

# Contribution of Youths towards Rural Development Through Community Development Activities in Tsafe LGA Zamfara State Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the contribution of youth towards rural development through community development activities in Tsafe local government, Zamfara state. Ninety (90) youths were randomly selected from the three (3) purposively selected villages in the study area. Results revealed that majority of the respondents were male (90%), within the active age of 21-30 (63.3%), married (82.2%), engaged in farming (71.1%) and obtained Qur'anic education (66.6%). Multiple number of various community development activities were found to be engaged in by the youth with majority involved in rehabilitation (24.6%) and minority in construction of culvert (15.6%). It was concluded that youths in the study area are engaged in worthwhile rural community development activities that aimed at improving their living standard. Thus, it was recommended that efforts of the youths be celebrated to avoid their mask by modern external interventions that mostly begin with what is needed by the rural people instead of their felt needs, and encourage further involvement in self-help initiatives through awareness campaigns.

**Keywords:** Youths, Rural development, Community development

## 1.0 Introduction

The present day global trend in rural development centres on bottom-top approach that aims at tackling the felt needs before what is needed by the rural populace. In addition, it also focuses on making people get involved in the development process and work-out certain favourable initiatives that better their lives, not relying at the mercy of external intervention. It is believed that synergy of efforts between natives and development agencies/partners yields better results than either individually. Christenson *et al*, (1989) refer community development as ongoing economic, social and environmental improvement - sustaining a desirable environment; having a vital social system that fosters collaboration, equity and freedom; and a vital economy that is diverse, competitive and accessible. They comprehensively spread across community development to cover economy, environment and social well-being of a people in continuous collaborative way within a social system.

Cavaye (2001) opined that in the contemporary world, development of rural communities depends on several interdependent ingredients: First, adequate infrastructure needed to support economic activity and community life. Second, a healthy economy that depends in part on new business starts, access to venture capital, improving the efficiency of existing firms or the establishment of new industries or enterprises. Third, policy settings that help position rural and regional areas in an economically competitive, socially just, and environmentally responsible position. Fourth, the delivery of services in rural communities that allows the local economy and social system to function, sustain employment, population and quality of life in rural areas. However, he primarily concluded that rural community development fundamentally involves a process - a series of actions and decisions that improves the situation of a community, not just economically, but also as a strong functioning community in itself. It is through action, participation and contact that the community becomes more vital, more able to manage change with stronger networks, organisational ability, skills, leadership and passion. Action and participation in the sense refer to people making self-help efforts that serve as encouragements to and built upon by external interventions. It basically transcends to internally motivated programmes/activities carried out for the purpose of improving living condition and livelihood standard. Rural community development is aided by rallying resources within reach by the local people in order to address their demands.

Youth are the backbone of any nation's survival. They constitute the most vibrant component of the society and are the leaders of tomorrow. In rural communities, the activities of youth determine the viability and future of the populace. In fact, bulk of decisions that have to do with protection of image and self-help efforts lie in their hands. Olujide (2008) opined that youth constitute the major resource base for any country that want to embark on any meaningful rural development projects.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, despite many rural community development activities carried out day-to-day by the development agencies, evidences have revealed the inability of the programmes/projects to foster genuine continuous local action. Not only that, but respective communities' rural community development efforts have been masked by externally-driven plans, strategies and projects to the extent that most of the time local initiatives are not

recognised, thus decrease in youths agility towards self development initiatives, retrogression in positive motive and drain of labour force to urban areas. It is against the commonality of this nationwide, especially northern Nigeria that this study was primarily embarked upon.

Hence, the study was aimed at the following:

- 1) describing the socioeconomic characteristics of youths in the study area;
- 2) identifying various rural community development activities carried-out by youths in study area; and
- 3) determining the problems affecting the youths in rural community development activities

## 2.0 Methodology

Tsafe local government area is one of the fourteen (14) local government areas of Zamfara state in the north west geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Its headquarters is located in Tsafe town. The area is geographically lies between Latitude 11° 56' 00" North and Longitude 6° 54' 00" East. It covers an area of 1,698 square kilometers and a population of 266,008 according to the 2006 figures of population census. The climate of the area is warm tropical with temperature rising up to 38°C (100.4 °F) between March to May. Rainy season starts in late May to September while the cold season known as Harmattan lasts from December to February. The vegetation of the area is characterised by northern guinea savannah. Agriculture is the most important occupation of the people in the area followed by trading.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select three (3) villages that were known to have youths engaged in worthwhile rural community development activities. The villages were Chediya, Rugar Na Ali and Sungawa. Thirty (30) respondents were randomly chosen out of the youths engaged in community development activities and discussed with using interview schedule.

Data generated were subjected to analysis and presented in descriptive statistical form of frequency and percentage.

## 3.0 Results and discussion

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents based socioeconomic characteristics**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	81	90
Female	09	10
Age (years)		
≤20	12	13.3
21-30	57	63.3
30-40	21	23.3
Marital status		
Single	16	17.7
Married	74	82.2
Occupation		
Farming	64	71.1
Trading	16	17.7
Handiwork	07	7.7
Civil service	03	3.3
Educational Attainment		
Qur'anic education	60	66.6
Primary Certificate	14	15.5
Secondary Certificate	10	11.1
Tertiary education	6	6.6

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

Table 1 shows that most (90%) of the respondents were male, while female were 10 percent. This implies the dominance of male in rural community development activities, nevertheless, women were found to be the dominant contributors at the home front due to the cultural peculiarities in the study area where women were known to shoulder the bulk of responsibilities at home including apprenticeship in non-farm and processing activities. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (63.3%) were within the active age of 21-30, married (82.2%), engaged in farming (71.1%) and obtained Qur'anic education (66.6%). Concentration of the respondents in the active youthful age further confirmed Olukosi (2000) who stressed that the concentration of the youthful age makes the group a good target for fostering development in a community or a country.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on rural community development activities**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Construction of earthen dam	86	23.5
Construction of road	66	18.0
Construction of culvert	57	15.6
Construction of well	67	18.3
Rehabilitation	90	24.6

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

\*Multiple responses

Table 2 presents that all the respondents were engaged in more than one rural community development activity. Majority (95.5%) were engaged in construction of earthen dam, while the least engaged activity was construction of culvert (15.6%). This could imply that because of the indispensability of water and majority were farmers (as shown on table 1) then much value is attached to source of water for farming and other domestic uses. The general implication is that the respondents had got involve in a wide range of activities aimed at changing their condition and bettering their standards through local action. The findings are also in line with what was put forward by Jibowo and Sotomi (1999) that aside provision of farm labour, youth mobilise for community development in terms work force and mobilisation exercises.

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on problems affecting them as regards rural community development activities**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate funds	23	25.5
Illiteracy	25	27.7
Poor support	10	11.1
Inaccessibility to materials	13	14.4
Lack of motivation	19	21.1

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

Table 3 reveals that the pulse of the respondents towards activities that better their respective rural communities was being impeded in the decreasing order of illiteracy (27.7%), inadequate funds (25.5%), lack of motivation (21.1%), inaccessibility to materials (14.4%) and poor support (11.1%). Multiple engagement in rural community development activities presented on table 2 implies that the rural youth were ready to initiate developmental actions, but retarded from attainment of satisfactory level of delivery by the aforementioned problems. Attahiru *et al.* (2014) reported that rural people are ready to initiate community development projects and derive its benefits, but hindered from full satisfaction by certain problems. As a consequence of lack of motivation it was observed by Njoku (1999) that youth are generally trendy and full of life thus, find it difficult to adapt to dull and drab existence in rural areas.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

Youths in the study area are engaged in worthwhile rural community development activities that aimed at bettering the living standard of their respective communities. However, they are hampered by certain problems aside the little or none recognition of their local efforts by the government and donor agencies.

#### 5.0 Recommendations

- 1) External interventions whether domestic or international should intensify on the local actions of rural youths by beginning with celebrating their efforts before embarking on what is needed by them.
- 2) Impediments to the full performance of youths in rural community development activities should be given priority so as to motivate their better performance.

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### **Biography of the First Author**

I am a Nigerian with a passion for rural community development through education and self-help efforts. I was born into the family that was headed by a career civil servant who believed in sharing his belongings with have not, and had always strive to see people out of difficulty till his demise. My academic career began at the age of five starting from pre-primary, upon completion of primary school in 1996 I got admitted into prestigious Nagari college Birnin-Kebbi, Nigeria for my O'levels. In 2003 I enrolled for bachelors degree in Agriculture (B. Agric.) at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria and graduated with second class honours upper division in 2007. Currently, I am working with Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto as a lecturer and had bag M.Sc. Agricultural Extension from University of Ilorin, Nigeria in 2015.

My interest has always been to guide/couch the upcoming potentials and also get involved deeply in bringing to limelight the problems of my immediate community through research for action by themselves and either responsible and/or donor agency. Publication of literature to add to the existing knowledge and consultancy in rural development (Community Driven Development) form part of my activities.

I am currently a member and Northwest Nigeria coordinator of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria.