

## ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP ROLE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

**SOLOMON, CHRISTIANA TENI & OLAJIDE, MUILI FOLARANMI (PHD)**

Department of Continuing Education and Community Development,  
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria

E-mail: [fehintolachristiana5@gmail.com](mailto:fehintolachristiana5@gmail.com), Tel: 08104333222

E-mail: [muiliolajide842@gmail.com](mailto:muiliolajide842@gmail.com), Tel: 08033819613

### Abstract

*This study assessed the role of leadership in community development activities in Niger State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Samples of 250 leaders in five (5) randomly selected local government areas of Niger State were selected. The study was guided by two research questions. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire "Assessment of Leadership Role in Community Development in Niger State, Nigeria (ALRCDNSN)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pilot tested and the data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Formula and reliability coefficients of 0.78 was obtained. Descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. Findings of the study revealed that leaders have positive roles in community development activities in selected local government areas with religious leaders having a grand mean score response to the five items 3.28 which is above the benchmark of 2.50 indicating positive roles of religious leaders in community development; for the women leaders, the grand mean score response to the five items is 3.03 which is above the decision mean of 2.50. This indicates positive roles of women leaders in community development activities. In the light of the findings, it was recommended that refresher courses and training should be conducted for leaders so as to increase their capacity and keep them updated with the current trend of roles; on the part of the women leaders, trainings on how to help diversify their roles incorporating the children and teenagers. The study concluded that religious leaders and women leaders have positive roles in community development activities, that is, they use their positions to bring about development thereby positively impacting the community in the areas needed.*

**Keywords:** Assessment, Community Development, Role of Leadership

### Introduction

Leadership is a combination of two words: "Leader" and "Ship". A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership is the action of leading a person, group of people, or an organization beginning with oneself. No one can effectively lead others until they have learned to lead themselves and sustaining the mission close to the hearth. Leadership is universally desired but difficult to define clearly (Bernierth, *et al.*, 2018). The concept of "leadership," as used today, made its way into the general literature across the last century and has only recently become of increasing interest. The idea of a charismatic individual leader capable of recruiting followers to his or her path has given way to team-based problem solving. Organizational goals are pursued by people who move rapidly between leading and following roles. This team model accomplishes two critical goals: better decisions are made because leaders are listening to and considering the diversity of input from co-workers with different experiences and insights, and there is improved acceptance of the group's decision through consensus building as a result of the collaborative process thereby fostering compliance.

Kensler, and Uline (2016) stated that effective leadership requires insight and self-awareness, organization, ongoing communication and reinforcement, the ability to catalyze a shared future vision, and successful recruitment of followers motivated to action.

Effective leaders do not possess a defined thematic list of personal traits but, rather, deliver both high performance in addressing organizational task issues and consideration for individuals with concern for interpersonal relations, (Amanchukwu, *et al.*, 2015).

Brescoll (2016) reported that in reality, a leader's effective leadership and effective functioning lies in the way he uses his power to influence the behaviour of others especially the people he leads. He further stated that leadership is a process of influencing others to work with them. Influential leaders are always on the ground meet and ask about the problems faced by people in their locality, and their influence will indirectly be stronger as they constantly communicate with the public as when communicating and working with them.

Deliu (2019) believes that a successful leader should be visionary and able to lead his followers in a transparent manner while creating an atmosphere that allows people themselves to follow the process of economic development. This process includes the ability to realize the vision to develop the community as well as demonstrate practiced principles, relationships and trust, cooperation, networking and understanding of strategy, charisma, sharing and teamwork. Julia (2023) posited that a leader's leadership skills will determine the extent to which a person is able to operate and develop the vision, mission, goals and direction of the organization. Therefore, leaders should demonstrate the ability to lead their communities with distinctions of their achievements and records their ability to supervise the programme by managing the people, holding committee meeting on a monthly basis and solving issues that are raised immediately should prove that they are able to become great leaders. However, their skills in handling some issues can be further enhanced.

According to (Squazzoni, *et al.*, 2020) community is a social process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local conditions and the changing world. Sustainable community development cannot take place through force or order but is most likely to happen when all actors participate and share their ideas, visions and responsibilities equally and democratically in steering and implementing their community or village development projects bring all the atmosphere. Knickel, *et al.*(2018) stated that one approach in creating sustainable rural development is through giving the main actors an equal opportunity to think and plan their own future. This underpins the need for effective leadership at the local community levels in order to harness the efforts of the rural people towards their own development.

Usually, community development programmes aim at creating awareness of rural possibilities; providing information on resources, inputs and infrastructure; deploying technical assistance; skills acquisition and development; increasing literacy levels; improving productivity and productive systems; adapting appropriate technology in agriculture; sensitizing potential volunteers and donors among other things. Ideally, most community development programmes in developing nations focus on peoples' felt needs and basic amenities such as the provision of good roads, electricity, health clinics, markets, school buildings, and farm settlements among others. These goals can only be achieved through the combined and collective efforts of all those who share the conviction that rural community development must be accorded a high priority in our drive for poverty alleviation and national self-sufficiency, (Taylor, 2019).

He further stated that to help bring a rural community to action, it is necessary for individuals and groups to provide good leadership. When good leadership is provided, people participate voluntarily in the accomplishment of stated objectives. The approach to rural community development is always through local leaders who not only act as pioneers of projects but also help in influencing and motivating their people to action.

Raimi *et al.* (2019) amplified that stating that for any rural community development to be successful, influential local leaders must be involved else, they might undermine the progress of such programmes. Therefore, any agency or organization coming up with a development programme for the community must initially “clear” with these influential local leaders a process otherwise referred to as legitimization. It is saddening to recall that rural community development was neglected by successive governments since colonial rule in Nigeria. The colonial government concentrated their development projects such as roads, schools, hospitals, and pipe-borne water around the major cities and built network of roads to areas where they exploited our natural resources, the rural areas were completely left out. The post-independence governments are not equally left out in the practice of rural neglect as only communities whose sons and daughters were in government benefited. This study therefore aims at examining the impact of leadership on community development activities in Niger State Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of leadership role in community development in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To ascertain the role of religious leaders in community development activities in Minna, Niger State.
2. To determine the role of women leaders in community development activities in Minna, Niger State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are major role of religious leaders in community development activities in the selected Local Government Areas, of Niger State?
2. What are the major role played by women leaders in community development activities in the selected Local Government Areas, of Niger State?

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The methodology involved the use of questionnaire to elicit needed responses from community leaders of their level of participants in community development activities. The population of the study comprises of 1,923 registered non-governmental organizations in the three senatorial zones in Niger State, Nigeria. The sample size for this research work comprises 250 leaders in five (5) randomly selected Local Government Areas of Niger State from the three senatorial zones. Random sampling technique was employed to select 250 community leaders which were used for the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument for data collection was made of a structural self-developed questionnaire titled “Assessment of Leadership Role in Community Development in Niger State, Nigeria (ALRCDNSN)”.

The questionnaire was made of two sections ‘A’ and ‘B’. Section ‘A’ was structured to collect the demographic information about the respondents. While section B contains 8 statements

on the variables of the study. All the items of the questionnaire were rated using 4 point likert type scale of measurement as follow: Strongly Agree (SA) 4 point, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the department of adult and continuous education. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out on 30 respondents within the study population but outside the selected study sample. The instrument was administered once and the score obtained were computed using Cronbach Alpha's formula. Reliability co-efficient of 0.78, was obtained, hence, the questionnaire was considered as having high reliability and therefore suitable for data collection.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) to answer the research questions.

### **Results**

#### **Research Question One**

What are major role of religious leaders in community development activities in the selected Local Government Areas, of Niger State?

**Table 1.1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the role of religious leaders in community development activities**

| <b>S/N</b>   | <b>Items</b>  | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std.</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|--------------|---|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1            | Religious leaders teach people to have faith.                                       | 241      | 3.51        | 0.93        | Agree           |
| 2            | Religious leaders advise members to contribute to the development of the community. | 241      | 3.18        | 0.96        | Agree           |
| 3            | Religious leaders put in place projects to develop the community.                   | 241      | 3.28        | 0.93        | Agree           |
| 4            | Religious leaders modify one's attitude towards the development of the community.   | 241      | 3.14        | 0.82        | Agree           |
| <b>Total</b> |   |          | <b>3.28</b> | <b>0.91</b> | <b>Agree</b>    |

#### **Decision mean: 2.50 (source: field work report. 2024)**

Table 1.1 reveals the mean and standard deviation on the roles of religious leaders in community development activities. The mean of 2.50 and above was used as the benchmark for 'Agree', and the mean of less than 2.50 is considered 'Disagree'. Consequently, four items were listed. The table revealed that religious leaders teach people to have faith (item 1) had a mean score of 3.51 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that religious leaders teach people to have faith. Religious leaders advise members to contribute to the development of the community (item 2) had a mean score of 3.18 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that religious leaders members advice to contribute to the development of the community. Religious leader's put in place projects to develop the community (item 3) had a mean score of 3.28 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that religious leaders put in place projects to develop the community. Result from the table also revealed that religious teachers modify one's attitude towards the development of the community (item 4) with a mean score of 3.14 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that religious teachers modify one's attitude towards the development of the community. The table further revealed that the grand mean score response to the four items is 3.28 which is above the decision mean of 2.50; this indicates that religious leaders play all the above role in community development activities in selected local government areas of Niger State.

The analysis also reveal that responses on item 4 were closely related with standard deviation of 0.82 than item 3, 1 and 2 with standard deviation of 0.93, 0.93 and 0.96 respectively.

### **Research question two**

Do women leaders play any major role in the community development activities in selected Local Government Areas of in Niger State?

**Table 1.2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the roles of women leaders in community development activities**

| <b>S/<br/>N</b> | <b>Items</b>   | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std.</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|-----------------|--|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 5               | Women leaders encourage to women promote community development activities.                           | 241      | 3.10        | 0.92        | Agree           |
| 6               | Women leaders make women to earn better living by introducing projects in the community.             | 241      | 3.11        | 0.99        | Agree           |
| 7               | Women leaders encourage women to contribute in decision making to begin project in the community.    | 241      | 3.03        | 0.90        | Agree           |
| 8               | Women leaders encourage women to understand their legal rights for the development of the community. | 241      | 2.88        | 0.85        | Agree           |
| <b>Total</b>    |  |          | <b>3.03</b> | <b>0.92</b> | <b>Agree</b>    |

### **Decision mean: 2.5 (source: SPSS mean and standard analysis result. 2024)**

Table 1.2 reveals the mean and standard deviation on the roles of women leaders in community development activities. The mean of 2.50 and above was used as the benchmark for 'Agree', and the mean of less than 2.50 is considered 'Disagree'. Consequently, four items were listed. The table revealed that item 5 had a mean score of 3.10 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that women leaders encourage women participation in community development activities.

Item 6 had a mean score of 3.11 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that women leaders make women to earn better living by introducing projects in the community. Item 7 had a mean score of 3.03 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that women leaders encourage women to contribute in decision making to begin project in the community. Item 8 had a mean score of 2.88 which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that women leaders encourage women to understand their legal rights for the development of the community. The table further revealed that the grand mean score response to the four items is 3.03 which is above the decision mean of 2.50; this indicates positive roles of women leaders in community development activities in selected Local Government Areas of Niger State.

The analysis also reveal that responses on item 8 were closely related with standard deviation of 0.85 than item 7, 6 and 5 with standard deviation of 0.90, 0.99 and 0.92 respectively.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The finding of the study revealed that religious leaders play a positive role in community development activities. This is given by the aggregate mean of 3.28. The respondents agreed to all the items in Table 1.1 specifically religious leaders (teachers) modify one attitude toward the development of the community. This is in line with the study of Armstrong (2020) who noted significant growth in students' intercultural competency across all ten measures which could serve as a framework for leadership educators.

The findings of the study revealed that women leaders play a positive role in community development activities. This is given by the aggregate mean of 3.03. The respondents agreed to all the items in Table 1.2 specifically women leaders (who are also in charge of children) modify one attitude toward the development of the community. This is in line with Pauceanu *et al.* (2021) who stated that the contribution of entrepreneurial leadership on organization is a positive role.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership is an indispensable factor in the development of any community. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the choice of a leader. The study concluded that religious leaders and women leaders have positive roles in community development activities, that is, they use their positions to bring about development thereby positively impacting the community in the areas needed.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Religious leaders have positive roles in community development activities; refresher courses and training should be conducted for them so as to increase their capacity and keep them updated with the current trend of roles.
2. Women leaders have positive roles in community development activities; training on how to help diversify their roles incorporating the children and teenagers should be conducted.

### **References**

- Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management*, 5(1), 6-14.
- Armstrong, J. P. (2020). Assessing intercultural competence in international leadership courses: Developing the global leader. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 19(4).
- Bernerth, J. B., Cole, M. S., Taylor, E. C., & Walker, H. J. (2018). Control variables in leadership research: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Management*, 44(1), 131-160.
- Brescoll, V. L. (2016). Leading with their hearts? How gender stereotypes of emotion lead to biased evaluations of female leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 415-428.
- Deliu, D. (2019). Empathetic leadership—Key element for inspiring strategic management and a visionary effective corporate governance. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Marketing and Management*, 1(1), 280-292.
- Julia, M. (2023). Factors influencing the effective implementation of leadership development programs: *A case study* (Doctoral dissertation, Southern Nazarene University).
- Kensler, L. A., & Uline, C. L. (2016). *Leadership for green schools: Sustainability for our children, our communities, and our planet*. Taylor & Francis.
- Knickel, K., Redman, M., Darnhofer, I., Ashkenazy, A., Chebach, T. C., Šūmane, S., ...& Rogge, E. (2018). Between aspirations and reality: Making farming, food systems and rural areas more resilient, sustainable and equitable. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 59, 197-210.

- Pauceanu, A. M., Rabie, N., Moustafa, A., & Jiroveanu, D. C. (2021). Entrepreneurial leadership and sustainable development a systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, 13(21), 11695.
- Raimi, M. O., Adedotun, A. T., Emmanuel, O. O., & Anu, B. (2019). An analysis of bayelsa state water challenges on the rise and its possible solutions. *Raimi Morufu Olalekan., An analysis of bayelsa state water challenges on the rise and its possible solutions'.Acta Scientific Agriculture*, 3(2019), 110-125.
- Squazzoni, F., Polhill, J. G., Edmonds, B., Ahrweiler, P., Antosz, P., Scholz, G., & Gilbert, N. (2020). Computational models that matter during a global pandemic outbreak: A call to action.
- Taylor, L. (2019). The welsh way of colonisation in patagonia: The international politics of moral superiority. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 47(6), 1073-1099.