

GENDER PARTICIPATION IN RURAL MARKET ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

Faborode, Helen Folake Babatola and Alabi, Mary Bukola

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development
Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This paper assessed gender participation in rural market association activities of Osun state with a view to promoting gender equity and enhance sustainable participation. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select a total of 224 male and female respondents for interview. Data were analysed using frequency, mean and standard deviation while t-test analysis was used to draw inferences. Results showed that most male (70.5%) and female (83.9%) were positively disposed to rural market association. Participation varied ($t = -25.87$; $p < 0.01$) with the male and the female scoring above the mid-point (1.50) in three and seven of the ten measures of participation respectively but the female were more constrained than the male. It was concluded that participation by both male and female in market activities varied but leveraging their high disposition to participation and addressing the gender specific constraints in any initiative to enhance equity and sustainability in participation.

Keywords: Gender, Rural Market Association, Participation, Equity, Perception, Sustainable Participation

INTRODUCTION

Generally, rural market is one of the numerous important avenues for social relations that allows parties to exchange goods and services. Omole, Lukman and Baki (2013) described it as a centre for social activities and exchange of ideas; an institution driven by human activities for the distribution and exchange of goods, services and ideas for human consumption and satisfaction. Rural market constitutes the life-wire of rural economy and provides a platform for buying and selling of agricultural produce such as cassava, yam, fruits and fish, in addition to imported goods and services (Ikelegbe and Vande, 2013; Babajo, 2017; Luptacik, and Mahlberg, 2018). They are basically located in remote areas, usually in villages, often situated very close to the village square while some are located close to the king's palace in some places.

Rural markets can be categorised into two classes based on their physical structures and the number of participants (Kio-Lawson, 2015). The daily market involves many full-time traders and it is more convenient because it provides daily needs to people (Omole, 2012), while periodic market involves the meeting of people at definite places and at specific times. It is an approved public gathering of buyers and sellers of commodities based on strict or defined places specified at a time. Other types of market include morning, full-day, night, and provincial markets.

Although rural markets consist of people who meet for economic purposes, they usually have organised groups of individuals with common purpose, vested interest or productive activities referred to as associations. They are many and nearly every type of seller belongs to an association. For instance, there are associations based on types of vocation, wholesale and service providers. The associations usually cater for their members' welfare and supervise their activities in the markets. They represent members by presenting their views on market matters to the Local and State Governments. They also control the records of their members and discipline them when the need arises (Omole, 2012). Membership could be voluntary or mandatory and participation of members in the activities of associations is mandatory with certain sanctions attached.

Rural market associations perform a number of functions across cultures. For instance, rural periodic markets in Mayan Guatemala contribute to rural development by increasing large-scale agricultural production (Eff and Jensen, 2014). Studies by Rambanapasi (1997) and Madi (2004) found that rural periodic markets in Zimbabwe and Nigeria respectively contribute to rural development by generating employment for the rural population, while in South Africa, it also acts as a tool for rural development by increasing smallholder market participation.

Participation in rural market associations include important components such as leadership (holding of offices), membership (ordinary/committee), attendance at meetings and financial/material commitments (Ekong, 2010; Masamha, *et al.*, 2019). Leadership is an important concept in any social system. It is the process of directing the efforts of a group of people towards the attainment of set goals and objectives. Leaders of market associations are either elected/nominated by group members or appointed by traditional rulers. Membership entails an agreement on group memberships which often requires them to pay membership fee.

Importantly too, attendance at meetings is another indicator of participation while absence from association meetings and its activities could attract fines and other sanctions. Aside this, members are also expected to make financial or material contributions which are crucial determinants of meeting group objectives. Generally, participation in rural market associations is influenced by personal attributes such as age, level of education,

occupational position, characteristics of the association, length of residence in community and very importantly, gender (Ekong, 2010).

Historically, the market space was known to belong to the female gender (Ikioda 2012) and participation in rural market associations was female dominated. During this period, the female gender through their various rural market associations represented the voices for social inclusion, protested against some obnoxious impositions by the colonial administration to take charge of market administration and rejected the flat rate tax imposed on market traders (Aloma, 1948; Byfield, 2003; Ugwuja and Onyishi, 2020). With the recent rapid expansion in rural markets and its economic activities, male dominance in rural market associations has emerged (Holden and Tilahun, 2021; Cornwall, 2005), creating a unique opportunity to confirm their culturally assigned gender roles while the female gender subsists in their participation in rural market associations with several constraints obscuring their representation and participation in decision-making. The socio-cultural and economic barriers to equal gender participation in rural market associations include gender bias, limited access to resources, societal expectations and organisational culture (Tinuke, 2012; Metu and Nwokoye, 2014; Amusan, Akokuwebe and Odalaru, 2021).

This gender imbalance in rural market associations has been reported to sabotage rural economy and hurtful to economic diversification (Osuntade et al., 2025). The unequal gender representation in rural market associations calls for strengthening gender participation in rural market association activities to enhance bottom-up development and accelerating rural poverty alleviation by improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (Karg *et al.*, 2019; Chagomoka *et al.*, 2018) without jeopardising the future of male and female participation in rural market association activities. It is on this premise that this study was conceptualised to assess gender participation in rural market association activities in Osun State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Description of study area

The study was conducted in Osun State, an inland area in Southwestern Nigeria with Osogbo as the capital. It is surrounded by Kwara State in the north, Ekiti and Ondo States in the east, Ogun and Oyo in the south and west respectively. The State is comprised of thirty (30) Local Government Areas (LGAs). The projected population for the state is 5,521,901 people (Osun State population, 2023). It has a total land mass of 8602 square kilometre and predominately lowland rainforest vegetation. The state lies within latitudes 6°50'N and 8°10'N and longitudes 4°00'E and 5°10'E with an annual average rainfall of 1800 mm and 1200mm. Also, the state has two distinct seasons: rainy season which is between April and October as well as dry season (November to March). It is mainly an agrarians state producing major crops such as yam, maize, cocoyam, cassava, beans, banana, vegetables, oil palm and plantain.

Research Design

The study adopted the mixed method type of research design which involves the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data (Cresswell, 2014) aimed at triangulating data sources.

Sample Size and Sample Selection

A total of 224 respondents in 28 market association were used for questionnaire administration through a multi-stage sampling procedure. At the first stage, five (Ilesha, Ikirun, Ile-ife, Iwo and Ede) out of the six administrative zones in the state were purposively selected based on the degree of rurality. At the second stage, one hundred markets (Ilesha, 20; Ikirun, 20; Ile -Ife, 20; Iwo, 22 and 18 in Ede) were identified. At the third stage, six markets were purposively selected in each of Ilesha, Ikirun and Ede zones while five were selected from Ile-ife and Iwo zones based on the preponderance of commodity associations in the markets. Also, one commodity association was selected in each of the twenty-eight markets. At the last stage, four male and four female were selected from each commodity association using systematic random selection techniques based on their register to make a total of 224 respondents. In addition, market leaders (Iyaloja, Babaloja, chairpersons and secretaries of commodity associations) were selected as Key Informants (KI) to elicit some qualitative information for the study.

Data collection and analysis

A combination of quantitative (structured interview schedule) and qualitative (key informant interview guide) methods were used to elicit information from male and female respondents in selected rural market associations. The interview schedule was used to collect information on socio-economic characteristics, associations available in rural markets, participation in rural market association activities, gender perception on participation in rural market association activities and the constraints encountered by male and female.

Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and equal interval were used to describe and summarise the data while inferential statistics (independent t-test) was used to determine the difference between the level of male and female participation in rural market association activities.

Measurement of dependent variable

The dependent variable for the study is participation in rural market association activities. It was measured using ten activities which include membership recruitment drive, finance and leadership roles. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their participation in the activities above, using a four-point scale, ranging from Never Participated (NP) =0; Rarely Participated (RP) =1; Occasionally participated (OP) =2 and Always Participating (AP) =3. The scores of each respondent were added to get the maximum (156) and minimum (0) composite score. The maximum score was divided into three (3) using equal interval approach to calculate the scores for the levels of participation into low (< 52), moderate (52 -104) and high (> 104)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal and Socio- Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Results in Table 1 show that equal numbers (112) of male and female respondents were sampled to provide equal opportunity to be heard and reduce elements of bias in the information provided. Also, the highest numbers (41.1% and 44.0%) of the male and female respondents respectively were within the age range of 41 – 50 years while 18.8 percent male and 31.3 percent female were between the age range of 31 – 40 years. Thus, a greater number of the respondents were in the middle age category which represents the productive and active age. This age category has been widely documented (Addai *et al.*, 2023) to be an economically active age cohort. Obviously, there was lesser participation by the younger (31- 40 years) category despite constituting about 60.0 percent of

the nation's population, very innovative and highly unemployed (NBS, 2012). This portends great danger for sustainable rural and national economy.

In addition, all the male and female respondents belonged to at least one market association, making it almost impossible to trade without being a member of an association whose membership is dependent on satisfying association guidelines and regulations especially where traditional norms are still adhered to. This implies that both male and female gender had equal opportunity to actively participate in the association activities, benefit and learn from the experiences of others. The monthly income for the male and female were 53.936 and 42.887 Naira, pointing to a wide disparity in their earnings in favour of the male gender. Though the male earned more, they both earned far below the federal government recommended minimum wage of 70,000 Naira in Nigeria. However, the rural people are known for not keeping proper records of their earnings or may deliberately refuse to disclose the amount they actually realised for fear of taxation and insecurity (Filusi and Ayinde 2019)

Furthermore, 35.7 and 17.9 percent of male and female respectively had access to primary education only, 28.6 and 24.1 percent to technical / secondary education, 13.4 and 8.9 percent to adult education, 3.6 and 12.5 percent to tertiary education while 18.8 percent of the male and a higher (36.6) percentage of the female had no formal education. This finding is consistent with that of Babulo *et al.* (2008); World Bank (2020) who averred that woman were generally more involved in trading and had lesser access to formal education than the men. Better access to formal education could provide the male with better opportunities to participate in association activities and enjoy the benefits of associations such as access to information, financial and welfare opportunities.

Notably, more (58.9%) female than male (54.5%) were ordinary members of market associations who could mostly be seen and rarely heard. They were less visible in executive roles with a wide gender gap (34.8% and 27.7%) in favour of the male. Thus, the male dominance often dictated by culture has continued to play out and positioning more male in leadership roles while the female were made to play obscure roles; especially in the process of decision-making. This could limit the females' access to association benefits while their male counterparts were better positioned to access information and other benefits to enhance their activities in the associations, market place and rural economy. The market space was known to belong to the female gender (Ikioda 2012) but more male leaders have emerged (Holden and Tilahun, 2021; Cornwall, 2005) in recent time.

The following excerpt below is from the key informant interview conducted:

“There is almost no association for just women. More males occupy executive positions, there's gender inequality, and the female gender are marginalised in the market association activities due to our traditional culture”. (A KII response of a female participant at Sekona market, Ede South LGA)

The excerpt of the KI response above corroborates the earlier findings of higher participation of male traders in executive positions than their female counterparts.

Thus, the marginalisation of the female in market association activities could make them poorer if no action is taken to address the trend.

Also, most (89.3% and 97.3%) female and male respondents respectively belong to the Yoruba ethnic group while only a few (10.7% and 1.8%) belong mainly to the Hausa ethnic group. This finding implies that Yoruba language being the medium of communication in the markets could enhance information dissemination among association

members to enhance decision-making and participation of members in association activities. Cultural affinity has been associated with participation in association activities because of the respondents' familiarity with the specific cultural norms and values, including the objectives, rules, goals and activities (Qianyi and Yongren, 2023).

Furthermore, about 77.7 and 73.2 percent of the male and female respondents were indigenes of the towns where markets are located while only 22.3 and 26.8 percent were non-indigenes. It implies that the rural market associations were community based and generally comprise of people who know themselves and could easily be traced if the need arises. This would enhance trust which is highly needed for entrusting opportunities to participate in the activities of associations, particularly where money and exchange of goods are concerned, integration is of utmost important.

Table 1: Personal and Socio- Economics Characteristics of the Respondents

| Variables | Male (n= 112) | | Female (n= 112) | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Age | | | | |
| < 30 | 2 | 1.7 | 4 | 3.85 |
| 31 – 40 | 21 | 18.8 | 35 | 31.3 |
| 41 – 50 | 46 | 41.1 | 49 | 44.0 |
| 51 – 60 | 26 | 23.2 | 19 | 17.0 |
| > 60 | 17 | 15.2 | 4 | 3.85 |
| Market association membership | | | | |
| Yes | 112 | 100.0 | 112 | 100.0 |
| Estimated annual income | | | | |
| Below 500,000 | 48 | 42.9 | 75 | 67.0 |
| 500,000 – 1,000,000 | 57 | 50.6 | 35 | 31.3 |
| Above 1,000,000 | 7 | 6.3 | 2 | 1.8 |
| Mean± Standard deviation | 647,232 ± 377,082 | | 514,651 ± 375214 | |
| Educational Status | | | | |
| No formal education | 21 | 18.8 | 41 | 36.6 |
| Adult literacy | 15 | 13.4 | 10 | 8.9 |
| Primary occupation | 40 | 35.7 | 20 | 17.9 |
| Technical / secondary education | 32 | 28.6 | 27 | 24.1 |
| Tertiary education | 4 | 3.6 | 14 | 12.5 |
| Role played in the association | | | | |
| Ex- officio member | 8 | 7.1 | 7 | 6.3 |
| Committee member | 7 | 6.3 | 10 | 8.9 |
| Financial member | 42 | 37.5 | 61 | 54.5 |
| Founding member | 1 | 0.9 | 9 | 8.0 |
| Non-financial member | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 4.5 |
| Ordinary member | 61 | 54.5 | 66 | 58.9 |
| Executive member | 39 | 34.8 | 31 | 27.7 |

| Ethnicity | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|
| Yoruba | 100 | 89.3 | 109 | 97.3 |
| Hausa | 12 | 10.7 | 2 | 1.8 |
| Igbo | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.9 |
| Indigene of the town | | | | |
| Yes | 87 | 77.7 | 82 | 73.2 |
| No | 25 | 22.3 | 30 | 26.8 |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Perception of Respondents towards Participation in Rural Market Association Activities

Results in Table 2 revealed that 70.5, 17.0 and 12.5 percent of the male respondents had positive, negative and neutral disposition towards participation in rural market association activities. Similarly, 83.9, 10.7 and 5.4 percent of the female had positive, negative and neutral perception respectively. Thus, majority of the male and female respondents were positively disposed to participation in rural market association activities. Consequently, only very few male and female had negative and neutral perception.

The following excerpt from a key informant supports this finding.

“Everyone knows that market association is good for us not only for economic reasons but it helps members to mix with each other, there is coordination and cooperation, we believe in it” (A female key informant at Owode market Okuku, Odo-Otin LGA in Ikurin).

The implication of high positive perception by both male and female towards participation in rural market association activities is an indication of their readiness to participate actively in association activities if provided with the enabling environment.

Table 2: Respondents’ Level of Perception towards Participation in Rural Market Association Activities

| Level | Score | Male (n=112) | | Female (n=112) | |
|----------|--------------|--------------|------|----------------|------|
| | | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Negative | 32 – 74.6 | 19 | 17.0 | 12 | 10.7 |
| Neutral | 74.7 – 117.2 | 14 | 12.5 | 6 | 5.4 |
| Positive | 117.3 – 160 | 79 | 70.5 | 94 | 83.9 |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Participation in rural market association activities on gender basis

The results in Table 3 show the calculated mean scores for male and female participation in rural market association activities based on ten indicators / activities (Meetings, Association responsibilities in the market, Transportation, Finance, Security, Provision of accommodation for association, Marketing benefits, Membership recruitment drive, Leadership role and Participation in leadership positions).

The analysis revealed the highest participation mean scores of 1.70 for the male in one activity (association meetings) and 1.77 for the female in two (association meetings and association responsibilities in the market). Further analysis showed that the mean scores (1.53 to 1.77) for the female were higher than the mid-point (1.50)

of the expected individual maximum score of 3.0 in seven (7) of the activities (meetings, association responsibilities, transportation, finance, security, providing accommodation for associations and marketing benefits). In comparison, the male scored above the mid-point (1.50 to 1.70) in only three (3) activities (meetings, association responsibilities and transportation). This finding revealed that variation existed in areas of interest based on gender but both male and female participated actively in association meetings which gave them equal opportunities to benefit from association activities. In addition, both male and female had lowest participation scores (0.52 and 0.72) in leadership positions. This could be attributed to change in membership composition over many years.

This view was affirmed in an excerpt from a KII response:

“Many people who have occupied positions in the past have relocated, some have died while some are no longer in the association because of age or other reasons”. (A female key informant in Ogbaagba Olooluwa LGA Iwo)

Notably, the female scored higher than the male in all the ten activities for measuring participation which implies more female participation than their male counterparts. This is further explained in the grand mean scores of 1.32 and 1.50 for the male and female respectively. However, in spite of more female participation than their male counterparts, they were fearful of the male taking over in association activities where they previously enjoyed total prominence. These views were clearly affirmed in the excerpt from the KII responses of both male and female thus:

We women are not in any way opposed to the men participating in market association activities but will oppose a situation when women who make up more than 70% of the market population will enjoy lesser participation as time goes due to cultural demands which often gives support to our men as leaders while the women are expected to follow. (A KII response from a female informant at Idominasi market, Ilase LGA)

The following excerpt also complements the female’s view:

It is a fact that more and more male are coming to participate in the market space, especially in association activities and we are not out to compete with our wives. No doubt the women will always give their husbands due respect when situations arise even in the market place. (A male key informant at Ibokun market in Obokun LGA)

The female feared losing the prime position they traditionally enjoyed in the market space to their male counterparts who were emboldened by the cultural norms of male dominance over the female in rural gender relations.

It has been established in literatures (van-Antwerpen Ferreira, (2010); Faborode and Ajayi, (2015); Nentwich and Hsu, (2023) that the male usually takes over in many female dominated activities when they become more relevant particularly in economic advantage. The inference from these findings is that active participation without compromising gender equity is imperative for achieving sustainable rural development. More is required to allay the fears of the female to achieve gender equity in rural market association participation. With increasing male participation in the market space and the relevance of market associations in the political, economic and socio-cultural affairs of rural communities, poverty among the female could increase if no decisive action is taken to

ensure gender equity to promote sustainability in any planned intervention to enhance participation in rural market association activities.

Table 3: Gender Disaggregated Data on Participation in Rural Market Association activities

| Indicators (activities) | Male (n = 112) | Female (n = 112) |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| | Mean score | Mean score |
| Meetings | 1.70 | 1.77 |
| Association responsiveness in the market | 1.56 | 1.77 |
| Transportation | 1.57 | 1.73 |
| Finance | 1.12 | 1.64 |
| Security | 1.50 | 1.62 |
| Accommodation for association | 1.43 | 1.54 |
| Marketing Benefits | 1.31 | 1.53 |
| Membership's recruitment drive | 1.35 | 1.37 |
| Leadership role | 1.12 | 1.27 |
| Participation in leadership positions | 0.52 | 0.72 |
| Grand mean scores | 1.32 | 1.50 |

Note: N=Never (0), R=Rarely (1), O=Occasionally (2), A=Always

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Level of Participation in Rural Market Associations Activities on Gender Basis

Results in figure 1 show the levels of male and female participation in rural market association activities using the composite scores. The composite score (156) for participation in market association activities was derived from the summation of scores of the ten measurement indicators (having 52 activities with maximum score of 3.0 and 0 minimum each). Equal interval was used to categorise the composite score into low (< 52), moderate (52-104) and high (> 104) levels.

Less than half (35.7%) of the male and female (33.9%) respondents were categorised as low participation level, about half (56.3%) of the male and 45.5 percent of the female were in the moderate level while fewer male (8.0%) than female (20.5%) were in the high level. This finding revealed that the highest number of both male and female gender had moderate participation but the female in comparison with their male counterparts enjoyed higher participation.

This may be due to the traditional belief that the market place belongs to the female gender where the males are becoming more visible in recent years (Lilli and Regina, 2023; Olorunsola and Agboola, 2025). Thus, enhancing participation by both male and female without compromising gender equity is of utmost importance but would require intervention programme based on gender peculiarities to enhance participation and sustainable rural development.

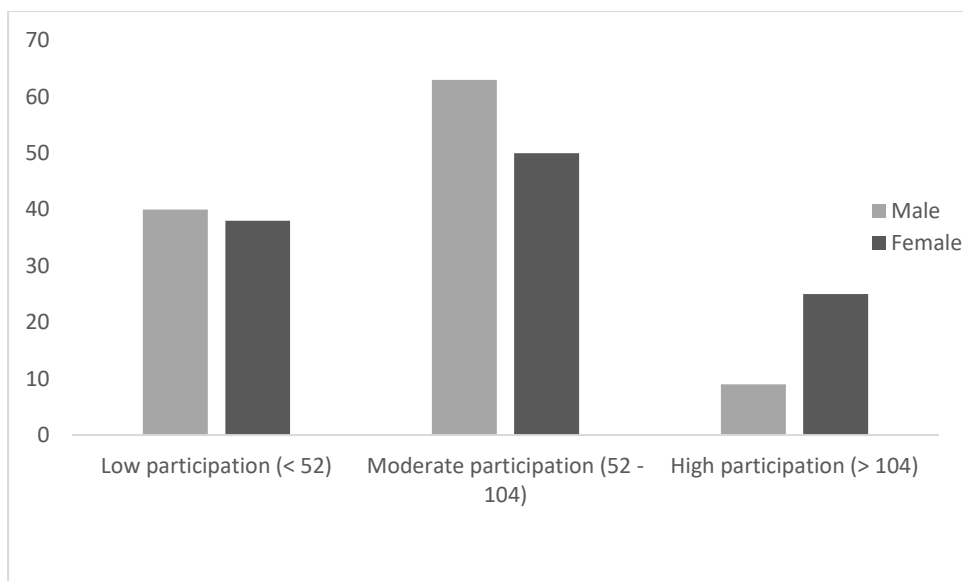


Fig 1: Level of Participation in Rural Market Associations Activities

Male and Female Participation Constraints in Rural Market Association Activities

Table 4 shows the ranking of the constraints encountered by the male and female respondents' participating in rural market association activities. The mean scores for each of the 20 constraints were calculated using the scores of the three-point scale (major constraints =3, minor constraints =2 and not a constraint =1). The calculated mean scores for each of the constraints were ranked based on gender and this revealed the severity of each constraint.

The six leading constraints encountered by the male in order of severity were access to association resources, bad roads to the market, irregular attendance of meetings, non-regular payment of dues, access to credit facilities and lack of constitution or law guiding activities. The female constraints were access to credit facilities, male dominance, politicisation of association, leadership problem, bad roads to the market and inadequate dissemination of information. Also, the three least constraints experienced by the male were male dominance (20th), female dominance (19th) and gender related challenges (18th) while for the female they were female dominance (20th), lack of constitution or law guiding activities (19th) and non-regular payment of dues (18th). These results showed that though they both encountered many constraints, there were gender-based variation in the types and severity of the constraints. The inference from these findings is that any planned initiative to enhance participation of male and female in market association activities without compromising gender equity must focus on the aforementioned leading constraints based on gender peculiarities.

Table 4: Gender Disaggregated Data on Constraints to Participation

| Constraints | Male (n = 112) | | Female (n = 112) | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Mean | Rank | Mean | Rank |
| Access to association resources | 1.22 | 1 st | 1.55 | 10 th |
| Bad road to the market | 1.18 | 2 nd | 1.76 | 5 th |
| Irregular attendance of meetings | 1.03 | 3 rd | 0.88 | 14 th |
| Non – regular payment of dues | 1.02 | 4 th | 0.75 | 18 th |
| Access to credit facilities | 1.01 | 5 th | 1.99 | 1 st |
| Lack of law or constitution | 1.01 | 5 th | 0.71 | 19 th |
| Inadequate information | 0.96 | 7 th | 1.73 | 6 th |
| Favouritism of certain members | 0.95 | 8 th | 1.68 | 8 th |
| Leadership problem | 0.93 | 9 th | 1.79 | 4 th |
| Corrupt practices | 0.88 | 10 th | 1.70 | 7 th |
| Monopoly of activities by few | 0.87 | 11 th | 1.48 | 11 th |
| Conflict with other associations | 0.86 | 12 th | 1.40 | 12 th |
| Conflict among members | 0.83 | 13 th | 0.98 | 13 th |
| Participation takes time | 0.82 | 14 th | 1.59 | 9 th |
| Diversity of membership | 0.76 | 15 th | 0.79 | 16 th |
| Local politics | 0.76 | 15 th | 0.79 | 16 th |
| It is politicised | 0.75 | 17 th | 0.80 | 15 th |
| Gender related challenges | 0.72 | 18 th | 1.83 | 3 rd |
| Female dominance of activities | 0.66 | 19 th | 0.59 | 20 th |
| Male dominance of activities | 0.65 | 20 th | 1.87 | 2 nd |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Extent to Constraints based on gender

Figure 2 shows the extent of male and female constraints in rural market association activities. More (62%) male than female (44.0%) were moderately constrained but a higher (46%) proportion of the female compared to the male (9.0%) were highly constrained while a significant number (29.0%) of male than the female (10.0%) had low constraints. This implies that the female respondents were more constrained compared to their male counterparts.

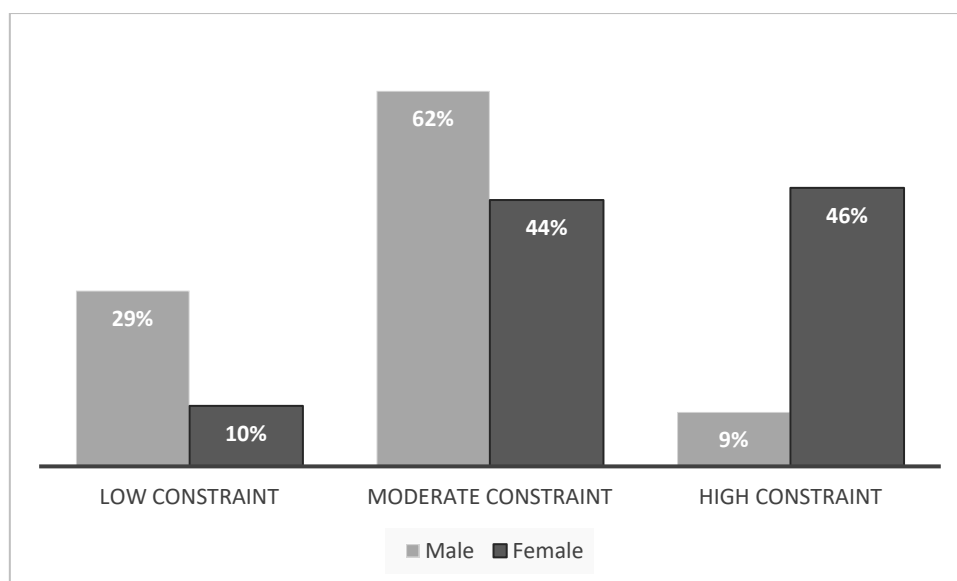


Fig. 2: Extent of male and female constraints

Independent t-test analysis showing the difference between male and female participation in rural market association activities

The results of independent t-test analysis in Table 5 show that significant difference ($t = -25.87$) existed between the participation of male and female in rural market association activities at 0.01 level of significance in the study area. The level of participation of male and female respondents differed considerably. Gender inequality persisted in favour of the male in the study area where culture and tradition continue to support and validate male supremacy in spite of the nation's constitution on equality of all. This finding was similarly reported by Nartey *et al.* (2023) that cultural gender norms create doctrines that establish male dominance over the female

Table 5: Result of t-test Analysis

| Variables | t | df | Sig.(2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence level of difference | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| (Overall participation score) | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Male | 25.857 | 111 | 0.000 | 60.250 | 55.63 | 64.87 |
| Female | 24.210 | 108 | 0.000 | 69.798 | 64.08 | 75.51 |

Significance (*) (**) at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$

Source: Field Survey, 2021

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was established in the study that rural market associations have continued to gain prominence as important avenue for political, economic and social advantage with both male and female gender participating in a space that was traditionally meant for the female. The age long cultural practice of female subjugation and enforcement of male dominance is being challenged by the female for fear of male dominance while the male gender held firmly to the culturally assigned supremacy over the female in gender relations.

Thus, it is of utmost importance to promote gender equity for sustainable participation in rural market association by leveraging the high positive disposition to participation by both male and female and focusing on the numerous gender-based constraints in any planned initiative to enhance gender equity in rural market association

participation and economy. It is also imperative that government should formulate policy to guide market associations in their operation and moderate socio-cultural issues such as religious beliefs and stringent cultural norms that could undermine rural marketers (irrespective of gender) from active participation in association activities.

REFERENCES

- Addai, G., Suh, J. and Bardsley, D. (2023). Contributions of urban periodic markets to sustainable rural development in Ghana: A rural web analysis. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 7, 100480. DOI:10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100480
- Aloma, A. (1948). *The Freedom of Egba Land*, (Abeokuta: Longman).
- Amusan, L., Akokuwebe, M. E., & Odularu, G. (2021). Women development in agriculture as agency for fostering innovative agricultural financing in Nigeria. *African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development*, 21(7), 18279-18299. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajfand/article/view/231653>
- Babajo, H. (2017). Effects of periodic market on Economic Development of Giwa Local Government area of Kaduna state, Nigeria, 18(5) 2018 Publisher: Global journals ISSN: 2249-460
- Babulo, B., Muys, B., Nega, F., Tollens, E., Nyssen, J., Deckers, J. and Mathij, E. (2008). Household livelihood strategies and forest dependence in the highlands of Tigray, Northern Ethiopia, *Agricultural Systems*, 98(2): 147-155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2008.06.001>.
- Byfield, J.A. (2003) "Taxation, Women, and the Colonial State: Egba Women's Tax Revolt" *Meridians*, 3, (2), 250 – 277.
- Chagomoka, T., Drescher, A., Glasser, R., Marschner, B., Schlesinger, J., Abdul-Razak, A., Karg, H., & Nyandoro, G. (2018). Urban and peri-urban agriculture and its implication on food and nutrition insecurity in northern Ghana: A socio-spatial analysis along the urban–rural continuum. *Population and Environment*, 40, 47–66. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45180140>.
- Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). New Delhi, India: Sage Publication.
- Eff, E. A., & Jensen, C. D. (2014). The integration of periodic markets in mayan Guatemala: A gravity approach in production, consumption, business, and the economy. *Research in Economic Anthropology*, 34, 349–374. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0190-128120140000034012>
- Ekong E.E, (2010). *Rural Sociology: An Introduction and Analysis of Rural Nigeria*. 3rd Edition, Dove Educational, Uyo, Nigeria, 10(5): 220 - 273.
- Faborode, H. F. B. and Ajayi, A. O. (2015). Utilization of indigenous arable crop storage and preservation technology in Nigeria. *Review of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 21(2): 12 – 21.

- Filusi, O. J., Ayinde, J. O. (2019). Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Youth Commercial Agricultural Development (YCAD) Programme Among Rural Youth in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *AGROFOR International Journal*, 4(3), UDC 631:316. 334. 55, Pp. 669
- Holden, S. T. and Tilahun, M. (2021). Mobile phones, leadership and gender in rural business groups. *World Development Perspectives*, 24, 100370. DOI: 10.1016/j.wdp.2021.100370
- Ikelegbe A. and Vande P. T (2013). The civil society organization, good governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria South East *Journal of Political Science* Vol.3 (1) 2017 pg 15-25
- Ikioda F. (2012). Exploring the role of associations of market traders in Nigeria market places. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* 10(2): 105-116 accessed <http://journal.km4dev.org/>
- Karg, H., Bellwood-Howard, I., Akoto-Danso, E.K., Schlesinger, J., Chagomoka, T., Drescher, A. (2019). Small-Town Agricultural Markets in Northern Ghana and Their Connection to Rural and Urban Transformation. *Eur. J. Dev. Res.*, 31, 95–117
- Kio-lawson (2015). Rural Markets and Nigeria Economic Development: A Case Study of Selected Markets in Bayelsa State. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research Social and Management Sciences*, 4(4): 16 – 28.
- Lilli, S. and Regina, B. (2023). The myth of the market queens: A case study of women and power in Ghanaian markets. *Global Food Security*, 38, 100703. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2023.100703>.
- Luptacik, M. and Mahlberg, B. (2018). Revisiting the Efficiency-Equity Trade-off: A Multi-objective Linear Problem combined with an extended Leontief Input Output Model. Accessed 28th February, 2026 at <https://ideas.repec.org/p/brt/depwps/016.html>
- Madi, I. A. (2004). Market integration and rural development in nsukka region, south-eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Development*, 23(3), 355–374. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258027579_Market_Integration_and_Rural_Development_in_Nsukka_Region_South-Eastern_Nigeria
- Masamha, B., Uzokwe, V. N., Ntagwabira, F. E., Gabagambi, D. and Mamiro, P. (2019). Gender influence on participation in cassava value chain in small holder farming sectors: Evidence from kigoma region, Tanzania. *Experimental agriculture* 55(1), 57 - 72 Cambridge University Press (CUP). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0014479717000552>
- Metu, A., and Nwokoye, E. (2014). Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. In *International Conference on Entrepreneurship: Strategy for Socio-Economic advancement in Emerging Economies, organized by the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Bowen University Iwo*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2622222>
- Nartey P, Bahar OS, and Nabunya P. A (2023). Review of the Cultural Gender Norms Contributing to Gender Inequality in Ghana: An Ecological Systems Perspective. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 25(7):14.

- Nentwich, Julia and Hsu, Chieh (2023). (Un)doing masculinity? Men working in women's occupations. 10.4324/9781003193579-25.
- Olorunsola, E. O. and Agboola, A. F. (2025). Factors influencing the role performance of commodity leaders in periodic markets in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology*, 25(1): 95 – 101.
- Omole, F. K. (2012). Analysis of some factors affecting market patronage in Osun State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v3n3p70>
- Omole, F. K., Lukman, Y. and Baki, A. I. (2013). Analysis of Market Typology and Functions in Development Journal of Critical Reviews. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 3(1): 55-69
- Osuntade O.B., Liverpool-Tasie Lenis Saweda O., Kolade O., Amadi G., Reardon T., and Wineman A. (2025). Are women represented where they are present? Evidence from female leadership roles in food wholesale markets in Nigeria. Research Supporting Africans MSMEs to provide safe and nutritious food.
- Qianyi S. and Yongren, S. (2023). Distinguishing social mechanisms of membership adoption in emerging technology communities. *Social Science Research*, 14, 102917. DOI:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2023.102917.
- Rambanapasi, C. O. (1997). The periodic markets concept and the transformation of the rural settlement hierarchy in Zimbabwe. *Journal of African and Development*, 27(28), 237–257. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24326368>
- Tinuke, M. (2012). Gender and development: Challenges to women involvement in Nigeria's development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(6), 14.
- Ugwuja A. A. and Onyishi, J. E. (2020). Female political protests in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria: The Abeokuta women's revolt as a framework, 1945-1999. *Preorc Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, 1(1): 52 – 78.
- Van-Antwerpen, S. and Ferreira, E. (2010). Males in predominantly female-dominated positions: a south African perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Management*, 7:363 – 379.
- World Bank (2020). Women and Trade: The Role of Trade in Promoting Women's Equality. <https://www.worldbank.org/topic/trade/publication>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Faborode, Helen Folake Babatola is a Reader in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Alabi, Mary Bukola is a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria.