3) One of the most common techniques employed by local governments in maximizing participation in the rural areas is to create formal organizations and to work closely with them in order to achieve development objectives. See also Slocum (1962); Lassen (1980).
- (4) Blau (1964) and Homans (1974) emphasized the rational way in which people assess what they are likely to get in exchange for their efforts. Blau argues that human beings are motivated to gain rewards (Barnett, 1988); Homans in his own part argues that self interest is the universal motive behind the way people behave. Both authors believe that people tend to do things for rewards. In the context of this paper, it implies that when Kwara village residents make decisions about what projects or programs to participate in, their estimates of the probable benefits or rewards are among the things they take into account.
- (5) In the context of this paper, "village officials" is a collective term referring to the village heads, the local government council officials, and change agents (such as Agricultural Extension Agents, Community Health Inspectors, Community Development Field Staff, etc.). Communication contacts between these officials and the village residents were usually through meetings organized by the officials.
- (6) See also Patel (1967), who indicated that people usually respond to change after a sound exposure to an idea that explains the importance of the values of the change.

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地方自治体による農村開発プロジェクトへの クワラ住民の参加

〈要 約〉

ヨーゼフ M. アウォトゥンデ

ナイジェリア・クワラ地方の農村コミュニティは、従来自助的コミュニティ開発プロジェクトに着手してきたが、1988年の自治体主導型の農村開発プロジェクトについては、住民も積極的に参加した。

本研究では、このプロジェクトへの住民参加を説明する要因について考察し、次の諸要因が関連していることを明らかにした。

(1) 社会的特性に関する要因：

配偶者関係，社会組織体のメンバーシップ，居住年数，開発関連のセミナーや訓練プログラムへの参加

(2) 心理学的な特性に関する要因：

プロジェクトから得られる利益または利益があることへの期待，過去の経験の良悪

(3) コミュニケーション・仲間からの刺激に関する要因：

村官吏とのコミュニケーション，農村開発に関しての村官吏との討論の有無，村官吏・親族・友人からの奨励，村会合への参加状況