

Motivational Factors influencing women participation in community development project in urban Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the motivational factors influencing women participation in urban Nigeria. Considering intrinsic and extrinsic, this study identify how social, economic and cultural factor affect participations among women. The research design used in the study is descriptive survey research design. The participants were chosen using a multi-stage sampling method. First, purposive sampling was used to select specific urban communities within Ibadan that have active community development projects. A sample size of 150 women were selected using a quantitative survey and 30 women were selected purposively on a small scale to provide rich qualitative observations in the form of a demographic survey. The structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool and in-depth interviews as complementary tool. The study found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors determine the participation of urban women in Nigerian. The study recommended among others that community development organisations, NGOs and governmental agencies should promote programmes that enhance women accessibility to loans, skill-based training and other income generating opportunities. Socio-economic factor is highly correlated to women participation in community development project. Therefore, the findings of this research provide insight for both practice and policy to enhance inclusive urban development.

1.0 Introduction

Community development constitutes a participatory process through which community members collaborate to formulate collective responses to shared problems. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and 11 aim at facilitating gender equality, women empowerment and making the cities and human settlement safe, inclusive and resilience and sustainable and this orientation follows the same aim [1]. In Nigeria (as in most other developing scenarios) community development projects are significant in addressing such intricate socio-economic problems to a society such as poverty, bad infrastructure and availability of a range of services. Members of the community determine the sustainability and the efficiency of such businesses. Women play a crucial role in community development since they form a large portion of the population and in most cases, they feel the negative pressure, which accompanies development [2]. Their unique world views, indigenous knowledge and strong social networks make them of invaluable importance in terms of sensing community needs, mustering of resources and executions of development projects. Nevertheless, despite their considerable potential, women's participation in community development projects is frequently limited by a range of factors that include socio-cultural norms, economic disempowerment, and restricted access to education and decision-making platforms [3].

The present study concentrates on urban residents in Nigeria, wherein rapid urbanization introduces both opportunities and challenges for community development. These dynamics require the study of the motivational factors and challenges that define the participation of women in community development.

The benefits of urban contexts, from the perspective of availability of resources and information are rather substantial, however, the downsides are also overwhelming, namely, urban overcrowding, unemployment, social fragmentation, and so on, all of which has the propensity to undermine the notion of community cohesion and a low level of participation. An in-depth understanding of the exact set of motivating factors that encourages the urban women to participate in the developmental efforts in their society, as well as the hurdles they face would be essential in coming up with effective interventions and public policies that would appreciate their participation in the developmental efforts of the society they live in.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the widely acknowledged significance of women's participation in community development, their actual engagement, particularly within urban areas of Nigeria, remains insufficient due to socio-cultural, economic, institutional and social barriers which include patriarchal systems, limited access to financial resources, high household chores, and low education level among others that contribute to the hampering of active participation of women [4]. Although research has begun to examine women's involvement in community development in Nigeria, there is a persistent need for a more nuanced investigation of the motivational factors that prompt urban women to surmount these impediments and contribute to community projects. It is imperative to analysis the factors that inhibit or propel the active involvement of women in community development project. Thus, it is against this backdrop that this study seeks to bridge this gap by examining both the underlying motivations and the persistent obstacles that urban women encounter in Nigeria's community development projects.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To ascertain the key motivational factors influencing women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria.

2. To delineate the barriers hindering women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria.
3. To explore how socio-economic and cultural factors shape women's participation on urban community development projects in Nigeria.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Various stakeholders will find the research very significance. With regard to gendered community development, the findings will serve as a guide to policymakers and government agencies on how to make gender-sensitive community development programmes to utilize the urban women. The findings of the research can therefore be used by the development practitioners and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as they attempt to work on their intervention in consideration to their motivators and mitigating their reported barriers. Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on gender and development in Africa, particularly in the Nigerian context, offering a deep understanding of women's agency and participation in urban community development. Academics and researchers will find this study useful for further investigations into related areas, fostering a more comprehensive discourse on women's empowerment and sustainable development.

2.0 Review of Literature

Women's Participation in Community Development

Women's participation in community development is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond mere physical presence in community activities. It involves their participation in the process of making decisions, contributions in mobilization of resources, developing and testing development projects [5]. Real engagement means that women own, control and have a say in the projects that concern them and their communities. It is embedded in the ideologies of empowerment, equity, and social justice whereby women are measured as change agents and not the subjects of charity [6]. Within the field of community development, one can present participation being regarded as driving force to sustainable change. With women playing an active role, the better chances of having projects that are relevant to the needs they serve, culturally acceptable, and able to be well sustained in the long run. Their involvement may bring about better project results, strengthening of the communities and the building of the local leadership skills [7]. However, achieving meaningful participation requires addressing systemic inequalities and creating an enabling environment that supports women's agency and collective action.

2.1 Theoretical Reveiw

This study is anchored on two prominent theoretical frameworks: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, a foundational concept in human psychology, posits that individuals are motivated to fulfill a series of needs in a hierarchical order [8]. These needs, which are usually in pyramid form, are categorized into the lowest needs such as the physiological needs and the higher needs which are self-actualizations. The ranks are:

1. Physiological Needs: Survival Needs of food water, shelter and sleep.
2. Safety Needs: Stability, security, protection against being hurt and the feeling of order.
3. Love/Belonging Needs: Belonging, an association, affection, and a sense of part of the group.
4. Esteem Needs: Self-respect, achievement, and status, and recognition.
5. Self-Actualization Needs: Realizing one's full potential, personal growth, and fulfillment.

Maslow's theory suggests that women may be motivated to participate in projects that address their fundamental needs. As a case example, projects that allow access to clean water or food security are likely to connect with the satisfaction of physiological needs, and those that guarantee safety and security exploit the needs related to safety. In addition to survival, women can aim to participate in activities that lead to build social relations (love/belonging), provide chances to develop and gain some recognition (esteem), or to themselves make a contribution to greater society and their own development (self actualization) [9].

Knowledge of the level of need that a community development project meets can assist in the customizing of the motivational approaches.

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) provides a framework for understanding different levels of citizen involvement in planning and decision-making processes [10].

There are eight rungs on the ladder and they are classified into three general levels:

Non-participation:

1. Manipulation: The people are taught or regarded as a source which can be healed.
2. Therapy: Citizens are made part of the process that seems to be participatory but is developed to incite some behavioral or attitudinal change.

Tokenism:

3. Informing: the populations are informed about their rights, responsibilities, or choices, and do not have a chance to respond or bargain.
4. Consultation: The citizens are presented with the opportunity to share their views but it might or might not be taken into account at the end of it all.

5. Placation: The bearers of power can give citizens the space to advise but still have the ultimate decision-making capacity.

Citizen Power:

6. Partnership: Redistribution of power: the negotiation occurs between the citizens and those in power to allow shared decision-making.

7. Delegated Power: has the powers to designate citizens to a majority of the seats on a committee or a board that has allocated powers to make decisions.

8. Citizen Control: The citizens utilize their managerial powers in the matters concerning determination of decisions and programmes and without interferences.

Arnstein's model is particularly relevant for analyzing the depth and quality of women's participation in community development projects. It helps to distinguish between genuine empowerment and mere tokenism, where women's involvement is superficial and lacks real influence [11]. For this study, it will be crucial to assess at which rung of the ladder urban Nigerian women typically participate and what factors enable or constrain their ascent to higher levels of citizen power.

Motivational Factors for Women's Participation

Motivational factors are the internal and external stimuli that drive individuals to engage in certain behaviors. For women in community development projects, these factors can be diverse and often interconnected. It has been found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are important elements. Intrinsic motivators are intrinsic and are based upon the inward desires and gratification whereas extrinsic motivators are external ones such as pressures or rewards. The wish to enjoy personal growth and empowerment serves as one of the main intrinsic motivators. Women usually have a chance to learn new things, expand their knowledge, and create leadership qualities in themselves when participating in projects in the community [12]. Such personal growth may result in a higher self-agency, social status, and personal confidence in their families and communities. For instance, a study in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria, found that empowerment was a significant motivational factor for women's participation in community development programmes [13].

Well connectedness and solidarity are doubly strong intrinsic motivators as well. Development projects in the community give women an avenue to socialize with others of their age, develop networks and a feeling of belongingness. Such social connections can help in providing the emotional support, they can share the knowledge, and help in increasing collective action which is very costly in urban settings as the traditional social ties could be breaking down [14]. Another strong intrinsic motivator is the possibility to make the contribution to the prosperity of their families and communities under the idea of altruism or sense of civic responsibility. Extrinsic motivators are mostly based on economic categorized and enhanced livelihoods. Many women in urban Nigeria face economic hardships, and participation in community projects can offer tangible rewards such as access to microfinance, skill-based training leading to income-generating activities, or direct financial incentives [15]. Another powerful motivator will be those projects that promise a better delivery of essential services such as water, sanitation, or healthcare since it will come directly to their lives and to the lives of their families. An extrinsic motivation can also be the possibility of being credited or respected by the community members on their contributions.

Moreover, the need to have a better infrastructure in the community and services is also a strong motivation factor. Women are usually the ones who are responsible the most in the management and maintenance of the house as well as child rearing and therefore are allergic to the lack of amenity in the local area. They are usually motivated to participate due to the immediate values these projects have to them including access to a better school of their children, health facilities, or access to clean water that is more consistent [16]. The collective desire to address these immediate needs can galvanize women's involvement.

Barriers to Women's Participation

Despite the various motivational factors, women's participation in community development projects in urban Nigeria is often hampered by a range of barriers. These barriers may be either socio-cultural, economic, institutional and even personal. Common obstacles are socio-cultural rules as well as patriarchal systems. Conventional gender roles in most Nigerian societies have reduced the mobility and outreach of women by confining them in domestic settings. Decision-making power is frequently concentrated in the hands of men, leading to women's voices being marginalized or ignored in community forums [17]. The female subservience is highlighted by the culture in that the culture discourages women to become leaders or practicing their views freely. A study on socio-cultural factors affecting women's participation in community development projects in Northern Cross River State, Nigeria, highlighted how traditional norms restrict women's involvement [18].

Disempowerment and constraints of resources are a huge challenge as well, as one can tell about economic resources. Many urban women, particularly those in low-income households, have limited access to financial resources, credit, and productive assets. Such economic weakness may limit their chances in contributing to projects that demand contributions in terms of money or time that can be utilized in income generating ventures. The unpaid care work and domestic responsibilities also take away their time and energy to be engaged in the community [19].

Lack of access in education and information can also be a block. Lower literacy rates among women, particularly in some urban informal settlements, can hinder their understanding of project objectives, their rights, and available opportunities for participation. They can also be alienated to the community development activities due to lack of access to relevant information channels [20]. Institutional barriers include discriminatory policies or practices within community development organisations, lack of gender-sensitive planning, and insufficient support mechanisms for women's participation. Women are also discouraged to participate by

lack of safe ground where women can gather and share issues affecting the community, or even timing of the meetings cannot be at the right time when women are busy with their household chores [21].

A woman can also be deterred by personal barriers like low self-confidence, fear of speaking in front of people or past negative experience related to community projects. Such individual variables are usually compounded by limitations posed on them by the socio-cultural and economic statuses.

Women's Participation in Urban Community Development in Nigeria and Africa

Across Nigeria and the broader African continent, women's involvement in urban community development projects presents a mixed picture, characterized by both significant contributions and persistent challenges. The women have been out in front of the grassroots in seeking to do better in living conditions, in seeking better services, and in seeking social cohesion in most of the urban centers around. They are involved in it because they normally participate directly in the urban struggles of everyday lives like shortage of houses, sanitation and access to clean water [22]. For instance, in various Nigerian cities, women's groups have successfully mobilized to implement self-help projects, including the construction of boreholes, establishment of community health centers, and organisation of sanitation drives. These initiatives often leverage women's strong social networks and their inherent capacity for collective action. However, the extent and the quality of this participation very much varies, often, with the local socio-economic conditions, the nature of the projects and the levels of backing provided by external organisations [23].

In other African urban contexts, similar patterns emerge. Informal settlements in Nairobi, Accra and Johannesburg provide some examples where women in the settlements have organized community-based organisations to deal with matters such as waste management, as well as obtaining land security. They are often motivated to do it by the very pressing survival needs and the aim to bring the living conditions of their families to a better level. In many cases, such efforts prove to be extremely resilient and creative when confronted with the high structural barriers [24]. However, despite these positive examples, women's participation in urban community development in Africa often remains at the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder, primarily at the stages of notifying or consultation. They do not normally participate in the topmost decision making and management of the project and in many cases this is because of identical socio-cultural, and economic obstacles that have been stated above together with the barriers of institutions. Consequently, they are underutilized in terms of their contribution to the transformative and sustainable urban development. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of women's participation in urban community development in Nigeria, with the aim of identifying effective strategies for overcoming existing barriers and fostering more inclusive and empowering forms of engagement.

3.0 Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology employed in this study to investigate the motivational factors influencing women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria. The methodology was thoroughly and scientifically searched and interpreted into the data to have an overall overview of the research problem.

3.1 Research Design

The research design used in the study is descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate since it enables the sample to collect information of some of the individuals in the population to explain the nature, attitudes, and activities of the population concerning the research questions. A descriptive survey design is suitable for this study because it enable the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on the motivational factors and barriers to women's participation in community development projects. The quantitative data provided statistical insights into the prevalence of different motivational factors and barriers, while the qualitative data will offer a deeper understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of the women.

3.2 Study Field and Population

The study was conducted in selected urban areas within Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria. One of the largest cities in West Africa, Ibadan is marked by quite the mixture of the different population, a combination of formal and informal settlement, and a variety of community development initiatives. The target population for this study comprised of women residing in these urban areas who have been involved in or have had the opportunity to participate in community development projects. The selection of Ibadan as the study area is based on its representative nature of a typical Nigerian urban center, with a blend of traditional and modern influences that shape community dynamics.

3.3 Sampling and sample size

The participants were chosen using a multi-stage sampling method. First, purposive sampling was used to select specific urban communities within Ibadan that have active community development projects. This ensure that the study focuses on areas where women's participation can be observed and assessed. Second, within the selected communities, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify and recruit women who have participated in community development projects. The sample was purposively selected according to the condition that the women are expected to be active in the community initiatives, but the other participants that were not found at the first glance were reached with the help of snowball sampling to suggest further contacts. The method especially comes in handy in accessing a wide pool of participants who cannot be easily identified elsewhere.

A sample size of 150 women were selected using a quantitative survey and 30 women were selected purposively on a small scale to provide rich qualitative observations in the form of a demographic survey.

3.4 Instrumentation

The structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool, with the supplement being in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on the demographic characteristics of the participants, their level of participation in community development projects, and their perceptions of various motivational factors and barriers. The questionnaire was in Likert scale structure to determine the intensity of such factors. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring the participants' experiences and perspectives in greater detail. To support the research questions that are considered key, an interview guide was created to meet the requirements of the key research questions, but did not forbid the possible emergent themes to be raised in the course of the interview. The scales were constructed using a critical analysis of the available literature and are to be pre-tested so as to guarantee their validity and reliability.

3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher and trained research assistants collected data. The selected participants were administered the questionnaires in their respective places at home or community gatherings and then using the research assistants to achieve clarity and completeness. The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews at a time and place convenient to the participants and such interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

It relies on descriptive and inferential statistics in order to help it analyze the quantitative data collected via the questionnaires. A demographic overview of the participants as well as the level of participation was described by means of descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means). Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, were used to examine the relationships between motivational factors, barriers, and women's participation. The thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data based on in-depth interviews by transcribing and reading through them. It will entail detection of, an examination, and a report of data patterns (themes). The thematic analysis provided a rich and detailed understanding of the women's experiences and were used to complement and triangulate the quantitative findings.

4.0 Results and discussion

This section presents the key findings of the study regarding the motivational factors and barriers influencing women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria. The results were presented in the context of the available literature and the theoretical platforms, in which this study is carried out.

4.1 Motivational Factors for Women's Participation

The study revealed several significant motivational factors that drive urban women's involvement in community development projects. Economic benefits and improved living was also marked as one of the primary extrinsic motivators. Most women have said that the issue of being able to become financially independent or learn new skills in income generating activities or the access to micro-credit facilities was very influential to the reasons why they join. This aligns with findings from other African contexts where economic empowerment is a strong driver for women's engagement in community initiatives [15]. The study in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria, specifically highlighted that 'fringe benefits' contributed significantly to women's participation [13]. This implies that tangible rewards either in the form of direct economic stimulus or economic advancement opportunities are relevant in motivating women especially in the urban areas where the economic demands may be high.

The value of intrinsic motivation was regarded as extremely strong when it comes to self-development and empowerment. Through their participation, women expressed the wish of improving their knowledge, leadership and confidence. Community involvement projects offered them opportunities to air their grievances, make a contribution in areas of decision-making, as well as fulfill their potential besides being stereotyped as exclusive domestic creatures. This resonates with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where the fulfillment of esteem and self-actualization needs drives individuals towards greater engagement and achievement [9]. The feeling of accomplishment and the fact that they could see the real outcome of their contributions also helped them in achieving success and that caused them to want to contribute even more.

The social unity had also to be bonded. Women appreciated that they interacted with other women, were able to develop a great social network and enjoy the feeling of belonging to some kind of a community. These networks helped each other, and share knowledge, as well as enhanced collective action. Community projects are an important area of cultivating social capital and overcoming isolation that exists in an urban environment, where social bonds may be occasionally torn. This aligns with the 'love/belonging' needs in Maslow's hierarchy, emphasizing the human desire for connection and affiliation [8].

Moreover, increased demand to develop better community infrastructure and service was a motivating factor as well. As the heads of families, women are more conscious of the lack of basic facilities like water, sanitation, health and education. The direct rewards that these projects had on their families and neighborhoods also encouraged them to participate. This practical driver unveils the direct correlation of the community development projects to their life and daily living.

4.2 Barriers to Women's Participation

These study also identified several persistent barriers that hinder women's full participation in urban community development projects in Nigeria. Among the biggest impediments, patriarchal systems, and socio-cultural rules were always referred to. Conventional gender roles tend to place women under extreme house chores that restrict their time and energy accessibility in the outside. Cultural expectations that prioritize male leadership and decision-making often marginalize women's voices in community forums, even when they are present. This aligns with broader African studies that highlight how patriarchal norms restrict women's public engagement and decision-making power [17]. The challenge is not merely about physical presence but about achieving

meaningful participation, as articulated by Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, where women often remain at the lower rungs of 'tokenism' rather than 'citizen power' [10].

Absence of resources, and economical disempowerment were also a problem. A large proportion of women in urban areas and especially those in low-income families do not have enough finances to invest in any project or devote time which could be an income-generating activity. They are also economically vulnerable due to unavailability of credits and land, and other productive assets. This barrier is often intertwined with the burden of unpaid care work, which disproportionately falls on women, leaving them with little disposable time or income for community activities [19].

The other major obstacle was limited access to education and information. Lower literacy rates among some segments of urban women, particularly those from marginalized communities, can hinder their understanding of project details, their rights, and the long-term benefits of participation. Information dissemination methods that do not account for women's schedules or literacy levels further exclude them from critical project information [20].

There were also institutional barriers as manifested by the absence of gender sensitive planning in the community development organisations and government agencies. Meetings held at inconvenient times or locations, and the absence of childcare facilities, often exclude women. Furthermore, some community structures may not actively promote or support women's leadership, reinforcing existing inequalities [21].

4.2 Analysis of Results

The findings of this study reveal the complex interplay between motivational factors and barriers in shaping women's participation in urban community development in Nigeria. Women are significantly driven towards personal growth and social connection on the one hand and economic gains and high quality services on the other hand; however the former drive is in most cases superseded by the strongly embedded socio-cultural, economical, and institutional barriers. The study in Ilorin Metropolis, for instance, found that while motivational factors significantly correlated with participation, the overall level of women's participation was only moderate [13]. This implies that even the presence of highly decisive motivators can fail to pull through important barriers posed by any structure. The relevance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is evident in the diverse motivations observed. A woman is motivated by the range of needs: the physical ones (stimulated to be satisfied with the improved services), the safety ones, the more advanced needs in belonging and self-esteem, and self-actualization stimulated by the ability to progress and become a part of the society. Effective community development initiatives must therefore cater to this range of needs to maximize women's engagement.

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation provides a critical lens through which to view the quality of women's involvement. While women are often 'informed' or 'consulted,' their progression to 'partnership' or 'citizen control' remains challenging due to the identified barriers. The ability to influence and make decisions within community projects is important, thus the inclusion of them in true empowerment is not enough. This shows the importance of a conscious effort to break the power equilibriums that still exist and to establish participatory areas that are truly inclusive.

The focus on urban dwellers in Nigeria reveals unique dynamics. Whereas urban settings seem to have prospective benefits in the area of access to information as well as resources, they also have certain drawbacks like social fragmentation and survival of the old norms amid the urban crowd. The findings suggest that interventions must be context-specific, recognizing the nuances of urban life and the diverse experiences of women within these settings.

In conclusion, while urban Nigerian women possess significant motivation and potential for contributing to community development, their full participation is contingent upon addressing the systemic barriers that limit their agency and opportunities.

Future interventions should be holistic in nature with the provision of more than capitalizing on their motivations but rather, it must aim to break socio-cultural, economic and institutional barriers hence, there will rise truly empowering and effective community development.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Overview of the Results

This study investigated the motivational factors and barriers influencing women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria. The findings reveal that women are motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic motivation can be identified as the thirst of self-development and empowerment, a need to feel social connection and being in solidarity. The extrinsic motivators mainly exist because of the lure of economic gains and better livelihoods as well as the need to have a better infrastructure and services in the community. Although, urban settings appear to be having potential advantages in the field of access to information, as well as resources, they also possess some disadvantages such as fragmentation in the social environment and survival of the ancient ideals in the urban crowd. The results indicate that interventions should be contextually based, taking into consideration the peculiarities of urban living, as well as differentiation of women experiences in such environments.

Finally, the urban Nigerian women do have the high level of motivation as well as the capacities in contributing to the community development, but as long as the systemic misunderstandings are not resolved, they cannot be fully active participants of the community life. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, indicating that women seek to fulfill a range of needs through their participation.

However, despite these strong motivators, women's participation is significantly hindered by several barriers. The most prominent among these are deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms and patriarchal structures that limit women's public roles and decision-making power. The major hindrance lies in the economic disempowerment i.e., the lack of access to resources and unpaid care work. Moreover, the poor accessibility to education and information, as well as the institutional ones, e.g., non-gender sensitive planning, and establishments of support systems hamper their participation as well. These barriers often relegate women to lower levels of participation, as conceptualized by Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, where their involvement is often tokenistic rather than genuinely empowering.

5.2 Conclusion

Women in urban Nigeria possess a strong inherent drive and a clear understanding of the benefits of participating in community development projects. They are driven by varyingly different reasons including personal, social and economic reasons. However, even in these endeavors some form of dense network of socio-cultural, economic and institutional barriers will always come to mar their potentials. Achieving meaningful and sustainable women's participation in urban community development in Nigeria requires a concerted effort to not only leverage their motivations but, more critically, to dismantle these systemic obstacles. The effective empowerment also requires that the simple involvement by these people be transformed to actual influence and control over the development processes directly affecting their lives and communities.

5.3 Policy and Practice Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forth to enhance women's participation in community development projects among urban dwellers in Nigeria:

1. Promote Economic Empowerment: community development organisations, NGOs and governmental agencies should promote programmes that enhance women accessibility to loans, skill-based training and other income generating opportunities. Socio-economic factor is highly correlated to women participation in community development project.
2. Address Socio-Cultural Barriers: Targeted interventions are needed to challenge and transform patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles that limit women's public engagement. This can be community sensitization processes, use of male allies, and introduction of positive role models of women in leadership in community development.
3. Enhance Capacity Building and Education: Adult literacy should be highlighted and the authority must invest in developing urban woman in terms of leadership, project handling, and advocacy. It is also important to ensure that there is more accessible channel where one can get relevant information on the community projects.
4. Foster Inclusive Governance Structures: Community development initiatives should intentionally create gender-sensitive spaces and processes that facilitate women's active involvement in decision-making. This includes flexible meeting times, provision of childcare, and quotas for women's representation in leadership positions within community development committees.
5. Integrate Women's Needs in Project Design: Community development projects should be designed with a clear understanding of women's specific needs and priorities, particularly concerning improved infrastructure and services.
6. This will make the projects be directly related to their lives and hence increase the level of motivation to attend to the project.
7. Support Women-Led Initiatives: Provide financial and technical support to existing women's groups and associations engaged in community development. These groups are usually the important channel of group action and empowerment.

5.4 Future Research Suggestions

1. Longitudinal Studies: Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impacts of specific interventions aimed at enhancing women's participation and empowerment in urban community development projects.
2. Comparative Studies: Carries out comparison research of different urban centers available in Nigeria and other states in Africa on how to do this in the particular localities and most effective practice.
3. Impact Assessment: Research the direct impact of women's increased participation on the sustainability and effectiveness of community development projects.
4. Role of Technology: Explore the role of technology and digital platforms in facilitating women's participation and overcoming barriers in urban community development.

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